



# AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TAKES OFF

Top 5: Domestic Export Commodity by Main Destination

Commodity	2019 (Jan - June)		2020 (Jan - June)		Main Destination
	Volume (kg)	Value (FJD'000)	Volume (kg)	Value (FJD'000)	
Kava	150,148	15,192.8	219,737	20,612.5	USA
Taro	2,446,677	12,302.9	3,004,030	12,277.2	NZ
Tumeric	488,114	2,432.1	810,773	5,254.4	USA
Mixtures of Spices	309,589	2,070.2	312,089	2,314.9	Australia
Ginger	94,714	609.9	163,203	1,046.3	Australia

Source: Fiji Agriculture & Rural Statistics/Fiji Bureau of Statistics

Agricultural exports have taken off substantially despite all odds.

Minister for Agriculture, Dr. Reddy says they are getting the fundamentals right, incentivising the farmers and working closely with the exporters to raise exports.

Although COVID 19 has brought much vulnerability to the forefront, the pandemic has paveda opportunities the nation need to capitalize on. The Ministry has seized this opportunity through implementation of Agriculture Initiatives which have contributed to achievement of specific economic

indicators such as export.

The total Crop and Livestock Domestic export in the form of fresh chilled and value added recorded \$121 million (FJD) in the first half of 2020 (Jan-June) which is an increase from \$111 million (FJD) that was recorded in the same period of 2019. This is a 9% growth in export despite the COVID 19 pandemic.

The contribution of only fresh and chilled exports increased from 14% (4.9 million kg) in the first half of 2019 to 17% (5.7 million kg) in the same period of 2020. This supports the 15% growth in volume and 11% in

value of export recorded in January to June 2020.

Major commodities that contributed to the increase in export volume are Kava, Taro, Tumeric, Ginger, Fruits, Eggs, Mixture of Spices, Yam, Pineapple and Other Root Crops. Major Export Destinations that recorded increase in volume of export as compared to same period in 2019 are New Zealand, United States of America, Australia, Hawaii and Pacific Island Countries. On this front, the sector could achieve an annual export figure of \$60 million by end of 2020 and the Ministry hopes to increase this to a \$100 million in two years' time as alluded to by Hon. Dr Reddy at the Fiji Farmers Forum in Nadi recently.

The Ministry fully understood the impact of COVID 19 and the demand for agriculture as the backbone of Fiji's economy and this has pushed the Ministry to another level to formulate plans and strategy that will not only sustain us through this pandemic but enable us to bounce back better.

# TOKOU FARMERS RECEIVE TRAINING ON KAVA DIEBACK DISEASE



Participants of the Farm Management training

Minimizing the risk of diseases such as Kava Dieback on the local kava industry was the focus of a Farm Management training held for kava farmers of Tokou Village on Ovalau recently.

Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, Mr. Ritesh Dass said the training was important as it provided empowerment to farmers, raising awareness on the effect of diseases that affect kava production.

"There is potential in rural farmers, and accessibility to information on the diseases that can affect production is vital. This is a rapidly spreading black soft rot of the stem tissue and symptoms appear on the leaves before the visible rot starts," he said.

"It is a very serious disease and production losses are high, therefore the supply of quality planting material is also essential."

The Ministry of Agriculture is working on efforts to control the spread of the disease on yaqona farms.

"The disease is a virus and there is no spray that can kill the virus and the only way you can tackle it is to burn the whole planting material," Mr. Dass said.

"There is no known resistance among the varieties of kava grown in Fiji and cultural control is the way to manage kava dieback."

"Proper management of yaqona is the best way to combat it, following the traditional method and if diseased plants are younger, it is best to dig them out and replace them with fresh cuttings," he said.

"The kava industry is a thriving industry and precaution must be undertaken from an early stage to avoid losses."

Training participant and yaqona farmer Tonio Bainimoli said the training provided him valuable insight on diseases that could affect his production.

"This is the exact disease that we are having on the island and we are not aware of how severe it is and I am grateful the Ministry of Agriculture is creating awareness and giving us an insight of what this dieback disease is and how we can combat it," he said.

"Before this Farm Management training, we were applying all sorts of chemicals to the yaqona plants to combat it and now we have come to learn the best way to eliminate it."

Also, yaqona farmers received training demonstrations on detection, inspection and practical maintenance methods of the dieback disease during the training, while also being introduced to the 13 noble yaqona varieties available in Fiji.



Technical Officer Makereta Ranadi (right) showing farmers Kava dieback disease management.

# FIJI AGRO MARKETING PROMOTES GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Fiji Agro Marketing has, since its establishment in 2004, made great progress through stronger support for gender diversity in its workplace.

For the first time in its history, Fiji Agro Marketing has a strong representation of women in its Executive Management team, whereby 67% are women. Fiji Agro Marketing has always had strong women representation due to the high number of women working as part of its back-end team and for the first time now, this has also been reflected in the make up of the organisation's Executive Management Team as well.

Fiji Agro Marketing recognises that women play an important role in daily decision making. Hence, with the inclusion of women in leadership positions, Fiji Agro Marketing believes it will allow for different viewpoints and will create

a driven and fairer environment for its workers to promote inclusiveness and healthy competition in the organisation's overall leadership and strategic direction.

Four out of the five ladies that are represented in leadership roles have come from the Corporate Sector and bring to the organisation a diverse range of experience which presents an ideal opportunity for the Authority to foster mentorship and coaching culture, that will break the barrier of gender disparity in organisations.

The involvement of women in leadership roles will create a diverse workforce that will naturally lead to a more diverse culture and is more likely to thrive with the promotion of fairness and inclusiveness.

The Authority has also seen that our local women must get the experience that is needed to be ready for management roles as

well as opportunities to raise their profile so they can recognize and capitalise on their full potential. One of the women represented in our Executive management team, Ateca Nauluvula has been with the Authority for six years and has recently been promoted to a leadership role, serving as the Quality Assurance Manager. The knowledge and experience she has acquired over the years will play an important role in the delivery of the Authority's services to the farmers and the products that are processed at the AMA's warehouse. Within this short timeframe, she has reflected good leadership qualities and has been molded through mentoring by her peers.

The Authority will continue to invest and support efforts to hire and promote diverse competent candidates going forward.



From Left - Right: Sandhya Singh - Human Resource Manager, Ateca Nauluvula - Quality Assurance Manager, Sereana Lalakobau - Financial Controller, Vera Wedlock - Business Marketing Manager

