



Pacific Pest Info

Pest & Quarantine Information
SPC Plant Protection Service

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Those with Internet access can find a wide range of Plant Protection Service outputs on the PPS Web site at www.spc.int/pps. A CD version is available for those without Internet.

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1. Plant Protection Micronesia

Konrad Englberger – PPM Coordinator

Quarantine-Customs merge

Former Guam Quarantine Chief, Dr. Russell Campbell confirmed to PPM Coordinator that Guam Quarantine has now merged with Customs.

Daily quarantine operations are now the responsibility of the Chief of Customs.

Dr. Campbell and two other quarantine officers are now responsible for the quarantine inspection station. Dr. Campbell informed PPM Coordinator of the many issues that need to be sorted out between Customs and Quarantine, example, quarantine training for Customs Officers.

Bill deferred on quarantine regulations

House Bill 6-174-6 HD1 which seeks to exempt fruits and vegetables from the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan, China, Australia and New Zealand from existing quarantine regulations has deferred passage through the House of Delegates in Palau. At present, Palau Bureau of Agriculture requires every importer of fresh fruits and vegetables to meet the import permit requirements in order to rid of any pests.

Invasive insect survey—

Funding is secured from University of Guam to conduct in 2004 an invasive insect survey. Dr. Ross Miller of the University of Guam secured the funding for the three-year project. Guam and Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) will be surveyed in the first six months followed by Palau and Yap in the second half of 2004.

PPM Coordinator will help establish contacts for the Palau and Yap surveys and to organise training when surveys are completed. Mr. Englberger pointed out that local staff from the different islands could help in the survey and receive hands-on training experience in return.

Mr. Englberger mentioned the PPS Pest List Database as a possible format to record data from the surveys. This issue was further discussed and the project coordinators felt that the Biota system would first be used and later can be transferred to the SPC Pest List Database.

Chromolaena biocontrol

Chromolaena is an invasive weed spreading through the Micronesian islands and Papua New Guinea. On January 27, 2004, 1,964 larvae of the Chromolaena-feeding moth *Pareuchaetes pseudoinsulata* were released near the agricultural station in Weno, Chuuk. This brings the total number of the biocontrol agent released on the same site since 2003 to over 22,000. In a previous visit last October, and observed during this visit, a few larvae of the biocontrol were found present at the site. However, it cannot be confirmed if these larvae were from an established generation. Furthermore, it cannot be confirmed at this point in time, if *P. pseudoinsolata* is established on Chuuk. There is a need to continue with releases of larvae in larger numbers until they are established in the field.

2. Vanuatu Nakamal bars ranked highest as sources of information

Vanuatu farmers discussed their agricultural problems in an extension exercise held in November 2003. The exercise used the participatory extension approach to identify problems and solutions.

PPS Extension Assistant Mr Salend Kumar and DSAP Extension Specialist Dr. Siua Halavatau facilitated the exercise in collaboration with Vanuatu Department of Agriculture and Quarantine.

The participatory extension exercises were carried out in the three villages of Mangaliu (North Efate), West Ambae and North Pentecost.

A good cross section of the farming communities in the areas selected was involved in the extension exercise. They included farmers, both men and women, and youth groups. In North Pentecost village chiefs were also involved.

Participants were asked to rank their main sources of livelihoods, agricultural problems, major pests and disease problems and the solutions they apply to the problems.

North Pentecost farmers - where village chiefs were also canvassed for their views - identified soil fertility and pests and diseases as main problems experienced. The main pest and disease problems identified include fungus and rots (yam, cabbage and fruit trees), followed by holes in the leaves of crops, taro beetle, fruit piercing moth and rat damage.

Chiefs of North Pentecost, when asked to rank main economic crops for food security and for social obligations, picked kava as main crop. Other crops identified include cassava, yam, coconut, banana and bele.

For sources of information, participants in North Pentecost ranked nakamal kava bars as the main place they go to get information. In addition, telephone, radio, newspapers, the Peace Corps, workshops and public notices were ranked in that order of significance as information sources. Lack of regular visits from extension officers is probably the reason why they were not identified as a source of information.

3. Strengthening Organic Farming in the Pacific

Good soil fertility and market accessibility are two very important conditions for sustainable organic production in the Pacific. These are two conclusions from a workshop on Organic Farming held at USP's Institute for Research, Extension and Training in Agriculture (IRETA) in November 2003.

The workshop brought regional organic farmers together to share experiences and to discuss contentious issues like organic certification, market accessibility, capacity-building and the formation of an umbrella association to address the needs of organic farmers in the Pacific.

Biogrow New Zealand, a private company, made a presentation on organic certification where the meeting was told of the high costs involved in certification. In addition overseas expertise is constantly relied upon owing to lack of trained Pacific islanders. Current certification is based on overseas standards and is quite different from Pacific standards.

The meeting recognised the absence of a regional network of organic stakeholders in the Pacific and proposed to establish a Steering Committee to promote the development and marketing of organic farming in the Pacific. The workshop also recommended the development of basic standards for Pacific organic produce.

Mr. Salend Kumar, PPS Extension Assistant, represented PPS at the meeting.

4. Microscope hot tips

Jacqui Wright – PPS Plant Pathologist

With the recent visit of Mr Werner Willi to Koronivia Research station, both Koronivia staff and SPC staff learnt some valuable tips on caring for microscopes. Mr Willi is responsible for the maintenance of the operating microscopes of many hospitals in New Zealand and has now serviced the research and quarantine microscopes in Tonga, Samoa and Fiji. Here are some helpful hints:

- Never cover the microscope with the plastic cover that came with it. In the tropics, it can lead to moisture build-up, which encourages lens-destroying fungi to grow. Instead, cover it with a cotton (not synthetic or polycotton) or calico piece of material.
- The best lens cleaning solution is white spirit (available in most of the Pacific) and if you can't get your hands on some white spirit, human saliva is also excellent.
- Contrary to popular opinion, it is okay to use a tissue to clean the lenses of your microscopes, and cameras, and glasses.
- Try to keep the microscopes in a "hot box" and remember to use incandescent bulbs not the new energy-saving compact fluorescent bulbs (because they don't produce heat).

5. Quarantine activities for PICTs

Emil Adams – PPS Information Officer

Quarantine incinerator for Tuvalu

A new wood-fired incinerator is now operational at Tuvalu International Airport. PPS Staff Warea Orapa, Naca Waqa and Bal Narayan, in Tuvalu last month to carry out on-going plant protection activities helped set up the incinerator. PPS Staff, working alongside Tuvalu Quarantine, trialled the equipment using airline refuse from international flights. The operation went smoothly.

Quarantine workers used to cart airline refuse across the other end of Funafuti to destroy. The new incinerator is located across from the airport inside the plant nursery compound.

The assistance to Tuvalu is part of an aid package to upgrade national quarantine service in the Pacific islands funded by EU under the Plant Protection in the Pacific (PPP) project. Other PICTs have also received incinerators under this aid package including Niue, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. The aid package also includes a training component for PICT quarantine workers and a region wide quarantine awareness campaign targeting Pacific island travellers.

PPP is based at the SPC Plant Protection Service. Last year, a quarantine campaign targeting athletes to South Pacific Games, was well received by PICTs as reflected in the minimal quarantine infringements

recorded at Fiji national borders. A similar campaign is being planned for the Festival of Pacific Arts to be held in Palau in July this year.

In-flight quarantine video

To further spread the cautionary message on quarantine targeting Pacific island travellers PPS recently completed the in-flight quarantine video for Pacific flights. PICT representatives to a regional consultation on quarantine and plant protection expressed the need for this information to be disseminated to the travelling public.

The 7-minute video highlights the rich biodiversity of Pacific islands and the need to protect it from harmful pests and diseases. The video is intended to be shown on all in-bound Pacific flights as an educational piece on quarantine and PPS staffs are actively seeking collaboration the regional airlines to have the video shown on all Pacific flights.

In the video travellers are asked to take precautions when travelling with food items. Food items carry the highest quarantine risk and potential to spread pests and diseases to new areas. As such, passengers are asked to declare to quarantine all food items or discard using the amnesty bins at airports. Quarantine service is at the forefront in protecting our biodiversity through vigilant detection of new pests and diseases at the national borders.

Quarantine attachment training for PICT Quarantine Officers

Three Quarantine Officers of the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar and Land Reform completed in January their 3-month attachment with PPS. The training is an all encompassing effort by PPS to increase the technical capacity of Pacific island quarantine services to conduct their own Import Risk Analysis (IRA) and Market Access applications to facilitate trade and reduce quarantine risks. The trainees go back to quarantine and become a core group equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct IRAs and Market Access submissions in consultation with Government and SPC technical advisory services. The new Attachment Training Unit is a component of the Import-Export Biosecurity Technology (IMPEXTEK) centre being established at PPS to facilitate trade in commodities of Pacific island countries.

6. PPS Internet Site on CD

Makelesi Kora-Gonelevu – PPS Information Assistant

PPS Website is now available on CD and a total of 43 CDs have since been distributed to the following countries: Solomon Islands, Tonga, Cook Islands and Papua New Guinea. The CD copies of the PPS website is made available to PICT agricultural and quarantine offices who do not have affordable access to the Internet. The next updated version of CD will be available mid-year. To view the website live on the Internet please go to <http://www.spc.int/pps> .

7. Pest List Database: help from new staff

Dick Vernon - PPS Information and Extension Service

SPC PPS information section recruited a second Information Assistant, Ms. Sarah Pene, to work alongside Makelesi Kora-Gonelevu on the Pest List Database. Sarah has a biological background with degrees from Australia and France, and will take on the large task of reviewing the many thousands of pest and host names in the PLD. This will leave Makelesi to focus on the information system of the PLD. Dick Vernon will soon start work on the regional model agreed to by PICT representatives last October at the Sigatoka meeting.

Meanwhile introduction of the PLD to new countries continues with workshops planned for Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea (NAQIA and NARI) in March and April.

8. SPC Agricultural Staff Changes

The Land Resources Division (LRD) bid farewell to long-serving SPC Animal Health Adviser Peter Saville at a farewell luncheon at the Fiji Club. Peter served the region as the animal health specialist for over 20 years. Mr. Saville and family are moving to Alice Springs in Australia where Peter has secured a contract there.

In another development staff of the Land Resources Division (LRD) extended a warm welcome to Mr. Aleki Sisifa taking up the position of Director of LRD. Mr. Sisifa joins SPC with an extensive track record in agriculture both at the national and regional level. He is a former Director of Research and Extension for Tonga Ministry of Agriculture. He is also the former Team Leader for the EU-PRAP Project based at SPC. He has also done extensive work with FAO Sub-regional office based in Samoa. Mr. Sisifa comes on board LRD at a crucial time when the Division is implementing the recommendations of a review exercise for LRD.

9. Biosecurity, Plant Protection and Animal Health Meeting (BPPAH) Tradewinds, Lami, 15 – 19 March 2004.

PPS is hosting this combined meeting of quarantine, plant protection and animal health specialists. This meeting replaces the RTMPP (Regional Technical Meeting on Plant Protection) bi-annual meeting, who last met in 2002 and the PPPO (Pacific Plant Protection Organisation) meeting. Animal Health workers are invited in the interest of harmonising biosecurity and quarantine issues, issues that will feature prominently in this meeting. In small PICTs the quarantine officer handles both plant and animal quarantine.

Notices on meeting objectives, arrangements, nominations and country reports have already been sent out to PICTs and responses are beginning to come in. There will be reports on activities by PICT representatives, technical reports by PPS and new initiatives and collaborative work with regional organisations.

Contact us here at PPS for more information.

10. Completed PPS activities in PICTs

PPS Staff	Dates	PICT Activity
Warea Orapa	19-30 Jan	Tuvalu: Tuvalu weed survey
Nacanieli Waqa	19-30 Jan	Tuvalu: fruit fly host survey
Bal Narayan	19-30 Jan	Tuvalu: Biocontrol of coconut-scale insect on Nanumaga and survey of presence of scale on other <i>motus</i> .
Stephen Hazelman	25-29 Jan	Solomon Is: Electronic library and rural email system.
Konrad Englberger	26-30 Jan	Chuuk: quarantine training, biological control
Salend Kumar	15-21 Jan	Vanuatu: PRA follow-up
Sada N Lal	9-15 Feb	Vanuatu: TBM planting
Fereti Atu	9-15 Feb	Vanuatu: TBM planting

11. PPS Staff travel calendar

Dates	Country	Staff	Activity
17-19 Feb	Tonga	Steve Hazelman	PRA follow-up
16-20 Feb	Tonga	Salend Kumar	PRA follow-up
23 Feb	Kosrae	Konrad Englberger	Citrus canker work
29 Feb – 7 March	PNG	Sada N Lal	Taro Beetle Management
15 – 19 Mar	Lami, Fiji	All PPS	Biosecurity, Plant Protection and Animal Health Meeting
21-26 Mar	PNG	Sidney Suma	OCO Meeting
7-14 Mar	Sol Is	Richard Vernon Makelesi Kora Sarah Pene	PLD Works hop

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