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1. Developing extension materials workshop for Cook Islands

Emil Adams – PPS Publications Officer

Research, Extension and Quarantine officers of the Cook Islands Ministry of Agriculture received skills training in developing extension materials at a workshop held at the USP Centre Rarotonga, 19 – 23 April 2004. The main aim of the workshop was to re-visit the role of extension as the focal point for disseminating information to growers. As such extension officers require specific communication skills, among others, to develop extension materials for farmers.

Participants invited from the outer islands - all Senior Agricultural Officers - include Maara Tairi from Atiu, Tiraa Arere from Aitutaki, Noo Aiturau from Mauke, Tokai Ngaiorae from Mitiaro and Lucky Tungata from Magaia.

Participants from Rarotonga included Head of Quarantine Ngatoko Ngatoko and Quarantine Officers Lax Apera and Moetu Tangitamaiti plus research officers Dr. Maja Poeschko and Patu Katu.

Acting Secretary and Chief Administration Officer Mr Teariki Rouru officially opened the workshop in the absence of Secretary Mr Nga Mataio who was away overseas. Mr Rouru stressed to the participants the importance of putting into use the knowledge and skills learned from participating in these types of workshops. He cautioned that producing accurate information was critical to decision-making.

Workshop facilitator Mr Emil Adams of SPC Plant Protection Service conducted the workshop. The first order of the day was for the participants to conduct a SWOT analysis of their work environment. Issues relating to internal administration and the ability of agricultural officers to service their clients with information were raised and discussed. From the results of this first discussion, the need to produce and update extension information catering for growers was clear. Subsequently, a short presentation introduced the communications model as the framework for extension work. Critical in this discussion is a clear understanding of the targeted audience and the prevailing socio-economic situation they exist in. Extension messages can be tailor-made to growers when we appreciate the environment they live in. Simplicity in message design is the key principle.

Throughout the week participants learned guidelines in writing for extension, use of different extension media, and design and layout of extension materials. Participants also received training in basic computer operations, desktop publishing, use of digital camera to generate images, editing digital images, scanning illustrations and basic guidelines to good design when mixing text and graphics. Each participant worked on a project applying the skills learned as they progressed through the week. Extension materials developed need to be pre-tested to get feedback on clarity of message, design and use of appropriate graphics. Ministry officials provided this valuable feedback. Accuracy and the need to ensure the message is clear were emphasised in the feedback to the participants on their drafts.

On the third day of the workshop a field trip was organised to the local Cook Island News newspaper to learn how the popular media handle development information. An agricultural column produced by the Ministry of Agriculture is published every two weeks in the local newspaper. Publishers of the newspaper, who gave a very informative guided tour of newspaper operations, told the participants they are always on the lookout for news stories particularly those with human interest such as impact of agriculture on the lives of rural people. Participants were told that newspapers, as a mass media, can reach the general population with extension messages - and it is free. A local journalist from the newspaper reported on the workshop, which featured in a latter issue of the daily. Similarly, there was coverage of the workshop in the local TV news as well as a news item in the local AM radio station.

A short excursion to the back roads of Rarotonga to visit the numerous *nono* (*noni, nonu*) fields allowed participants the opportunity for hands-on training in basic digital camera operations. The excursion turned into an impromptu field visit as more agricultural activities were taken in ending up at the watermelon farm of participant Mr Patu Katu. Katu's farm, a monocrop commercial activity, supplies most of the watermelons on Rarotonga. The back road is a hive of flourishing small-holder farm operations on either side of the road, mainly cash cropping. A typical farm patch would be an intercrop of tomatoes, chillies, winged beans and swamp taro. The main growing season for vegetables is a few months away, the winter months, and local prices for these commodities are quite expensive at the moment.

On the last day of the workshop participants were invited to the Ministry head office in Arorangi to present their projects to the staff. Secretary Mr. Nga Mataio was invited to close the workshop and to hand out certificates of participation to the workshop participants. Before everyone partaking in a huge final lunch, Mr Mataio, in his closing remarks, thanked SPC for facilitating and funding the workshop especially in inviting the outer island agricultural officers. He told participants that information is critical in decision-making and that ultimately the Ministry is responsible for giving out information. He will now discuss with Ministry staff the extension projects produced at the workshop checking them for accuracy and to prioritise the leaflets for final production.

The range of extension materials developed include a tomato leaflet, Nono quality brochure (English and local Maori), 'Producing Seedless Watermelons', a Quarantine leaflet, and a Quarantine poster.

The workshop facilitator acknowledges the support of Dr Maja Poescki in organising the workshop (participant and facilitator travel itineraries, workshop venue, field visits, teas and lunches) and the Ministry of Agriculture for providing transport and allowing the participants to take time off to attend the workshop. Donors EU, NZAID and AUSAid are acknowledged for assisting with PPS programmes.

2. Solomon Islands & Papua New Guinea take on Pest List Database

Dick Vernon, Makelesi Gonelevu, Sarah Pene

Seven Solomon Islands quarantine & plant protection staff attended a 3-day workshop in Honiara in March, which gave them hands-on operational knowledge of the Pest List Database (PLD). The PLD is an information system that records pest occurrences on crops within a country, and provides a range of reports from the pest occurrence data, to serve commodity trade and plant protection activities. The system also can be used by quarantine services to manage information on pest interception at ports and airports.

Six senior officials attended a one-hour overview of the system at the start of the workshop, which was then followed by a discussion. John Harunari, Director of Extension and Training, opened the workshop. A new computer, supplied by SPC to operate PLD, was installed in the Quarantine Office. Francis Tsatsia is designated to operate the system for Quarantine, and Hellen Tsatsia, Senior Research Officer, is to fulfil this role for the Research Service, where the system was also installed.

In PNG, separate workshops were held between 23 March and 1 April by NAQIA (National Agriculture Quarantine & Inspection Authority) in Port Moresby and by NARI (National Agricultural Research Institute) in Lae, to introduce the Pest List Database (PLD) to their staff and to representatives of some of the commodity institutes.

PNG is the eleventh country to take on the system and the PNG PLD is the largest in terms of data records that the SPC team has implemented to date. The system so far contains 12,120 pest occurrence records, which provide 3,886 authenticated unique pest-host records. Occurrences of 4,547 pest species on 974 host species are recorded in the system. These figures exclude weeds: a weed survey is planned for later in the year. Roy Masamdu at NAQIA and Sim Sar at NARI were instrumental in organising the workshops, under the direction of Managing Director Andrew Hamanea and Director General Dr Ghodake respectively. The two organizations are setting up a joint Scientific Committee to oversee the management of the system and the linkage between the copies held at their respective HQs and at various commodity institutes. SPC will provide technical backstopping to these arrangements.

3. Cocoa Pod Borer Emergency Response Plan for PNG

Sidney Suma – PPS Biosecurity Officer

Discussions were held with Dr Samson Laup, Entomologist with the Cocoa and Coconut Institute (CCI) on Sunday 28 March and focusing on work done so far by CCI on the emergency response plan (ERP) for cocoa pod borer (*Conopomorpha cramerella*) – a pest that is now present in the western part of Indonesia's Papua Province and a threat to PNG and the rest of the Pacific. Dr. Laup asked for assistance from SPC (Biosecurity Officer) in providing guidance on what could be done to improve draft emergency response plan developed by CCI, which was based on the general emergency response plan for PNG.

The Biosecurity Officer met Monday (29/04) morning with CCI entomologists Dr. Laup and Mr. Titus Kakul at the CCI Murnas Research Centre on the north coast of Madang and on Tuesday 30 March held

discussions with Mr. Roy Masandu and Mr. David Tenakanai, Chief Plant Protection Officer and Entomologist from NAQIA regarding the same issue.

It was the general consensus that the best approach would be to develop a contingency plan for the pest that could include mitigation measures for pre-incursion and post-incursion. The contingency plan could have parts on prevention, incursion response, containment and eradication, stand down and long-term pest management. The importance of prevention, evaluating the possible pathways of entry and developing a simple and pragmatic contingency plan was stressed.

4. Student project on quarantine amnesty bin analysis

Sidney Suma – PPS Biosecurity Officer

SPC Plant Protection Service will sponsor student projects on amnesty bin analysis in three countries this year. Students from the Biology Department of the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby, PNG; Fiji College of Agriculture, Koronivia, and the University of South Pacific, School of Agriculture, Alafua, Samoa will conduct the research projects. They will analyse quarantine amnesty bin deposits at Jackson's Airport (Port Moresby) in PNG; Nausori Airport (Suva), in Fiji and Faleolo Airport in Samoa.

Discussion was held with Mr. Roy Masandu (Chief Plant Protection Officer) and Mr. Alphonse Bannick (Chief Agriculture Quarantine Officer) regarding NAQIA assistance for the student project conducted in Port Moresby. Both officers gave their support and agreed that Mr Bannick would provide overall supervision of the project in liaison with Mr Masandu and appropriate National Agricultural Quarantine Inspection Authority (NAQIA) officers. NAQIA would also provide all logistical support including transport, security clearance (for airport access), laboratory space and technical assistance for the student undertaking the study. Nominal funding would be provided by SPC for the purchase of consumables for the project.

Discussions held with Professor Lance Hill – Head of Biology Department at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) and in charge of student projects - proved successful. The student project proposal will be advertised on student notice boards. The Biosecurity Officer will forward details of the proposal to Professor Hill in due course.

The Biosecurity Officer will liaise with Fiji Agriculture College and University of South Pacific, Alafu a Campus to arrange the projects at these two sites.

5. Tuvalu fruit fly host survey

Nacanieli Waqa – Fruit Fly Technician

Following the initial fruit fly host survey carried out in Tuvalu in January 2003, a more intensive follow-up survey was carried out in January 2004. A total of 89 fruits were sampled from the islands of Niulakita, Nukulaelae, Funafuti, Niutao, Vaitupu, Nanumea and Nanumanga. To date there is only one species of fruit fly confirmed to be present in Tuvalu: *Bactrocera new species near passiflorae*. The fruit fly network was also extended during the survey visits from Funafuti to the outer islands except the islands of Nui and Niulakita, which will be organised by the Funafuti Agricultural Office.

The fruit fly trap catches from Funafuti, Nanumea and Nanumanga have been forwarded to SPC and together with the specimen collected from the host survey have been sent to Griffith University for identification and DNA analysis. During the survey, a short training to allow continuity of fruit fly surveillance was carried out for Funafuti Agriculture Staff and one staff member from Nanumanga. Follow-up training was also carried out for outer island Extension Officers. These officers attended the DSAP workshop in Funafuti in February 2004.

Ms Evolini Sakaio, Funafuti Extension Officer, who was involved in the fruit fly host survey work in January, demonstrated fruit fly trapping to her fellow officers attending the DSAP workshop.

6. Fiji Bilateral Quarantine Agreement (BQA) Task Force Committee

Nacanieli Waqa – PPS Fruit Fly Technician

The Fiji BQA Taskforce Committee, with PPS representation, resumed regular meetings with the first one held on 14 April, 2004. One major activity the committee is tasked to complete is the publication of export

commodity standards. To date export standards for eggplants have been completed. The next ones are for breadfruit and mango. Stakeholders in this industry are canvassed for their input in developing the standards. The publications will be distributed to farmers, exporters and agriculture staff in a bid to educate and promote export standards of quality commodities. The committee is getting good support from the industry and is working very closely with the newly formed Fiji Trade Facilitation Committee (FTFC) especially on management and policies affecting farmers and exporters trading in export commodities covered under the Fiji/NZ Bilateral Quarantine Agreement.

7. Integrated approach to address pest problems of Tonga squash crop

Jacqui Wright – PPS Plant Pathologist

The squash crop is important to Tonga and they are experiencing a number of pest problems. In response to Tonga's prioritisation of the crop, ACIAR has indicated a willingness to fund work on the pest problems of the crop in an integrated approach. The Australian collaborators are Dr Robyn McConchie and Dr Kerrie McDonald from the Department of Crop Sciences, University of Sydney.

Meetings with, Mr Pita Taufatofua (Deputy Director for Research and Extension), Mr Finau Savelio Pole (Chief Executive, Research), Ms Sela Tupouniua (Senior Plant Pathologist) and Mrs Luseane Taufa (Senior Agricultural Officer) discussed aspects of the project. The Tongans provided their opinions and input into the project proposal document.

8. Training for Micronesia quarantine officers

Konrad Englberger – Plant Protection Micronesia

The third SPC-sponsored Quarantine Training was held from April 5 to 9 at the University of Guam. The capacity-building exercise was to improve the knowledge of quarantine workers in Micronesia. Quarantine officers from the following countries participated in the week-long training: Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (CNMI), Guam, Republic of Palau, Marshalls, and the Federated States of Micronesia. Quarantine Officers from FSM included Mr. Akissy Edward, Mr. Petring Albert¹-Pohnpei, Mr. Palikkun Tolenna-Kosrae, and Mrs. Saiory Joab of Pohnpei.

The training was a collaborative effort involving Plant Protection Micronesia (PPM), the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS), University of Guam (UOG), US Fish and Wildlife, USDA Food and Inspection Service (FSIS), US Geological Survey (USGS), Guam Department of Agriculture, Plant Protection and Quarantine and the Federated States of Micronesia Department of Economic Affairs.

Topics covered in the training included: Animal Disease and their importance; Entomology and Insect Pests of concern; Plant Pathology and Plant Diseases; International Standards on Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs); International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC); Phytosanitary measures for the Micronesia Region; Import Risk Analysis/Pest Risk Assessment; Importance of Quarantine and Trade; and Invasive Species and Management; and International, National and Local Plant Protection and Quarantine issues.

Lectures, lab activities (insect and nematode identification, etc) and field visits to business sites and the Guam Plant Inspection Station were made. At the visit sites, participants were briefed on quarantine operations and issues relating to plant protection and quarantine service to the public were discussed e.g. goods certification requirements, pest interceptions. Pre- and post-tests gauged knowledge gained and understanding of topics covered. Although the post-test was more difficult there was a 32 % increase in knowledge gained when the two tests were compared. The SPC Evaluation Form was distributed to participants and collected for assessment of the training. Overall, most participants agree that the training was well organized and relevant in content and presentation.

9. Completed PPS activities in PICTs

<i>PPS Staff</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>PICT Activity</i>
Richard Vernon Makelesi Kora Sarah Pene	20 Mar – 2 Apr	PNG: PLD workshop
Jacqui Wright	28 Mar – 2 April	Samoa: Taro rot investigation
Sidney Suma	21 Mar – 8 April	PNG: 6 th OCO Annual Conference, Cocoa pod borer contingency planning, Biosecurity law consultation, Forum Trade Ministers Meeting Australia: University of Queensland (CBIT); QUT: BIF and QDPI
Konrad Englberger	5-11 April	Guam: Quarantine training
Jacqui Wright	15 – 17 April	Tonga: Preparations for study on squash pest problems
Konrad Englberger	17-22 April	Marshall Islands: Quarantine training and chromolaena eradication
Emil Adams	19-23 April	Cook Islands: Developing extension materials workshop
Takaniko Ruabete	25-30 April	Cook Islands: Nematode survey
Konrad Englberger Salend Kumar	26-29 April 17 April – 1 May	Kosrae: Quarantine training and Mikania eradication Wallis et Futuna : PRA
Steven Hazelman	26-28 April	Hawaii: Area Wide IPM

10. PPS staff travel calendar

Dates	Country	Staff	Activity
25 Apr – 3 May	Australia	Warea Orapa	ACIAR Meeting
1-8 May	Wallis et Futuna	Makelesi Kora Sarah Pene	PLD training
1-10 May	PNG	Sada N Lal Feret Atumuaria	NARI Field Day, 5 th and TBM work
8-22 May	Wallis et Futuna	Warea Orapa	Surveys and weed management
8-18 May	Wallis et Futuna	Jacqui Wright Richard Davis Takaniko Ruabete	Disease surveys
13-16 May	Vanuatu	Feret Atumuaria	TBM

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