



## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CLEARS MARINE AGRIFUTURE TO RESUME SALES OF OGO AND SEA ASPARAGUS**

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) has lifted its Cease and Desist Order against Marine Agrifuture LLC (Olakai Farm). This morning, the company was notified it may resume the sale and distribution of Kahuku Ogo, Robusta Ogo and Sea Asparagus food products harvested at the Kahuku farm.

Laboratory test results from samples taken on Nov. 29 indicated that Marine Agrifuture's processing areas and products were negative for Salmonella. The wells, all inlets to production ponds, and the growing and rinse tanks were also free from Salmonella and levels of indicator organisms (Enterococci and Clostridium perfringens) that would signal possible environmental contamination.

"Based on lab test results and visual confirmation by health inspectors of the thorough cleaning and improvements made to several critical components of the farm's physical infrastructure, the department is satisfied that all reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the safety of Marine Agrifuture's food products," said Peter Oshiro, Food Safety Program manager. "The department will continue to work with the farm on measures to prevent any future contamination of products."

The department has recommended the farm continue to sample and test their wells, inlets to the production areas and growing ponds, and rinse/grow tanks to insure corrective measures remain effective and sufficient. The farm is urged to share test results with DOH for compliance assistance and consultation. All components of Marine Agrifuture's farm, piping, wells, source/rinse water, production areas, equipment and food products are subject to further

periodic and unannounced testing by health inspectors. In addition, the farm is not allowed to grow or harvest any products from streams, or other areas not approved by DOH.

The Department of Health's Sanitation Branch is a statewide program responsible for the inspection of food establishments, issuance of permits and enforcement of food safety regulations. The Branch does not conduct routine inspections or issue permits for Raw Agricultural Commodities such as fresh fruit, vegetables, and other food crops grown on farms. Educational classes on food protection and safety are provided to the public, food industry and other agencies through the branch's Food Handlers Education Program.

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