

## Supporting Hawai'i's Organic Industry with a Program Office

With consumer demand for organic produce and other food products increasing both locally and nationally, Hawai'i's organic farmers are faced with limited support for local business development and certification. A feasibility study beginning in February 2013 will seek to change that.

Thanks to a Specialty Crop Block Grant from the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, The Kohala Center (<http://www.kohalacenter.org>) will facilitate a process to determine the best approach to creating an economically self-sustaining organic program office in Hawai'i, where organic producers can obtain information and assistance for infrastructure, production, processing, marketing, certification, and business development.

The process will involve significant stakeholder input to ensure the needs of organic food producers, manufacturers, and purchasers are understood and addressed. Additionally, a state-wide organic industry conference will be planned and executed, and an assessment of the industry derived through archival data and a series of advisory committee meetings will be conducted.

While The Kohala Center will coordinate the feasibility study, it does not intend to house or oversee the resulting program. The organization anticipates that services will ultimately be provided by the Hawai'i Organic Farmers Association, a branch of the Hawaii Farm Bureau, a program at UH-CTAHR, an office within the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, or some other institutional configuration to be determined.

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