



The mission of HIplan, a 501c3 educational non-profit based in Hilo, is to develop the entrepreneur ecosystem on Hawaii Island. HIplan has conducted business plan competitions for Hawaii companies for the last five years, mentored more than 200 companies and awarded \$200,000 in prizes. More than 50% of all entries to the competition, and four of five grand prize winners, were agriculture-related companies. Therefore, HIplan is placing emphasis on supporting agricultural business development.

Hawaii has a long history of innovation in agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture. But, small farm size, high production costs, a small local consumer market and distance to larger markets make Hawaii's agriculture uncompetitive in global markets and result in Hawaii importing 85% of its food. Innovative solutions that increase productivity and efficiency throughout the entire agriculture value and supply chains are needed to meet current and future challenges.

In 2016 Hawaii Governor David Ige pledged to double local food production by 2030. In July this year, he signed a bill to provide at least 30% of locally grown food in schools by 2030 and established a goal for the Department of Education to have at least 30% of food served in public schools locally sourced by the same date.

To meet these goals, Hawaii agriculture will require transformative innovation and a tech-knowledgeable workforce with skill sets that are not now prominent in the state. To address these issues and seek solutions, HIplan is convening an international conference on tropical agriculture technology:

A two-day Tropical AgTech Conference to be held June 22-23, 2022, at the University of Hawaii-Hilo. The focus on tropical agriculture differentiates the conference from other AgTech conferences around the world.

CONFERENCE GOALS & PURPOSE

The PURPOSE of the Tropical AgTech Conference is to stimulate the development and use of agriculture technologies in Hawaii to enable commercialization of crops, as well as to export innovations in technology suitable for tropical environments.

Goals for the conference are to:

- Stimulate development of a local AgTech ecosystem and a technology-enabled sustainable agricultural industry including climate-smart farming solutions

- Improve agriculture productivity to achieve higher profits (higher yields & margins) with higher paying jobs, younger workforce and higher value crops
- Showcase Hawaii as the ideal location for adapting ag technologies to tropical environments (diversity of microclimates)
- Attract investment to Hawaii agriculture
- Provide more opportunities to keep talented residents employed in Hawaii
- Stimulate economic development in rural Hawaii

ASPIRATIONAL GOAL

To position Hawaii as the center for tropical AgTech development and commercialization

Currently approximately 40% (55% of children) of the global population lives in the tropics with expectations to reach 50% by 2050. The highest concentration of “hunger” currently exists in tropical regions. Climate change is already having a negative impact on existing crops in the tropics and is expected to get worse. The size of the tropics is projected to grow in size.



Developing solutions that allow for agriculture production near population centers in the tropics is necessary and potentially very profitable. AgTech is currently focused on large-scale production, however 80% of the food consumed globally comes from small-scale farms (~5 acres). It makes strategic sense to focus on smaller farms and high value crops.

Hawaii is in many ways the perfect laboratory for the creation and commercialization of tropical AgTech. Hawaii Island is unique in that it contains eight of the world’s 13 climates, allowing for the propagation and proof of concept of technologies for a wide variety of plants and animals in a relatively small geographical footprint.

Hawaii Island is also home to the US Department of Agriculture Pacific Basin Agriculture Research Center (PBARC), Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority – Hawaii Ocean Science & Technology Park (NELHA-HOST Park) and the strong presence of the University of Hawaii Systems with UH Manoa CTAHR, UH Hilo CAFNRM and the Hawaii Community College campuses.

Putting the State of Hawaii in the spotlight as the place for tropical AgTech development and commercialization can lead to new investments into Hawaii AgTech businesses and help increase agriculture production to meet the state’s sustainable food goals. Contact:

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