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Kansas farmers asked to support Hawaiian industry crucial to agriculture

For many years, biotechnology has been a tool critical to all farmers by developing seeds that can increase yield, reduce pesticide use, provide drought tolerance, and enhance environmental stewardship.

What many may not know is that Hawaii, with an almost perfect growing climate, is home to the seed industry of groups like Monsanto, Syngenta, Pioneer, Dow AgroSciences and BASF. These groups contribute more than \$250 million per year to the local economy, with operations on the islands of Kauai, Maui, Molokai, and Oahu.

Anti-GMO activists are trying to threaten this positive and safe scientific work. The Hawaii Farm Bureau and the Hawaii Crop Improvement association are asking for help in educating not just those in Hawaii, but around the country, to learn the truth about how biotechnology is helping real farmers deal with real agricultural challenges.

“Education about the positive role biotechnology plays in agriculture is crucial,” said Steve Baccus, Kansas Farm Bureau president. “You need look no further than this year’s drought to know that safely making plants work better in all conditions, and allowing farmers and ranchers to be even better stewards of the land, is something that should not be sidetracked.”

Farmers are being asked to submit, in 1,000 words or less, how biotechnology has positively impacted the agriculture operations on their farm. Suggested topics are reduced pesticide use, increased yield, drought protection, and enhanced environmental stewardship. A short description of the farmer’s operation is also requested. Submitted stories will be published in a ‘Views from the Farm’ booklet to help educate the public about the important role of biotechnology as a tool to help farmers remain viable.

Farmers with the top five most compelling stories will receive a one-week trip for two to Hawaii in February. A portion of the time will be to speak personally about their stories to business leaders, lawmakers, and the media.

Farmers can submit stories online before the deadline of November 30, 2012 at www.hciaonline.com/why-biotech/farmers/.

For questions, contact Alicia Maluafiti, executive director of the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association, at director@hciaonline.com or 808-224-3648.