



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

PRIORITY WATER ISSUES IN HAWAII AND IN THE U.S. AFFILIATED PACIFIC ISLANDS

A 38-question survey was developed to assess public awareness and attitudes about water issues in Hawaii and in the six Pacific Island territories, federations, and republics that have an association with the USA, including American Samoa, Guam, Marshal Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau. In Hawaii, the survey was mailed out to 322 residents randomly selected from Hawaii phonebooks whereas it was orally administered to 50 randomly chosen adults on each Pacific Island entity. The collected data were separately tabulated and analyzed at two levels using SAS. The survey questions were divided into five sections: (1) how the participant feels about the environment, (2) what the participant thinks about various water sources and their condition, (3) who the participant thinks should be responsible for water issues, (4) the participant's environmental perspective, and (5) the participant's water quality education level and sources of information. Differences and commonalities arose out of the findings for Hawaii and among the island entities. Survey respondents across the islands consider drinking water the highest priority water issue. Other important findings that have emerged are (1) the perception that drinking water is/is not suitable in its current state, (2) the satisfaction levels of water quality associated with beaches, shorelines, and coastal waters vary across the Pacific Islands, (3) water quantity concerns are island specific, and (4) urban waste is the widely perceived water quality challenge. The results of this survey have been disseminated through conference presentations and publications and are being used to develop outreach and research programs in water resources. Based on discussions within the Southwest States and Pacific Islands Region, drinking water, including water sources and water testing, has emerged as a Region IX priority initiative.

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