

KONA RISK ASSESSMENT
February 19, 2006 – March 4, 2006

Purpose

- To assess the risk of agricultural, environmental and public health pests introduced to Hawaii through ports of entry in Kona.
- To analyze data collected during the fourteen-day assessment period to evaluate the effectiveness of pest interception and prevention under current staffing numbers.

Areas Covered During Assessment

- Air Cargo – 100% inspection of each type of commodity: plants, cut flowers and plant parts.
- Board Aircraft (domestic inbound) – Inspectors monitored passengers as they deplaned and later boarded aircraft to inspect for insect pests (mosquitoes, vector of WNV) as well as agricultural items left on board.
- Baggage Claim – Passenger surveillance in baggage claim area. When available, detector dog teams were brought in to work the area.
- Maritime Cargo – Ocean containers (produce sites) and feed (container yard) inspection.
- Private Aircraft – Passengers, baggage and aircraft were inspected to determine pest risk.
- Interisland Air Cargo – Night freighters were inspected for agricultural commodities which originated from neighbor islands or were cleared for interisland movement.
- Certified Nurseries – Little Fire Ant surveys using peanut butter bait sticks.
- Airport Cargo Area – Red Imported Fire Ant survey using Spam bait (following PPC protocol).
- UPS/Federal Express – UPS and Federal Express sort their parcels in the morning.

General Observations

Air Cargo

- Average of 8-10 domestic flights per day.
- Air cargo mostly on UA 53 (SFO) and UA 59 (LAX). 4-6 lots of produce may be ready for inspection at the same time, and complaints have been made as to

which importer should get inspected first. The rest have to wait in the sun while one inspector makes his/her way through each lot.

- Kona Airport has a large sterilizer that is regularly maintained but remains unused. The sterilizer was installed by DOT as a requirement for international flights but foreign trash is flown to Oahu for destruction.
- Matson offered to loan PQ a 24 ft. container to use as a freezer. Kona has one large chest freezer but that would prove inadequate for destroying the amount usually generated during a risk assessment. We paid Big Island Parcel Service \$210 for roundtrip drayage of the container and about \$50 per day for electricity for an estimated total of \$950. Container was set up in front of BIPS cargo station at the airport.
- Air cargo on evening flights are usually inspected in the dark (with only a flashlight) on a baggage cart parked near the Kona office (Airline cargo offices shut down at night). During the risk assessment, halogen light sets were brought out to illuminate the area, however, it was inconvenient because the only outlet HDOA had access to meant the extension cord needed to be unplugged every time a vehicle passed by.
- During the day, UA will move the cargo to a non-AOA area (parking lot in front of loading dock) so importers can unload for inspection. Some freight will remain inside UA warehouse if importer requests.
- Kona airport has no refrigeration that HDOA can use to hold commodities that are pending insect or disease identification. Aloha, Hawaiian and BIPS have refrigeration space but will only hold items belonging to their customers.
- Disposing of treated (frozen) commodities has proven to be a problem in Kona. All the dumpsters at the airport are privately owned. The nearest transfer station is for household trash only (not government or commercial). The Puuanahulu Transfer Station (for commercial and non-private) is about 20 minutes away and there is a charge for disposal.
- On the way to the dump, one box of bell peppers fell off onto the road. We stopped to pick up the box and what peppers we could safely gather from the busy highway. Cargo nets for covering the flat bed are recommended for all PQ trucks.
- During the Kona risk assessment, multiple lots of fresh strawberries were destroyed due to infestations of aphids, which are not known to occur (NKO) in the state. One lot of organic celery was heavily infested with slugs and had to be destroyed. One lot of bok choy was also destroyed for harboring slugs. Much of the organic leafy vegetables such as lettuce, parsley and bell peppers were infested with insects. The produce was destroyed because it either contained NKO pests or the infestation was considered to be heavy.

Baggage Claim Area

- The baggage claims at the airport are unsecured, open areas. There is no PA system available and although there are Agriculture counters in each baggage claim area, there is no notice board to post the names of passengers the inspectors wish to see.

- Detector dog presence during the risk assessment was well received. Undeclared items were intercepted by the dog team. Overall response to the dog by passengers and airport workers was favorable (see dog stats for interceptions).

Boarding Aircraft

- There may be up to 11 domestic commercial flights arriving in Kona on any given day. Kona International Airport has no jet bridge and passengers must disembark the planes on stairwells. Inspectors meeting flights will wait at the bottom for an agent to bring down the agricultural declaration forms. During the risk assessment and after the last passenger deplaned, the aircraft was boarded and inspected for plant materials, animals and pests. Special attention was given to searching for mosquitoes in an effort to determine this route as a potential pathway for the introduction of West Nile Virus. No mosquitoes or other live insects were discovered during this risk assessment.
- For the most part, the agents and flight crews were accommodating and accepting of us. One confrontation did ensue during one aircraft inspection. Inspectors boarded a UA plane after the passengers got off and was immediately told by an aircraft mechanic to wait until everyone got off the plane. The Hilo supervisor intervened and was able to rectify the situation and the mechanic apologized for the misunderstanding.

Maritime Cargo

- There are a few produce sites that regularly import entire Matson/Horizon Lines containers of produce. Because of the barge schedule, the containers are available for inspection on the same day at the same time. There is generally one inspector available to do produce site inspections and this must be done in the mornings before the first flight comes in. To alleviate the morning work rush, additional staffing in Kona is needed to adequately cover morning produce inspection and late evening flights.
- The container yard is in Kawaihae Harbor (about 40 minutes from airport). Feed containers are inspected there by request only. The containers are on chassis and the only way to get a good look at what's inside is to climb up the bumper (ramp not provided as it is on Oahu). There are times when the inspector drives to the yard where the container is either not ready for inspection or won't be ready that day. The inspector has to decide whether to wait for the container (and be late to catch a flight), drive all the way back at a later time, or come back another day (importer will be upset because their animals need to eat). Additional staff is recommended to prevent staff from being stretched too thin.

Private Aircraft

- Kona staff will board private aircraft only when time permits. There are roughly 70 private aircraft per month that fly into Kona directly from the mainland US. Much of these flights are not met and local agents and flight crews have gotten into a habit of not filling out the required declaration forms for lack of HDOA presence.

Interisland Air Cargo

- The bulk of perishable air cargo come to Kona on the Aloha cargo freighters that fly in and out during the late evening and early morning hours. Much of the produce, cut flowers and plant material are pre-cleared at the first port of entry. Kona staff does not normally inspect these items. During the risk assessment, interisland inbound was inspected to determine the pest risk of this pathway.

Certified Nurseries

- Inspectors surveyed all 16 certified nurseries in Kona for presence of the Little Fire Ant (LFA). No nurseries tested positive for LFA.

Airport Cargo Area

- PPC in Kona regularly surveys the airport for Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA) every 6 months. As it was time for another check, USDA-PPC allowed us to put out bait (Spam) to test for RIFA in the same locations normally baited. The airport cargo area tested negative for RIFA.

UPS/Federal Express

- Both UPS and Federal Express have morning sorts but Kona staff does not inspect inbound parcels unless they are called in for a particular item. All of the parcels were thought to be pre-cleared at the first port of entry, however, during the risk assessment it was discovered that there are often containers specifically marked for Kona which transit through Honolulu. These parcels are not presented for inspection in Honolulu. A shipment of live fish was intercepted during the risk assessment. Neither the agent nor the importer knew live fish required Agricultural clearance.

Cost of Risk Assessment

- The risk assessment was conducted for a total of 14 consecutive days in which data was collected for all domestic inbound. Data was also collected for interisland inbound as time permitted. Present Kona staffing was supplemented by an average of 6 additional HDOA inspectors per day of the assessment. Most of these inspectors were flown to Kona in order to help collect data from intense inspection and monitoring of passengers, aircraft and cargo. The workforce in Kona more than doubled during the risk assessment at a cost of \$53,893. This cost covered inspectors' overtime pay (including fringe benefits), per diem, rental car, airfare and hotel accommodations.

Recommendation

The current staffing in Kona is comprised of a single working supervisor and two inspectors. Staffing levels have not kept up with the increase in direct domestic inbound flights over the years. A high risk pathway continues to be domestic cargo. More time could be spent inspecting each shipment with additional inspectors to cover other areas. An additional two to four inspectors would begin to adequately cover inspection duties and allow the work schedule some flexibility during staff vacation/sick leaves.



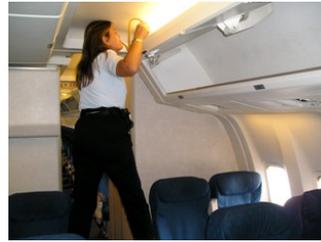
Infested produce destroyed in freezer.



Radishes imported without a certificate of treatment were destroyed.



Feed and media inspection of containers on chassis.



Aircraft boarded and inspected for hitchhiking pests such as the mosquito.



Air cargo inspection done outside at the loading dock.



FedEx freight inspection is done outside on the ramp area.



Detector dog teams in the baggage area.



Large capacity sterilizer housed in cargo building.