



**BENJAMIN J. CAYETANO**  
**GOVERNOR**



**Department  
of Agriculture**  
STATE OF HAWAII

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **HAWAII RECEIVES ITS FIRST NEUTERED BROWN TREE SNAKE**

Governor Ben Cayetano joined the state Department of Agriculture and other government agencies in viewing Hawaii's first neutered brown tree snake flown in last night from Guam. The snake will be used in training exercises with Department of Agriculture detector dogs.

"Brown tree snakes are a definite threat to our economy, environment, and quality of life," said Governor Cayetano.

"That's why it's important to use a live neutered brown tree snake to train our detector dogs as part of our prevention program. Training our dogs to recognize the scent of live brown tree snakes is a major step in our fight to keep this most unwanted pest out of Hawaii."

"Much of the credit goes to our congressional delegation for securing \$3.5 million, this year, from the U.S. Departments of Defense, Interior, and Agriculture."

Last year, Governor Cayetano signed into law a measure that would allow the state Department of Agriculture to have one live, sterile male brown tree snake for training of its snake detector dogs. In addition to being neutered, a radio transmitter has been implanted into the snake to detect its whereabouts at all times.

The state's first live sterile snake, measuring five-feet in length, arrived from Guam last night aboard Continental Micronesia, flight #2. During transport, the snake was safeguarded in a double-lock, escape-proof container.

Strict guidelines are in place to ensure that the snake does not escape. During training, the department will have at least three inspectors on site: an inspector will always have a direct line of site on the contained snake, another will have a receiver to track the snake for more than 100 yards; and the third will be the inspector-canine team being trained. The snake will be contained in a double-secured bag and snake-catching equipment will always be on site, as a precautionary measure. Training will be conducted at three warehouse locations.

When not in training, the snake will be safeguarded in a double enclosed container, behind locked doors at either the department's Plant Quarantine Station or Airport Office.

As additional snakes are needed, the Wildlife Services of the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has been contracted to supply neutered snakes with transmitters implanted for Hawaii's training program.

"On the state level, we will be expanding the state's canine training program by increasing the number of dog and inspector teams from three to seven," said James J. Nakatani, Hawaii Department of Agriculture Chairman.

"The department is also looking at the possibility of utilizing both passive and active dogs to step-up its snake detection and prevention program."

Media contact: State Department of Agriculture Plant Quarantine Branch Manager Myron Isherwood at (808)586-0844 or Brown Tree Snake Canine Coordinator Lester Kaichi at (808)586-0893.

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