

A Message From Senator Daniel K. Inouye
United States Senator



The Rural Economic Transition Assistance - Hawaii (RETA-H) has been a success in assisting in a historic transition in Hawaii agriculture from sugar to diversified agriculture. RETA-H brought a sense of hope to many in Hawaii's rural and agricultural communities. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the entrepreneurs, Oversight Committee members and staff who never gave up throughout our journey together. Monty Richards, Bill Paty, Dennis Teranishi and Paula Helfrich – thank you for your unwavering support.

The RETA-H program funded entrepreneurial ventures including papaya, bananas, taro, beef, pork, hay, ginger, asparagus, coffee, herbal tea, a sawmill, processing facilities, a composting project, agricultural pharmaceuticals, and many others. Approximately 18,000 acres of former sugarcane lands have been put back into production, and about 1,100 jobs have been created by this program.

As RETA-H officially comes to an end, I would like to believe that the sense of hope and "can do" spirit will continue forward to aid in providing leadership in Hawaii's agricultural transition.

Whether in value added products, biotechnology, landscaping or moving an agri-tourism initiative forward, there is much to be done. And, there is no question that we have the talent, entrepreneurial spirit, expertise and now the fertile land, to capitalize on these and other exciting opportunities to support Hawaii's sustainable future.