

THE PROCESS OF QUARANTINE IN PNG AND ITS PRESENT STATUS

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ABSTRACT

The Papua New Guinea Agricultural Quarantine Inspection Service (PNG AQIS) under the existing structure is unable to perform to expected standards. The lack of equipment, facilities and manpower are the major factors resulting in general deterioration of quarantine service in Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea is relatively free from serious pests and diseases of plants and animals. In order to protect the health status of our plants and animal resources. PNG must maintain an effective quarantine service to prevent exotic pests, diseases and other harmful plants and animals entering Papua New Guinea. It is about time that changes were made in the existing Quarantine operations and establishment before exotic pests, diseases and harmful plants start establishing themselves in PNG. It is proposed that PNG AQIS be established as a division under the Ministry and administration of the Department of Agriculture and Livestock. Under this set up proper attention be given to improve its organisation, manpower and quarantine facilities in various ports.

Key words: Quarantine, manpower needs, service equipment, quarantine facilities, back-up service.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The AQIS was established under the sanitary Procedures for Plant Produce Moving Ministry of Public Health and administrated by the Department of Agriculture and Livestock to enforce the Quarantine Act Chapter 234 which is responsible for the prevention of the introduction and spread of pests and diseases affecting animals and plants.

Fortunately, Papua New Guinea is relatively free from serious pests and diseases of animals and plants. Some serious diseases affecting animals and not present in PNG are Foot and Mouth disease of cattle; New Castle disease of poultry and African Swine Fever of pigs. Kphara beetle (storage pest on grains and stored products); Coffee Berry Borer are few examples of serious pests that are absent in PNG.

Introduction of such pests or diseases into PNG can cause economic disaster to the welfare of our agriculture based society.

With increasing trade, tourism and international flights between other countries and PNG, there is

also an increasing risk of introduction of exotic pests and diseases. Therefore right organisation, trained manpower and right facilities be placed in each port to maintain our pest and disease free status as long as possible.

This paper is intended to highlight the following:-

- i) Functions of PNG AQIS
- ii) Existing Structure
- iii) Manpower
- iv) Equipment and facilities.

2.0 FUNCTIONS OF THE PNG AQIS

The Agriculture Quarantine Service is empowered under the Quarantine Act Chapter 234 to police the terms and conditions and the regulations under the Act. The Quarantine Service is responsible for two (2) regulatory functions under the Quarantine Act:

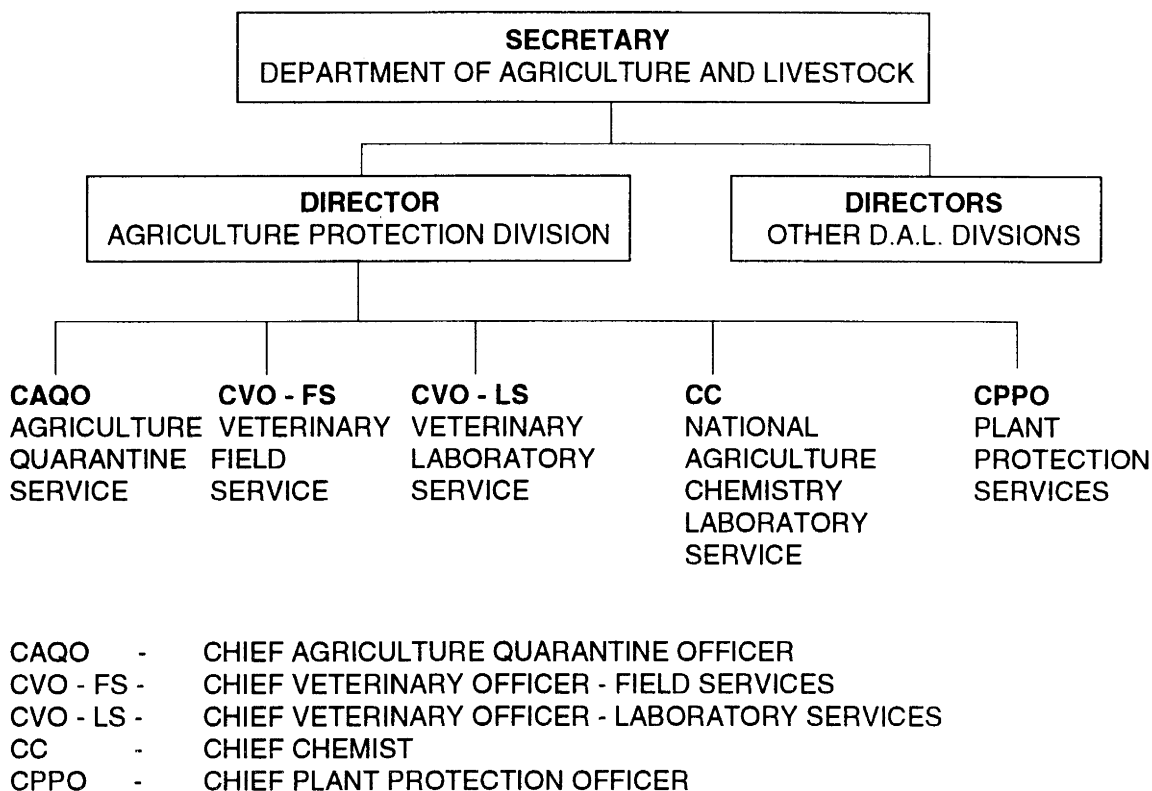
These are:-

(a) Issue of Permits:

The Quarantine Service has in place a Permit System through which it regulates and monitors imports of all fresh, frozen and processed food materials, live animals and plants. Permits are

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Figure 1. AGRICULTURAL QUARANTINE AND INSPECTION SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT UNDER DAL ADMINISTRATION



issued for imports of all these commodities.

These permits issue guidelines and import commodities, aimed at providing agricultural and health security of our plant and animal resources by preventing the introduction of harmful pests and diseases into PNG. Similarly phytosanitary and other certificates complying with the quarantine requirements of importing countries of PNG exports are also issued with the intention to emphasize strict quality control of our agricultural exports to be more competitive in the international markets.

b) **Inspection Service:**

The Quarantine Service is also empowered under the Quarantine Act to carry out inspection on arrival of all bulk imports. Examination of incoming used vehicles/machinery and equipment, overseas aircrafts and vessels and issuance of clearance certificates for all imports arriving into the country.

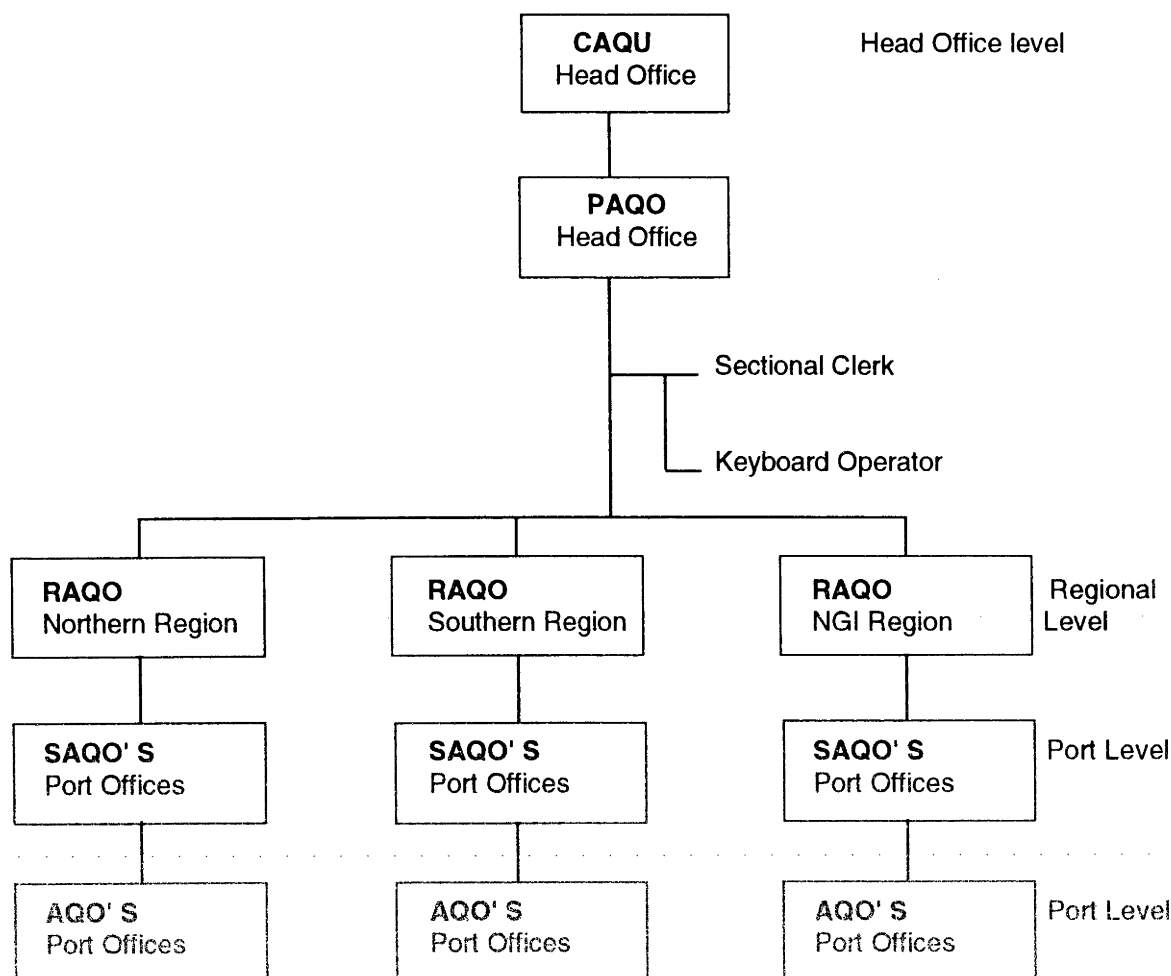
Similarly the Quarantine Service also emphasizes strict quality control of our agricultural exports by inspection, grading and certification of all agricultural commodity exports. Without the appropriate quarantine certification our agricultural exports may not be allowed entry into some countries. Quality control of our exports ensures that we get the maximum value of our commodities in foreign exchange.

3.0 EXISTING STRUCTURE

Under the existing structure, Agriculture Quarantine Service operates as a Section of the Agriculture Protection Division under the administration of the Department of Agriculture and Livestock.

The structure is illustrated on Fig. 1. This shows that the Director is also responsible for other sections and is not devoting enough time to deal with quarantine matters.

Figure 2. AQIS CHANNEL OF COMMAND STRUCTURE UNDER EXISTING STRUCTURE



CAQU - CHIEF AGRICULTURE QUARANTINE OFFICER
 PAQU - PRINCIPAL AGRICULTURE QUARANTINE OFFICER
 RAQO - REGIONAL AGRICULTURE QUARANTINE OFFICER
 SAQO - SENIOR AGRICULTURE QUARANTINE OFFICER
 AQQ - AGRICULTURE QUARANTINE OFFICER
 KBO - KEYBOARD OPERATOR

The present structure does not allow for the recruitment of Plant Pathologists, Entomologists and Veterinary officers and these services are provided by Plant Protection Section and National Veterinary Laboratory Sections which is far from satisfactory.

3.0.1 Decentralization of Quarantine Administration

The Quarantine Service underwent structural re-

organization in 1992 following recommendation from the New Zealand Consultancy Report 1989 (ANZDEC 1991).

The re-organization (Fig. 2) involved the decentralization of the Quarantine Administration within the DAL Policy guidelines to bring agricultural services closer to the general public, importers and exporters and the rural community. Three (3) Regional Offices were then established viz, the Southern Region with the Regional Office located

in Port Moresby, the Northern Region with Regional Office located in Lae and the New Guinea Islands Region with the Regional Office located in Rabaul.

The Quarantine Service has to date established 17 Port Offices in the major port of entries throughout the country as shown below.

(i) **Southern Region:**

Port Moresby - Wharf (Waterfront)
- Airport/Post Office

Popondetta
Alotau
Misima
Daru
Tabubil

(ii) **Northern Region:**

Lae
Madang
Wewak
Vanimo
Mt Hagen

(iii) **New Guinea Islands Region:**

Rabaul
Kavieng
Kimbe
Manus
Buka

Future plans are underway to restore quarantine services in other ports of the North Solomons Province (Kieta/Buin). A port office will also be established on Lihir Island should the need arise coinciding with the opening of the Lihir Gold Mine.

4.0 MANPOWER

Under the existing structure the Quarantine Service has a total staff strength of 43 with additional 5 positions created and pending approval from the Department of Personnel Management.

Occupied positions under the existing structure are shown below:-

Positions	Number
Chief Agricultural Quarantine Officer	1
Principle Agriculture Quarantine Officer	1
Regional Agriculture Quarantine Officer	3
Senior Agriculture Quarantine Officer	23
Agriculture Quarantine Officer	13
Keyboard Operator	1
Section Clerk	1

The Quarantine Service also employs Support Staff (labourers) to assist Quarantine Officers to carry out quarantine duties. A total Support Staff strength of 25 personnel are engaged and distributed throughout the port offices.

5.0 OFFICE FACILITIES, MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT

Quarantine Section has a total of 17 offices and 7 of this are at the headquarter while 10 are situated in various ports. Those situated in various centres are provided office space by Provincial governments, Mining Companies and various boards or Air Niugini. Most of these office buildings have not been maintained over the last ten years and consequently require major renovation or repair work.

Small incinerators, using wood/fuel were installed in most ports and due to lack of maintenance, they are non operational at present. At Jackson's airport, incinerator is not operating for the last 7 years. This will be replaced by a gas operated incinerator in 1994. In most ports inspection equipment, including rikens, face masks, gas analyzers and handy tools are lacking. This means that proper inspection procedures cannot be followed.

The furniture in most port offices is very old and require replacement. These port offices have adhoc arrangements with Provincial DPLs. Mining Companies and some exporters to assist with typing, fax and photocopying. In most cases these arrangements are inconsistent and have caused frustration among officers.

All quarantine offices are linked with telephone and some are also connected with fax machines.

6.0 CONCLUSION

It is proposed that the PNG Quarantine Authority be established in the Department of Agriculture and Livestock in order to facilitate and up-grade the PNG Quarantine Service status and functions comparable to those of our international trading partners such as Australia and New Zealand.

REFERENCE

MAF New Zealand Consultancy Report 1991, Training and Manpower Needs Analysis - Project Report and Recommendations. DAL, PNG.