



# CUSTOMS & QUARANTINE AGENCY, GUAM

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*Director's Office*

*Director – Pedro A. Leon Guerrero, Jr.  
Chief of Customs – Raffaele M.J. Sgambelluri*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **CQA Officers Inspect Container Three Times to Stop Pests from Entering**

BARRIGADA, GUAM – March 29, 2016 – On March 1, 2016 CQA inspected a container loaded with 5,140 kg of cut nipa leaves arriving from the Philippines. These leaves were imported as construction materials for FestPAC.

The container arrived with a phytosanitary certificate indicating it was fumigated before leaving the Philippines, however, upon opening the container officers observed active blue flies.

The officers immediately disabled the specimen, placed it into a vial and resealed the container to prevent any from escaping. The specimen was given to UOG entomologist Dr. Aubrey Moore who currently identifies intercepted insect pests for Guam. When Dr. Moore could not identify the specimen to species, the specimen was shipped to the USDA Systematic Entomology Laboratory in Washington D.C. as is protocol for incoming foreign shipments.

On March 7, the specimen was identified as *Physiphora clausa* in the family Ulidiidae. USDA considers this species to be a “non-actionable pest” as they are not known to do any economic damage.

Although USDA deems these flies “non-actionable”, local authorities determined treatment was necessary prior to release as the risk of other pests hiding amongst the nipa leaves was probable.

Mr. Patrick Artero, Acting Chief of the Guam Department of Agriculture's Biosecurity Division, who makes the final disposition, gave the consignee the option to export back to the port of origin, destroy, or treat. In this case, the consignee opted to treat. Note: The consignee absorbs this cost.

The container received treatment of two separate types of fumigants.

The consignee asked to fumigate with a product called Vikane which isn't as effective or expensive as the other option. Treatment of Vikane was applied on March 16, 2016, however, it was ineffective and the container did not pass re-inspection. The container was resealed and reported to Mr. Artero who recommended fumigating with a product called methyl bromide, applied on March 17, 2016. This line of treatment subsequently eradicated the specimen and met the requirements to pass re-inspection.

On March 17 the container was released to the consignee, after CQA officers conducted a third

inspection to ensure it was free of any live pests or invasive species which could negatively impact Guam's agriculture or natural resources.

For more information please contact our Public Information Officer Ms. Jessi Santos at (671) 475-6202 or email [jessi.santos@cqa.guam.gov](mailto:jessi.santos@cqa.guam.gov).

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