



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Commissary agency seeks new products at Hawaii Food Show

*By Nancy O’Nell
DeCA West public affairs officer*

FORT LEE, Va. — Defense Commissary Agency buyers will evaluate food- and grocery-related products from more than 80 Hawaii small businesses during the 12th Annual American Logistics Association Hawaii Food Show, Aug. 20, at the Hawaii Prince Hotel in Waikiki.

The show will provide DeCA buyers with the opportunity to taste-test locally produced products and interact one-on-one with business owners before selecting new products for the five military commissaries on Oahu.

“When military shoppers walk into their commissary they deserve the best product selection available,” said DeCA Director and CEO Philip E. Sakowitz Jr. “We are constantly looking for new items to enhance our stock selection and make coming to the commissary worth the trip for service members and their families. The ALA Hawaii Food Show has proven over the past 11 years to be a successful method to discover distinctive Hawaiian products that are a hit with commissary shoppers.”

With more than 75,000 military service members and retirees living in Hawaii, breaking into the military market can boost a business’ bottom line.

“The annual event is a win-win for commissaries and Hawaii businesses,” said DeCA Zone Manager Benjamin Wainwright, who oversees the five commissaries in Hawaii.

Since the first ALA Food Show held in 1998, DeCA has added more than 1,400 products

from Hawaii businesses to its shelves. Some of these products are now sold in commissaries worldwide.

“Last year alone DeCA selected 251 products from the food show,” said Wainwright. “Those products ranged from frozen cookies, coffee and vanilla extract to biodegradable cutlery and plates.”

Commissaries routinely stock more than 2,000 grocery items from local Hawaii companies and more than 100 varieties of locally grown fruits and vegetables.

In addition to evaluating products, DeCA will provide each company with individual feedback on its product within days of the show.

“We attend the food show on behalf of commissary shoppers,” said Vicki Sliwicki, a DeCA buyer who will be attending the event for the ninth year. “It’s fun to taste-test new products, but we do get down to business. Service members travel the world over and enjoy foods from many cultures. We owe it to them to find the very best products from Hawaii to offer in commissaries in Oahu.”

- DeCA-

Photo caption: DeCA selected 251 new products at last year's ALA Hawaii Food Show, expanding the selection of made-in-Hawaii products available to commissary shoppers in Hawaii. Jack McGregor, DeCA West overseas product support chief and David Carey, DeCA West acting deputy director were part of last year's DeCA evaluation team and will return again this year to taste-test products from more than 80 Hawaii vendors. (DeCA photo)

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*