

Why I support the Maui GMO farming moratorium initiative

Our family moved from Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Maui on April 8 of this year (2014). A few months after settling in, I got something odd in the mail. I did a double take when I looked at it because it seemed outrageous. What I got was a little flyer about a bill that would ban farming in Maui County.

My first thought was “who in the world would want to ban farming?” As a new resident, in my dream designation, I was determined to vote against anything that would ban farming! I didn’t want anyone to lose his or her job over a crazy idea.

I turned to the place where a lot of us get and share information these days, Facebook. I asked local friends why anyone would want to ban farming and was equally shocked with the answers.

It turns out that flyer wasn’t entirely honest and left out some crucial details:

- **This isn’t a ban on farming.** It’s a temporary moratorium that would allow Maui to independently verify the health risks of what several large companies are putting into the ground and air. If everything comes back OK, then there is an option to lift the moratorium. The flyer made this sound like all farming would be shut down for no good reason.
- **Agrochemical companies can continue planting during the moratorium.** The two main companies: Monsanto, and Mycogen, have 24 non-GMO products between them that they can still plant according to Maui United. They do not have to shut down all their farming operations here in Maui.
- **Jobs don’t have to be lost.** I have seen ads for the “farming ban” on social media, TV spots, and almost every YouTube video I watch. One thing that has been highlighted is the 600 jobs that could be lost. I don’t know the inter-workings of these companies but it seems that since they do plant non-GMO seeds; they could ramp that up and retain the workers. These companies are large enough that not a single job has to be lost. As a new Maui resident, this feels like a scare tactic. I do acknowledge that I don’t work there, so I do not know for sure.

When talking to friends on both sides of the debate, both agree that the bill is flawed as written. The question that I’ve wondered is if this bill is flawed, where are or were the bills that weren’t flawed?

I have done the research and haven’t been able to find anything like this introduced before here in Maui, so it seems disingenuous to say that this measure, introduced by the voters, is flawed.

Read full, original article: [Watching the GMO Debate as a New Maui Resident](#)