



**EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN FOR EXOTIC
PLANT PESTS AND DISEASES**

**A MODEL FOR
CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES**

Everton Ambrose

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CONTENTS

	List of Acronyms	vii
	Acknowledgement	viii
1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	DESCRIPTION OF THE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN	1
3	EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN FOR EXOTIC PESTS AND DISEASES FOR (COUNTRY)	5
3.1	Prevention of Introduction of Exotic Pests and Diseases	5
3.1.1	Component Activities	5
3.1.1.1	Plant Protection and Quarantine Laws	5
3.1.1.2	Surveillance	5
3.1.1.2.1	Import Permit	5
3.1.1.2.2	Arrival Notification	5
3.1.1.2.3	Baggage Inspection	6
3.1.1.2.4	Container Inspection	6
3.1.1.2.5	Mail Inspection	6
3.1.1.2.6	Ship and Aircraft Inspection	6
3.1.1.2.7	Survey Activities	7
3.1.1.3	Proper Handling and Disposal of Garbage	7
3.1.1.4	Public Information	7
3.1.1.5	Monitoring and Review of Preventative Measures	7
3.2	Containment and Eradication of Exotic Pests and Diseases	8
3.2.1	Action Plan: A - Sequence of Events	8
3.2.2	Action Plan: B - Component and Description of Tasks	8
4	TABLES AND FIGURES	
	Table 1 Inter-institutional Composition of the National Emergency Pest and Disease Committee	4

TABLES AND FIGURES CONT'D

Figure 1	Organisational Chart of the National Emergency Pest and Disease Committee	2
Figure 2	Flow Chart - Mobilisation of the National Emergency Pest and Disease Committee	10

5 ANNEXES

- 1 - List of Names, Addresses and Telephone Numbers of Members of National Emergency Pest and Disease Committee**
- 2 - Map of (Country) by Agricultural Region and Ports of Entry**
- 3 - The Plant Protection and Quarantine Act and Regulations**
- 4 - Customs Declaration Form**
- 5 - Cabinet Decisions**

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIO	Agricultural Information Officer
AOE	Agricultural Officer Extension
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CTO	Chief Technical Officer
DC	Diagnostic Centre
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
ECS	Eastern Caribbean States
EO	Extension Officer
EPTF	Emergency Pest and Disease Task Force
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
LFC	Local Field Component
LTL	Laboratory Team Leader
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
NEPC	National Emergency Pest and Disease Committee
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
PC	Police Component
PPB	Plant Protection Board
PPO	Plant Protection Officer
PS	Permanent Secretary
RFC	Regional Field Component
RFCo	Regional Field Coordinator
TFCo	Task Force Coordinator
TCA	Technical Cooperation Agency

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1 INTRODUCTION

Plant quarantine means the legal restrictions on the movement of agricultural commodities in order to prevent or delay the establishment of plant pests and diseases in areas where they are not known to exist.

The objectives of plant quarantine are:

- 1) to prevent the introduction of plant pests and/or diseases;
- 2) to eradicate, control or retard the spread of any such pest or disease that has already been introduced into a country.

It is the responsibility of all countries to prevent or retard the entry of any exotic pest or disease and to be prepared to deal with it in the event that it does enter. Thus an action plan should include efforts to prevent or retard the entry, and an emergency operations plan when the exotic pest or disease has entered the country.

The Caribbean countries are free from many of the serious pests and diseases of tropical crops. In addition, many of the major pest and disease problems present are restricted in their distribution amongst the countries. Thus, efforts should be made to prevent these pests or diseases from entering the Caribbean Region or becoming more widely distributed within the Region.

This means that Quarantine Units must be prepared to act by having the necessary physical, financial and human resources ready to be mobilized in the emergency situation. The likelihood of introducing an exotic plant pest or disease with plant or plant products, garbage and used equipment dictates the necessity for port surveillance. The public should be well informed of the gravity of the situation and how they might assist in preventing the entry or spread of these organisms. Every citizen is expected to play his/her part in this operation.

This Model Action Plan for Exotic Pests and Diseases is developed on that basis. It is to be used under the country's legislation on plant quarantine.

2 DESCRIPTION OF EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The Emergency Action Plan for Exotic Pests and Diseases is an organised approach to prevent the introduction of exotic pests and diseases into a country and to contain or eradicate them if they enter. It provides for the creation of a National Emergency Pest and Disease Committee which is responsible for its administration. The NEPC is headed by the Minister of Agriculture or the Permanent Secretary with membership from national agencies - governmental or non-governmental as may be required (Fig 1). It is an inter-ministerial, inter-sectoral and inter-institutional group, with representatives from various Government Ministries, statutory boards and the private sector. The nature of the representation ensures that it includes the required interest groups and obtains the

necessary support to achieve its objectives. The composition of, and representation on the NEPC, are shown in Table 1. The proposed representation is not exhaustive and the Minister may invite other agencies as necessary. Annex 1 provides a format to list the names, addresses, telephone numbers and roles of NEPC members.

The task of the NEPC is to promulgate policies and coordinate inputs and activities of the different Government Ministries and other agencies. The agencies represented on the NEPC have been selected based on their role in the prevention of entry of exotic plant pest or disease into the (country) (Annex 2) and their possible role in the control, eradication and containment in case of an introduced pest or disease.

The NEPC coordinates the activities and ensures that the functions of each agency are adequately implemented. For example, the Director of Agriculture ensures that plant protection and quarantine measures are effectively carried out. The Comptroller of Customs or his nominee ensures that Customs personnel at the ports of entry are appropriately informed of the legislation and policy decisions of the Committee concerning the surveillance of arriving passengers and agricultural produce. The General Manager of the Air and Sea Ports Authority ensures the proper disposal of international garbage, and so on.

During normal times, the NEPC meets regularly (possibly twice/year) to review and refine the implementation of procedures and to update the members on any developments as necessary. In emergency situations, it meets as often as necessary.

The NEPC establishes the Emergency Pest and Disease Task Force or Technical Committee with the Chief Technical Officer as the Task Force Coordinator. This is the technical operational committee and is responsible for all technical activities to be undertaken. It consists of the following components:

- Field Component
- Police Component
- Laboratory Component
- Plant Protection Board

As part of the EAP, regular field exercises are conducted (at least once/year) to enhance the reactive capacity. There is need for strong coordination and for each person to know his/her role in the Plan. The system should be in a state of readiness at all times.

Figure 1

**ORGANISATIONAL CHART OF THE
NATIONAL EMERGENCY PEST AND DISEASE COMMITTEE**

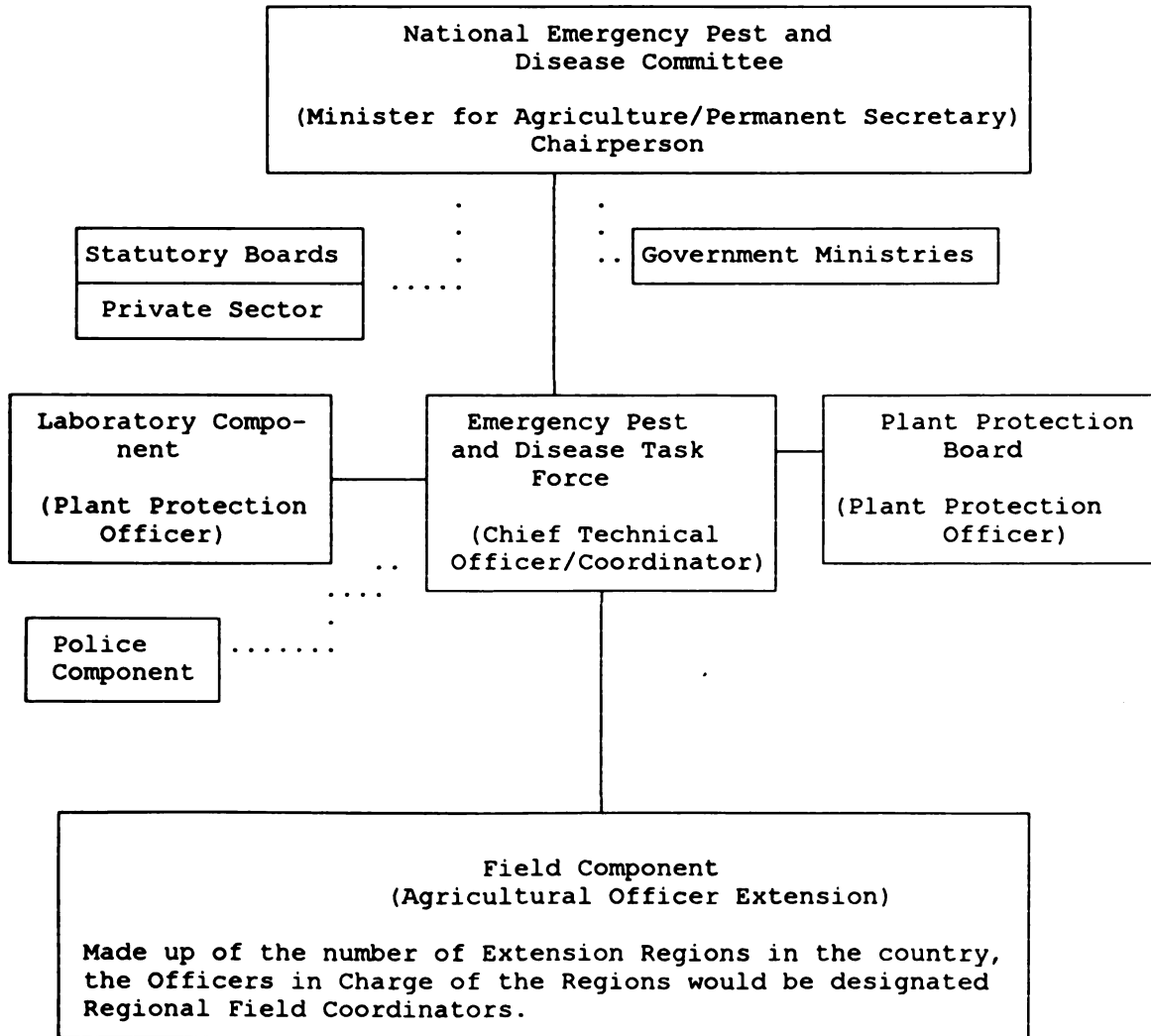


Table 1

**INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COMPOSITION OF THE
NATIONAL EMERGENCY PEST AND DISEASE COMMITTEE**

AGENCY	DEPARTMENT OR DIVISION	SUGGESTED REPRESENTATIVE
Ministry of Agriculture	Administration	Minister/Permanent Secretary
	Department of Agriculture and Divisions	Chief Agricultural Officer/Director of Agriculture/Plant Protection Officer
	Agricultural Infor- mation Unit	Officer in Charge
Ministry of Health	Environmental Health Unit	Chief Environmental Health Officer
Ministry of Public Utilities	Air and Sea Ports Authority	General Manager
Ministry of Communication and Works	Transport Communications	Chief Engineer Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Finance and Planning	Customs	Comptroller of Customs
	Finance	Director
Ministry of National Security	Police Force Fire Department	Commissioner Chief Fire Officer
Ministry of Legal Affairs	Attorney General Chambers	Crown Counsel
Ministry of Local Government	Local Government Department	Local Government Officer
Statutory Boards	Production/Marketing Division	General Manager of each
Private Sector	Farmer Organizations Chamber of Commerce Other NGOs	Executive Secretary or Managing Director of each

3 EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN FOR EXOTIC PESTS AND DISEASES FOR (COUNTRY)

3.1 ROUTINE PREVENTION OF INTRODUCTION OF EXOTIC PESTS AND DISEASES

3.1.1 Component Activities

- Development and Implementation of Legislation Relating to Plant Protection and Quarantine.
- Surveillance - Port inspection and field monitoring.
- Proper handling and disposal of international garbage.
- Public information.
- Monitoring and review of preventative measures.

3.1.1.1 Plant Protection and Quarantine Legislation

The (insert name accurately) Act and Regulations pertaining to (Country) are given in Annex 3. In the Act, provisions are made for the establishment of a Plant Protection Board, a component of the EPTF which monitors plant protection and quarantine activities in the country on a regular basis. The Plant Protection Board should meet regularly.

3.1.1.2 Surveillance - Port (Air, Sea and Frontier) And Field

This section gives the main areas of the plant quarantine system related to surveillance activities at the international ports of entry and the field.

3.1.1.2.1 *Import Permit*

All planting material must be accompanied by an import permit. This is issued by a Plant Quarantine Officer with the approval of the Plant Protection Board. The decision taken should be based on a pest risk analysis.

3.1.1.2.2 *Arrival Notification*

The Comptroller of Customs or his/her representative shall notify an Officer of the plant quarantine service of the arrival at the port of any plant, planting material, fruit, vegetables, plant product, plant pest or disease, soil or any other article which may be regulated by the Plant Protection Act No ... of 19 ... **(TO BE FILLED IN)**

The Comptroller of Customs or his/her representative shall not release or dispose of the above mentioned item(s), unless so authorised by the plant quarantine service.

An importer shall notify the Plant Quarantine Service in advance of the arrival of regulated material.

3.1.1.2.3 *Baggage Inspection*

The passenger must hand to the Immigration Officer the signed Customs Declaration Form (Annex 4) which indicates whether he/she is carrying any regulated item(s). The Immigration Officer stamps the form and indicates to Customs whether the passenger is carrying a regulated item. The Customs Officer also enquires from the passenger whether he/she is carrying any regulated item(s). The Customs Officer may examine the baggage.

If a regulated material is present, the Customs Officer requests the services of the Plant Quarantine Inspector.

If the Plant Quarantine Inspector is not on site, the Customs Officer shall detain the material and may give the passenger a retention slip. The Customs Officer then informs the plant quarantine service and requests that an Officer inspects the material with minimal delay.

3.1.1.2.4 *Container Inspection*

It is the responsibility of the importer to ensure that the plant quarantine service is informed of the presence of regulated material in the container. The container is opened by the Customs Officer in the presence of the Plant Quarantine Officer. The Customs Officer shall not release any regulated material unless duly authorised by a Plant Quarantine Officer.

3.1.1.2.5 *Mail Inspection*

It is the responsibility of the importer to ensure that the plant quarantine service is informed of the presence of regulated material in the mail. The Customs Officer or the Postmaster shall not release any regulated material unless it is authorised by a Plant Quarantine Officer.

3.1.1.2.6 *Ship and Aircraft Inspection*

If a Plant Quarantine Officer is present at the port, he/she shall be a member of the boarding party which also includes Customs Officer, Immigration Officer and a Public Health Inspector. Otherwise a Plant Quarantine Officer may board a ship or aircraft if he/she suspects that it is carrying a regulated material.

If a Plant Quarantine Officer is not present at the ports, the Customs Officer may assist by giving the ship's captain to sign an appropriate declaration (Annex 5).



3.1.1.2.7 Survey Activities

Survey and monitoring activities for pests or diseases must be undertaken to determine their status in the country. The activities may be of a general nature or for a specific pest or disease. In both cases, the activities may involve the other Sections of the Ministry of Agriculture, other governmental and non-governmental agencies and the public. If a specific pest or disease is targeted, training in survey procedures would be necessary and the surveyors would have to ensure that all areas are covered within a specific period of time.

3.1.1.3 Proper Handling And Disposal of International Garbage

All plant material or portion thereof, from an international carrier, to be disposed of must be placed in a metal container (in the carrier) that can be covered to ensure that no plant pests or diseases can leave the container. If there is no incinerator then the garbage is disposed of (after the carrier has left territorial waters) in a manner which would not cause the introduction of exotic pests and diseases into the country and according to international regulations.

If facilities for disposal exist, this shall be done under the supervision of the plant quarantine service.

3.1.1.4 Public Information

There should be continuous campaigns to create and maintain the public awareness of pests and diseases of quarantine importance and the need to be vigilant.

Activities include:

- Regular press releases
- Radio and television spots, films, slides, videos
- Publication and dissemination of leaflets and placing of posters and/or bill boards at conspicuous locations at ports of entry
- Provision of information to travellers, travel agents, shipping agents concerning the prohibition of entry of agricultural produce without a permit
- Talks to the Customs, Police and other appropriate agencies.

3.1.1.5 Monitoring And Review of Preventive Measures

- Monitoring and review of measures being undertaken in relation to the prevention of entry of exotic pests and diseases shall be undertaken by the NEPC.

Person Responsible: Minister of Agriculture/Permanent Secretary (Chairman - NEPC)

- Conduct through the EPTF, regular education sessions for all personnel actively involved in the implementation of preventative measures, such as Port Personnel, Customs Officers, Plant Protection/Quarantine Officers and the like including the public.
- Ensures that information is available on sources of material and equipment in an emergency.
- Conduct (at least once/year) field exercises simulating introduction of an exotic pest or disease to test the reactive capacity of the mobilisation plan for control/eradication and containment of an exotic pest and disease.

Person Responsible: Chief Agricultural Officer/Director of Agriculture

- Regular training sessions for Plant Protection/Quarantine Officers, Extension Officers to educate and update them on symptoms of exotic pests and diseases.
- Ensures that the relevant plant protection laboratory knows of reference centres for pest confirmation and approved steps for preserving and submitting material.
- Ensures that the Plant Protection Board is active and involved in Plant Protection decisions.
- Knows where to source information on exotic pests.

Person Responsible: Crop Protection Officer/Pest Management Officer

3.2 CONTAINMENT, ERADICATION OR CONTROL OF EXOTIC PESTS AND DISEASES

3.2.1 Part A - Emergency Action Plan (Sequence of Events)

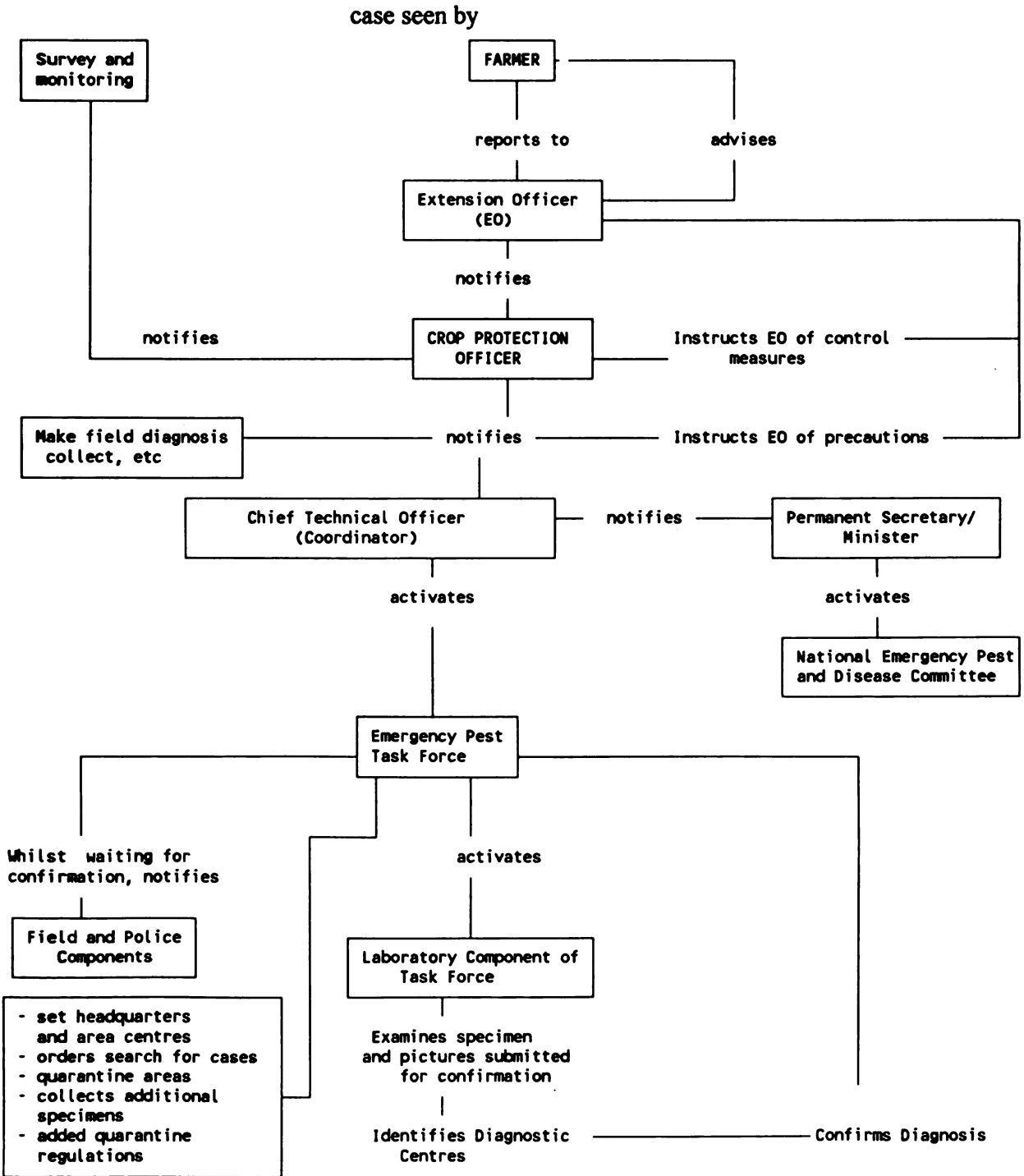
The EPTF implements the containment and eradication operation of the Action Plan. The sequence of events are given below and in the flow chart (Fig. 2).

Step 1 Suspicious case seen by farmer.

Step 2 Farmer reports to Extension Officer who investigates the case.

Figure 2

FLOW CHART FOR MOBILISATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY PEST AND DISEASE COMMITTEE



- Step 2a** **Diagnosis reveals endemic pest or disease. Farmer advised of control measures by EO. Sequence stops.**
- Step 2b** **EO unable to identify pest or disease. Reports to Plant Protection Officer.**
- Step 3** **PPO investigates.**
- Step 3a** **Diagnosis reveals endemic pest or disease. EO advised of control measure. Sequence stops.**
- Step 3b** **Diagnosis creates suspicion of the presence of new pest or disease. (Survey and monitoring activities may detect the presence of new pest or disease). Farmer and EO given precautionary instructions, specimens collected and pictures taken for preliminary laboratory diagnosis, by PPO.**
- Step 4** **PPO notifies Supervisor/Chief Technical Officer who notifies the Permanent Secretary/Minister.**
- Step 5** **CTO activates Emergency Pest Task Force and additional samples and/or pictures are collected and dispatched by the PPO to established Diagnostic Centres for more positive identification and confirmation. Information on the pest (biology, hosts behaviour pattern and the like to help in eradication or containment) is requested by the PPO from the Diagnostic Centres and Regional and International Organizations.**
- Step 6** **The Minister/PS puts into operation the emergency mobilisation plan and activates the National Emergency Pest and Disease Committee and notifies the relevant Ministries and Agencies of their role. Minister notifies Cabinet and issues declaration on internal plant quarantine regulation.**
- Step 7** **Emergency Pest Task Force sets up the Headquarters and area centres, orders island wide search (survey) for cases and collects additional specimens and takes pictures. Issues general information and instructs the Field Component and Quarantine Officers.**
- Step 8** **Report received from DC by the PPO and eradication plan is put into operation by the CTO.**

3.2.2 Part B - Components and Description of Tasks

3.2.2.1 Component: National Emergency Pest and Disease Committee

Responsibility: Promulgation of policies and coordination of input of the different Government Ministries and other agencies to prevent the entry of, control and/or eradicate any exotic pest or disease.

Functions

Person Responsible - Chairman (Minister of Agriculture)

- a) Through NEPC, promulgates policies for the prevention of entry, control and eradication of foreign pest and disease.
- b) Coordinates the various inputs and makes available the resources of the different Ministries and agencies in achieving (a).
- c) Makes representation to Cabinet for additional financial assistance needed and in the issuance of special orders or proclamations related to (a).
- d) Ensures that all policies promulgated by the NEPC are implemented by the EPTF.
- e) Designates the Chief Technical Officer EPTF Coordinator.

3.2.2.2 Component: Emergency Pest and Disease Task Force

Responsibility: Mobilisation and execution of the national emergency action plan and implementation of policies promulgated by the NEPC.

Functions

Person Responsible - Task Force Coordinator/Chief Technical Officer

- a) Serves as the Executive Officer of the NEPC and ensures that all policies promulgated are expeditiously and effectively implemented.
- b) Ensures that the EPTF is in constant alert and readiness, and schedules regular field exercises to enhance its reactive capacity.
- c) Activates mobilisation of the EPTF as soon as a report is made by the Plant Protection Officer.
- d) Makes immediate notification of the NEPC for mobilisation of the EPTF.

- e) Coordinates the actions of the various components of the EPTF.
- f) Coordinates the activities of all the regions and assigns personnel as needed to the Regional Field Coordinator.
- g) Orders the RFCo to proceed with disinfection/disinfestation of infected/infested areas as soon as diagnosis has been confirmed.
- h) Through the RFCo, implements surveillance to monitor the efficacy of control/eradication measures.
- I) Through the RFCo, serves official quarantine notices.

3.2.2.3 Component: Regional Field Coordination

Responsibility: Execution of all the field operations in the event of an outbreak of an exotic pest or disease in that area.

Ideally, the RFC shall consist of personnel within the region where the outbreak occurs. Authority for movement of support personnel from another region is vested upon the TFCo through the Officer-in-Charge of Extension.

Functions

Responsible Person - Regional Field Coordinator (RFCo)

- a) Establishes a field operating unit.
- b) Selects location of headquarters close to the infected/infested areas. Should not be more than an hour drive to the most distant area of the outbreak area.
- c) Selects suitable headquarters building with ample space for storage of supplies and equipment, suitable communications and eating facilities. There should be ample parking space for field vehicles and should be located where there is easy flow of traffic.
- d) Makes available a map of the area under his/her jurisdiction and points out areas of infection/infestation to all RFC personnel.
- e) Establishes communication with the local authorities, public, police in order to ensure security of the infected/infested area.
- f) Refers all requests for information regarding the outbreak by the news media to the TFCo until an Information Officer from the Agricultural Information Service has been

assigned to the RFCo; gives those requesting information the telephone number of the TFCo and explains that the latter has the most complete source of up-to-date information.

- g) Establishes means of communication with personnel stationed where the problem is.
- h) Lists personnel complement of RFC and assigns them specific tasks to enable them to be put to work immediately upon arrival in the affected area.
- l) Gives specific assignments to support personnel arriving from the other regions.
- j) Requests the assignment of a secretary.
- k) Meets with all personnel every evening for debriefing on the day's activities and problems, institutes remedial measures to problems, and plans for activities for the following day.
- l) Instructs all personnel that information to be released to the media will be through the Information Officer only.
- m) Gives daily debriefing report to the TFCo.

3.2.2.4 Component: Laboratory Services

Responsibility: Handling preliminary diagnosis and submitting specimens to reference laboratory for confirmation of field diagnosis, and development of local capability for laboratory diagnosis.

Functions

Responsible Person: Laboratory Team Leader/PPO

This person may be the PPO or a Senior Laboratory Assistant

- a) Collection of specimens for laboratory diagnosis.
- b) Assembles and keeps in constant readiness additional emergency kits for further collection and shipment of specimens.
- c) Makes prior arrangement with airlines or courier service and the reference laboratory on how specimen could be shipped as quickly as possible.
- d) Supervises shipment of hand-carried specimens.

- e) Once the EPTF is activated, makes arrangements to receive incoming specimens from the RFC and store them until confirmation is made and local laboratory diagnostic capabilities are established.
- f) Once local laboratory capabilities are established to handle diagnosis, supervises the operation of said laboratory.

3.2.2.5 Component: Quarantine Component

Responsibility: Establishment and staffing of quarantine and buffer zones.

Functions

Responsible person - Quarantine Officer

This person is a plant protection staff member or a senior member of the extension service.

- a) Assists the TFCo in planning and establishing quarantine and buffer zones.
- b) Posts pest and disease warning signs on all roads at the outer perimeters of the quarantine and buffer zones.
- c) Coordinates the establishment of 24-hour police patrol (if necessary) to cover roads in both buffer, and quarantine zones to control movement of plants and other products.
- d) Establishes a list of all farms or areas that have received plants or plant products or any products which are capable of transmitting the pest or disease.
- e) Arranges for the inspectors to visit these farms or areas and establish control measures.
- f) At his/her discretion, allows the movement, on a permit basis, of perishable crops for human consumption and other non-plant products from affected farms and farms not known to be affected within the quarantine area.
- g) Trains sufficient field personnel and establishes teams to disinfect the areas.

3.2.2.6 Component: Information Service

Responsibility: Dissemination of information to the media and the public

Functions

Responsible Person - Information Officer

This person is from the Agricultural Information Service. The TFCo will request the Minister of Agriculture to immediately assign and dispatch this person to the Regional Office.

The Information Officer

- a) Compiles list(s) of local news outlets (eg radio, newspaper, television) to notify of the situation.
- b) Prepares pertinent information, publication, background, materials, and photographs for distribution to media personnel.

3.2.2.7 Component: Local Field Operations

Responsibility: Provision of support to operations

Functions

Responsible Person - Extension Officers

- a) Examines plants referred by farmers.
- b) Reports to the Plant Protection Officer without delay, the presence of suspicious pest or disease cases.
- c) Implements all instructions of the PPO to prevent spread of pest or disease.
- d) After confirmation of exotic pest and under the supervision of the RFCo, searches for cases and identifies all affected plants.
- e) Supervises and carries out destruction of all affected plants and plant parts.
- f) Implements on-the-spot disinfection and/or disinfestation of the area.

3.2.2.8 Component: Police Component

Responsibility: Provision of security

Functions

Responsible Person - Commissioner of Police

- a) Assists quarantine officials in securing the area.
- b) Prevents access as directed by the Quarantine Officer.

4 ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

**LIST OF NAMES, ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS
OF MEMBERS OF NATIONAL
EMERGENCY PEST AND DISEASE COMMITTEE**

ANNEX 2

**MAP OF (COUNTRY) BY AGRICULTURAL REGION
AND PORTS OF ENTRY**

Insert the map of the country indicating the agricultural regions and ports of entry.

ANNEX 3

THE PLANT PROTECTION AND QUARANTINE ACT

ANNEX 4

CUSTOMS DECLARATION FORM

ANNEX 5

SAMPLE OF DECLARATION TO BE SIGNED BY CAPTAIN

1. TO: Plant Quarantine Officer

Address:
.....
.....
.....

2. NAME OF SHIP:

3. NAME OF PORT OF ARRIVAL

4. DATE OF ARRIVAL:

5. PORT AND COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:

6. PORT AND COUNTRY OF LAST STOP:

7. DO YOU HAVE ITEMS REGULATED BY Name of Act and Regulations:
.....
.....

8. IF YES, INDICATE TYPES AND COUNTRY(IES) OF ORIGIN:

9. DO YOU HAVE GARBAGE CONTAINING SCRAPS OR PART OR WASTE OF AGRICULTURAL ITEMS OR OTHER REGULATED ITEMS?
.....

10. IF YES, INDICATE WHERE THE GARBAGE IS KEPT:
.....
.....

11. SIGNATURE OF CAPTAIN:

DATE: