



## KORONUBU FARMERS CELEBRATE WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION



Minister for Agriculture Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy planting fruit trees to commemorate the World Day to Combat Desertification at Koronubu, Ba.

Farmers in Koronubu, Ba converged at Mrs. Shaloshni Wati Sharma Agroforestry farm last week to celebrate World Day to Combat Desertification with the theme "Food, Feed and Fibre Sustainable Production and Consumption."

Officiating at the event the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy said today's event reminds us of the importance and real value of the land.

"Today we have gathered to commemorate the World Day to Combat Desertification and raise awareness on the global and national actions that address desertification, land degradation and drought."

"In 1998 Fiji ratified the convention on addressing desertification and Fiji has been an active signatory to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and since then Fiji has been actively involved in Conventional activities including multi-lateral Environment Agreements on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD).

Minister Reddy said we joined

196 member countries to make this day unique one to remind everyone that we can reverse land degradation and land degradation neutrality through problem solving, strong community involvement and co-operation at all levels.

"This year's theme, Food Feed and Fibre is calling on all involved to sustainably produce and consume," said Minister Reddy.

World Day to Combat Desertification is held on 17th June every year and Fiji has been part of it since then.

Hon. Reddy said Food, Feed and Fibre is also contributing to climate change with around a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions coming from agriculture, forestry, and other land use.

"With changes in the consumer and corporate behaviour and the adoption of more efficient planning and sustainable practices, there could be enough land to meet the demand," said Hon. Reddy.

Hon. Reddy said 16 new initiatives have been developed for the Agriculture Ministry to implement that are aligned to this year's theme which include the Home Gardening Initiatives, Village Nutritional Security and Farm Support Initiatives.

"It is also working together with key relevant stakeholders that includes the Ministry of Forestry on the 30 million trees program, Pacific Community (SPC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the implementation of the Ridge to Reef Project which is funded by the Global Environment Fund," added Hon. Reddy

However, Minister Reddy said the Fiji Government had adopted Sustainable Land Management (SLM) way back in 2012 and provides a wise investment for economic growth that does not compromise resilient livelihoods.

"It is the key to safeguarding and managing the quality of the land by balancing its biological and economic potential."

"Sustainable Land Management can give tremendous momentum to positive change and can be the best driver to achieve land degradation neutrality."

Minister Reddy concluded by reiterating that every one of us has a role to play and the choice is on us to produce responsibly and consume sustainably.

## NUBU FARMS ASSURED OF MARKET



(Second from right) Prime Minister Hon. Josia Voreqe Bainimarama, is flanked by Tui Nubu Ratu Manoa Naleba, Minister for Agriculture-Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy (1st from Right) and CEO for AMA Mr. Alvin Sharma (1st from left).

68 contract farmers have been assured that the Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA) will buy their crops from Nadarivatu, relieving them of the worry regarding market access.

These farmers have signed contractual agreements with the Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA) and have committed 125 acres of their mataqali land to be used for the planting of dalo, celery, and carrots.

This was highlighted by the Minister for Agriculture Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy during a talanoa session at Nadarivatu village last week following the launching of Nubu Farm by Prime Minister Hon. Voreqe Bainimarama.

Minister Reddy elaborated the climatic conditions of Nadarivatu was good for carrots and celery, highlighting the need for import substitution.

While responding to the farmers' queries on planting material, farm roads, land preparation, and machinery provided by the Agriculture Ministry, Minister Reddy said the necessary impetus for development would be provided through several avenues.

"The Ministry will provide

planting material at no cost to the farmer for the amount they require; we will need advanced notice to organize the planting material and we will provide this progressively. The only requirement is the farmer will have to replenish us the equivalent amount of planting material within three years. We will also assist with land preparation and machinery," Minister Reddy said.

"All contract farmers will be eligible to become Fiji National Provident Fund members and AMA will facilitate deductions in consultations with farmers and FNPF.

The farmers coordinator Mr Peni Matawalu said they are privileged to have an established market for their produce and are looking forward to produce the identified crops for AMA.

"It is an opportunity for the farmers to utilise their idle land with the planting materials provided to them for free and contribute towards import substitution," said Mr Matawalu.

Mr Matawalu, a former school teacher has committed 6 acres of his land to grow dalo, duruka, celery and carrots.

## FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IMPLICATION WORKSHOP FOR COVID-19 IN FIJI



PS Agriculture Officiating at the Food Security and Nutrition implication workshop for COVID-19 in Fiji held at the Holiday Inn, Suva.

The impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic is a test of resilience to many food systems and economies around the globe.

This was the underlying message

shared by the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture Ritesh Dass while officiating at a 2-day workshop on Food Security and Nutrition Implication for COVID-19 in Fiji.

Mr. Dass stressed the importance of individual contributions and the need for a change in mindset in how the agriculture sector was viewed.

"Agriculture should be our way of life and not just an activity or a profession. Fiji has proven its resilience in dealing with the crisis quite rapidly and this is what we should be proud of as a Nation," he said.

"Vulnerability to climate change related hazards combined with Fiji's position as a net food importer, highly dependent on international trade and subject of a high external debt are additional challenges aggravating the difficulties faced during this pandemic."

In Fiji, the pandemic is challenging the livelihoods of a significant extent of the population, whose income and employment are at risk due to losses in tourism and remittances in particular representing 34% (Reserve Bank of Fiji, 2017) and 5.1% (World Bank, 2018) of GDP respectively.

The objective of the workshop is to share information and engage in discussions on various ongoing food security and nutrition

initiatives from Government and non-Government stakeholders. Assess readily available data and to identify data needed and to drive data compilation. Its secondary objective is to identify gaps and to provide possible innovative solutions.

This activity for which the concept is developed is supported by the FAO FIRST Programme, a policy assistance facility aiming to set the right policy environment in agriculture and the rural sector to achieve zero hunger.

The current activity focuses on supporting the main stakeholders of the Food Security and Nutrition Scenario to jointly analyse the current context and come up with shared policy responses for the way ahead.

It will also support the Food Security and Livelihood cluster in compiling a Plan of Action based on all agency inputs to attempt to quantify and address the current concerns.