



Pacific Pest Info

Pest & Quarantine Information
SPC Plant Protection Service

No. 38 20th February 2003

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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. CABI Crop Protection Compendium

Dick Vernon

SPC PPS has received a stock of the 2002 CABI Crop Protection Compendium CDs, and a small number of licences for on-line access via the Internet. The system includes “up-to-date information on 10,000 pests, diseases, weeds and natural enemy species worldwide, 1,850 with complete datasheets. Over 1,100 specialists provided the datasheet information, which has been peer-reviewed and edited to the highest standard. 6,500 images allow for easy identification of crop pests”.

To get a copy of the new Compendium please notify Makelesi Kora (makelisik@spc.int) or Dick Vernon (richardv@spc.int) indicating a preference for the CD or online access. The CD version can be installed on your PC and accessed directly; the online licensed version requires an Internet connection to access the current system at CABI. The latter therefore requires a dialup to the Internet each time you want to use it, and lasts only for one year, but has the advantage that you get the latest most up-to-date information.

On record there are 34 previous edition CDs having been distributed and believe it best to give priority to those who have not previously had one, but put your bids in as soon as possible so that we can distribute them and get them into use.

2. Rhinoceros beetle on the rise in Samoa

A recent survey of five villages on the big island of Savaii indicated an increase in numbers of the rhinoceros beetle by up to 50 percent. Samoa Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) officials believe the increase is attributed to villages not maintaining the recommended control measures, which in turn has resulted in the proliferation of growth conditions for this menacing pest of coconut.

Mr. Pili Enosa, DAFF Research Officer, conducted the survey accompanied by two SPC Plant Protection Service staff Mr. Sada Lal, Entomologist and Mr. Stephen Hazelman, Extensionist. DAFF had approached SPC Plant Protection Service for assistance in the survey. The team was also assisted by USP Alafua bio-metrics researcher Mr. David Hunter. SPC responded quickly to help gauge extent of damage and to look into re-introducing sustainable bio-control.

Coincidentally, areas with observable beetle damage were in the immediate vicinity of commercial logging sawmills. Waste materials from sawn logs provide ideal breeding grounds for the beetle. However, Mr. Enosa believes that saw milling was not the only reason for the increase in rhinoceros beetle numbers. They found increased beetle damage in many other areas not close to sawmills.

Whilst in Savaii the team worked through the local village network drawing in the village council under the leadership of the village mayor. The villagers, both men and women, were briefed on the objectives of the survey and requested their active involvement in setting up pheromone traps. The villagers worked alongside Ministry officials and the SPC team.

SPC had previously been involved many years back on rhinoceros beetle control in the South Pacific which successfully introduced biological control agents to keep beetle numbers down.

The re-emergence of the rhinoceros beetle, with subsequent devastating damage to coconut trees, comes at a time when coconut processing is again becoming an important part of Samoa's economy. The coconut mill - producing coconut oil for export - re-opened last year and had to resort to importing copra to meet production demand. A second mill will soon open.

Desiccated coconut and coconut cream are the other two value-added products produced for export placing extra demand for copra.

Some media awareness is now required to re-inform local communities about the rhinoceros beetle especially the control measures, which can help reduce beetle populations substantially.

(Source: Samoa Observer, 23 January 2003)

3. Plant protection activities in Yap

Konrad Engleberger, Co-ordinator, Plant Protection in Micronesia

Mr. Stan Fal'mngar Assistant Director, Yap Community College, Land Grant Program, Community Extension Service, met with Mr. Engleberger and action was taken on the following issues.

Fruit Fly Control Program

Mr. Fal'mngar was informed there are some good fruit fly control strategies now developed. The Pest Advisory Leaflet No. 40 "Fruit Fly Control Methods for Pacific Island Countries and Territories", was given to him for information. BactroMAT cue lures for testing on mango trees was also given to Mr. Fal'mngar who expressed desire to be more involved in the fruit fly surveillance program which is presently being carried out by the quarantine service. His participation in fruit fly surveillance program was supported by PPM Co-ordinator.

Training for pesticide applicator

Mr. Fal'mngar requested for assistance in training and certification of pesticide applicators. The Coordinator can provide some training on pesticide safety and use but is unable to give official certification for applicators. Mr. Fal'mngar was informed that official certification for pesticide applicators is carried out by the University of Guam (UOG). Contacts at UOG for pesticide applicator certification were given to Mr. Fal'mngar.

Biological control of Chromolaena odorata

Mr. Fal'mngar asked for help with biocontrol of Chromolaena. PPM Coordinator informed the request was timely because at the Pohnpei laboratory *Pareuchaetes pseudoinsulata* are presently being reared and it should be easy to provide several thousand eggs and larva to Yap for field release. Later in the year there

will be another biocontrol agent available, *Cecidochares connexa*, with plans to release this biocontrol agent to all FSM states including Yap.

Weed posters

At the end of the meeting Mr. Fal'mngar was given several Yap invasive weed posters for the use of the College in Yap.

4. Pest List Database Workshop in Cook Islands

Dick Vernon

Fourteen Ministry of Agriculture staff worked with SPC PPS's Makelesi Kora and Dick Vernon to become familiar with the Cook Islands Pest List Database. Ngatokorua Mataio, Secretary of Agriculture, on behalf of the Minister, officially opened the workshop. It was held in the Cook Islands Centre of the University of the South Pacific.

The PLD system serves separately to record plant pest occurrences within a country and pest interceptions at borders. The former is managed largely by plant protection staff, but its data is used by the Quarantine Service to generate Pest Lists for the facilitation of trade. The system came with 1,938 Cook Islands pest occurrence records already entered, to which a further 72 records from an SPC PPS / Landcare Research disease survey were added during the workshop. The participants came from both the research and quarantine services. A number of ideas came forward on how the system might be enhanced, mostly on the quarantine interceptions side for which there were more participants, headed by Ngatoko Ngatoko, Chief Quarantine Officer. In the participants' evaluation of the workshop all 12 of the respondents commented favourably, but five thought it should be longer – between one and two weeks. SPC provided a new computer for operation of the Pest List Database, and a digital camera to assist with the identification of pests.

An overview was presented to a larger group including several from other Ministries and this led to a lively debate on how the system may serve various constituencies, notably farmers wishing to export produce overseas.

The event was covered by both the daily newspaper and television. The workshop follows the PLD introduction to Samoa, Tonga, French Polynesia, Niue, and Fiji Islands in 2002. Further workshops, for American Samoa and Vanuatu, are in preparation, with others planned for later in the year.

5. Fiji Quarantine Section upgraded to Division level

The Agricultural Quarantine Section of Fiji's Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar & Land Resettlement has been up-graded to Division level. Once gazetted it will be named Fiji Quarantine and Inspection Division (FQID). Mr Hiagi M Foraete is Acting Director, Fiji Quarantine.

6. Fiji Quarantine Target Travellers to SPG 2003

Fiji Quarantine is developing a media campaign to raise awareness on the movement of items that pose a quarantine risk. There will be close to 4,000 athletes, officials and team supporters arriving into Fiji at the end of June for the 2003 South Pacific Games. These visitors will be carrying food, beverage, souvenirs, traditional costumes, herbs, medicine and clothing. Quarantine staff at Fiji international airports will be vigilant and looking for passenger belongings that might hide pests and diseases. SPC's Plant Protection Service is helping Fiji Quarantine and Inspection Division (FQID) develop media messages and with training. Activities now underway include a planned '*talanoa*' session on SPC's Pacific Way video program with Dr. Jimmie Rodgers, SPC-Senior Deputy Director General, Suva operations, and Ms. Fusi Vave, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar and Land Re-settlement on quarantine implications of many visitors from different countries visiting Fiji. Other media activities include production of a leaflet aimed at athletes carrying quarantine risk items. These items include soil on running shoes, including golf equipment, traditional food and beverage for personal use, canned, dried and preserved food items, fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers. These items will need to be declared on arrival.

In the SPG Manual being distributed to all Team Managers of all participating countries there will be an insert on quarantine for the information of athletes. This information provides a guide of what you can bring and can not bring into Fiji. Visitors to Fiji are especially singled out to refer to this guideline before packing any food or other quarantine risk items.

There will also be quarantine alerts to be posted on the SPG Website (www.spg2003.org). A short radio spot on quarantine will also be developed for all radio stations in the Pacific.

FQID will hire extra staff to cope with peak arrival times and PPS will help with their quarantine training. PPS will also fund vests and caps to distinguish quarantine from other airport arrival services. An official launch of SPG quarantine media activities is planned at the end of March where Fiji Prime Minister Mr. Laisene Qarase is expected to be the official guest.

This effort by PPS to assist Fiji Quarantine better prepare for SPG 2003 is an initiative of the Pacific Plant Protection Organisation to reach a vast audience of individuals from varying backgrounds and inform them about quarantine.

7. Pacific Quarantine Awareness Campaign Show Positive Results

The number of Pacific nationals getting caught with undeclared quarantine risk items and having to pay the spot fine of NZ\$200 at New Zealand Airports decreased favourably, latest figures from New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) Biosecurity show.

Pacific nationals travelling into New Zealand each year make up less than 5% of the total but as neighbours there is a higher risk of goods - such as fresh fruit and vegetables - that could carry a damaging pest - such as fruit fly - surviving the airline trip.

Protect New Zealand coordinator Adrienne Tollemache commented that instant fines are a small but useful indicator of what's happening at the New Zealand border. Statistics are collected from across national groups for each thousand passengers. For July to December 2002 the figure for Pacific nationals dropped from a previous high of 3.8 per thousand passengers to 2 fines or less per thousand.

This was easily the best example of a decrease in infringements and an encouraging sign for 2003. It suggests the message is getting through and that publishing information in Samoan and Tongan can add to the effectiveness of the Declare It message, noted Adrienne Tollemache. The key message from MAF is "Declare It!", backed by the launch of more information for the Pacific community produced by the Protect New Zealand awareness programme which made special visits to Samoa, Tonga and Fiji in late November, early December 2002.

MAF Quarantine Service officers are at their busiest every holiday season keeping New Zealand free of animal and plant pests and diseases by stopping quarantine risk goods entering the country. The Christmas period is the busiest time of the year for Pacific islanders travelling overseas, mainly to New Zealand.

The Protect New Zealand message, brochures, posters and giveaways will be on show at this year's Pasifika Festival on 8 March at Western Springs, Auckland.

SPC's Plant Protection Service, based in Suva Fiji, work in partnership with Protect New Zealand. The partnership is committed to building a strong Pacific awareness of biosecurity risks.

(Source: Protect New Zealand Media Release, 30 January 2003)

8. Condolences

SPC's Plant Protection Service offers sincere condolences to family members, friends and work colleagues of the late Mr. Aisea Waqa, Principal Quarantine Officer, Fiji Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar and Land Resettlement (MASLR) who passed away 15 October 2002. Mr. Waqa has been with the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture for 32 years. He was an active member of the Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) and represented the region at the first Interim Commission for Phytosanitary Measures in Rome in 1998. He will be missed by his network of Pacific island friends and professional colleagues in plant protection and quarantine.

SPC Plant Protection Services was notified of the untimely death on 10 February 2003 of Mr. Nemaia Tekiu, Principal Research Officer, Nuu Research Centre, Samoa Ministry of Agriculture, Forests,

Fisheries and Meteorology. Mr. Tekiu has worked tirelessly for many years as Research Officer at the Nuu Centre. Condolences to his wife, three daughters and extended family.

9. PPS Staff travel calendar

Dates	Country	Staff	Purpose
07-20 Feb 03	PNG	Ema T. Vueti	Heat Tolerance Studies
11-24 Feb 03	PNG	Naca Waqa	Heat Tolerance Studies
10-21 Feb 03	Samoa	Jacqui Wright	Samoa Pest Survey
14-28 Feb 03	Samoa	Sada N Lal	Samoa Pest Survey
17-28 Feb 03	Samoa	Richard Davis	Samoa Pest Survey
17-28 Feb 03	Samoa	Takaniko Ruabete.	Samoa Pest Survey
17-25 Feb 03	Samoa	Stephen Hazelman	PRA Exercise
21-28 Feb 03	American Samoa	Dick Vernon	Pest List Database Workshop
24-28 Feb 03	Niue	Sidney Suma	ERP/TLB Workshop
7-9 Mar 03	New Zealand	Emil Adams	Pasefika Festival – Pacific biosecurity
6-13 Mar 03	Solomon Is	Ema T. Vueti	Fruit fly work
11-14 Mar 03	Tokelau	Sidney Suma	Tokelau Law Legislation
12-14 Mar 03	Tokelau	Jacqui Wright	Tokelau Law Legislation
8-12 Mar 03	Vanuatu	Sada N Lal	Taro Beetle Management
mid-March	Solomon Is	Mick Lloyd	Electronic Library Project
17-31 Mar 03	Tonga	Sada N Lal	Rhinoceros Beetle Control

 Emil Adams
 Publications Officer
 Email: EmilA@spc.int

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