

Prevention/EDRR Working Group  
Quarterly Meeting Notes August 31, 2022, 1:30 to 3:30pm

**Participants:** Helmuth Rogg (HDOA), Mike Melzer (UH-CTAHR), Josh Fisher (USFWS), Rebecca Chong (CBP), Dorothy Alontaga (APHIS), Becky Azama (HDOA), Roshan Manandhar (UH-CTAHR), Helen Sofaer (USGS), Forest & Kim Starr (MISC), Franny Brewer (BISC), Chuck Chimera (HISC/HPWRA), Chelsea Arnott (HISC), Elizabeth Speith (HISC), Christy Martin (CGAPS), Kailee Lefebvre (CGAPS), Darcy Oishi (HDOA), Arisa Barcinas (HDOA/CRB Response), Koki Atcheson (CRB Response), Keith Weiser (CRB Response), Sheldon Arakawa (APHIS), Janet Ashman (Hawai'i Farm Bureau) Rob Hauff (DLNR), Adam Knox (MISC), Elliott Parsons (HI Pacific RISSC), Leyla Kaufman (HISC), Stephanie Easley (CGAPS)

**Meeting Notes:**

1. **Introductions:** Co-chairs Mike Melzer and Helmuth Rogg welcomed the Prevention/EDRR Working Group. We did introductions.

2. **Regulatory Updates.**

a. Rebecca Chong provided an update on recent Hawaii Risk Assessment Committee (HIRAC) Pest Risk Committee activities. HIRAC continued with joint agency quarterly operations.

b. Dorothy Alontaga provided an APHIS update, including:

- APHIS continues to inspect plants that come from foreign countries and items going from Hawai'i to the mainland.
- APHIS is working on the suggestions submitted for funding under section 7721 of the Plant Protection Act. Suggestions submitted by Hawai'i requesters will compete against suggestions submitted from all the States. As always, there is greater demand than there is allocated funding. We will have to wait and see how the review team and USDA evaluates Hawai'i's submissions.
- APHIS is working with other agencies to determine how to address the coffee rust situation in Hawai'i.
- APHIS is implementing a new system to apply for import permits. It is intended to be more user-friendly.

c. Becky Azama provided an update from HDOA-PQB, including:

- Hawai'i Island: Soil continues to be collected from privately owned vehicles entering Hawai'i Island. A resident surrendered a box of "Mystery Snails" that were imported without a permit. They turned out to be a type of apple snails. A store owner caught an alligator lizard in a non-ag container. PQ inspectors retrieved the lizard from the store.
- Maui: A container containing feed was found to be infested with beetles. The importer elected to have the feed treated. Coconut husks were found in a truck arriving from Oahu. Myrtaceae species are regularly found.
- Maui PQB statistics since April 1, 2022: 200 violations were recorded with action taken on 500 parcels of prohibited, infested, or infected materials. 103 insect interceptions were made with 41 including species not known to occur (NKO) in Hawai'i. 319 infested parcels were intercepted with 164 including species not known to occur. 34 disease interceptions were made, with 32 of them not known to occur in Hawai'i. 70 infested parcels were detected with 30 having not known to occur

species. 66 non-compliant interceptions of prohibited or restricted plants were made with 20 interceptions containing Myrtaceae plants, cut plant parts, or fruits. Most were refused entry into Hawai'i with the remaining being treated.

- There were 9 interisland insect interceptions; 7 of the 9 were fruits, cut flowers, and cut foliage infested with LFA. 34 infested parcels were treated and destroyed by freezing.

- Oahu: A gopher snake was found by a store owner in Kapolei and was captured by HPD.

- Recent skunk captures: On August 15, 2022, DLNR captured a skunk on Maui at Kanaha Pond Wildlife Sanctuary. The trap was intended to catch feral cats and mongoose. The rabies test on the skunk was negative. Other skunks have been captured on Maui at a trucking company in August 2018 and at Kahului Harbor in December 2020. A skunk was captured at Honolulu Harbor during each of February 2018, July 2021, and June 2022.

**3. Speaker:** Josh Fisher presented on the development and utilization of incompatible insect technique to potentially control mosquitos in Hawai'i, an urgent conservation need to protect native bird species. He provided background on what this technique is, how it utilizes incompatible strains of the Wolbachia bacteria, and how recent advances in the technique have increased its utility. He provided examples of its successful use around the world to control mosquitos for public health applications. He explained that US Fish and Wildlife Service is interested in funding the use of incompatible insect technique in Hawai'i to address introduced mosquitos (*Culex* sp.) that spread avian malaria among Hawaiian forest birds. The decline of these bird species is a conservation crisis. Climate change is allowing introduced mosquito species to survive in areas at higher elevations which have been the last holdout for some imperiled bird species.

Josh described the work that needs to be done before the technique could be used in Hawai'i, including complying with the extensive regulatory requirements, addressing logistical issues presented by remote forest use in Hawai'i, and conducting community engagement. He set out a potential timeline for the release of incompatible male mosquitos in Hawai'i, which could begin in late 2023 or early 2024. This effort is a collaboration of more than 20 organizations. Helmuth noted that while this is not a typical EDRR project it is important to understand that the use of incompatible insect technique has been successful worldwide and does not require the use of genetically modified organisms. The group had some interesting discussion about the potential use of the technique for public health concerns in Hawai'i and use on other Pacific Islands.

**4. New Pest Alerts:** Helmuth and Darcy reported on new pest finds in Hawai'i. HDOA and CTAHR continue to detect new species on a regular basis. Mike noted that the protocols put in place under the communications task have been effective and useful for HDOA and CTAHR communications regarding new pest detections. Helmuth noted that Spotted Lantern Fly is currently not known to occur in Hawai'i but it is a pest to watch for here. The National Plant Board meeting in July discussed the potential for this pest to expand its range in the US and the potential for it to arrive at air and maritime ports.

### **5. On-going Tasks:**

- a. CRB Task: Koki provided an update on Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle rapid response, early detection, and treatments. Koki iterated that CRB Response does not do enforcement actions. She noted there was a detection of CRB in Laie in August, which is the furthest detection on the west side. Koki thanked Forest and Kim Starr for their help in clearing up a mis-report of CRB in Maui.

Koki noted that a CRB breeding site was found in Palehua, which is at a higher elevation than past detections.

Koki gave a brief description of the CRB Interim Rule (22-1 Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR)) which became effective on July 1, 2022. It regulates the movement of CRB host material on and from Oahu. Compliance agreements are required for businesses that work with CRB host material. So far, 23 companies have signed agreements and CRB Response is supporting HDOA with outreach and education. Visit [crbhawaii.org/compliance](http://crbhawaii.org/compliance) for more information.

The interim rule can be in effect for one year, so HDOA is working hard to develop the final rule and start the formal rulemaking process. The permanent CRB rule will be added to HDOA's Plant Intrastate Rules, chapter 72 HAR). The rulemaking process requires HDOA to compile all of chapter 72 so HDOA is looking at ways to update that chapter as part of the process.

b. Firewood Pathway: Stephanie provided an update on this task. HDOA held public informational meetings on the potential firewood quarantine on May 19 and June 22, 2022. In preparation for those meetings, HDOA developed and circulated a preliminary draft of the firewood administrative rules. The rules will be a new subchapter at the end of HDOA's current Plant Import Rules (chapter 70 of HAR). This rulemaking will start after the CRB rulemaking (chapter 72 HAR) is underway.

c. Communications Protocols: The first HDOA/CTAHR meeting to carry out this task was held in March 2021. At that meeting protocols were developed for the sharing of new pest finds between HDOA and CTAHR. Those protocols have been put in place and are working well.

The second HDOA/CRAHR meeting was held on May 21, 2021. That meeting included a presentation by an HDOA Education Specialist regarding general requirements for moving species and samples.

The final meeting of this task to discuss the specific requirements for the movement of species and samples by UH researchers was scheduled for November 16, 2021. It had to be rescheduled because of coffee leaf rust meetings. We have never been able to reschedule the final meeting.

Mike developed a list of scenarios involving the movement of plant, animal, and soil samples. HDOA is working on providing the permit and other requirements a researcher would need for each of the scenarios. Jonathan Ho provided HDOA's update of this task. He said HDOA is continuing to review the list of scenarios and hopes to develop a document similar to an SOP that CTAHR and other UH researchers can utilize to ensure they obtain all needed permits or other approvals prior to moving species or samples.

## **6. Other Discussion:**

- Kailee Lefebvre provided a summary/update on a CGAPS project: a new interactive biosecurity display at HNL. CGAPS has contracted Bishop Museum (for the design, construction, and installation) for this project, and is partnering with HISC, HDOA, and USDA. The display will target returning local travelers (domestic flight). The display will be located at the new Hawaiian Airlines wing at Daniel K. Inouye International Airport. The display will have three interactive components: 1) Be an Ag Inspector game; 2) booth brush station; and 3) who protects Hawaii (featuring folks that work on biosecurity in the State, including volunteers). The display will also have information about amnesty bins (what goes there, etc). The display will also have information about what is that we are

trying to protect (information about Hawaii uniqueness) and information about some of the worst offenders (featuring some high-profile invasive species). The install is set for December 2022. Once the script is finalized we can ask for input from this group. If there is any interest to review the final content please contact Kailee Lefebvre: kaileehl@hawaii.edu

- Pathways of Introduction: No update was provided at this meeting; this task has been in standby mode for a while. Helmuth was able to get some interception data from USDA (interception data from commodities that come from foreign locations). HDOA is also working on gathering information HDOA interception data (for commodities that come from the mainland USA). The task group is also updating the limited distribution list. An update will be provided at the next working group meeting.

- Diagnostic Tools for Early Detections: Mike Melzer will provide a final update on this task at the next meeting. Mike will also provide training (small workshop to demonstrate that tool and see if that will be of utility at inspection locations) for HDOA and possibly USDA inspectors in October or November.

**7. Next meeting:** Helmuth and Mike wrapped up the meeting, thanked participants, and indicated we will set a date for the next quarterly meeting which will be in January 2023.