

# HAWAI‘I AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

# AG2019

## PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

*Please note: Presenters are listed in alphabetical order by presenter last name. Only those presenters whose information was received by Sept 1, 2019 are included in this document.*

**Hannah Nicole Apostol** is currently a tenth grader at Waipahu High School where she serves as FFA chapter Vice President. In FFA, Hannah has nationally placed 6th in AgriScience in Food Products and Processing Division 2 and is a State Champion in FFA AgriScience in Environmental Services/Natural Resource Systems Division 3. She has conducted a service project at the Pouhala Marsh. The purpose of her project was to restore populations of endangered native plants and the health of the Kapakahi Stream. She continues to fight for her passion of helping others in need and the world that surrounds her. She won the Mark Tawahara Award and Scholarship through many hours of community service and volunteer work. Hannah is also a part of many organizations including FFA, Youth for Safety, National Junior Honor Society, HOSA, and Early College.

**Josh Atwood, Ph.D.**, manages the interagency Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council, a cabinet-level collaboration of state agencies dedicated to invasive species coordination and policy direction. The HISC works with the legislature and other partners to develop new invasive species policies and increase capacity for biosecurity work at the local, state, and regional levels. The HISC has collaborated with the Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture and other agencies on the 2017-2027 Hawai‘i Interagency Biosecurity Plan and with Governor Ige's Western Governors' Association chairman initiative on biosecurity and invasive species. The HISC is administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife.

**Bronson Kainoa Kiyoshi Azama** and is a senior at James B. Castle High School. For the school year 2019-2020, he will serve as the Pelekikena (president) of the Ho‘oulu ‘Ōpio Natural Resources Academy, which focuses on cultural and ‘āina based education for students from 10-12th grade. He also serves as the Hawai‘i State President for the Future Farmers of America (FFA) organization. Being born and raised in the ahupua‘a of He‘eia, the last operating ahupua‘a on O‘ahu, he has been deeply committed to working with numerous organizations and leaders to bettering cultural and ‘āina based education for students across the state. Outside of school he is a member of the Ko‘olaupoko Hawai‘ian Civic Club and an advocate in our community for our environment and the preservation of our natural resources and rural lifestyle.

**Lydi Bernal** has over a decade of experience building school garden programs and growing Hawai'i's farm to school movement. In 2014 she became the founding coordinator of the Hawai'i Farm to School Hui, a statewide network. Prior to her role as Hui Coordinator, Lydi served as the Garden Education Coordinator with Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation where she was the lead author of the 'ĀINA In Schools garden and compost curriculum and led trainings for several hundreds of teachers and volunteers annually. She is a certified O'ahu Master Gardener and graduate of Hawai'i's Agricultural Leadership Program. She received a "Hero of Agriculture, Food, and the Environment Award" during the 2010 Hawai'i Agriculture Conference. Inspired by opportunities early in life to connect with nature and be empowered to make a difference, Lydi has passionately dedicated herself to helping expand opportunities for youth to become committed stewards of the Earth.

**Dale B. Bonar, Ph.D.** was born and raised on O`ahu, Dr. Bonar earned his PhD in Marine Science at UH and spent 16 years as a Professor of Zoology and Research Scientist at the Center of Marine Biotechnology, University of Maryland. Returning to the west coast, board service with a local Land Trust resulted in taking over directorship of the Northwest Program of the National Land Trust Alliance. In this position he worked with Land Trusts from Wyoming to Alaska, helping them grow and professionalize. He returned to Maui in 2002 to become Executive Director of the Maui Coastal Land Trust (now the statewide Hawai'ian Islands Land Trust) and served as chair of the Natural Areas Reserve System and the Legacy Land Conservation Commission. Following retirement from the Land Trust in 2012, Dale began the Affordable Farming Project, with the goal of providing an effective, affordable method for the establishment of small, sustainable "family farms".

**Zhiqiang Cheng, Ph.D.** is an Associate Professor and Extension Specialist in the Department of Plant and Environmental Protection Sciences, CTAHR, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He works on biology, ecology, and management of turfgrass and landscape pests. Dr. Cheng has over 15 years of research experience in the field. He has recent and on-going research projects on many important landscape and turfgrass pests in Hawai'i including coconut rhinoceros beetle, Ficus stem and leaf gall wasps, lobate lac scale, oriental flower beetle, hala scale, leaf and sheath blight (mini ring), take-all patch (Bermudagrass decline), rover ant, foliar nematode, fruit fly, and more. Dr. Cheng has given presentations in many international, national and local conferences, meetings and workshops. He serves as peer-reviewer for many scientific journals.

**Chynna Chun** graduated in 2019 from Mililani High School. She was previously the Future Farmers of America (FFA) President for her Mililani Chapter and has been involved with FFA for about two academic years. During her last state convention, she was nominated to be FFA's 2019-2020 State Treasurer. In the fall, she will be majoring in Tropical Agriculture and the Environment at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Outside of school, she is currently doing a summer internship with KUPU to strengthen her leadership abilities while also doing conservation work with different organizations such as Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea and Army Natural Resources. She hopes to shed more light on the AG P-20 Bill which advocates for an agriculture education working group to assist those who are also passionate about agriculture.

**Dominique Depaz** is the Product Research & Development Consulting Manager for Agro Research International, a manufacturer of organic essential oils, pesticides and biological amendments. He developed two of the company's products: Agropest insecticide and Weed Slayer herbicide. Prior to Agro Research, he worked as the Florida lead salesperson for Pathway Biologic and Agraquest/Bayer. Dominique also owns an independent agricultural product testing company and for many years managed a large Central Florida vegetable farm. He is a Certified Crop Advisor.

**Warren Doi** began his career as a management consultant for Ernst & Young in London, England where he managed a worldwide system integration project for Hewlett Packard. His other clients included AT&T, Cisco Systems, PG&E Energy Services, and Xilinx where he led cross-functional teams to deploy localized requirements. After gaining experience in the corporate world, Warren founded a series of companies in the San Francisco Bay Area that included a financial transaction platform, a real estate investment trust, and a carshare system. He returned home to Hawai'i to help establish the Energy Excelerator where he built the Go-to-market track and mentored over 25 CEOs. These experiences allowed Warren to realize the potential of TerViva where he now leads their business development efforts in Hawai'i and the Asia-Pacific region.

**Darren Andre Estal** is currently a 10th-grade student at Waipahu High where he serves as a FFA Chapter Secretary. He has been in FFA for two years and is currently serving his third year. In FFA, Darren competed and took third place at the national level in the agriscience plant systems division two. He has competed in Creed Speaking. Darren's goal is to serve the agriculture industry by educating youth about agriculture and how we can help improve the industry. During his two years in intermediate school, Darren was a member of Youth For Safety. In YFS, he learned many things about traffic safety and other safety issues and educated the public about safety. But before he was in FFA and YFS, he didn't like to speak in front of a crowd. These programs have helped Darren get out of his comfort zone and network with many others.

**Allen (Al) Frenzel** is state executive director of the Hawai'i and Pacific Basin USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). He attended the University of Nevada, Reno, for two years as an agriculture major in plant, soil and water science. He entered the military, and during his thirty years career, he rose to the rank of colonel while serving as professor and director of logistics management at the U.S. Army War College, and then as a Defense Logistics Agency civilian advisor on the United States Pacific Command staff. He completed his bachelor's degree in business administration at Central Texas University and received his Master of Science in business administration from Boston University. Frenzel is a strong advocate for farmers and ranchers and has been active in community support, including fighting for the protection of agricultural lands and the fragile environment in Hawai'i.

**Jhanella Shayne Gerardo** is a 9th-grade student at Waipahu High School. She currently serves as the Class of 2023 Council President and is part of the Waipahu FFA Chapter. During her time at WIS, she has had a part in many organizations such as the Student Government, National Junior Honor Society, FFA, Youth for Safety, and Hawai'i Public Health Institute's Youth Council. Jhanella has testified for multiple bills before the Waipahu Neighborhood Board and state legislation. She continues to serve her community with countless hours of volunteer work and was awarded the Mark Tawarahara Award and Scholarship for her service. Jhanella strives to inform the public about issues in her community and plans to establish her own orphanage in the future. Her other accomplishments include State Champion in AgriScience Fair in Social Systems Division 1.

**Elson C. Gushiken** is the Vice President of ITC Water Management, Inc. He has been with ITC for 40 years and has 48 years of experience in the water industry. He was educated at the University of Hawai'i and is a member of the Hawai'i Section of the American Water Works Association (AWWA), Water Environment Federation, Hawai'i Water Environment Association, and the Landscape Industry Council of Hawai'i.

**Danya Hakeem** is Director of Agriculture & Circular Economy Innovation at Elemental Excelsior. Danya works directly with the Elemental's agriculture and circular economy portfolio companies to help them co-design and implement successful projects, identify follow-on funders and customers, and scale their products and services. She provides tailored services and strategy with an eye for both transformational change in the places they work and for the client's exponential growth. Sitting at the heart of the accelerator, she provides value to Elemental's portfolio companies and manages connections to industry. Before Elemental, Danya was the Program Director for Hawai'i Center for Food Safety and Outreach Manager for Kunoa Cattle Company. She has a background in freelance filmmaking and holds an M.S. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University and a B.A. in Communications and Business Management from Virginia Tech University.

**Amy Hennessey, APR**, serves as the senior vice president of communications and community, providing strategic counsel to Ulupono Initiative's internal team and external partners. She also oversees all communications aspects including branding, marketing and public relations. Amy is a member of Ulupono's management team.

**Lea Hong** has been the Hawai'i State Director of The Trust for Public Land, a national non-profit organization dedicated to conserving land for people, since 2006. She previously chaired the environmental and cultural resource law practice group at the Honolulu law firm of Alston Hunt Floyd & Ing (now Dentons) and worked for the Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund. Lea is a graduate of Rice University and the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawai'i, where she serves on the Friends of the Law School Board and has taught classes on environmental litigation, environmental regulatory compliance, and conservation transactions. She is from Wahiawā, on the island of O'ahu and enjoys surfing and catering to her mini-labradoodle in her spare time.

**Laura H.E. Kaakua** is President and CEO of Hawai'ian Islands Land Trust, the islands-wide nonprofit land trust. Laura works with landowners, communities, government agencies, farmers and ranchers, and Hawai'ian cultural practitioners to protect the lands that sustain us for current and future generations. The Land Trust has protected over 20,000 acres of Hawai'i's most precious land utilizing both strategic fee simple purchases, and conservation easements granted by willing landowners. The Land Trust works with local communities to steward the six preserves under its care, and annually monitors its forty conservation easements. Previously, Laura worked for The Trust for Public Land, the Honorable Greg Nakamura of the Third Circuit Court, Sierra Club's Hawai'i Chapter, Earthjustice, and Envision Hawai'i. Laura is a graduate of the William S. Richardson School of Law, Boston College, and Punahou School, and is an alakai of Na Pualei o Likolehua, and a member of Protect Kahoolawe Ohana.

**Kevin Kelly** is a marine geologist who received his MBA in 1999. He served as an advisor to the University of Hawai'i's Vice-President of Research and Innovation and has managed large federal research awards for the university. He has served on the boards of numerous statewide and community organizations including the Hawai'i Science & Technology Council and the Defend O'ahu Coalition. In 2013 he chaired the North Shore Clusters of Opportunity project, an economic analysis focused on integrating existing assets, including people, to generate new jobs and economic opportunities in the North Shore region. He founded North Shore EVP in 2015 to lead implementation of regional economic development strategies including implementation of a food aggregation facility serving all North Shore farmers and Hawai'i's first USDA GroupGAP program.

**Robert King** is President of Pacific Biodiesel, the renewable energy company he founded in 1995. With more than 100 employees statewide, Pacific Biodiesel is Hawai'i's award-winning and internationally recognized producer of renewable fuels and the only commercial liquid biofuel producer in the state of Hawai'i. A certified diesel mechanic with a background in agricultural engineering, King is spearheading the company's many sustainable, agriculture-related projects demonstrating that sustainable, community-based farming for food and fuel expands the ways Hawai'i can meet its renewable energy goals. King served six years on the Hawai'i State Environmental Council and is recognized as a renewable energy leader by local, national and international organizations. Pacific Biodiesel was also recognized as "one of the 25 Most Influential Hawai'i Businesses in the past 50 years" by Pacific Business News and was the recipient of the 2014 Best Green Business by Hawai'i Business magazine.

**Aaron Kirk** is the Vice President of marketing and business development for Hawai'i Gas. Aaron and his team are responsible for bringing to fruition new gas technologies projects and renewable energy initiatives, such as the creation of the first renewable natural gas (RNG) facility in the state at O'ahu's Honouliuli Wastewater Treatment Plant. This facility changes raw biogas from organic material and turns it into usable natural gas, making it a clean, carbon-neutral source of energy. Aaron and the business development team at Hawai'i Gas are currently exploring energy crops and ag waste which can create clean, renewable energy through anaerobic digestion or gasification. Previous to his time at Hawai'i Gas, Aaron served as President of both Bonterra Solar and Sunetric. He has served on the board of directors of the Better Business Bureau of Hawai'i and currently is treasurer and board member of Hawai'i Bioeconomy Trade Organization.

**Dexter Kishida's** passion is to connect children with their land, water, food and community. For the past six years he has worked for the Department of Education's School Food Services Branch most recently as their farm to school coordinator. His mission is to provide students with high quality local food that connects them to Hawai'i. Seeing the economic, social and health benefits of eating closest to the source, much of his work includes supply chain development and increasing access of locally grown and raised food for Hawai'i communities.

**Frankie Koethe** is an O'ahu RC&D Project Coordinator. She was born and raised on O'ahu, growing up with local culture and protocol and has worked in sustainable community development since 2012. Her Master's research at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa focused on the sustainability and environmental health perceptions of a rural community on Kaua'i. Frankie completed her degree in Natural Resource Environmental Management in August 2017. At O'ahu RC&D, she aims to assist farmers in stewarding natural resources and supporting agriculture around the island. Frankie's work includes watershed restoration work in Wai'anae, developing the Hawai'i Women Farmers Network, and more.

**Susan Kubo** is the Assistant Director for Partnerships for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Pacific Islands Area, where she works with agencies and organizations on collaborations to make NRCS conservation programs available in the Pacific Islands Area. Susan was born and raised in Hawai'i and received her BS in Civil Engineering from University of Hawai'i, Mānoa. She has worked with NRCS in California, Utah, Maine, Pennsylvania, and Hawai'i. While much of her career has been spent working with farmers, ranchers, and forest managers planning and implementing conservation, she also coordinated nonpoint source pollution and soil health partnerships and supported and managed NRCS program implementation.



**Natalie McKinney** is the Executive Director of Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation (KHF). KHF's 'ĀINA In Schools program is a farm to school initiative that connects children to their local land, waters, and food to grow a healthier Hawai'i. As the Hawai'i core partner for the National Farm to School Network and an advisory member of the Hawai'i Farm to School Hui, Natalie has worked with governmental, non-profit, and business leaders to institutionalize food and sustainability education in Hawai'i schools and communities. In 2016 Natalie was honored as a Kaiser Permanente Honor Roll Champion for her vision, creativity, and collaborative spirit.

**Michael Melzer, Ph.D.** is an Assistant Researcher in Agricultural Security in the University of Hawai'i's Department of Plant and Environmental Protection Sciences. His program conducts surveys for invasive species of regulatory importance, characterizes and develops diagnostics for new and emerging plant pathogens, and develops and distributes "clean" germplasm of tropical crops such as citrus, sweet potato, and taro. His program also administers the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response in Hawai'i and is working to develop and implement a wide range of approaches for eradicating this, and other invasive species, from Hawai'i. Michael is originally from a rural farming community in Canada and obtained his M.Sc. and Ph.D. from the University of Hawai'i.

**Debbie Millikan** is a Sustainability Specialist at 'Iolani School where she teaches about sustainability and supports integration of sustainability and food systems curriculum from grades K to 12. She also coordinates the O'ahu Farm to School Network which supports farm to school programs on O'ahu. She is passionate about empowering students to think critically, find their voice and act to create a sustainable food systems future for Hawai'i.

**Richard "Buddy" Nichols** is a fourth-generation farmer. He operated 8 different operations which grew vegetables, fruits, row crops, and cattle. His primary ag enterprise was dairy cattle and milk. Buddy created Wholesome Milk Products which included 6000 cows, a processing facility, and three distribution centers. Markets included Walmart, Wild Oats, and home delivery. Other enterprises included a feed processing company and livestock growing operation. Buddy has an MBA in Accounting and is presently the Farm Loan Manager for Maui County Farm Service Agency.

**Dana Okano, Ph.D.** is a Program Director in Strategies, Initiatives & Networks division of Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF). She manages various initiatives and grants in the environment and sustainability portfolio at the organization. Prior to joining HCF, Dana worked for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as land-based sources of pollution coordinator, coral reef management liaison, and coastal zone management specialist. In these roles, she provided grant funding and technical support across a range of coastal and watershed issues in US Pacific jurisdictions. As a coastal zone management planner with County of Hawai'i Planning Department, Dana focused on land use planning issues involving coastal and marine water quality and shoreline access protection. Dana also served two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Benin, West Africa. Dr. Okano has a PhD in Natural Resources and Environmental Management from the University of Hawai'i and professional certification from the American Institute of Certified Planners.

**Nancy Ooki** has worked with faculty at the University of Hawai'i and other universities to design and implement programs that support the three mandates of 4-H youth development programs--STEM, Healthy Living, and Civic Engagement--since beginning her position in 2015 with UH Cooperative Extension as a 4-H and Youth Development Educator. Her current work focuses on three areas of educational programming: Technology, Agriculture Education, and Applied Learning / Life Skills. She has been part of the GET Local Initiative since its inception and

provides support for disseminating field day videos, maintaining and updating the website, and educating youth about the importance of local agriculture in Hawai'i.

**Steve Parabolici** is the Chief Technical Officer for Mana Water; a company which is bringing sustainable wastewater reclamation and reuse to Hawai'i. He has 40 years of experience in the water and wastewater industry in Hawai'i. His areas of expertise include wastewater operations, water distribution, water quality, recycled water systems and operator training. At the end of 2014 after over 30 years of service, he retired from the County of Maui's Wastewater Reclamation Division. While with the County, he held the positions of Wastewater Operations Superintendent, Water Recycling Coordinator and Wastewater Reclamation Facility Supervisor. Steve has a B.S. in Biology from Framingham State College. He also is a past president of the Hawai'i Water Environment Association and serves on the Association's Water Reuse Committee.

**Teya Penniman** is the HIAMP Program Coordinator. She is a mediator, facilitator, arbitrator, and attorney, with an interest in the intersection of agriculture and conservation. She has facilitated public decision-making processes on water and energy-development and has collaborated with local and statewide agricultural groups on invasive species issues. She writes and reports on local, regional, and international issues related to biodiversity, agriculture, and culture.

**Gustavo Pinoargote, Ph.D.** was born in Guayaquil, Ecuador. He obtained his undergraduate degree in Agricultural Sciences from EARTH University in Costa Rica and moved to the US to pursue a Master's in Business Administration from Texas A&M University – Commerce. In 2012, He joined EM Research Organization and was assigned to the Interamerica Division located in Tucson, Arizona. In his current position, he supports the implementation of biotechnological innovations in developing countries in the use of microbes in different areas such as agriculture, animal husbandry and environmental restoration. In 2013, he was admitted to the Doctorate Program in Microbiology at the University of Arizona. In May of 2015, he received an award from the School of Animal and Comparative Biomedical Sciences in recognition of research conducted in the use of probiotics in aquaculture systems. In 2017, he received the title of Doctor of Philosophy in Microbiology from the University of Arizona.

**Mariah Iris Ramo** is 13 years old from Waipahu, Hawai'i. She was born and raised in Ilocos Norte, Philippines and moved to Hawai'i in 2011. She has made the most out of her time in Hawai'i by getting involved in many organizations which have taken her to a national safety conference in Vermont and even placing 6th at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis. FFA has inspired Mariah to use her voice and share her passion for ag. She wants to focus on advocating for modern agriculture and is in the process of starting an organization called Ag Innovators of Tomorrow. Her purpose is to get children interested in agriculture to keep the industry thriving by implementing various technologies in agriculture because the key is to inspire the youth to create a brighter future. Her organization will help unite everyone around the globe through the creation of modern agriculture.

**Lisa Rhoden** is the Food Safety Director for North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership. She served on the South O'ahu Soil and Water Conservation District board and is currently a board director with O'ahu Resource Conservation and Development. She is a graduate of the Hawai'i Ag Leadership Program, Class XIV, and holds a MSc in Environmental Science and Policy from Johns Hopkins University. She is a long-time farm advocate with experience in Hawai'i in distribution, farm management, and agronomy. She is passionate about locally grown food and farm food safety. As Food Safety Director with North Shore EVP, she is responsible for assisting farmers with implementation of food safety practices and policies for their operation. She is the

manager of the Hawai'i GroupGAP program and looks forward to growing that organization with farmer partners across the state. Ms. Rhoden resides on westside of Kaua'i with her son and husband.

**Lauren Ruotolo** is Director of Development of *Hawai'i Institute of Pacific Agriculture* overseeing its grant management, communications, events, donor relations, and fundraising efforts. She began with HIP Ag in 2016 as the Program Manager and has worn many active hats within the organization. Lauren has been working in the environmental sustainability movement since she was young, protesting to preserve her adorned neighborhood hiking trail from becoming a golf course. In college she helped implement a recycling program and community garden on campus. In the last decade, Lauren has held various positions including farmhand, garden designer, guide at a horticultural therapy center, and environmental technician. When Lauren isn't working for HIP Ag, you can find her gardening, hiking, or swimming the shorelines with her dog, Fern.

**Kristy Sakai** has more than 20 years of experience as a Montessori Certified, Early Childhood educator and administrator. As the Executive Director of The Bennett Foundation, she is working to create a sustained culture of wellness for educators, young children and families in Hawai'i. Their Hawai'i Farm to ECE program has transformed the preschool educational landscape in a short amount of time. Kristy understands the unique opportunities of working with young children and their families in order to create long-term impact on their development and wellbeing.

**Bruce J. Schnicker, Ph.D.** was raised on a diversified row crops and livestock family farm in Washington, Iowa. He received his B.S. in Biometry and M.S. and Ph.D. in Plant Breeding and Genetics from Iowa State University. Over his career, Bruce has developed plant improvements to increase the productivity and sustainability of food grade corn, field corn, soybeans, wheat, canola, and cotton for farmers in the U.S. and internationally. Bruce enjoys developing innovative solutions for farm operations while helping agriculture embrace the digital era. He has held leadership roles spanning strategy, research and development, and commercial deployment of a diversity of crop technologies and systems. Bruce is a Bayer Senior Science Fellow and currently serves as the Maui Technology Center Lead and the Hawai'i Technical Outreach Lead.

**Dana Shapiro** is founder and manager of Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative (HUC), a farmer-owned social enterprise with nearly 100 members spearheading development of Hawai'i's 'ulu industry to support increased food security and resilience for the islands. Born on a rural kibbutz (or cooperative agricultural community) in northern Israel, Dana has a master's degree from Ben Gurion University in cooperative business development and worked as a co-op and rural business consultant throughout the state prior to establishing HUC in 2016.

**Joshua Silva** is an edible crops Extension Agent with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) Cooperative Extension on O'ahu. Josh's sustainable agriculture program includes areas such as farm food safety, soil fertility and health, integrated pest and weed management, and agricultural technology. Born and raised on O'ahu, Josh received his degrees from CTAHR and continued to work on agricultural-related research projects that included soil and land use mapping, soil fertilizer calculators, and Pacific agroforest food systems.



**Bruce Silverglade** is a principal at OFW Law. His practice includes resolution of competitive disputes involving food labeling and advertising claims, proactive responses to FDA food safety proposals, management of class action lawsuits, FTC and FDA enforcement actions, compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act, implementation of FDA nutrition labeling regulations, matters concerning economic adulteration, and federal agriculture and nutrition policy. Bruce has extensive experience with these issues on both the national and international levels and speaks/lectures extensively. Prior to joining OFW Law, he was Director of Legal Affairs at the Center for Science in the Public Interest. Bridging the gap between consumer organizations and the food industry, he organized a bipartisan effort that culminated in the enactment of the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 (NLEA). Bruce received his BA in political science from the University of Illinois and his JD from Boston College Law School.

**Vheena Sistoza** is currently a 10th-grade student at Waipahu High where she serves as FFA Chapter President. She served previously as Treasurer of the Class of 2022 Council. At WIS, she served as 7th Grade Council President and was also a member of Student Government, FFA, Youth for Safety, Ho'omana, Track and Field, and Cross Country. Vheena has testified for an agriculture workforce development bill before the Ag Committee. She continues to advocate for agricultural education to encourage food sustainability in Hawai'i. Other accomplishments include placing 7th nationally in AgriScience Fair in Social Sciences Division 1 and State Champion last year in AgriScience Fair in Power Structural and Technical Systems Division 4.

**Michelle Starke, Ph.D.**, is the Science and Environmental Outreach lead for Bayer Crop Science Hawai'i. In this role, she acts as a resource to help stakeholders better understand Bayer Crop Science products and farming practices. Prior to coming to Hawai'i, she worked for Bayer (previously Monsanto) for more than 20 years in Commercial and Regulatory functions. Michelle has a Ph.D. in Crop Science, with an emphasis in Weed Science, from the University of Kentucky. She has worked on herbicide resistance in weeds and presented on stewardship of weed control and weed control products previously. Michelle grew up in Southern Illinois on a small dairy farm. She lives on O'ahu with her family.

**Kylie Tavares** is an Extension Agent with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) Cooperative Extension on Maui. Kylie's programming supports the edible crop industry on Maui, focusing on sustainable agriculture and farm food safety. Her work includes crop variety trials, integrated pest management, soil nutrition, and food safety education. Kylie was born and raised in San Francisco and later moved to Hawai'i to be closer to her family. Soon after graduating from CTAHR, she began her career on Maui with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts assisting agricultural producers reach resource conservation goals. She continues to support Maui growers in her current role with Extension.

**Glenn I. Teves** has been a County Extension Agent on the island of Moloka'i for 38 years, and is the longest serving Extension Agent. He was born and raised in Mānoa Valley where his family was active in livestock production including cattle, horses, and goats. His family also ranched in various other locations around O'ahu. He graduated from Kamehameha Schools, and UH CTAHR with a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture. His mentors were Ethnobotanist Bea Krauss, Entomologist Jack Beardsley, and Horticulturist/plant breeder Jim Gilbert. He has been involved in all aspects of agriculture development and extension education on Moloka'i including community planning, infrastructure and organizational development, and crop development. He was involved in the planning and development of the Moloka'i Livestock Cooperative

slaughter facility, and the Moloka'i Cooling Plant. He is a Ho'olehua Hawai'ian homesteader and farms with his wife growing banana, taro, avocado, vegetables, and vegetable seeds.

**Travis L. Thomason** was a native of Weiser, Idaho where he has spent years in the agriculture sector providing conservation services to producers. From working on the farm in Idaho to earning a BS in Agronomy from Brigham Young University, he has always found a strong connection to the land. Travis has spent the last 15 years working for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) across the country. He started his position as the Director for the Pacific Islands Area in 2017 and enjoys working with a great team focusing on providing excellent customer service and efficient delivery of conservation programs in the Pacific. Travis and his wife, Amy, have six wonderful children who enjoy the outdoors and love Hawai'i.

**Neil Tsukayama** received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in August 1985. Thereafter, he embarked on a 32-year career of federal service. Neil recently retired and resumed his education by enrolling at Windward Community College and has completed coursework in aquaponics and plant science. In January 2019, Neil was accepted as an IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE), Student Research Experience (SRE) Associate. Neil is assisting his laboratory supervisor, Bradley Fox PhD., in attempting to stimulate taro corm development in an aquaponic system by modifying water nitrogen levels at targeted stages in the plant's growth. This investigation is being conducted in support of the Mini Ahupua'a for Lifestyle and Mea'ai through Aquaponics (MALAMA) project. MALAMA, working in Waimanalo, aims to promote food production, nutrition, and STEM education through a Native Hawai'ian cultural lens.

**Barry Usagawa** is the Program Administrator for the Water Resources Division of the Honolulu Board of Water Supply where he has worked for 34 years. He administers the Water Systems Planning, Water Conservation, Recycled Water, Long Range Planning, Hydrology-Geology and Project Review functions of the department. Water Resources conducts long-range water resource and capital planning for O'ahu to ensure sustainable water resources and dependable water systems for current and future customers. Barry has lead the development of O'ahu's 8 regional Watershed Management Plans for resource protection and water use and development. Barry is a member of the Hawai'i Community Foundation's Freshwater Council which developed the State Freshwater Blueprint for water conservation, reuse and recharge targets to ensure 100 mgd of resilient water by 2030. He is a licensed professional engineer in Hawai'i and a BS in Civil Engineering from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

**Sean Michael Valencia Monte** is currently a 9th grade student at Waipahu High School, where he serves as a proud member of their FFA Chapter and is currently the assistant treasurer of the Class of 2023 Council. During his time at WIS, he was in NJHS, Student Government/Council, FFA, Youth for Safety, and AVID. FFA has increased his passion for being an Environmental Engineer in the future to create a sustainable environment. He was a State Champion last year in AgriScience Fair in Natural Resources and Environmental Service Division 2.

**Warren K. Watanabe**, Executive Director of the Maui County Farm Bureau was born and raised on a family farm in Kula. He graduated from Maui High School and UH Mānoa with a degree in horticultural sciences. He took over the operation of the family farm and watched it evolve over time growing vegetables as well as flowers for lei heads. Warren has held various positions in the Farm Bureau, including serving as President of the Maui County Farm Bureau. He has also served on the Maui County Board of Water Supply, Maui Produce Processing Cooperative, Advisory Committees on the Maui General Plan, Kahului Harbor Master Plan, Young Brothers, Superferry,

Maui County Tourism Strategic Plan and Focus Maui Nui. He also represents the Hawai'i Farm Bureau on the Hawai'i Drought Council. Warren is a strong advocate for the "Important Agricultural Lands Initiative" providing a mechanism for ensuring long term viability of agriculture in Hawai'i.

**Pomai Weigert** is an AgBusiness Consultant for GoFarm Hawai'i. Pomai brings experience in marketing, community relations, agtourism, and social media to her role as a consultant. She has served as a consultant to the Hawai'i AgriTourism Association and as Marketing and Community Relations Specialist for Ali'i Kula Lavender Farm on Maui.

**Rupananda Widanage** is an agricultural and natural resource economist with extensive training in market and non-market valuation techniques, natural resource economics, and applied econometrics. He conducted research on agriculture, food security, and poverty in Sri Lanka. He also conducted research on economics of invasive plant management in British Columbia, Canada. Rupananda published some of his research findings in peer reviewed academic refereed journals such as Regional Development Studies and Asia Pacific Journal of Rural Development. Currently, he is a Ph.D. student at the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management, University of Hawai'i, Mānoa.

**Teresa Young, MA**, The Kohala Center's RCBDS rural cooperative business development specialist, provides a full range of technical assistance services to rural cooperative business clients in Hawai'i. Much of her work includes 1) providing cooperative and rural business education and assistance to clients in Hawai'i's rural areas; 2) researching markets and developing co-ops, and mutually-owned and other rural businesses, for both producers and consumers of goods and services; 3) training local residents in creating business structures and cooperative cultures; and 4) facilitating the involvement of community development partners, key industry representatives, cultural practitioners, community leaders, local financial institutions, county, state and federal agencies, and academic partners. Her aim is to cultivate robust local economies by developing cooperative and small rural businesses, value chains, and regional industries, with an emphasis on job creation and family-supporting incomes.