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The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (AS-EPA) launched its Pesticide Awareness and Importation Training.

The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (AS-EPA) executed its Pesticide Awareness and Importation Training on Wednesday March 07, 2012 at the Department of Agriculture's conference room. The objective of this training is to provide basic pesticide information and more importantly to endow the Territory's first line of defense with the knowledge on how to detect and prevent unauthorized pesticides from entering the Territory. Because most of the pesticides are under the Department of Agriculture's jurisdiction for application on plants grown by the local farmers, Department of Agriculture's Director HTC. Lealao Melila Purcell acknowledged the importance of all agencies involved in working collaboratively to ensure pesticides are properly used based on their specifics.

Fanuatele Dr. To'afa Vaiaga'e emphasized on the importance of this training, as he stated, "There are several illegal pesticides that are out there, without our knowledge whether they are legal and safe for our use. Detecting illegal and unauthorized pesticides should be a partnership effort by all ASG Departments, Business Owners, Farmers and members of the community that have direct connection to pesticide issue." He hopes that the Pesticide Awareness and Importation Training will help the public, business owners, government departments and the communities recognize the difference between legal and illegal pesticide.

The training involved local government departments, private sectors, vendors, farmers and members of the community. Marcy Katzin from the USEPA Region 9 Office was the instructor who shared several tips on how to identify illegal pesticides and what needs to be done upon their discovery. She also discussed the importance of why illegal pesticides are not recommended and the effects of such pesticides when they are available to the public and especially their risks when in contact with children.

An important issue was discussed about the need of ensuring the produces sold or provided to the school lunch program are safe for consumption. Additionally, the determination of the pesticide residue does not exceed its limitation set forth by USEPA Standards.

The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (AS-EPA) wants the public to know that when you purchase or use a pesticide product or anything that claims to kill insects, that product is considered a pesticide. Pesticides that are sold in the Territory Must have an EPA REGISTRATION number or an EPA ESTABLISHMENT number. When you come across a pesticide product that does not have any of the following features kindly report to AS-EPA at 633-2304.

Fanuatele Dr. To'afa Vaiaga'e extends his sincere gratitude to the director of the Department of Agriculture, Department of Health, Department of Homeland Security, Department of A.S. Customs, Ace Hardware, Tool Shop, Mega Bugs, and all members of the community who attended this training.

