

MAUI RISK ASSESSMENT

June 18, 2006 –July 1, 2006

Cargo

The first week of the Maui Risk Assessment (MRA) focused on the inspection of Domestic Cargo and Inter Island Cargo. Without the MRA, there is usually one inspector responsible for most of the inspection of all domestic cargo. Other inspectors come to help when possible, but usually for a short time between flights. Also, the Maui Staff does not conduct inter island inspection on a regular basis. Therefore, the MRA's focus was to see what would happen if there were more inspectors conducting inspections.

During regular inspections, inspectors don't have time to do a thorough inspection. Their focus is on "high risk" items because of the volume of cargo that needs inspection. Most, if not all inspectors do not have time to do interceptions on all insects and diseases that are found. If they recognize the pest as occurring in Hawaii, or see a light infestation, the commodity is released and no samples are taken.

During the MRA, there was an increase of interceptions because of the addition of inspectors. Inspectors were able to check at least one of each commodity in each shipment and were able to take their time. This is important in the inspection process because there is a threat of a new pest on an item that is usually not inspected. Some insects look similar, so that there is potential for the inspector to identify an insect as one that is in Hawaii, but may actually be unknown to occur (NKO) in the state. Another benefit of more inspectors at cargo is the reduction of stress on the inspector. With the increase in manpower, inspectors are not rushed to finish their inspections and move on to the next importer. They also have someone to consult with if they need help or have any questions.

There were 97 insect and disease interceptions during this two-week period. During the first week, there were 75 interceptions with the MRA inspection on domestic cargo. The second week had a total of 22 interceptions without the assistance of extra inspectors.

Inter island cargo inspections were conducted and there were a limited amount of interceptions. Because of the limited manpower, most of the inspections were conducted in the early morning and late evening. In the second week of the MRA, the focus changed to UPS on selected days. The UPS inspections were conducted in the early morning which conflicted with the inter island inspection. Therefore, there was no early morning inter island inspection conducted during that time. This MRA period had six insect interceptions and zero disease interceptions. A shipment of salad cut greens was infested with a blotch miner (NKO), so it was rejected.

UPS

UPS inspections were conducted on three days and there were no interceptions. We did inspect some agricultural items, but there were no rejections. On Thursday, June 29, a dog team was present. This was the first time the dog team has worked at UPS. They had no positive response to any of the packages searched. Both dogs were 100% on the practice targets. The dogs worked for approximately one and a half hours.

FedEx

FedEx inspections were conducted on four days of the second week. There was one rejection of significance. On Sunday, June 25, a shipment of stock was rejected at the airport for being infested with Nysices, which is a NKO insect. On Tuesday, June 27, the same importer had a shipment from the same shipper. HDOA specialist Van Kashiwamura recognized the box and shipper. On further inspection, he discovered it was a shipment of stock infested with Nysices for the same importer. So, the importer tried to get their shipment through FedEx because it was rejected at the airport.

Passengers who do not go to baggage claim

We conducted a study for the first time to see how many people do not go to the baggage claim area. There were three places where we had people posted. These locations were chosen because of their isolation from the inter island flights. From gate 23 through 39 there are no inter island flights. The first location was by gate 23 because we could observe how many people transfer to inter island flights. The second location was located by the escalator, where passengers arrive to go either to the rent a car or baggage claim areas. The third location was by our inspection counter in baggage claim located by an exit.

We found that there was a significant amount of people who take transfer flights out of Maui. When we observed the Hawaiian Airlines flights, there were significant numbers of passengers for that time period at gate 23. From my own personal experience, I also noticed that there are quite a few transfers for Aloha Airlines flights. There is also a chance that people passing through gate 23 did not know or did not read the sign where the baggage claim was, and may still end up in the baggage claim.

The rent a car area was second in the amount of people that did not go into baggage claim. There was a mixture of people that had carry-on baggage and people who get their rent a car and meet their party back a baggage claim. There were some people who went outside to smoke a cigarette.

Baggage claim had the lowest amount of people. Due to staffing shortages, it was decided that this was a "low risk" area and was observed when possible. Otherwise, the focus was at the other two areas.

Dog in Gate Area

We conducted an inspection in the gate area of one domestic flight with a dog team on Thursday, June 22. This was the first time this kind of inspection was conducted for the MRA. The type of inspection process can be varied to see which type of inspection is the most effective through experimentation. But for this inspection, one inspector accompanied the dog team. The inspector randomly stopped 25 people and asked them to set their carry-on baggage on the floor. The dog team would search the bags and the process would repeat itself. Out of the 25 people, there were three positive responses by the dog. Out of those three responses, two were declared on their agriculture declaration form. One response was a passenger who did not declare their fruit on the declaration form. None of the items found were restricted.

Inter island passenger inspection

Inter island passenger inspection was conducted on a limited number of flights. There were no interceptions or items that required inspection certificates. Most of the items that were observed were leis and cut flowers. In the past, HDOA has observed people with plants and non domestic animals that did not have inspection certificates. This may be a low risk area, but there is still potential for movement of insects or diseases into Maui from items that were not inspected.

Recommendations

This MRA's cargo inspection data is consistent with past risk assessments. The increase in manpower coincides with the increase of interceptions. At least four inspectors were used on a daily basis during the inspections on domestic cargo. This may be the number of inspectors needed to carry out this type of inspection on a year-round basis. Inter island freight interceptions were limited to insects found in Hawaii. The blotch miner that was found was from a domestic shipment that came through Oahu. So far there were no interceptions of the Little Fire Ant or the Nettle Caterpillar, however continued monitoring efforts when available will ensure port of departure inspections are adequate. This way we will be able to see if the current inspection system is performing properly or if changes need to be made.

The domestic passenger inspections had numbers that may need to be investigated further. This could be a seasonal occurrence or on a year-round basis. With that being said, HDOA should continue to see if the numbers continue to be around 18% of the passengers not going to baggage claim. The same three inspection areas should be used to keep the data consistent.

If HDOA were to post inspectors at these areas, temporary inspection counters may need to be considered as well. HDOA inspectors, busy going from one flight to the next, are not very visible. Further, passengers tend to be in a rush to get off the plane. Passengers have commented in the past that they did not see the inspector in the jet bridge. Temporary tables with proper identification may induce passengers walking by

to stop if they have agricultural items. One possible location, as evidenced during the MRA, would be at the exit by gate 23. This location would ensure that HDOA would be able to see the passengers going to baggage claim and transferring out of Maui. The second location would be by the Federal Agriculture Station by the Aloha Airlines departure gate. Here HDOA will be able to inspect the passengers coming off Aloha, Delta, and perhaps the Harmony flights. Although HDOA will not be able to see where the passengers go, we can get an idea of how many people don't see the inspector in the jet bridge. The other advantage of doing this is that the inspector will have a clear view of the passengers walking towards him. In the jet bridge, because of the size constraints, passenger inspections are difficult. There are passengers waiting for strollers and other passengers, passengers walking side-by-side block the inspector's view, while the inspector has to go through the declaration forms. The inspector can ask passengers with "questionable hand carry items" to stop for inspection. The last inspection area should be in baggage claim. Because of time constraints, most of the time inspectors don't go into baggage claim. During past MRA's, inspectors were posted in the baggage claim. To see if this way is better than the current system of inspecting the bags in the back where no one can see us except for the airline employees, HDOA should consider doing this again for visibility.

Inter island flight inspections may be "low risk" but it can be a good tool for educational/ PR purposes. Agents and flight crews did ask me why HDOA was inspecting an inter island flight. So, I explained some of the inter island regulations. Some of them did not know that was part of our job. Some of the flight crew asked me about bringing items from the mainland back to Hawaii. Another good aspect is that passengers are able to see us. These flights should be monitored when time allows.

The workload between the MRA leads should be divided into two parts. One lead should take care of the operational duties. This lead will plan projects, run daily operations, coordinate with government agencies or private industry for MRA projects, and complete reports. The other lead should perform the administrative duties. This lead will be responsible for the sign up schedule, tracking of inspector's time, input of data on Invicta, making sure all inspection/rejection/interception reports are completed (and following up if necessary) and for samples and disposition when identifications come back. With the division of duties clearly stated the leads will be better able to focus their attention on those areas and will be able to help the other when needed. This will ease the burden on the MRA leads. This may be helpful in the sense that if successful, then this or a variation of this model could be used as a permanent way to run the port.