

Dairy presents many potential problems

Like many descendants of immigrant families, my family and I have been a part of Koloa, but more importantly, Koloa has been breath and life to us for more than a century.

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OTHER VOICES

Ellen Ebata

The date on grandfather's partially preserved contract with the sugar mill is Dec. 22, 1899.

And to speak of the receiving of life, if not for grace and the incalculable sacrifices of the Native Hawaiians, the forging of new lives here would not have been possible. Having been given so much, are we therefore not charged with being wise stewards of the land and its resources?

A letter to the editor (*TGI*, Monday, Sept. 28) "Sustainability ..." (proposed dairy in Mahaulepu) again raises profound issues about our responsibility for the aina. Could there be a more chilling scenario? A dairy in Mahaulepu Valley, a hurricane, a prolonged power outage.

What would become of the entire herd? How would it be possible to continue the milking process for the 2,000 cows or even the initial herd of 650-plus pregnant cows? Those who have lived through Iniki and Ewa know just how long it takes to clear roads and get utilities restored.

With any storm or heavy rains, what happens to all the manure and urine that is supposed to stay on the pastures? Hawaii Dairy Farms' (HDF) Plan filed with the state on July 23, 2014, states that only 10 percent of all the waste is to be pumped from the milking parlor and raceways to manure ponds.

The other 90 percent is supposed to stay where it drops in one of their 118 pasture paddocks (more than 100,000 pounds of liquid manure and urine each and every day, HDF Plan pg. 42). There is no plan for collection or removal of that large volume of manure and urine from any of the paddocks.

How could any dairy prevent the waste from running into our streams, groundwater and coastline? The valley is less than a mile from the beach! And who can guarantee that the groundwater won't carry waste to our drinking wells which are adjacent and only 750 feet away (HDF Plan pg. 9)?

There are few on island more qualified to speak to dairy issues than Mr. Alan Faye, whose family and in-laws owned and operated the Waimea and Moloaa dairies for three generations. How can we not heed his wisdom and warning on the problems with HDF's choice of Mahaulepu? (Faye Letters to the Editor, Feb. 26 and Sept. 20). He knows full well the problems with environmental pollution, odor and flies.

It's frightening to read HDF's plan for management of its voluminous waste as damage to the aina is a certainty with an industrial-sized dairy. Their plan also states that millions of gal-

lons of effluent and manure sludge will need to be pumped out when storms/hurricanes approach.

Even more alarming was their statement that with even the "forecast" of severe weather they would need to pump out the effluent ponds because it takes four days to empty them (plan pg. 54). Given the capricious nature of storms, we don't have the luxury of four days' notice of a direct hit.

By my count, if the dairy were already operating, their effluent ponds would have had to be emptied seven times so far this summer. HDF's plan does not even include any backup generators.

Government officials: Please, please give this issue the time and study it deserves. Stop it before it becomes a disaster for our community, our health and the environment of the entire south side and beyond.

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Ellen Ebata is a resident of Koloa.