

Recipients Acknowledge Private-Public Partnership



Baulevu households receiving their day old chicks donated by Pacific Feeds Limited from the Ministry of Agriculture

The onslaught of Tropical Cyclone Harold and the destruction it left in its wake has left a toll on the agriculture sector and greatly impacted Fijian livelihoods.

Our agricultural sector saw over \$27million of damages from the immense levels of rain and flooding throughout Fiji. This is but a fraction

of the total cost of damages the Category 4 Cyclone wreaked across the country.

With food supplies being affected, it was imperative that Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture restore some sense of normalcy to people's lives.

Through private-public partnership,

Pacific Feeds Limited donated 2,190 chicks to the Ministry of Agriculture in order to help meet the food and nutrition requirements of affected Fijians.

The Ministry of Agriculture then donated these six-twelve day old chicks to selected households within the greater Nausori area.

For laid off Family's Repair garage worker Vijay Prakash, who lives in Vuci South Road, the assistance couldn't have come at a better time. He was laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The assistance came at the right time, because now I am out of work and with the devastation of TC Harold, we will have something to start off with and to keep us busy at home and now we are feeding them with chicken starter," he said.

"The 12 that I am assisted with is an addition to my old stock of 15 and I am getting advice from my friend that works for Crest Chicken on its maintenance and feeding," said Mr. Prakash.

Whereas for Prem Chand of Baulevu, Naitasiri the broiler birds offer him a new opportunity to venture into broiler farming; "I am a full time

farmer planting dalo, okra, cassava, kumala and bhindi and we have a few ducks too but this is the first time we are rearing broiler," he said.

"With the current situation we are facing now, we have decided to venture into broiler rearing and the timely assistance of the day old chicks is really appreciated," said Mr. Chand.

Further down Baulevu, Mr. Samuela Matea also received his dozen chicks and shared that the assistance would be a start for him, as he had plans to begin his own broiler farm and to provide food and nutrition through the assistance within his community.

"I received 12 chicks and I am really grateful for this assistance as I am planning to rear it and it was my intention that I can feed the community and earn extra income for my family," said Mr. Matea.

Farmer Contracts to be Implemented by AMA



AMA Chief Executive Officer Mr Alvin Sharma during a recent press conference at the Ministry of Agriculture conference room in Raiwaqa.

Current and potential suppliers of the Agricultural Marketing Authority of Fiji (AMA) will be provided 'Farmer Contracts' as part of the institution's 6-month plan.

AMA Chief Executive Officer Alvin Sharma said they would be providing written contracts to farmers for a 3-year period.

"The contract will define the quantity of produce required, what the intervals are required at, what will be the price range to be paid out to the farmer and the obligations of AMA and the respective farmer," he said.

The Farmer Contract would apply to current farmers and all new potential farmers who would opt to supply the AMA with the specified produce.

"Anyone in Fiji with access to land and dedication to farming can apply for this contract, we are going to make farming a profession and we are not going to stop there.

"If you have been laid off and wish to switch to an alternate self-sustaining career opportunity, then this can be the opportunity that you have been waiting for."

Moreover, the AMA, as part of the initiative, will offer contracted farmers an interest free cash advance, depending on their output commitment.

"We understand that for new and existing farmers, finding funds for land preparation can be a huge challenge, this cash advance shall be used to

prepare the land and plant the required crops," he said.

"AMA will then deduct this amount from the monies to be paid to the farmer for his or her crop in 2-3 deductions inside 12 months," said Mr. Sharma.

"We will monitor all our contracted farmers and slowly increase the amount of the interest free cash advance that they can take."

The CEO confirmed that AMA will take the lead role in negotiating on behalf of the contracted farmers to improve their livelihoods.

Additionally, through the contract, farmers would become members of the Fiji National Provident Fund and have access to rural banking.

"All our contracted farmers will need to become members of the FPNF and their relevant deduction will be made by the AMA from the respective monies which is to be paid to the farmers," he said.

"They too will be able to accumulate their hard earned savings for their retirement, or make use of the FPNF's wide range of services," he added.

"We will work with the Ministry of Agriculture and the relevant financial institutions to ensure that our contracted farmers also have access to rural banking facilities, where these services are taken to them rather than them going to these institutions."

Minister Reddy Affirms Commitment to Securing Fiji's Food and Nutrition



Minister for Agriculture Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy (4th from left) with Senior Government Officials plant potatoes at Grace Road farm in Sabeto, Nadi.

Fulfilling the critical primary and strategic objectives of securing the country's food and nutritional security requirements remains a top priority of the Fijian Government.

This was highlighted by the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy in Sabeto, Nadi recently while announcing the Ministry of Agriculture's plans to steer agricultural growth and expansion.

"As you all know, we are in an extremely challenging era."

"The pandemic is also disrupting people's food environments and is already resulting in food security scares across various countries.

"Here at home, COVID-19

has brought our vulnerabilities to the forefront, as well as paved opportunities that we need to capitalize on," said Hon. Reddy.

"I wish to focus on the opportunities ahead of us and how the Ministry of Agriculture wishes to seize this opportunity to fulfil two of our critical primary and strategic objectives; those are securing the country for its food and nutritional security requirements, progressively expanding agriculture to its full potential to raise our national income and become the leading export earner for the country," he added.

Minister Reddy also stressed that the secondary objective of improving the livelihoods of our rural communities, the provision

of employment opportunities and utilizing sustainable agricultural practices to mitigate climate change issues would be addressed.

At the same time, addressing our secondary objectives in improving the livelihood of our rural communities, provision for employment opportunities and using sustainable agricultural practices to mitigate climate change issues.

Several initiatives were announced to ensure all Fijians had access to food of acceptable quality and nutritional value such as the Home Gardening Seed Packages, Farms Support Package, Establishment of Orchards and Nurseries and Establishment of Medium to Large Livestock Farms.



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