

# The Australia-Africa Plant Biosecurity Partnership



## MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release: Friday, 13 November 2015

### Australia sharing fruit fly expertise with Africa

Three plant biosecurity managers from Africa are working with leading Australian fruit fly researchers to take up the fight against the invasive pest in Burundi, Mozambique and Tanzania.

"These countries are highly dependent on agriculture, making fruit fly very damaging not only for trade but also for food security," said Dr Michael Robinson, CEO of Australia's Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre (PBCRC) which is leading the project.

The new Australia-Africa Plant Biosecurity Network supports increased agricultural production, improved food security and better market access for farmers in ten African countries. Fifteen Network Senior Fellows are currently in Australia, with Epitace Bizimungu, Armando Marcos Come and Katemani Mdili spending three weeks studying the key aspects of fruit fly research and management; biology, market access, monitoring and control.

Epitace is Branch Head of Pest Control in Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi. Fruit fly is a major pest in Burundi, affecting exports to neighbouring and European countries. Epitace is working to reduce the impact of fruit fly on Burundi's mango crops.

Armando is in charge of Mozambique's Phytosanitary Inspection and Plant Quarantine Service. More than 75 per cent of Mozambique's workforce is in agriculture, making the industry crucial for job creation, trade and poverty reduction. He aims to review Mozambique's quarantine pest lists and assessment procedures, train inspectors and improve facilities.

Katemani is a Senior Agricultural Officer with Plant Health Services in Tanzania. Exotic pests such as fruit fly have had a serious impact on Tanzania's agricultural exports and the economy in recent years due to a lack of specialised knowledge.

"Australia is very good at biosecurity," said Katemani. "I am hoping to learn more - even the organisational structure and the way the system works; how different institutions work towards the common goal of biosecurity."

While in Australia, Epitace, Armando and Katemani are participating in a three week rotation with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, the South Australian Research and Development Institute and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). All three Fellows see the visit as an opportunity to build networks and pass skills and experience on to colleagues back home.

"The three week rotation gives the Fellows a good overview of Australia's fruit fly expertise, built over decades of dealing with these pests and backed by rigorous science" said Professor Tony Clarke from QUT. "Sharing that knowledge strengthens global biosecurity."

The project is funded by the Australian International Food Security Research Centre (AIFSRC) within the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and is being delivered by a consortium of PBCRC, CABI and the Crawford Fund.

For video interviews and more information, visit [www.pbcrc.com.au/research/east-africa/](http://www.pbcrc.com.au/research/east-africa/)

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