



Quarantine E-News

Issue 3

March 2012

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CITES Training Workshop 5th—9th March

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) held a National Workshop at the Aggie Grey's Hotel conference room for 1 whole week from the 5th to the 9th March. The Pesticide Registrar and Senior Officer Seaport attended this weeklong workshop.

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ternational agreement ments. Its aim is to ternational trade in wild animals and threaten their surviv-

The overall pur-the workshop ity of respective the national implementation, operation and administration of the CITES. Participants from the Customs Department, MNRE, Office of the Attorney Generals', MFAT and Fisheries were facilitated by the officials from the New Zealand Department of Conservation, where the overall objective is for Samoa to implement the CITES properly which includes having in place a well coordinated system supported by a Management Authority, Scientific Authority and the partnership of relevant agencies to serve the purpose of the Convention at the national level.

pose and outcome of was to build the capac-agencies in Samoa on

Taro Leaf Blight History on its' Invasion

- Keep in Mind!**
- * Site and Report any Unfamiliar living insect, animal, bird etc
 - * If you are unsure, declare
 - * Think twice before you pack, there could be a CITES item
 - * Ensure Packing List is Provided for Containers

The epidemic of Taro Leaf Blight devastated the agriculture industry so much that it **drastically affected Samoa's economy. It was dominantly noticed that the incursion was** during the cyclone season which affected Samoa in 1993 with the incidence of taro leaf blight (TLB) caused by the fungus, *Phytophthora colcasiae*. It was reported that the epidemic was first experienced on the island of Upolu, at the Aufaga Aleipata district which rapid spread throughout the whole country affecting all the local varieties of taro.

The fungus attacks the leaves and stems of taro, leading to either stunting or failure to produce a corm. In response, the then Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Meteorology (MAFFM), instituted a number of initiatives to control TLB, including input subsidies, development of resistant varieties, and food crop diversification. As a short-term measure, it developed a control package combining fungicide applications and sanitation. There were the use of chemicals, sanitation type of procedures, cultural aspects, introduction of resistant varieties breeding programs. Given that smallholders are the main producers and exporters of taro, the adoption rate has been minimal and, hence, the level of exports has fallen to almost Zero.



Con't: Taro Leaf Blight History on its' invasion

The medium-term strategy of MAFFM has been to introduce exotic cultivars with some known resistance or tolerance to the disease and reasonable taste so as to increase future smallholder taro production. The long term strategy is a breeding program to build up the resistance in local varieties. The implications of TLB on the economic circumstances in Samoa, and for taro trade and domestic prices in the South Pacific region, were noticeably deducted. Each of these methods were aimed to minimize the approach that was evident as the TLB struck. These were carried out at the community level, with trainings hosted by the Agriculture sector.



Much of the taro in Samoa is grown as a sole crop, usually on a newly cleared land that has been fallowed for 2-3 years.

Occasionally, it is intercropped with yam, pineapple, Alocasia, bananas or cassava. It is also sometimes grown in between rows of tree crops such as coconuts. The most common cultivar of taro grown has been Taro Niue, but since the blight epidemic in 1993 cultivar diversification is being actively pursued.

Years has gone by and the Ministry has identified and determined ways to make the best possible yields of taro cultivation, where induced varieties has been monitored and evaluated to ensure the resistance strain.

Pest Diagnostic Training in New Zealand

The NZaid Pacific program is a result of several years' work by a number of organizations in the Pacific and New Zealand. The overarching aim of this program is to develop plant health diagnostic capability in the Pacific. In Samoa, a total training session of 4 every quarter within last year was organized where the members were consistent throughout, consisting of the Quarantine division, Crops division, USP representative, Women in Business representative, all of whom are indirectly or directly involved in identification.

It is from these trainings that 2 individuals from the Quarantine were selected to participate in the overall training scheme for the Pest Diagnostic which took place in New Zealand from 19th March to the 30th March 2012. Principle Quarantine officer, Talei Fidow, accompanied the selected individuals Quarantine Assistants, Pai Too and Malo Tuulua to participate in the Regional training program together with other selected members from across the Pacific.



Site and Report of any Unfamiliar species

It is our work together responsibility in assisting with the Quarantine division in ensuring that the border is protected and prevented from the invasion of exotic pests or animal and plant disease. As we are a minority group from the whole of Samoa, it is vital that to carry out the most effective and guaranteed more than 100% perfect analysis is to work together. This includes siting any unfamiliar species of bird, animal, insect that you may come across and reporting it immediately to the office so as for us to continue our investigation whether it is a pest or not.

Keep a Watch Out - It May Be An Exotic Pest

Effective Management at the Border Prevents Catastrophe

Globalization has led to increase flows of people, goods and services, capital, technology and information across the border of the Pacific. As a developing nation, Samoa encounters difficulties to its attempt to adopt and implement new international requirements, mainly because of their lack of trained personnel and financial resources. We constantly face the pressure to loosen trade regimes and continue to identify ways to improve bio-security surveillance.

Samoa as a Pacific island nation faces a range of threats and risks created by its openness to the external environment, such as **long established risks to the region's bio-security** from traditional diseases and pathogens. There are serious risks surrounding the potential for the introduction of new plant and animal disease that could adversely impact the production and bio-diversity of the region. Bio-security risks have increased significantly in recent years because of the rapid increase in trade and travel volumes and pathways. Invasive species can have catastrophic effects when endemic species behave naively to unfamiliar species. In Guam the brown tree snake has attained a population density of 4,000 to 12,000 per square kilometer and has eliminated nine out of eleven native bird species. The Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA) is a serious risk to the entire region, as it would cost millions of dollars in damage and extremities to the Pacific, as its establishment in Samoa would be very difficult and extremely expensive to control.

As Quarantine are just a few monitoring the prevention and protection at various border entries such as Fagalii and Faleolo airports, Matautu wharf, various Depots and Post office, does not mean that we could manage to carry out our roles exceeding 100% detection. This is a shared responsibility, as there are actions and documents that every individual must do in their right mind to minimise non-compliance and our country.

Ways to Assist:

1. Site and Report of any Unfamiliar Species
2. If you are not sure, declare
3. Honestly fill Passenger Declaration forms
4. Clean, secure and hygiene packing of Imports and Exports
5. Ensure Proper Documentation for Imports and Exports
6. Ensure certification of Appropriate Imports and Exports
7. Register all Pesticides

Quarantine staffs are always willing to assist you



Samoa Quarantine

Matautu Office—20924
Fagalii Airport—28775
Faleolo Airport—42048
Facsimile—20103

Protect Samoa from Pests and Diseases