



# Newsletter

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTS, FISHERIES & METEOROLOGY

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## A Word from the Assistant Director Quarantine...



Susuga Asuao Kirifi Pouono  
Assistant Director for Quarantine

### “DECLARE ALL”

*It is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome you all to this second edition of the Quarantine Newsletter. I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge an increasing trend in support and patronage during this year from our stakeholders; importers, exporters, government departments, public in general, overseas counterparts, Director and MAFFM Personnel as well as our hard working staff. We look forward to your continuing support in 2003 and years to come.*

*This quarter ends up in Christmas, and the New Year season. A lot of people are travelling, both overseas and into the country. It reminds me of the previous awareness campaign by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Protect New Zealand and our MAFFM Quarantine.*

**DECLARE ALL YOUR GOODS, AND DON'T GET FINED 200.00 NZ DOLLARS.** *This is for all passengers entering New Zealand.*

*My message is for all to declare all quarantinable goods on arrival at any port. If unsure, please declare. It works for any country, not only New Zealand, and it is certainly a need for Samoa.*

*Have an enjoyable Christmas and a Prosperous 2003.*

**SOIFUA!!**

## Samoa has got to be tough to be kind

*By Tofa E. Siitia*

We, friendly people, all know that we live in paradise, perfect crop growing conditions, healthy livestock, and a wonderful environment.

The sustainability of this paradise is the reason to have a conscientious and committed team of Quarantine Staff.

For years, these people have worked days and nights, to ensure that potentially devastating risks to our economy, our environment and our way of life are stopped at the border. Hence, quarantine work is extremely hard but essential.

*(cont. page 6)*

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Readers are invited to submit articles for publication in this newsletter by writing to:  
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# MAFFM - Quarantine to Samoa's National Disaster Committee

*By Asuao K. Pouono*

On the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2002, Quarantine approached the National Disaster Committee on quarantine matters to be considered in its national agenda. The focus of the meeting was on emergency response, in the event of any pest or disease incursion which can be of national concern.

The committee had the opportunity to witness a number of pests which are exotic to Samoa. The committee was also made aware of the possibility whereby a new pest can be as bad as other natural disasters such as cyclones.

References were made to the foot and mouth disease on cattle, swine fever on pigs, rabies on dogs, and newcastle disease on chickens, which are not present in Samoa. These can have serious impacts when present. Everyone had memories of the bad days with the african snail and particularly the taro leaf blight disease.

Members of the National Disaster Committee were quite receptive of the purpose of the meeting, and quarantine was left to forward a submission to the committee so that things can progress further. Some key result areas which were discussed included the emergency concept, emergency fund, legislation and people to be involved.

*Members of the National Disaster Committee during a discussion session with Ms Bonny Vogelzang - Plant Antomology/Pathology.*

The workshop was attended by representatives from the Prime Minister's Department, Customs, Police, SPREP, and MAFFM.

John Burton, Dr. Joanna Mckenzie and Bonny Vogelzang are acknowledged of their presentations. Contribution from all was very good.



*Foot and mouth disease on pig*

*Giant African Snail*

## Quarantine and the Cattle Shipment

*By Sami Ale*

The Samoa Agricultural Quarantine Service played a very important role in inspecting and checking the health of the animals from the Cattle Shipment which arrived Samoa on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December at Matautu Wharf. Carbage was disposed of using very strict quarantine guidelines. Quarantine surveillance is also a significant role which shall be a priority activity for all farmers receiving cattle. This can be achieved by reporting any animals that appear to be sick to the Ministry.

***Please, ALERT Quarantine if you have any sick animals.***

A big faamalo to all Quarantine Officers who were invloved with the Cattle Shipment.

Malo le tauata'i.

# Restriction to the Importation of Watermelon *Citrullus vulgaris* syn *lunatus* from Tonga

By Sami Ale

The Samoa Agricultural Quarantine Service has banned the importation of watermelon by passengers from Tonga, due to a threat posed by a species of fruit fly known as *Bactrocera facialis* which is not found in Samoa.

A protocol between the Department of Agriculture in Tonga and the Samoa Ministry of Agriculture was signed during 1999 and agreed to conditions of importation of watermelon from Tonga.

1. A permit is to be issued by the Quarantine Division of the Ministry of Agriculture from Samoa.
2. Watermelon has to be fumigated with 32gr of Methyl Bromide per cubic metre for 4 hours at 21° – 26° C at a loading of

not more than 50% capacity.

3. A phytosanitary Certificate is to accompany watermelon consignment from Tonga stating, chemical used, dosage rate, treatment time, temperature, chamber loading capacity and date of treatment.
4. Subject to Quarantine's normal inspection to determine release.

Tonga's Chief Quarantine Officer has confirmed that Tonga Quarantine will not be able to fumigate watermelons brought in by individuals due to cost, but can accommodate commercial consignments.



Principal Quarantine Officer with confiscated watermelons from Tonga

## Quarantine finds serious possible pest

By Sami Ale

After learning in August 2002 of the existence of a serious new pest of lettuce (Aphid) in New Zealand, our public was advised to ensure that this pest doesn't get into Samoa. Quarantine Officers were also alerted to be stringent on their inspection of imports.

This may have been the Aphid that was detected on Lettuce at the Faleolo Airport. A severe infestation by live aphids was found on lettuce in a consignment of mixed fruits and vegetables carried by a passenger from New Zealand. What made it worse, was the absence of an import permit and a phytosanitary certificate from New Zealand. This is one of the major problems we are currently faced with, and those are the documentations which were stressed in our earlier message. Work is currently underway to obtain a firm identification of the aphid found on the lettuce.

“This represents a very important message for all Samoans, and highlights the work of us all and Quarantine Officers” said Asuao Kirifi Pouono, Assistant Director for the Quarantine, when he learned of the finding. “While on a study tour of New Zealand I learnt of the existence of this pest and provided my Quarantine Officers with information and photos of the pest and told them to be vigilant. The pest is a major headache for lettuce growers and it can cause them to use pesticides that would not have been used.”

(cont. page 6)

# Quarantine Officers Develop Their Inspection Skills

By Sami Ale

November 2002 was a very busy time for Quarantine Officers with their training with Allan Chambers, SQIP Training Co-ordinator. Mr Chambers presented a further round of structured training, designed to develop the knowledge and skills of Quarantine Officers to an international standard.

The training was part classroom-based and part workplace, where Mr. Chambers worked alongside Quarantine Officers. While working at the Faleolo International Airport, Matautu Wharf and the Apia Post Office, Mr Chambers developed a manual of instruction for the staff, and commented on their duty performance.

To assist Quarantine Officers on decision making, Mr Chambers also prepared a Ready Reference for inspection at the Airport and Post Office. This reference describes the import conditions for most of the goods that officers will detect.

It also tells them how they should deal with the goods, to ensure that quarantine risks are appropriately addressed.

Working at the various operational areas can have its interesting moments. Officers get to meet interesting people and can also be the first to come face to face with the latest exotic pests.

While working at Faleolo International Airport, Officers detected and seized a consignment of fruits and vegetables that were declared by a passenger who had neither an import permit nor a certificate of inspection from New Zealand MAF. The package contained a lettuce which was heavily infested with an aphid thought to be the exotic lettuce aphid.

This finding generated considerable interest including one letter to a media editor, which called for the offender to be “thrown into cell 9

and throw away the key”.

The interest generated by the lettuce case seemed to rub off on other officers, who detected a slug and aphids on imported commercial produce a few days later. Within days, another Quarantine Officer had prevented the departure of a local ferry at 3 o'clock in the morning after he detected giant African Snails amongst the cargo of electric cables bound for Savaii. The infested cables were removed from the wharf before the ferry was cleared to depart.

“These actions demonstrate that Quarantine Officers are beginning to put into practice what they have learnt” said Asuao Kirifi Pouono, Assistant Director for Quarantine. “Their improved knowledge is giving them confidence to act in the interest of Samoa. This is a major step forward in preventing the entry of pests and diseases”, he said.



*Quarantine Officers listening to MAFFM Veterinary Officer, Sina Taulealo, as she trains them in animal physiology and animal disease*

# Quarantine, our first line of defence against foreign pests and diseases.

By Sami Ale

Quarantine plays a vital role in protecting any country from pests and diseases. Therefore, quarantine measures must be continuously strengthened, parallel to staff being efficient and effective in carrying out quarantine procedures.

A pest incursion can be extremely disastrous and expensive. A good example is the introduction of taro leaf blight disease caused by a fungus *Phytophthora colocasiae* into Samoa. It crippled the taro industry, affected this staple food, and has influenced the livelihood of thousands

It is for us to learn from such cases, and it warrants ensuring that all quarantine measures are followed, to prevent the entry of pests and diseases into the country. It is also a vital responsibility for the general public.

An incursion can happen without much notice. A Queensland fruit fly (*Bactrocera tryoni*) was first detected in Punanganui, Rarotonga on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2001. The suspect source of entry was the pile of rubbish from ships and airlines which should be incinerated. The Ministry of Agriculture in Rarotonga has started an ef-

fectiveness program

one of the most species in Australia occur in New Polynesia and species attacks edible and wild tables.

## First Impressions

John Burton (SQIP Team Leader)

I arrived to take up my position as Team Leader for the Quarantine Improvement Project in early September, 2002. It is difficult not to be taken aback by the natural beauty of Samoa, the friendliness of the people, and the simple family way of life.

Although I had come to Samoa to work (not for a holiday!), it seemed right that these thoughts should have been the first thing on my mind.

Biosecurity, and in particular Quarantine issues, should always be at the forefront of people's thoughts, either as resident or as visitors to Samoa. The natural heritage of the Samoan countryside is something to be treasured. The friendliness of the people, safe in the knowledge that there is nothing in the environment to harm them (snakes, poisonous spiders etc.), and the togetherness of the family, nurtured by faith and a sense of belonging, living in paradise.

Samoa is lucky in that it has a small but dedicated team of Quarantine Officers working all hours of the day and night to ensure that paradise status. I hope that in my two years here I am able to assist the Quarantine Division in some small way to further strengthen the borders and keep exotic and dangerous plant and animal pests and diseases out of Samoa.



Passengers of Polynesian on their arrival





*Live aphids found on lettuce at the  
Faleolo Airport at the end of November*

*(cont. from page 1)*

## Samoa has got to be tough to be kind....

There are many pathways whereby pests and diseases can enter Samoa; aircraft, passengers, ships, cargoes, postal items, and many others.

Quarantine Officers understand that passengers and visitors from overseas wish to bring gifts and other things for their loved ones when they come to Samoa. At the same time, they must understand to comply with quarantine requirements, since it can be disappointing when some items are withheld by officers and are not allowed entry into Samoa.

Some passengers get angry and upset with the Officer. Some try to use their influence to persuade the Officers to let things in. Such people are putting our environment at risk.

All quarantine principles are not to be compromised. Quarantine Officers shall not make exception for anyone, otherwise, it could lead to many problems.

That meat could carry foot and mouth disease. That fruit could have a dangerous fruit fly. That dog allowed in without going through quarantine overseas could have rabies.

We all take pride in our life, our sense of generosity, our gifting nature, our willingness to accommodate others needs, but Quarantine must come first and must be tough to be kind to keep Samoa the way we want it - our paradise in the Pacific.

*Inspection carried out at Faleolo*

*(from page 3)*

## Q'tine finds serious pest

Again the fruits and vegetables containing the infested lettuce were brought into Samoa without an import permit and had not been inspected by MAF officials before leaving New Zealand. If the consignment had been inspected before leaving New Zealand, MAF would have found the infestation and prevented export of the consignment. "That is one of the reasons why the Samoa Agricultural Quarantine Service insist that you must have an import permit and you must get fruits and vegetables inspected in the country of export."

Passengers need to consider the risks they are posing to Samoa's farmers when they try to import without following the rules. "We were fortunate this time, but such imports must stop otherwise we may get a pest or disease that causes worse trouble, than the Taro Blight." Travellers should obtain an import permit from the Quarantine Division office on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the ACB Building before leaving for overseas. If you don't obtain a permit you should not bring fruits, vegetables or plants with you. The Quarantine regulations are there to protect all Samoans.

Quarantine will be continuing to review and strengthen our quarantine procedures in the months ahead so as to provide the best level of protection possible for Samoa from unwanted pests and diseases. We do however encourage travellers to be careful what they seek to bring back to Samoa and to declare any plants, fruit or vegetables to quarantine staff on arrival in Samoa.

## STAFF PROFILE

As a new recruit to Quarantine, I am happy to be part of the team. I was impressed with the positive change in the division, compared to the old days at Savalalo 15 years ago.

I thought of my old boss Mr. Taimalelagi Edward Thomsen who is retired, and his small office, when I saw Tofa Eteuati and Tanifa Isaia with computers. It is this kind of environment that you could only dream of in the past 15 years.

So much has happened and it is pleasing to see Quarantine growing during the last few years.

After 9 years with the Quarantine, I resigned in 1986 and migrated to New Zealand to look for "greener pastures". It was at that time, I started introducing computers, instead of overtime payments.

After a few years in New Zealand and New Caledonia, I came back to Samoa in 1992 with my wife and two adorable young daughters. Some business initiatives, which failed one after the other included, a retail shop, taxis and other flea markets, kept me busy at home. The only successful investment is my Ice Pop Production, which is flowing very well.

After 15 years in the private sector, I feel that I have some experience which can be useful in my new post as a Senior Quarantine Officer – Technical Policy.

I am looking forward to meeting new challenges in my new job.

*By Tapeni Afamasaga. F.*

### New Staff Recruits

Quarantine Newsletter Editorial team would like to welcome new staff members who are now joining the Quarantine workforce. They are Peka Salapo, Tapeni Afamasaga and Sami Ale. Peka Salapo is now appointed as an Administration Assistant, Tapeni Afamasaga is appointed as a Senior Quarantine Officer - Technical Policy and Sami Ale as a Senior Quarantine Officer - Public Awareness.

### Retirees

Mr. Tai Tofaeono has retired from his position as a Quarantine Assistant after serving for almost twenty years. Mr Galuega Alapae has early retirement from being a Quarantine Assistant due to medical reasons.

Fa'amalo le galulue!!

### Further Studies

We would like to congratulate Mr. Joseph Tauati, Quarantine Officer who has left for post graduate studies in Japan under JICA funding.

Good Luck and God Bless!!

### Overseas Training.

Quarantine Officer, Mr Alapati Molilupe, represented the Samoa Agricultural Quarantine Service to a training on "Thermal Treatment for the Disinfestation of Fruit Flies", which was held in Japan from the 14<sup>th</sup> of May to 4<sup>th</sup> September 2002. The training was organized and funded by the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA).

The objectives of the workshop were

(1) Treatments applied to fruits before exporting such as Vapor Heat Treatment (VHT), Cold Treatment (CT) and Hot Water Dipping (HWD), (2) Preparing technical reports and (3) Methodologies used for fruit fly rearing.

According to Molilupe, the training was of great value to his work as a Quarantine Officer. Unfortunately, some equipment may not be available in Samoa.

Registrar Pesticides Mr Siaoosi Matalavea also attended the 9th Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC9) of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade held at the Bundeshaus in Bonn, Germany from 30th September to 4th October 2002.

The main focus of this 9th session was on making necessary decisions regarding the extension of the term of office or the appointment of new members of the Interim Chemical Review Committee (ICRC). Mr Matalavea would like to utilise this issue of the Quarantine Newsletter to register his sincere thanks to the Director of MAFFM for the opportunity given to him to represent Samoa to this meeting.

### *Christmas Greetings*

*Assistant Director and Staff of the Quarantine Division would like to wish all our Stakeholders and Customers a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous 2003.*

# QUARANTINE DIVISION STAFF



Assistant Director  
Asuao Kirifi Pouono



Tofa Eteuati Siitia  
Principal Quarantine Officer



Siaosi Matalavea  
Registrar Pesticides



Sami Ale. F.  
Senior Quarantine Officer (P.A)



Tapani Afamasaga F.  
Senior Quarantine Officer  
(T.P)



Pine Paenoa  
Senior Quarantine Officer  
(B.A)



Alapati Molilupe



Fa'ataualofa Matai



Vesi Ioane

## Quarantine Officers

## Quarantine Assistants



Peka Salapo



Junior Patau



Tovine Seiuli



Falema'i Seiagao



Afolau Malae



Paulo Siliato



Akerei Leau



Televave Magele



Mautoatasi Olamaleva