



# Pacific Pest Info

Pest & Quarantine Information  
SPC Plant Protection Service

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### **1. Biosecurity, Plant Protection and Animal Health Meeting**

The first meeting bringing together members of PPPO, RTMPP and Animal Health Specialists to look at the issues affecting the health of plants and animals was held at the Tradewinds Hotel in Lami Fiji, 15 – 19 March 2004. The meeting also discussed the important issue of Biosecurity and how it relates to trade in the Pacific islands.

The meeting was organised by SPC Plant Protection Service with donor assistance from EU, AusAID and NZAid.

The Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Sugar and Land Resettlement Mr Jonetani K Galuinadi delivered the official address before declaring the meeting open. In his address the Minister pointed to the advantage of bringing together the three core groups to save scarce resources but more importantly an integrated approach to tackling pest and disease problems in the Region. He also mentioned the impact Biosecurity, Plant Protection and Animal Health have on trade and sustainable production systems for food security in the Pacific region.

Island delegates who are heads of quarantine, plant protection and animal health services in the island countries comprised the core group attending the technical consultation. This group is the premier decision-making body in the region on matters relating to agricultural trade, quarantine issues and plant protection.

Country presentations from delegates reported on developments in quarantine, plant protection and animal health and highlighted areas where SPC contributed on the national scene. Group discussions provided feedback on what services are needed from SPC. This consultative and participatory process is the basis to develop work plans for SPC Plant Protection Service.

SPC collaborate with other regional organisations. The Forum Secretariat, FAO and SPREP were invited to present aspects of their work relating to SPC. The aim is for the regional organisations to have work programmes that are complementary and can help Pacific islands.

New Zealand MAF Biosecurity and Biosecurity Australia were also invited and made presentations focussing mainly on trade and quarantine issues.

A new pest threat and a planned preventative programme for the Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA) was presented to the group. The Pacific Ant Prevention Programme (PAPP) is raising awareness of the potential threats of exotic ants especially RIFA. A Pacific Ant Invasive Group was formed from PAPP and is tasked to carry out activities to prevent RIFA from being established in the Pacific.

At the end of the meeting the group came up with a list of recommendations for SPC to consider incorporating in their work programme. The recommendations were the results of group discussions based on PPS and Animal Health services.

The animal health specialists also took time to meet once again as a group.

On Monday night of the first day of the workshop a cocktail was hosted by PPS where quarantine materials for the Palau Pacific Arts Festival were officially launched. The awareness materials included a 3-minute video, posters and brochures. Palau quarantine also produced a leaflet on items restricted entry into Palau. Heads of Quarantine were each given a package of awareness materials to take back to help them conduct national trainings.

## **2. Solomon Island Electronic Library Update**

The Electronic Library (EL) concept is an initiative of SPC. The idea to set up the electronic library was discussed with officials of the Solomon Island Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock as a means to provide agricultural information to clients after Dodo Creek was destroyed.

The Electronic Library is tasked to:

- Collect information
- Update farmers, staff, planners and other stakeholders
- Store information for future users
- Disseminate information to various stakeholders
- Fast and efficient retrieval of information

A team from PPS – Extensionist Stephen Hazelman and Project Administrator Sushil Narayan – travelled to Solomon Islands in February to get an update on developments with the EL project, which was handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture in early 2003.

The Electronic Library is under the management of the Director of Research with daily operations under the care of the Information Officer.

SPC has funded a computer server, two PC computers and a network printer for the Electronic Library. A quick assessment by PPS pointed to a system that is not working, as it should be. There were a few technical and management issues that need sorting out for the project to progress forward. One of these issues is having in place a user pay system where divisions can put aside some funds to operate the system.

### *Linking farmers to plant protection network*

Relevant stakeholders were involved to develop this project, which is been partially supported by PPS. The project aims to pilot the use of rural email by farmers to better manage pests and disease problems affecting food crops. The project is located in North Malaita. Collaborating partners include both Government and non-government organisations: Ministry of Agriculture, Kastom Gardens Association, Planting Material Network, PestNet and PPS. A Project Coordinator has been appointed to link government and NGOs.

### **3. Plant Protection in Micronesia**

*Konrad Englberger – Coordinator, PPM*

PPM Coordinator travelled to Kosrae to help collect citrus canker samples. The strain of citrus canker fungus afflicting citrus orchards in Micronesia is yet to be identified. Citrus canker samples were collected from 15 different sites. As the US no longer accepted fresh samples, Dr. George Wall at the University of Guam prepared the isolations for dispatch to Dr. Tim Gottwald, citrus canker expert in Florida.

A second meeting of the Citrus Canker Committee was also held during the week the PPM visited Kosrae. One of the issues raised in the meeting was law enforcement to allow the Agriculture Department to destroy afflicted trees. Some committee members felt that this action was unnecessary. Citrus is exported and sold in the local market in Kosrae.

In related plant protection activities PPM Coordinator hand-carried over a thousand larvae of the moth *Pareuchaetes pseudoinsulata* to Kosrae for field release. The moth is the biocontrol agent for the invasive weed *Chromolaena*. At the site of the first release in October last year, it was assessed that there was good establishment of the biocontrol agent. Kosrae Quarantine Officers were then instructed to release the biocontrol agent at a different site in Malem.

### **4. Biosecurity and trade issues for Pacific islands**

The stringent rules by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on globalised standards and procedures and implemented by developed nations is forcing Pacific islands to play catch up and become a player on the world stage.

Pacific islands lack the resources to quickly implement new procedures and globalised standards that are also being adopted regionally under the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) and Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA).

Pacific Islands will especially have problems meeting plant health, animal health and food standards adopted by regulatory agencies (biosecurity/quarantine services) of trading nations under the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement).

The agreement is designed to minimise introduction of pests and diseases with fresh and processed commodities that may be harmful to agriculture, the environment and public health that could have been a problem in a tariff-free trading environment. The SPS agreement enables countries to take measures to safeguard the human, animal and plant health and the environment of their country from the risks involved in the import of commodities mainly from fishing, farming and forestry sectors.

Three international bodies set the minimum standards for trade in agricultural commodities. They are International Plant Protection Commission on plant health standards, Office International des Epizooties (OIE) on animal health standards and Codex Alimentarius (CODEX) on food standards. Residual pesticide levels in food and food products is one area where the SPS Agreement has set minimum standards with which trading partners must comply.

The major problem faced by Pacific islands countries is to develop national supply chains or commodity pathways, involving collaboration between national quarantine services, private sector commodity producers, trade agencies, shipping companies, that will deliver commodities to the importing country that meet the sanitary and phytosanitary standards adopted for that commodity by the regulatory (biosecurity) authorities in the importing country.

PPS and Animal Health Service (AHS) of SPC are positioned to provide technical advice to help build capacity of Pacific islands in the area of biosecurity and trade. This technical assistance is designed to help Pacific islands gain access to world agricultural markets and to help determine risks associated with imports. The preparation of Import Risk Analysis (IRA) and Market Access submissions are two important trade facilitation activities for Pacific islands covered under PICTA and PACER.

To further strengthen the position of Pacific islands in the global market, the EU-funded Pacific Regional Economic Integration Project (PACREIP) will help implement a Free Trade Area (PICTA) among Pacific ACP countries and to help improve trade-negotiating capacities of Pacific islands at the regional and multilateral levels (including WTO and EPAs).

SPC, in its technical advisory role, will implement a component of PACREIP which will focus on amending national biosecurity laws to comply with modern trade facilitation roles and enable quarantine services to implement measures required to comply with the SPS Agreement.

Import Risk Analysis (IRA) process identifies the risks involved with importing a commodity and to evaluate and implement management options that will minimise the risk to agriculture, the environment and human health of the importing country. A Market Access proposal is a submission to another country that would enable it to evaluate the sanitary and phytosanitary (biosecurity) risks associated with the proposed trade. The proposal highlights pests in the country, pest management practices applied to control these pests, post harvest handling and quarantine treatments in place for the commodity.

### 5. Completed PPS activities in PICTs

<i>PPS Staff</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>PICT Activity</i>
PPS Staff	15-19 Mar	Fiji: Biosecurity, Plant Protection and Animal Health Meeting
Richard Vernon Makelesi Kora Sarah Pene	7-14 Mar	Solomon Islands: PLD workshop

### 6. PPS Staff travel calendar

Dates	Country	Staff	Activity
20 Mar – 2 Apr	PNG	Richard Vernon Makelesi Kora Sarah Pene	PLD workshop
28 Mar-2 April	Samoa	Jacqui Wright	Taro rot investigation
21-26 Mar	Madang, PNG	Sidney Suma	6 <sup>th</sup> OCO Annual Conference
29-30 Mar	PNG		Cocoa pod borer contingency planning
1-2 April	PNG		Biosecurity law consultation
5-6 April	Australia		UQ: CBIT QUT: BIF and QDPI
8 April	Madang, PNG		Forum Trade Ministers Meeting
19-23 April	Cook Islands	Emil Adams	Production of extension materials national workshop
26-28 April	Hawaii	Stephen Hazelman Ema Tora-Vueti Naca Waqa	Area wide IPM
26 – 30 April	Australia	Warea Orapa	Consultation with ACIAR , PNG and Australian partners on planned weed projects

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