

### **Agricultural Training for French Polynesia Young Farmers**

PPS funds supported the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pesticide Safe Use training sessions for young farmers in Papeete, French Polynesia. The training sessions were conducted 1 and 15 December 2004 and 12 and 19 January 2005, as reported by Christophe Brocherieux. A total of 12 young farmers were selected in the Teahupoo's OGAF area by the Rural Development Service and the OGAF field coordinator. The majority of farmers have had very little training in agriculture. The training focussed on three types of farms: vegetable, fruit and ornamentals.

The young farmers, shown in the photo displaying their certificates, were very keen in the agricultural training and acknowledged SPC support. They further requested a follow-up training in fertiliser use and farm management.



### **Plant Protection Micronesia**

The Coordinator, Plant Protection Micronesia (CPPM), Mr Konrad Englberger, visited Kosrae in early February to follow up on plant protection activities.

Konrad hand carried 9 female and 8 male gall flies (*Cecidochares connexa*) for release on Chromolaena on Kosrae. The flies were released



*Glastine Cornelius, Kosrae Head of Extension, at his farm*

in Lelu soon after arrival in Kosrae on 7 February, near the *Rubus* site. Konrad also inspected the area near the seaport where gall flies were released in December 2004 confirming the establishment of the gall fly in the area. Old galls were sighted from the first generation and fresh galls from the second generation.

The CPPM discussed gall fly management and how to raise flies for release in the field with Mr. Palikkun Tolenna of the Kosrae Quarantine Office. The next generation of flies is expected in 5 to 6 weeks.

The CPPM inspected the Tafunasack area where *Pareuchaetes pseudoinsulata* was established in 2004. No *Pareuchaetes* larvae or damage symptoms were observed. The CPPM was not able to inspect the second *Pareuchaetes* release site in Melem. Mr. Palikkun Tolenna said he had not sighted any larvae on this site.

For citrus canker control, an island-wide survey is currently under way, conducted by Extension.

Head of Extension, Mr Glastine Cornelius, reported the Kosrae legislature were in the final stages of adopting a bill for partial control of citrus canker – cutting down and destroying

affected citrus. The disease has affected lime trees in all municipalities in Kosrae.

On Giant African Snail Eradication, the CPPM was informed that the snails have been located in a new area and were spreading. Baiting and the collection of snails continue. Complete eradication will be difficult as the snail is too widespread. Another pest that is spreading widely is the weed *Mikania micrantha*. Mr Cornelius reported herbicide spraying is continuing with many new areas in Tafunasack now affected. The CPPM took some herbicide from Pohnpei for Mikania control.

The CPPM attended briefly the annual meeting of the Pacific Island Forestry Committee in Kosrae. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss US forestry grants. Country delegates came from American Samoa, CNMI, Guam, FSM, Palau and Marshall Islands. There was also a large delegation from the US Forestry Service out of Hawaii and the US mainland. There was one session on educational and resource management training opportunities where SPC was mentioned. The CPPM made a 30-minute presentation on activities in invasive species in Micronesia. The CPPM had a final session with Quarantine and raised the following issues: the need to issue certificates for all quarantine items regardless of item size; the issuing of import permits needs to be more efficient with quicker turn around times; and that a meeting should be held every year to include all Quarantine supervisors from the four FSM states, Manager Agriculture Unit, Plant and Animal Quarantine Specialist and SPC Coordinator PPM.

### **Biosecurity alert for overseas relief assistance**

The Pacific region is in the cyclone season and some PICTs have already been affected by several cyclones, most notably the Cook Islands with four cyclones Meena, Nancy, Olaf and Percy.

Cyclone Olaf spared Samoa and the main island of Tutuila but damaged Manu'a in American Samoa. Most recently, Tokelau and the northern Cooks sustained severe damages from Cyclone Percy.

Already, relief work has started in the worst hit areas with overseas assistance starting to arrive at affected islands.

PPS, as Secretariat of the Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO), while supporting cyclone relief efforts, wishes to emphasise the importance of preventing the unintentional introduction of new pests through overseas relief supplies. The Pacific region is still free of major pests and diseases found in other parts of the world and a thriving export industry for some islands will no doubt be compromised if new pests are introduced.

PPPO would like all disaster relief organisations to work closely with local quarantine authorities and to strictly adhere to clearance procedures for imports of all relief items.

The aim is to protect the low pest status of PICTs so they can continue to export overseas without major disruptions.



*Nukumonu, Tokelau as Cyclone Percy passes through.  
(Photo: courtesy of NZHC in Samoa)*



*Fitiuta, Ta'u, American Samoa in the wake of Cyclone Olaf  
(Photo: Barry Markowitz)*



The Samoan fale remained intact whilst the European house took a beating in Fitiuta, Ta'u, American Samoa in the wake of Cyclone Olaf (Photo: Barry Markowitz)



Rarotonga landmark Trader Jacks took the full force of the waves from Cyclone Meena (Photo: Cook Islands News On-line)



Cyclone Nancy uprooted trees on Rarotonga (Photo: Cook Islands News On-Line)

## PPS Entomology and Weed Activities

1. Taro Beetle Management: PPS Entomologist, Sada N. Lal, and Taro Beetle Technician, Fereti Atumurirava, visited Vanuatu in February to establish trials for further evaluation of *Metarizium* fungus and Confidor®, the promising insecticide identified for the control of taro beetle.

2. Biological control of flat moth: two shipments of the bioagent *Bracon* sp. were sent to the Cook Islands to establish laboratory colonies. Once established, the bioagent colonies will be mass produced and released in areas affected with flat moth. Further shipments of *Bracon* sp. and another parasitoid, *Macrocentrus* sp., are planned for the Cook Islands.

3. A second shipment of two weed biological control agents -- the sida leaf beetle *Calligrapha pantherina* and mottled water hyacinth weevil *Neochetina eichhorniae* -- were imported from laboratory cultures held in Fiji under permits by Vanuatu. These bio-agents are now being screened at the post-entry quarantine facility in Port Vila. An earlier shipment of *Calligrapha pantherina* in August 2004 died out due to insufficient feed. The water hyacinth weevil is reported to be established at release sites and doing well.

4. Cabbage IPM in the Pacific (an ACIAR project funding proposal): ACIAR Consultant Dr. Max Whitten and Dr. Mike Furlong of Queensland University visited Fiji and Samoa, 20-27 February, for country consultations. PPS Entomologist Sada N. Lal accompanied the visitors. While in the islands, the team visited cabbage fields, local markets, and met with researchers, extension staff, farmers and farmer groups.

The project proposal aims to bridge existing technical gaps by conducting further studies and introducing more effective and suitable natural enemies of cabbage pests. In addition, the project will evaluate and select more effective and softer insecticides and consider improvements to cultural and agronomic practices of cabbage production in the Pacific. This new technology will be developed into an IPM package of best practices for cabbage production. Farmers will be



*Farmers can be involved in the planning of research activities*

encouraged to be active participants in all planning activities. This set-up will lead to the development and establishment of farmer

discussion groups and farmer field schools. Similar strategies are being planned for other vegetables such as egg plants, tomatoes and cucurbits.

Drs. Max Whitten and Mike Furlong will fine-tune the project proposal for submission to ACIAR for final approval. Once approved, the project should start in early July 2005. The ACIAR part of the project will be based in Fiji and Samoa and SPC will coordinate project outcomes to other PICTs.

<b>Staff Travel</b>			
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Place of Travel</b>	<b>Activity</b>
1 - 3 March	Richard Davis	Niue	Plant virus disease survey
4 - 7 March	Richard Davis	Samoa	Vanilla virus work
16 - 18 March	Makelesi K. Gonelevu	Rome	IPPC-IPP website training
16-23 March	Konrad Englberger	Guam	7th Annual Oceania Customs Conference Quarantine training, University of Guam
21-27 March	Konrad Englberger	Guam	
22-29 March	Fereti Atumurirava	Solomon Is	Planting TBM trials
27 March	Makelesi K. Gonelevu	PNG - Lae	PLD Refresher Training
8 April	Sarah Pene	PNG - Lae	PLD Refresher Training

<b>Events</b>		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Venue</i>
21 - 24 March	Biosecurity Information Facility (BIF) Workshop	SPC - Nabua

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