



Hawaii Invasive Species Council

“Pacific Islanders meet for 1st Biosecurity Workshop”

Hawaii Dept. of
Agriculture

U.S. Dept. of
Agriculture

U.S. Customs &
Border Protection

Pacific Invasives
Learning Network

HISC eNews
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Representatives from Pacific island nations and territories gathered in June for the Pacific Invasives Learning Network’s first biosecurity workshop at the Hawaii Department of Agriculture’s Plant Quarantine Inspection Station in Honolulu.

The Pacific Invasives Learning Network, in collaboration with the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, is a partnership of multi-agency teams dedicated to increasing weed and pest control skills through the sharing of experience and collaboration between Pacific islands. The workshop’s goal was to share information on invasive species prevention, eradication and control.

Sponsored by the Hawaii Invasive Species Council, the four-day workshop included plant and animal inspection officers and quarantine specialists from American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Guam. The discussion, facilitated by Konrad Englberger, formerly with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and Ken Ching, supervisor, Plant Protection and Quarantine, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, focused on biosecurity programs and operational needs.

Biosecurity relates to the policies and measures employed to protect areas from the biological harm caused by invasive species. Participants were asked to discuss the measures employed before, at, or immediately after arrival of a species at the “border” of their country, state or island and which involve prevention and rapid response.

Each gave detailed reports on their respective resources, invasive species and diseases of concern, priorities, and challenges, as well as technical support, facilities and equipment needed. Invasive species of concern include scarlet gourd, betel nut bud rot, false sakau, African tulip tree, strawberry guava, dengue fever and brown treesnakes.

The final session asked participants to propose solutions for identified biosecurity challenges and how to strengthen the PILN communication network. There was general agreement that better communication among Pacific island nations and territories is needed to help understand common threats and to share resources. HDOA and the USDA offered technical assistance.

It was suggested that the Internet be used to improve diagnostic capacity and networking. Increases in staff and training, along with public awareness and education, were declared high priorities.
—Priscilla Billig, HISC



Participants in the Pacific Islands Learning Network Biosecurity Workshop held June 2-5, 2009 in Honolulu, Hawaii. (l to r) James Stanford (Guam), Russell Campbell (Guam), Manu Tuionoula (American Samoa), John Wichep (FSM-Pohnpei), Alexander Pong Chingyan (FSM-Yap), Konrad Englberger (Micronesia), James James (FSM-Kosrae), Saimon Refit (FSM-Chuuk), Richard Seman (CNMI).



Call the Pest Hotline to report invasive pests.