

Molokai Livestock Co-op Holds Annual Meeting

BY GLENN I. TEVES

On May 17, ranchers held their annual Molokai Livestock Cooperative meeting at the slaughterhouse located next to the Hikiola Cooperative, and new board of directors were elected. They include President Jack Spruance, of Puu O Hoku Ranch; Vice-President Kevin Comcowich of Kualapu`u Ranch, and Secretary-Treasurer Viola Wichman of the Molokai Homestead Livestock Association.

Other board members include Edmund "Oboy" Pedro of Pedro Ranch, Jimmy Duvauchelle of Molokai Ranch, Russell DeCoite of V-8 Ranch, and Dennis Kamakana of the Molokai Homestead Livestock Association. A scrumptious prime rib dinner followed and was enjoyed by all.

We would like to acknowledge the outgoing board members, especially President Martin Kahae and Vice President Henry Tancayo for their vision and commitment in seeing the slaughterhouse through a critical construction stage. With the comple-

tion of the facility, the focus will be in developing products and markets. We would also like to acknowledge outgoing co-op manager Abbie Mayer, who recently resigned to take on equally challenging role at the Molokai Enterprise Community. Abbie helped move the cooperative through a crucial stage in federal certification, training of employees, and food safety and management certification.

The slaughterhouse is slaughtering cattle weekly, and supplying fresh beef to local markets, including Paddlers Inn, Kualapuu Cookhouse, Friendly Market, Molokai Ranch, and other outlets. The present target is ground beef for retail and restaurant establishments on Molokai. A major initiative will be the development of grass-finished and organic beef for local and export markets.

The cooperative recently received a grant to develop a system for grass-finished beef. This will allow ranchers to produce superior cuts of beef for the local market. Recently, one of the cooperative members shipped Molokai-grown steaks to New York, and favorable feedback was received. One restaurant indicated it would pay \$11 a pound for this unique tasting beef.

The Molokai slaughterhouse is fully operational, and is open to all local producers and also residents who raise animals for home use. In addition to slaughtering, the co-op can also custom cut and wrap your beef or pork. For more information, contact Mickey Duvauchelle and Chris Kaawa at 567-6994.

