

HON. REDDY ANNOUNCES AGRICULTURE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE MEASURES

Fiji Agromarketing Authority will be prioritizing buying honey from farmers badly affected by TC Yasa in Vanua Levu, revealed Minister of Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, the Hon. Dr Mahendra Reddy at a recent press conference.

This was one of the immediate measures the Ministry was implementing to assist affected farmers bounce back.

"We are providing support to bee farmers, in terms of providing free sugar as a supplement to the bees so that they can get their honey production up quickly.

"We will work with AMA to give priority for purchasing of honey from these areas, at least for the next six months' so that they can have a source of income for their households," he said.

In addition, planting materials and day-old chicks was also been distributed to those in the red zone who were directly impacted by TC Yasa in the Northern Division.

The Hon. Minister said the quick response by the Ministry was made possible following the immediate mobilization of Agriculture teams deployed to the affected

areas to conduct Initial Damage Assessments as early as Sunday, 20 December.

"We have mobilized 10,000 packets of seeds containing six to seven vegetable seeds that will be distributed to households in these affected areas in Bua, Cakaudrove, Macuata.

"30,000 bele cuttings will also be given out in this area and 150,000 cassava cuttings.

"This is the first round," Hon. Dr Reddy said.

In addition, day-old-chicks would also be distributed at no cost to affected farmers complete with the feed for the chicken, he said.

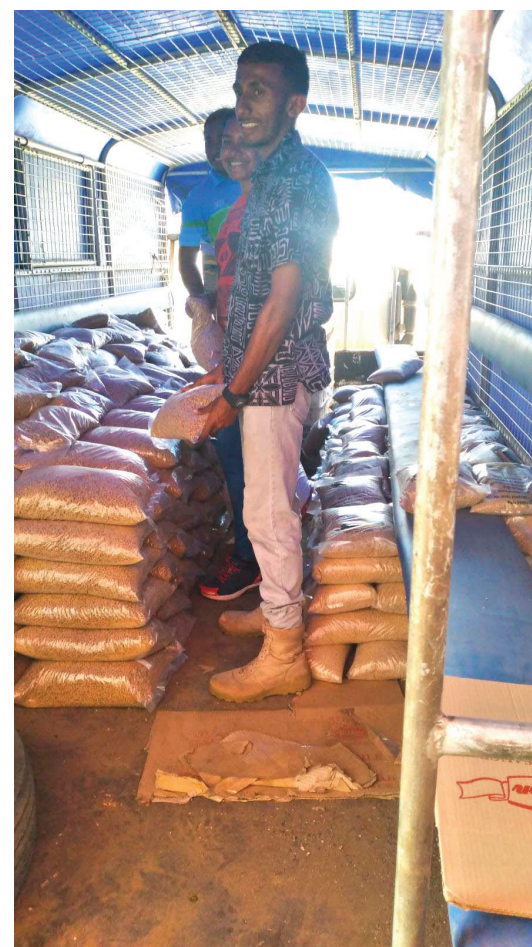
He explained the chicks were to be raised as a source of protein that could be harvested in eight weeks' time.

"They can raise poultry and at least in 8 weeks' time, these will be ready for consumption in a very short period of time."

The Minister said the support would continue for the next four months to prioritized farming households in Cakaudrove, Bua, Macuata, Southern and Northern Lau, and Lomaiviti.



MoA staff preparing bele cuttings for Vanua Levu



MoA staff loading chicks and feed in Labasa for distribution in Bua.

AMA RECEIVES HACCP REACCREDITATION



AMA staff packing chillies.

The Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA) trading as Fiji Agro Marketing has received reaccreditation of the internal Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) standard this year. Fiji Agro Marketing got HACCP accredited for the first time in early 2020, following an audit done in late 2019.

The Food Operations HACCP Certified trademark aims to achieve the highest standard of food safety

and quality outcomes across the food industry through:

- Auditing - Independent audits, improving confidence in food safety and HACCP systems,
- Training - Providing the foundation for the development of a food safety system,
- Certification - Providing confidence for shareholders, managers, and customers, and

- Re-Certification - audits will be conducted under the requirements of the nominated standards.

HACCP Australia identifies and manages hazards, reduces the risks of food contamination events through the development, implementation, and ongoing operation of comprehensive HACCP based Food Safety Programmes.

Apiame Cegumalua, Project

Manager, HACCP Australia Fiji Limited observed that there has been a marked improvement in the cleanliness and tidiness of the factory and good changes noted on renovations and upgrading of the restaurant, packing room for frozen root crops and vegetable processing and kava processing.

"There are significant positive changes to the lighting, processes, and hygiene within the Nausori warehouse and huge improvements have been noted in the processing area for the root crops.

"It is encouraging to note that the role of the Food Safety/Quality Assurance Team is now separated from the production activities and the HACCP Team members are now solely responsible for monitoring Hygienic practices and ensuring all operations are practicing good safety and quality standards," she added.

Ms. Cegumalua noted that the team was very well supported by CEO Alvin Sharma who was very proactive and ensured that all non-compliance issues raised were dealt with immediately, as these were very encouraging signs.

The evidence of this support for safety and quality is shown through the improvement in the facilities, the implementation of standards, the excellent filing of records, and the amendment of procedures and policies to suit the current requirement and operations of AMA.

The company has done very well in implementing the HACCP standard as compared to the previous year's audit. The separation of roles from production to safety policing by the CEO has made quite an impact on the current standard of the operations now.

Alvin Sharma, Chief Executive Officer of the Fiji Agro Marketing has attributed this huge turnaround to the excellent efforts of the team at the AMA.

"The team at the AMA is now driven to practise continuous quality improvement processes where we continuously strive to be better today than what we were yesterday. I would also like to make a special recognition to Ateca Nauluvula, our Quality Assurance Manager, and her QA team. They along with all the relevant Supervisors deserve a special mention for the tireless efforts.

"The AMA Board has also expressed its appreciation and congratulations to the entire AMA team in attaining this recognition and getting recognised for the various improvements which have been made this year," said Mr. Sharma.

"We will now continue this process and progressively go for more such international accreditation and recognition," he added.



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