

Prevention working group meeting
Hawaii Department of Agriculture – Plant Quarantine meeting room
September 15, 2004

Meeting opened by Neil Reimer, chairperson at 9:10 am

Reviewed agenda topics.

At the last meeting the goal was to gather proposals for the prevention funding available from HISC. There are proposals before the working group, but the total funding request is greater than the total available from the HISC. Approximately \$900,090 will be given to HDOA to disperse.

General discussion on how to address which proposals should be funded and whether to fund fully or at decreased level. It was stated that the goal is to have a recommendation for the HISC. It was stated that the HISC is scheduled to approve the monetary break down of the budget between the working groups, asking them to approve anything beyond that level. The working group should set priorities for the year and brief the HISC on what has been decided.

The proposals under discussion are:

Request for funds for HDOA Prevention Efforts - \$923,380 and \$680,092
(the two budgets differ in the number of inspection and number of hires)
Prevention Projects for DAR – \$86,000
Requested funds for West Nile virus surveillance/response - \$201,767
Brown Tree Snake Inspections - \$100,000
(requested verbally by Mike Pitzler, written proposal not available)

Neil Reimer outlined the HDOA proposal that consists of a series of blitz inspections at various ports of entry (FedEx, ups) and do 100% inspections for a week. They would do maritime ports for inter-island. The process would give them a good handle on what is being missed by not having inspections. When blitz inspections are not happening the aids would be entering data and preparing specimens for identification. Aides would also assist inspectors in regular inspections, so the inspections would be more thorough. In the end there would be tangible data from blitz inspections detailing what is coming in and data from the enhanced regular inspections which would illustrate how it could be more effective. There would also be the data from the traditional inspections which would show the difference. The process would illustrate how the HISC money is used and that it could obtain good results.

Question was raised about the effect of data gained from blitz inspections of Kahului on Maui. HDOA representatives stated that the facilities were shown to be inadequate, now a new facility, an actual inspection facility is being built. The other tangible result was a demonstration of the need for an increase in the

number of inspectors. There was no funding from legislature but received six inspectors from DOT, so there currently are more staff on Maui. They also discovered the need to keep better data. A database is being designed for the Kahului Airport. They are trying to design the database so that it could be expanded statewide if funding becomes available. The database is web based, the intent is to make data available to the public.

The blitz inspections at Kahului made it apparent what the pathways are. Organic produce is clearly a risk. The blitz focused the state to increase quarantines and inspections, it was clear that they couldn't do an adequate job. It remains to be seen if they can actually mitigate risk. The question is whether more money will make a difference if there is not also an emphasis on biocontrol issues.

Idea put forward that if each proposal reduced their budget slightly, then \$90,000 could go to Guam for the brown tree snake inspections and it would equal the HISC total available dollars.

DOH says they can reduce their proposal and still meet their goals. DAR concurs. DAR states they could cut the outreach component of their budget and try other means for doing outreach, perhaps a small grant from another source. HDOA states they could reduce the number of blitz inspections.

It is reported that the Department of Insular Affairs has found \$300,000 of end of year money that could go to support Wildlife Services on Guam (the money can only be used on Guam). If so, then HISC could hold back on supporting WS until later, the decision could be postponed until October, at which time more information about WS needs to avoid lay-offs will be available. Mike Pitzler will be giving an update on the brown tree snake situation in Guam at the upcoming HISC meeting.

General discussion of how HISC approves the total amount this working group can allocate to proposals but the group can change its allocations within the amount approved by the HISC. It is suggested that the working group present two budgets to the HISC, based on the needs of Wildlife Services. First scenario budget would require all proposals to receive a decrease in the amount awarded over the total proposed and WS would receive an allotment. The second budget assumes WS needs are met by other sources and proposals are awarded the amounts requested (as listed above).

First scenario:

Department of Health - \$175,000
Department of Aquatic Resources - \$75,000
Plant Quarantine (HDOA) - \$650,000
Wildlife Services - \$90,000

Report on discussion in public outreach working group about how to help other working groups translate data into a product that sells what they are doing to the public and to the state legislature. One suggestion is that during blitz inspections an aide follows crews, recording the inspections using a digital camera. HDOA stated that they did plan to hire aides by November and provide monthly updates to the legislature. The video suggestion was thought to be too expensive.

Red Imported Fire Ants (RIFA) Hawaii's participation is questionable since there is no longer a coordinator, FWS passed money to TNC to look for resources, this money has been passed to the Pacific Ant Prevention Plan, based in Samoa. RIFA and little fire ants will be addressed during the blitz inspections. The major pathway is mail order plants, mostly arriving through FedEx.

There is an effort to try and increase the overlap between the things one looks for and the things one finds as recent established pests. The focus is, to potentially, look at items that are not currently being looked at. This proposal is to look predominantly at agriculture, which is known to be a high risk. All the details have not been fully worked out. There will be new dogs coming on board next year. Right now the dogs are focused fully on brown tree snakes.

DOH has discovered a new mosquito species on the Big Island. They have found it breeding, it is definitely there. They're working on identification. It does not match known North American or Pacific varieties.

Budget discussion closed, Chairperson will present to HISC at the September 21 meeting.

Legislative issue brought up; Maui city council have actually read the Kahului Pest Risk Assessment and they now want to introduce legislation to ban imports of organic agriculture. The basis is that we can grow our own organic produce and it would benefit diversified agriculture.

BTS will probably come up again during the next legislative session. Question as to the status of discussions with Matson's (began last session). HDOA staff stated that Matson's are still concerned about non-funded mandates. They are concerned about pulling off a good inspection of sea cargo coming to Hawai'i, their concern is that Hawai'i needs to fund inspectors on Guam to look at household items, etc.; how they are packed, get data on the pathway risk. It has been suggested that PQ send staff to study this for two years to develop hard data, which would include documenting the actual flow of paperwork, pop open containers, get a feel of what it would take to establish a quality program. HDOA does not think WS will use the \$300,000 from OIA to do the Hawai'i study, but will use it to support the usual level of inspections, which have been cut.

Discussion began on going back and re-considering budget breakdown. Outcome of discussion is that Hawai`i specific inspections on Guam is important and the working group supports it. It is agreed that the Prevention working group will go with the budget recommendation referred to as First Scenario, whether or not WS receives money for DIA. This allocation allows WS to receive \$90,000 of the proposed funding, allowing WS to carry out Hawai`i specific inspections.

It is noted that reporting will be necessary. Demonstrating how the budget was spent, using state budget lines, creating a narrative/picture of what happened. Also, should note if HISC funds allow recipients to receive additional matching funds?

Meeting adjourned. 10:25 am