"Dry litter" Piggery project to curb unmanaged piggeries waste

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Pohnpei, FSM—Representatives of the Piggery Advisory Council, members of Pohnpei State government, and the diplomatic corps gathered this morning to celebrate the handing over of a $61,550 from the Japanese government. The money was provided by the Embassy of Japan's Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Human Security Projects and will be used to purchase two "tow behind" wood chippers as the basis for a Dry Litter Piggery Support Project.

"One of the main topics at PALM 6 held in Okinawa last month is how to protect human security in the island countries. The dry litter system is a desirable model to enhance human security with simple approaches using low cost local resources. It will prevent various diseases and pollution from harming the residents. We are fortunate to possess beautiful nature such as the waterfalls, the rivers, and the mangrove trees. However, at the same time we possess the responsibility to protect these heritages," Japan's Ambassador Eiichi Suzuki said during the ceremony.

Although the Guest Perspective by Mr. Paul Lake in this issue gives a much fuller explanation of the Dry Litter Piggery Support Project, essentially the idea is that wood chips would be used in pig pens. The wood chips, along with pig waste can then be gathered and easily turned into compost. Mr. Lake said that the process of decomposition that occurs in composting generates enough heat to kill off eColi and other harmful pollutants that are found in pig waste. Not only would the project save many gallons of water that are currently being used to clean pig pens on a daily basis but pig waste would not be channeled into Pohnpei's streams and rivers.

One of the two wood chippers will be used at the training farm of the College of Micronesia FSM National campus where farmers will be able to learn about the method of Dry Litter Piggery management for use in their own farms. The other chipper will be maintained by Pohnpei Agriculture. Pig farmers will be able to request wood chipping services from that department.

Governor Ehsa said during his remarks that piggeries management is one of the most important things that can be done for Pohnpei's environment.

U.S. Ambassador Peter Prahar said, "There is a lot of money spent on different projects in Micronesia, but I see none more important for human health than the issue of unmanaged piggery waste. As we have heard, this waste has an incredibly adverse affect on water quality and public health, especially on Pohnpei. The presence of unmanaged pig waste harms the environment, pollutes drinking water, and exposes the public to debilitating and potentially fatal diseases such as leptospirosis."

All of the countries with Embassies in Pohnpei have at one time or another supported projects to help to curb piggeries caused pollution of the environment. USDA-NRCS has been providing and will continue to provide technical assistance to the dry litter piggeries project. The Embassy of the People's Republic of China has facilitated the selection process for the construction of several biogas operations to be built in Pohnpei over the next two years. Very recently, members of the Piggery Advisory Council, working with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, applied for and were awarded a grant from AusAID to fund the dry litter piggery being built at Sei Pepper Farm in Kitti.

"I am sure that those of you my age who were raised on Pohnpei remember growing up swimming in the local rivers without the hazards that children face today. I hope that by working together the children of the next generation will have the same luxury," Ambassador Prahar said.

"Our joint efforts in this project are a model of transparency and coordination amongst donors," he said.

"Japan's contribution today is an important step forward in the ability for farmers to help reduce the impacts of unmanaged pig waste on Pohnpei. Thank you Ambassador Suzuki, and thank you all for your important contributions and hard work on the issue," he concluded.