



EPA

TANAPAG VILLAGE PCBs

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION IX • FEBRUARY 2005

EPA TO RE-SAMPLE LAND CRABS IN TANAPAG

This fact sheet has been produced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to inform the Tanapag Village community that we will be re-sampling land crabs in the area to determine if they are safe to eat. A ban on eating land crabs from areas where polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in soil had been a problem was put into effect several years ago. Now that the soil has been cleaned up and enough time has gone by to give us good data on the land crabs, EPA will sample from several areas in and around Tanapag the week of February 21, 2005.

BACKGROUND

Following an assessment in May 2000, a total of 92 land crabs were collected from five sampling areas in December 2000: 10 from Smiling Cove (to provide background data), and 19-21 from each of four Tanapag sites (Achugao Stream, Cemetery 2 and two Homestead area locations). At that time EPA sampling found statistically significant levels of PCBs in land crabs from Cemetery 2 and Homestead 2 (Beach Park) areas and some elevated levels of PCBs in those from the Homestead 1 and Achugao Stream areas. Some land crabs were also sampled for metals, but results did not show levels that would cause health concerns. There was, however, another possible contaminant found in the land crabs by the analytical laboratory which was thought to be an organochlorine pesticide such as DDT. Although the contaminant was not confirmed or quantified, this somewhat accidental discovery warrants further assessment. Since the land crabs were already under a consumption advisory based on the PCBs, it was determined that further investigation of pesticides would best be done upon re-assessment of the land crabs for PCBs.

UPCOMING SAMPLING

This month's sampling of land crabs will be similar to what EPA did in December 2000, with samples taken from the same locations as before. Since several years have gone by since the soil remediation and the elimination of the source of PCBs in Tanapag was completed, it is hoped that the PCB levels in land crabs in the affected areas would be reduced. If this is the case, EPA would make a recommendation to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Department of Public Health regarding modifying the existing land crab advisory issued by that agency in 2001.

In addition to sampling for PCBs, the land crabs will also be analyzed for the pesticide DDT and related compounds due to information provided by the laboratory of its possible presence. No metals analyses will be conducted because the previous sampling showed no levels of concern. If organochlorine pesticides are found above health-protective levels, this data will be considered in any health recommendation made to CNMI by EPA. No additional soil remediation is planned by EPA for the Tanapag site.

Results of the February 2005 land crab sampling will be provided to the community later this year after all data is verified and finalized.

(See Contacts on back)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Copies of previous sampling reports are available for public review at CNMI DEQ offices. Please feel free to contact either of the people listed below if you have questions about past or upcoming sampling.

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