NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan. 19, 2022

Media contact:
Christine Matsuda
christine@paakaicommunications.com
808-321-2473

Food System advocates call for transformation with twelve policy priorities

The *Transforming Hawai'i's Food System Together initiative convened a cross-sector summit, formulating policy priorities for lawmakers' action in the 2023 legislative session and beyond*

Top three themes: (1) state-level food system planning, governance and accountability; (2) support for farmers and sustainable local food production, and (3) food access and security for vulnerable groups

HONOLULU - Transforming Hawai'i's Food Systems Together (THFST) today released a set of twelve policy priorities, formulated at the recent THFST Food System Summit. The policy priorities set forth concrete ideas for action by state and county lawmakers, and set the stage for collective advocacy during the 2023 legislative session and beyond.

Click here to access hi-res photos from the summit, as well as video assets and background materials.

A common call to action that resonated amongst participants at the summit was the need for a comprehensive bill that takes a multifaceted approach to system transformation to achieve measurable health, equity, resilience and sustainability goals, rather than the piecemeal, siloed approach commonly advanced in the past.

"There's a real hunger for an integrated food policy approach in Hawaii that doesn't pit initiatives against one another, but advances multiple policy ideas in synergistic ways," said Mahina Paishon-Duarte, summit organizer and THFST core team member. "Like the food system itself, the policies to support transformation need to be complementary and intertwined in order to be effective."

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The summit resulted in the prioritization of twelve (12) policy ideas that will be supported by diverse subject matter experts and food systems advocates during this legislative session, grouped into three common areas of focus:

- State-level food system planning, governance and accountability;
- Support for farmers and sustainable local food production;
- Food access and security for vulnerable groups.

The summit convened more than 100 people representing multiple counties, sectors, and interest groups, to address the underperformance and vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s food system, using policy as a specific framework for action and transformation. The group gathered on January 11-12 at UH West O‘ahu to discuss and determine the state, county, and federal policies that would bolster the growing movement to transform Hawai‘i’s food system.

The policy language, full descriptions and summit recap information will all be made available at https://transforminghawaiifoodsystem.org/, along with video records of the legislative update panel discussions and key conversations that took place during the summit.

Click here to download:

- Video News Release:
  - Video b-roll from the Summit events
  - Video interviews with:
    - Councilmember Keani Rawlins Fernandez, Maui County
    - Kuike Kamakea-Ohelo IV, Arizona State University
    - Kelsey Amos, Purple Mai‘a
- Photo selects from the Food System Summit
- PDF of the policy priority detail descriptions
- PDF description of the THFST initiative

About Transforming Hawai‘i’s Food System Together:
Transforming Hawai‘i’s Food System Together (THFST) is an initiative that seeks to build statewide capacity and pave the way for a more robust, sustainable and resilient food system, especially in times of crisis. The initiative harnesses innovation and momentum developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, documents lessons learned, articulates policy and planning recommendations, and sets up the State to expand large-scale institutional purchasing of local foods.

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