



WATER TANKS END WATER WOES FOR LABASA FARMERS



Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy with ADRA Fiji Country Director Mr Iliapi Tuwai, Ministry staff and the recipients of the water tanks.

Ten Labasa farmers were each handed a 5,300litre water tank valued at over \$1,200 per tank by Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) today (13.01.21).

Lagalaga livestock farmer, Ms Akisi Vinaka, 63, said in itaukei she was grateful for the assistance as it would greatly help her with the water problems usually experienced in the area she lives in.

She said water problems was always experienced in the area she lived in creating difficulties for her sheep and piggery farm, hence, the water tank was a welcome relief.

Dreketilailai crop farmer, Deo

Raman, 52, also expressed his appreciation for the water tank.

“Before our water source was the river, we would use the pump to reach us. But this water tank will make it easier for me. Now the water will be pumped into the water tank and from there we will use it for both household and for the farm,” he said.

ADRA Fiji Country Director, Mr Iliapi Tuwai said the assistance was part of a project targeted at helping communities address water problems.

“ADRA is here to help you and I want to thank the Hon. Minister for this partnership we have with Government.

“I want to reassure you that we will

continue to work with Government to help you get up again,” Mr Tuwai said.

Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, the Hon. Dr Mahendra Reddy thanked ADRA and other development partners for assisting farmers in improving their livelihoods.

“This project by ADRA will provide an essential need, clean water. Provision of clean water is very critical with the support of development partners, and donors.

“Recipients will use these water tanks for their households and agricultural activity. It will transform their livelihoods and increase their agricultural productivity,” he said.

TRACTOR HANDOVER EXPECTED TO BOOST AGRICULTURE GROWTH IN BUA



Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, Hon. Dr Mahendra Reddy with the Ministry staff and members of Bua Rice Farmers Cooperative.

A rice farming community in Bua, is thrilled to have been given a tractor aimed at increasing their agricultural productivity, thanks to the intervention of Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, the Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy.

The tractor was handed over to the Bua Rice Farmers' Cooperative on Wednesday (13.01.21) in Vatubogi.

In receiving the tractor, Cooperative President, Mr Narendra Pratap, 54, expressed his sincerest appreciation for the assistance that would motivate him and his members to increase their rice and cassava production.

“Our Cooperative has 19 members from three areas; Tausa, Nasuva and Vatubogi. We are mostly rice and cassava farmers. Collectively, I believe we have more than 300 acres of land between us.

“I want to thank the Hon. Minister for giving us a tractor to the Bua Rice Farmers' Cooperative. We are looking forward to Government to help us so

we can grow more rice and reduce the rice import bill.

“We have a lot of land here and with more help we can produce more rice,” Mr Pratap said.

The Minister in handing over the tractor, told the farmers in Hindi it was a major achievement for the Cooperative.

He said it was important that farmers realized that mechanization was the way forward in moving towards a modern agriculture, which at the same time was also helping to achieve the Ministry's strategic goal.

He said the Cooperative had one of the largest rice schemes in Bua and as such Government looked forward in seeing a surge in agriculture growth in this area.

The Hon. Dr Reddy said with the tractor now owned by the Cooperative, it needed to be well looked after and the group needed to ensure that it would be maintained as well so that it would benefit the farmers in the long run.

BASIC INFORMATION ON LEPTOSPIROSIS



A dairy farm in Namosi.

What is it?

Leptospirosis is a disease caused by bacteria which live in the kidneys and genitals of many types of animals. Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can affect both humans and animals.

What are the signs and symptoms in people?

Leptospirosis usually starts with flu-like symptoms. Symptoms usually start within 5-14 days, but can appear as soon as 2 days, or up to 30 days after contact with the bacteria. It can cause a wide range of symptoms, but many of these can be mistaken for other diseases. In addition, some infected

persons may have no symptoms at all.

Symptoms include:

- High fever
- Headache
- Chills
- Muscle aches
- Vomiting
- Jaundice (yellow skin and eyes)
- Red eyes
- Abdominal Pain
- Diarrhoea
- Rash

Who is most at risk?

Anyone can get Leptospirosis, but some are more at risk due to their location and their work in Fiji. The

cyclone season also increases the risk of Leptospirosis due to higher rainfall and flooding.

Some examples of workers at risk:

- Farmers
- Crop farmers
- Slaughterhouse workers
- Fish workers
- Dairy farmers

However, household transmission of leptospirosis has become increasingly common in urban areas with poor overall sanitation infrastructures.

How could I get infected?

Rats, dogs, cats, cattle, pigs, horses and mongooses can carry and spread infection but some animals may have no symptoms of the disease. Cattle with leptospirosis sometimes abort in the last trimester or you might notice a sudden drop in milk production in a large number of your milking cows. People can get infected by contact with water, flood, mud, food which has been contaminated by urine or body fluids from infected animals.

Rats visiting the kitchen of homes can also contaminate food and utensils with feces and urine. The bacteria can survive in soil or water for weeks, even months. Pet animals particularly unvaccinated dogs can easily get

infected from their environment or from rats and mongooses. And humans handling their sick pets are at risk of getting infected. Spreading the disease from one person to another is possible but not common.

How does infection start?

The bacteria gets into your body through cuts/scratches or broken skin or through the eyes, mouth or nose.

You can get it while:

- Drinking contaminated water
- Wading in flood waters
- Playing in rivers or lakes
- Hunting
- Gardening in farm soil, working with crops
- Walking barefoot in paddocks or gardens
- Touching sick animals
- Eating or drinking contaminated food or water
- Smoking without washing your hands after animal contact
- Cleaning out sheds where animals live especially rats, mice, mongoose etc.
- Working in forests
- Sharing utensils with sick family members

How serious is it?

Without treatment, Leptospirosis can lead to kidney damage, meningitis

(inflammation of the membrane around the brain and spinal cord), liver failure, respiratory distress, and even death. If you or anyone you know has any of the above symptoms, you should seek urgent medical attention at your nearest healthcare facility.

Early treatment by a Doctor is key to preventing complications and deaths.

Any cattle abortions should be reported to your locality officers and veterinarians of the Ministry of Agriculture for further investigation.

How do I protect myself and others?

- Avoiding wading/swimming in waters that may be contaminated with animal urine, especially flood waters.
- Wearing protective clothing and footwear when working with livestock.
- Separating households from livestock e.g. through the use of fences/pens.
- Regular household cleaning.
- Getting rid of rats in the household.
- Keeping your food and eating/cooking utensils away from rats and pets
- Washing fruits and vegetables.
- Take care during milking of cows to ensure urine does not splash into eyes or mouth.