

# QUARANTINE UPDATES



## Law & role of Quarantine

The objective of any country's Biosecurity/Quarantine service is the prevention or control of the entry, establishment or spread of pests & disease that will or could cause significant damage to human health, animals, plants and other aspects of the environment or economic activities. Samoa like other Pacific islands has its unique fauna and flora and fragile ecosystem and vulnerable small industries and is relatively free from many serious pests & diseases that have major economic and environmental concerns for other countries.

### Legislative framework

Samoa Quarantine Service is mandated under the Biosecurity Act 2005.

### Imports/Exports

Quarantine manages control systems at all points of entry to minimize the risk of exotic pests & disease entering our shores. SQS also provides import and export inspection and certification to retain the highly favorable status for animal, plant health as well as human health and access to export overseas.

It is obvious that there is an ever increasing rate in the importation of quarantine items some of which include (meat, fish, seeds, fruit, vegetables, nursery stock) for both commercial and non-commercial users. Additionally the numbers of request applications for the importation of new commodities are increasing as well. Importers however need to be aware of the obligations under the Biosecurity Act 2005, whereby any person intending to import agricultural commodities must obtain an import permit prior to the importation of such commodities.



*Certifying exports*



*Seizure of non conformed items*



*Quarantine bin for disposal*

### “Declare or Dispose”

The traveling public is advised to declare all agricultural commodities when arriving in the country. People become complacent sometimes creating such mishaps at the border. The illegal importation of commodities can compromise the health status and market access for overseas markets.

### Seizure

Failure to comply with Samoa's import requirements, or imports posing a quarantine risk are seized by the inspectors. Two main items commonly confiscated at the border are honey and turkey tails. Latest report from one of the points of entry indicated an 8 % increase in non-compliance level (such a high value. SQS reminds the individuals/companies that non conformance with the law will result in the offenders being penalized.

### Penalties for common offences

Currently quarantine awaits the approval of “on the spot” fines or instant fines. However, implementations of penalty units are in place and are charged according to offence.

- Providing false declarations and misleading information *will be 3 penalty units or no more than 3 months imprisonment.*
- Penalty not *exceeding 12 penalty units or 12 months imprisonment* is borne by importers importing quarantine items without complete/improper documentations (Import permit & health certificate from country of origin)
- Obstructing and interfering with the inspectors decision is a breach of the law thus earning the offender a *6 penalty unit and not less than 6 months imprisonment.*