

# Biosecurity Monthly Newsletter



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## Seizure of undeclared lily bulbs.

On Wednesday 27th November, Biosecurity officers Ms Greta Remuera and Mr Tamarua Teroi, alongside three Customs officers, conducted an inspection of personal effects transported on Vessel Imua II, voyage (v73 ).

The consignment was imported by a returning Cook Islander from New Zealand and consisted of 1x mini quad bike and 1x drum of personal items.

The mini quad bike was inspected and found to be free of any signs of contamination.

The drum containing personal items was also inspected. Upon inspection, the biosecurity officers sighted an ordinary shopping bag that contained 2x packets of **untreated oriental liliium bulbs**. The 2 packets of liliium bulbs were seized and incinerated because:

- the importer did **not declare** the bulbs and
- the importer did not have an **import permit** which outlines the necessary import treatments required to be done at the country of origin.



Mini quad bike



Packets of liliium bulbs

# Fresh aromatic ginger from Bali seized at Rarotonga International Airport

On 29th November, approximately 2.5kgs of aromatic ginger rhizomes (*Kaempferia galanga*) from Bali, Indonesia, were seized by Senior Biosecurity Officer Mr Piri Maa at the Rarotonga airport.

The aromatic ginger rhizomes were imported by an Indonesian national on an inbound flight originating in Bali, transited Auckland, New Zealand for Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

The passenger was questioned about the rhizomes and the biosecurity declaration on his passenger arrival card. The passenger stated that the rhizomes (*Kaempferia galanga*) were of the ginger (*Zingiberaceae*) family from Bali, Indonesia. The passenger also stated that the rhizomes were for his personal use. The rhizomes appeared to be just uprooted with soil present on its exterior.

The rhizomes were seized because this could introduce foreign pests or diseases that could have an adverse effect on locally related *Zingiberaceae* family such as our local ginger and turmeric. The soil on the rhizomes could also introduce harmful soil borne pathogens.

The whole consignment of the rhizomes and soil was sealed and incinerated at the Rarotonga International Airport Incinerator.



Ginger Rhizomes



# Untreated watermelon seeds seized

On 3rd December, a small container of untreated watermelon seeds were seized by Biosecurity Officer Mr Tamarua Teroi.

The watermelon seeds were imported by a returning Cook Islander on an inbound flight from Auckland, New Zealand.

The passenger declared food items in a chilly bin and upon inspection of the food items, Tamarua sighted a small tupperware container labelled "Pineapple Watermelon". The officer opened the container and found the watermelon seeds.

The passenger was questioned in regards to the finding and stated that the seeds were untreated.

The seeds were seized and incinerated due to the risk of introducing harmful fungal or viral diseases from these seeds that could have an adverse effect on our local watermelon crops.

Untreated watermelon seeds



## Quick Fact:

To import any vegetable seeds into the Cook Islands, you must apply for an import permit from the Biosecurity Airport Office. Processing of Import Permit application takes between 2 to 5 working days.

# Water Safety Training

On Thursday 25th October, Marah Tairi, maritime security officer from the Ministry of Transport, conducted a water safety training for Rarotonga Biosecurity Officers and 2 Biosecurity trainees from the island of Manihiki.

The main objective was for officers to demonstrate an understanding of safety when embarking and disembarking vessels.

The training focused on all aspects of boarding a vessel— PREPARATION, SAFETY GEAR, EMBARKING A TRANSFER BOAT and BOARDING & DISEMBARKING A VESSEL.

The training was a success in improving biosecurity officers knowledge on basic water safety and boarding.

Thank you to Marah Tairi and the Ministry of Transport for the training conducted.



Above: Maritime Security Officer– Marah Tairi explaining the features of a 150N Hutchwilco lifejacket.

## A serving of Frog with broccoli?

The Biosecurity office received a call from Obviously the frog was dead and we conclude Prime Foods Ltd in regards to a frog found in that it was more of a food safety risk to the a packet of processed and packaged broccoli consumer rather than a biosecurity risk. imported from NZ.

The frog was noticed by a customer who had purchased a packet of imported broccoli. The packet was returned to Prime Foods for referral to the Biosecurity Office.

According to Prime Foods Ltd, the packaged broccoli was imported from New Zealand but had been originally sourced from a supplier in Europe. Preliminary investigations suggests that the frog could have made its way into the packet during processing.



## Busy December at Avatiu Shipping Port

The Biosecurity Division monitored and inspected all incoming biosecurity conveyances and cargo during the month of December. It was a very busy time at the Avatiu shipping port with 5 shipping vessels all awaiting for their turn to berth during a week-long period.

Cargo vessel OLOMANA v115 was the first to enter and offload its cargo. The Biosecurity team had conducted a risk assessment of its cargo prior to it coming into port, highlighting a few items of interest such as used vehicles, personal effects, fresh produce and timber. A total of 17 vehicle consignments were inspected, 2x 20ft containers of fresh produce and 18x personal effects ranging in size from a 200kg crate/drum to a 5 ton crate. All were inspected and found to be in compliance.

BORINGIA SWANN, a fuel tanker was next in line to offload diesel and jet fuel, followed by the tanker, "VICTOIRE" to offload LPG gas.

IMUA II v74 followed thereafter. The Biosecurity team inspected a total of 17 used vehicles, heavy machineries including a forklift & a used JCB tele-handler, over 10 containers of personal effects and fresh produce. These consignments were all inspected and in compliance.

MV TAKA-I-POMANA, a Tongan registered passenger/cargo vessel was the last vessel to come into port. As per normal procedure, the vessel was subject to a biosecurity inspection and the inspection of the ship stores and garbage was found to be in compliance and clearance was granted to the vessel.

Overall, there were no major interceptions during this period from our ports.