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Hawaii Coffee Association

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HAWAII COFFEE ASSOCIATION HOSTS VIRTUAL CONFERENCE AND NAMES STATEWIDE CUPPING COMPETITION WINNERS

HAWAII—The Hawaii Coffee Association hosted its first virtual conference on Thurs. and Fri., June 24 and 25. The industry’s statewide non-profit organization indefinitely delayed its 25th annual conference and statewide cupping competition in 2020 due to COVID restrictions. The 12th cupping competition was done remotely with winners announced at the culmination of today’s conference.

The program featured urgent topics relating to COVID relief and the response to the introduction of Coffee Leaf Rust in Hawaii. The HCA has made significant strides in serving its members in the virtual space. To that end, the organization has initiated semi-weekly, multi-agency conference calls on Coffee Leaf Rust among HDOA, USDA, APHIS, UH CTAHR, HARC, state and federal lawmakers, international partners, industry leaders and other stakeholders.

“We have a duty and an important role in responding to these multilayered crises,” said HCA president Chris Manfredi in his opening remarks. “Our response is timely, well-planned, coordinated and efficient. Our members are positioned throughout the supply chain, including farmers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, coffee shops and the many businesses and organizations that supply and support the industry.”

Manfredi continued, “While our primary focus has recently been on COVID recovery and Coffee Leaf Rust, the underlying issues relating to regulation, marketing, quality assurance and traceability still remain. The virtual platform has allowed us to easily connect with attendees in El Salvador, Africa, the Ukraine, China, the U.S. mainland and Hawaii.”

Keynote speaker Emilio Lopez is a 7th-generation coffee farmer and the managing director of Odyssey Coffees, an agro-industrial organization based in El Salvador. He shared his experience in a segment titled “Living with Coffee Leaf Rust” and stressed the importance of tree health and pruning techniques.

The conference schedule also included updates from HDOA, USDA PBARC, and UH CTAHR, plus election of a new Board of Directors; typically an annual event, but deferred in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Results of the 12th Statewide Hawaii Coffee Association Cupping Competition were announced today. A total of 70 entries were judged in HCA’s inaugural remote cupping event.

The top-scoring coffee was produced by Olinda Organic Coffee of Maui with a washed red Catuai variety receiving a score of 86.63. Awards were also presented to the top coffees produced in Hawaii

Department of Agriculture-recognized growing regions located throughout the islands, and to the top 10 highest scoring coffees.

The highest scoring entries from participating growing districts were Hula Daddy Kona Coffee's washed SL34 variety and the Ka'u District's Miranda Farms with a natural red Catuai variety. Each of these coffees earned a tying score of 86.60.

Top honors in the Hawaii District was earned by Waimea Coffee Farm with a washed Guatemala Typica/Jamaican Blue Mountain hybrid earning 84.50. Sakoman Farm placed first in the Hamakua District with a washed Caturra variety posting 81.38 and Waiialua Estate Coffee was the sole Oahu entry with a washed Typica earning 81.00.

"This year's competition showcased a wide selection of varieties and processing methods with the highest scores we have seen in this competition yet," noted Brittany Horn, HCA cupping committee chair. "Complex and unique entries from across the state are represented in the top scoring coffees and we also saw the tightest scores, making 2021 a very competitive competition for growers."

Kona-based Pacific Coffee Research organized the competition utilizing a judging panel comprised of local licensed Q graders led by Brittany Horn and Madeleine Longoria Garcia, co-owners of PCR. Horn is an authorized Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) trainer in coffee sensory analysis, green coffee and sustainability. Longoria Garcia, who served as head judge for the HCA cupping, competed in the US National Brewers Cup and educates local baristas and producers as a sensory specialist.

Judges included Marc Marquez of Savor Brands, Honolulu; Max Maemori, coffee consultant, Hilo; and David Hall of Small Kine Coffee Consulting, Maui. In addition to Horn, lab facilitators were Tyra Waipa of Savor Brands, Elijah Wright of Drift Coffee and Mayu Maemori.

To process cupping remotely, entries were cupped in three elimination rounds. Coffees advancing into the second and third rounds were organized into five "tables" or groups and shipped to cuppers for analysis in their own cupping labs. Judging at each location was performed simultaneously with deliberations among cuppers conducted via Zoom. Final scores for winning coffees were determined by the average scores from the semi-final and final rounds.

Commenting on the virtual cupping format, judge Marquez shared, "Nothing beats evaluating coffee together in the same space, but utilizing video conference and screen sharing technology allowed the panel to effectively deliberate and communicate our scores and notes with each other."

The panel employed the standard Specialty Coffee Association's cupping methodology and scoring format. Coffee cupping is a combination of art and science where coffees are evaluated and scored based on a variety of subtle characteristics: flavor, aroma, acidity, aftertaste, body, balance, overall cup experience, presence of sweetness, lack of defect and uniformity.

"This year's entries were incredible as this competition represents the collective efforts of our local producers, scientists, researchers and professionals who continue to elevate the quality of coffee grown here in the State of Hawaii," added Marquez. "Our coffee community should be very proud."

HCA's 2021 Virtual Conference and Cupping Competition is sponsored by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture. Mahalo to additional sponsors Savor Brands, TricorBraun Flex, Monarch Coffee, Satake, Rural Community Insurance Services, Greenwell Farms, Kona Hills, Green Flash Coffee and Maui Grown Coffee.

Complete results for the cupping competition are posted at www.hawaiicoffeeassoc.org. Watch videos of conference presentations at <https://hawaiicoffeeassoc.org/page-1771716>.

The Hawaii Coffee Association's mission is to represent all sectors of the Hawaii coffee industry, including growers, millers, wholesalers, roasters and retailers. The HCA's primary objective is to increase awareness and consumption of Hawaiian coffees. A major component of HCA's work is the continuing education of members and consumers. Its annual conference has continued to grow, gaining international attention.

Learn more about the HCA at www.hawaiicoffeeassoc.org

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