

## **Pest Detection**

The pest detection initiatives of Ministry of Agriculture are designed to intercept particular weeds, pests and diseases deemed threats to the agriculture sector and the environment. Early detection is crucial since management of plant pests and diseases is costly.

The [Plant Quarantine Division](#), the [Plant Protection Unit](#), and the Rural Agricultural Development Authority, [RADA](#), partner together in exposing the intentional or accidental introduction of pests to the country. Several initiatives of trapping, surveys, port inspections and emergency response projects are utilized in the detection efforts. Surveillance of fields for possible infestations is primarily conducted by RADA extension officers and is an on-going programme. On the field visits, trapped insects and diseased plant material are retrieved for further investigation and [identification](#) within the laboratory setting.

Pest and diseased plant materials are also intercepted at the ports of inspections, including the airports and wharves. The Plant Quarantine division inspects incoming plant material and fresh produce against standardized procedures. Passenger luggage and imported goods are also examined to restrict the entry of harmful plant pests and diseases.

[Emergency pest response systems](#) are established with the sole purpose of managing infestations; but take into account the need for quarantine and control of threats to plant safety. Components of these projects involve the development and execution of action plans, training of pest response personnel, and education of citizens on how to identify pests. Public awareness is crucial to pest management, in that, farmers and citizens will become cognisant of what signs to look out for before an invasive species becomes established within the country. As the saying goes, "Prevention is better than cure".