



Agriculture NEWSLETTER



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Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment - Hon. Dr.
Mahendra Reddy.

towards delivering our core role for our clientele and partners.

As we set our sights on the collective aspirations of the Ministry to "Grow Beyond", and as an entity and arm of the Fijian Government, the momentum of this grandiose movement is heavily dependent on our will to churn out our best in all that we do. It is a holistic approach that requires all hands on deck to bring to fruition. We can, and we will "Grow Beyond".

It is undeniable, we have achieved a lot in 2020. Agriculture was put under the spotlight and we have weathered the storm and I applaud your untiring effort, contribution, and sacrifice. We were a beacon during this unprecedented period of uncertainty and we will continue to be that guiding light going forward because agriculture is the basis of life, and we are at its foundations.

It is this time of the year that we must take stock of what has transpired this physical year, and dwell on the areas that we can improve on, and make the necessary adjustments to ensure we perfect the roll of the dice come the next cycle. Every year, we must strive to raise the benchmark of service delivery.

The Ministry's leadership team stands ready to tread this journey with you and we pray that this season of renewal, peace, and joy bring out that fervent spirit of servitude to guide Fiji and her people to prosperity.

From my family to yours, may you have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Dear Colleagues!

Season's greetings!

2020 has been a challenging year, to say the least, but we've overcome it nonetheless and I take my hats off to your unwavering support throughout the year.

We experienced the trials that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to our shores, we went through this together and we still are. We've maneuvered accordingly and are continuing to do so to date, the key is that we are in this together. In everything that we have done so far as a Ministry, we've rallied through in a concerted effort from all fronts and it is this stance that will steer our Ministry

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Message from the Hon. Assistant Minister



Assistant Minister for Agriculture-Hon Viam Pillay

Christmas is a time of great joy in Fiji as we come together in our different religious beliefs as a Ministry to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. We come together partly because of the wonderful simplicity of the Christmas message - a baby born to a poor couple in a stable who grew up to change the world.

The impact of Jesus Christ across the ages comes from his teaching that God loves us all without exception and that we, in turn, must love each other. This is something that inspires every Ministry staff - whatever our particular beliefs - because the same principle happens to be shared by all the world's great religions.

Christmas is for everyone and is also a source of the Ministry's unity - the idea that if we can embrace God's love and love one another, anything is possible for ourselves and our Ministry.

As we celebrate the birth of the

Christ Child, let us re-dedicate ourselves to putting love at the centre of our Ministry's life, to care for each other and especially our families and the farmers and as we gather together with our families and friends, let us spare a thought for those who are less fortunate, both in Fiji and overseas.

I especially ask you to remember those of our staff and farmers in distant parts of Fiji who are facing some difficulties during this Christmas, for some, their loved ones are in hospitals, some are away overseas and for some, their loved ones have gone to be with the Lord. However far they may be from home, they remain close to us in our thoughts and prayers and we send them a collective greeting on this most special of days.

May the joy and peace of the Festive Season be with you all. My family joins me in wishing you all a Very Happy Christmas.



Message from the Permanent Secretary



PS Agriculture - Mr. Ritesh Dass

The year 2020 is finally drawing to a close. It has been a year which has put in a significant demand on all of us. The pandemic came upon us unexpectedly, impacting everyone in Fiji, gripping the world, and literally stopping it in its track. The season of Christmas is on us, and this year everything will be different - that is certain. No one could have imagined that a virus thought initially to be nothing more than a common cold, would shake the foundation of almost every country in the world and that economies would take a nosedive.

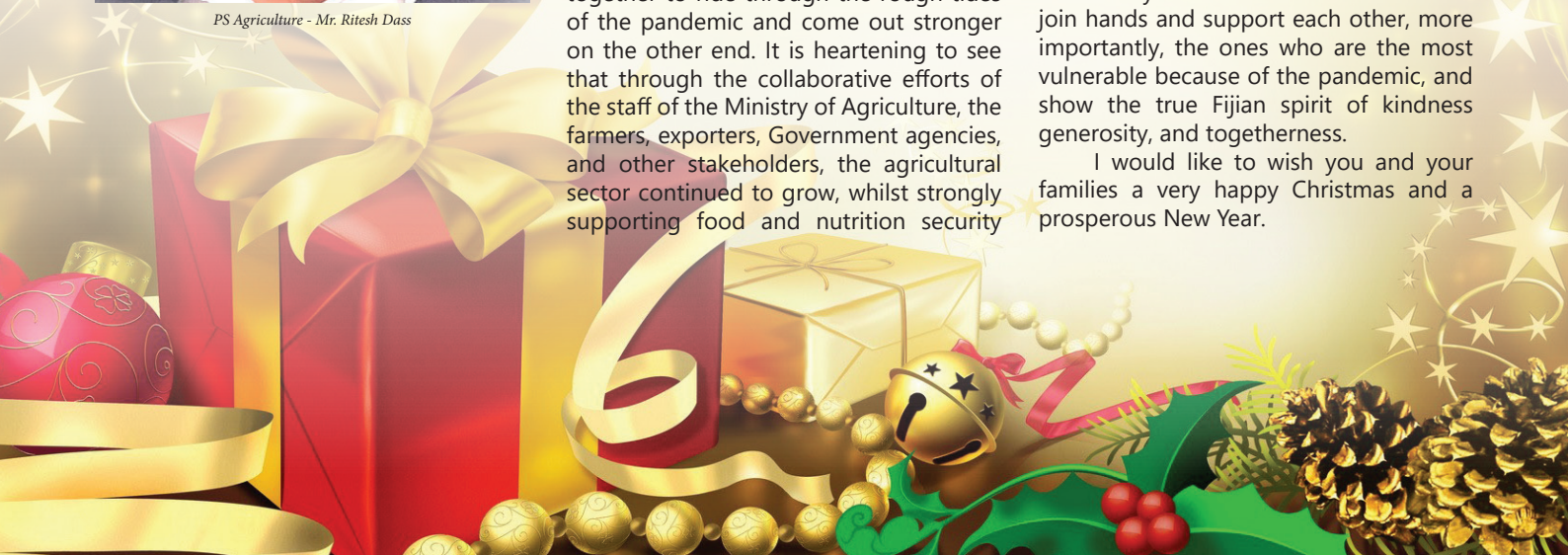
Certainly, through the adversities facing not only our nation but every other country in the world today, there is a greater need than ever before for individuals, organisations, and entities to come together to ride through the rough tides of the pandemic and come out stronger on the other end. It is heartening to see that through the collaborative efforts of the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, the farmers, exporters, Government agencies, and other stakeholders, the agricultural sector continued to grow, whilst strongly supporting food and nutrition security

challenges for all Fijians. Everyone realized that agriculture should be likened to time, which, irrespective of what happens in our world or our lives, keeps on going, keeps on moving on. And I thank each and everyone who kept agriculture striving for growth and will continue to drive the momentum going forward.

We must continue to work together to drive innovation and growth for the sector, as well as promote economic growth - broad-based, inclusive growth that helps Fiji develop as a nation and lifts the standard of living for all Fijians. We have set the sail and lead the transformation agenda, and the work we do today and our aspiration of "Grow Beyond" will set a strong platform for a prosperous Fiji in the future.

This year's Christmas will need us to join hands and support each other, more importantly, the ones who are the most vulnerable because of the pandemic, and show the true Fijian spirit of kindness generosity, and togetherness.

I would like to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.





Message from the Head of Agriculture Operations and Services



Head of Agriculture Operations & Services - Vinesh Kumar

Seasons Greetings

2020 has been a challenging year forcing most of us to adapt to new realities and accept new norms. What makes me optimistic is seeing that our people are capable not only to adapt but continue to thrive on change. A year ago,

no-one could have foreseen the physical, emotional, and economic toll COVID 19 unleashed upon the world. Many of us are still reeling from the havoc wreaked on our lives and our plans. Whilst the year has removed lots of privileges that we previously took for granted, it has also provided us with an enforced mental boot camp.

The Operations division of the Ministry of Agriculture is the "engine house" of our organization; this is where things happen in real-time. This team is the 'feet on the ground' and trust me, it is not an easy and comfortable place to be. Hence I take this time to salute each member of my team for their contributions and their efforts in taking up new challenges each day.

The team never shies away from challenges and takes head-on anything that comes their way. It's a call of duty and whilst many are in the comfort of their homes, our team would still be out in the sea sailing for five days to carry out TC Harold survey in Rotuma or waking up at 4 o'clock in the morning to do TB testing.

The Operation Green-Link at the height of the lockdown early this year in two urban centers was also a testimony to the selflessness of our people where they continued to work in an exposed

environment with no second thoughts to their health and safety. As a team, we achieved several milestones this year; from three successful divisional and one national agriculture show to the implementation of a number of new initiatives.

To improve customer service for the first time we introduced an online work order matrix which allowed each client to register their issues with unique coding. This year we also introduced discussion platforms such as "Noqu Agriculture" and "sota tale".

As we approach the end of 2020, we are met by a category 5 cyclone that has set us back again, but as Fijians, we will bounce back and we will again put this event in our past.

Despite all odds, at the end of every year in the true Fijian spirit, we always look forward to a time of joy and a time of getting together as a team. Christmas inspires all of us to believe that it is possible to live a better tomorrow and that it is worthwhile to make a greater effort to obtain better results. On behalf of our Operations team, we wish our MOA family a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



Message from the Head of Agriculture Research



Head of Agriculture Research - Mr. Shalendra Prasad

Ni Sa Bula Vinaka. Ladies and Gentleman, as we draw closer to the end of the year, we get into the festive mood. While we enjoy the achievements of the year with celebrations, let us not forget the various tasks yet to be completed.

I joined in as the Head of Agriculture Research in early February this year. I would like to thank the Ministry for entrusting me to take up this role and all the staff of the Research Division for their support. Together we can take agriculture research in this country to new heights.

We have gone through some unprecedented times this year due to COVID-19 and TC Harold, however, with concerted efforts, we managed to stay on course and deliver as expected. Some of the notable achievements during the year I wish to mention are the Launching of the National Soil Health Card, Launching of the Bacterium Culture for Composting, Launching of Soft dried pineapple and papaya fruits (Product was taken up by AMA for commercialization), Release of new Pigeonpea variety "Jaagriti", Launching of Cassava, Kumala & Vudi Chips (Product was taken up by Nabulini Village for commercialization) and hosting of the National Agriculture Symposium in collaboration with the Fiji Institute of Agricultural Science. The Fiji Agricultural Journal Issue 1 Volume 58 was also published. It is also worth mentioning that we revived the publication of the Annual

Research Report after it was last published in 2000.

We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for all their efforts throughout the year. All the achievements mentioned above would not have been possible through teamwork. The success of our Division is built on the efforts of our staff and in this past year, we have enjoyed many successes. Thank you for the dedication, loyalty, and commitment that each one of you has shown us.

We've come through a year that was filled with both challenges and victories. How reassuring it's been to know that we can count on all of you regardless of what we will face. On behalf of the Research Division, please allow me to extend my personal and genuine appreciation to each one of you for your valuable contributions to this organization. Working with you this past year has been a pleasure and we're proud to have you all with us.

We offer our best wishes and happiness to you and your families as we all look forward to another successful year ahead.



Message from the Acting Chief Economist



Acting Chief Economist - Ms. Sera Bose

Dear MoA Colleagues,

Earlier this year Pope Francis wrote that "God saves us then by making himself little, near, and real." What an appropriate and endearing description of the birth of Jesus Christ. Of all the ways that God could have chosen to reveal Himself to the world, He chose a simple way, a way of humility.

When I consider the circumstances that Jesus was born into, I cannot help but think of the people whom we are blessed to serve each day - Our Farmers & Stakeholders. People seeking a place where they can be safe and where they will receive compassion and a heartfelt welcome.

I am grateful to each of you for your enthusiasm to share your expertise, skills

and talents throughout the year for the Ministry and to the people we serve in Fiji's Agriculture Sector. You manifest God's love in real and concrete ways every day through your respective areas of service.

Please accept my prayers for a Joyous and Holy Christmas, and my best wishes for a Happy and safe New Year.

Yours in Christ.



Message from the Head of Human Resource Development & Services



Head of HRD&S - Mr. Ben Chand

Season greetings!

"Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team of people." Steve Jobs.

2020 has been a progressive year for the Human Resources Development & Services Division! We have throughout the year worked effortlessly in adding our desire, to continuously grow while promoting ethical practices, upholding our Values, and building trust amongst our colleagues and stakeholders.

From dealing with COVID 19, re-strategizing, and focusing on service delivery, we've encountered many challenges however, with the committed staff we endured and sailed through with humility and simplicity to reach our goals and achievements.

We believe and treat our employees as our most valuable assets and will

continue to serve you with due diligence in years to come.

We pride ourselves on commitment, bestowed together with the management's continuous support and understanding.

Come 2021, we will move forward and upward together with concerted effort and team commitment to translating our vision into action for a competitive, sustainable, and resilient agriculture sector. We also shift our focus on improving customer services, strengthening our policies, and working hand in hand to assist our people in their daily activities and grow beyond Agriculture.

Of course! 'Tis the season to be jolly again!! To all our staff we dedicate you these words and pray that God will bless you and your family this beautiful Christmas season. Stay Safe and Stay Blessed.





Message from the Head of Finance



Head of Finance - Mr. Ajay Singh

Dear Colleagues,

The Finance Division is a melting pot for the Ministry of Agriculture. Staff from every Division, Government agencies, and the private sector converge at the Division to deal with transactions needed to support Ministry of Agriculture activities, programs and ensure that all Fijians have access to safe quality nutritious Food.

This year unlike any other year has had very unique circumstances in Fiji. Some families have lost their only source of income while some family's income level has been drastically reduced as a result of COVID-19 and TC Harold.

Over the years, I have known Christmas to be a time of joy and tranquility. It is a time that allows us to sit back and build bridges amongst each other. This year, Christmas is a time when we can humble ourselves, share our love with everyone remembering in our hearts our brothers and sisters whose livelihoods

have been set back due to the devastating impacts of the pandemic and TC Harold. Let us also take the time to remember the tireless efforts of Health workers and their support staff, members of the Disciplined Forces, and other support organisations who are determined to contain the virus in our beloved country.

As we celebrate this Christmas season, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank every one of you for your assistance and support. 'Dhanyavaad and Vinaka vakalevu!

I hope that you will take time out with your family and friends to enjoy the Christmas love and return revitalized, ready to provide full support in ensuring that all Fijians have access to Nutritious Food and, eradicate hunger and multi-dimensional vulnerabilities.

I wish you all a safe Merry Christmas and a prosperous New 2021 Year!

