

FACT SHEET: 5 Initiatives

by: Ministry of Agriculture



1. Optimizing the use of Juncao Grass to Enhance Livestock Production



In partnership with the Chinese Government's Juncao Technology Program, medium-large livestock farms will be chosen to plant 0.5 acres of Juncao grass, which farmers will later expand for livestock feed. For a single hectare of Juncao grass planted, a total of 450 tons of green feed can be produced and prepared as silage feed for livestock during drier periods of the year. The Agriculture Ministry will provide a limited number of air tight bags for storage of shredded forage to be used during droughts. Juncao grass can be supplied as green forage for livestock and highly appropriate for Fiji's Northern and Western divisions, where it can withstand annual dry spells. The project implementation will be equally distributed amongst locations with commodity specific to dairy, beef and small ruminant farms.

2. Backyard Gardening Packages

To spur backyard gardening in urban and peri-urban areas for food security and nutritional improvement, the ministry will pilot the distribution of backyard gardening packages. Each package is worth \$65 and will include a guide for gardeners, up to 25 potting bags, up to five bags of garden soil and seeds and seedlings for four crops and two fruit trees. Packages will be provided to potential urban gardens in each town on Saturdays, beginning



with Tavua and Ba. Interested recipients will have to complete Gardener Profile Forms for monitoring and evaluation of their gardens.

3. Establishment of Fruit Tree Orchards



The Ministry aims to establish 40 orchards annually for the next three years, in demarcated areas for mangos, avocados, guavas, dragon fruit, breadfruit, citrus, passionfruit and Tahitian chestnuts. Twenty farms are targeted for the 2018/2019 financial year, with the ministry to select farms ranging from one to three acres. Following appropriate soil and agronomic tests, the Ministry will clear up selected farms, prepare field for planting and assist in planting. This initiative aims to increase established fruit orchards aside from seasonal fruit, reduce the import bill of fruit, improve farmer's livelihoods and the health of Fiji's general population and the supply of local fruit. Interested farmers can register their

interest with the Ministry.

4. Upscale Pulse Seed Production



The Ministry will partner with selected farmers who can allocate at least an acre of land to plant a particular pulse at commercial scales. These dried edible seeds will be produced by the Ministry in accordance with existing revised Standard Operating Procedures. The Ministry will provide pulse seeds such as beans, urd, mung and pigeon pea to large farmers and undertake the first complete land preparation for planting pulse seeds, as well as supervise planting and linking buyers the farmers. Small farmers will continue to receive pulse seeds from extension offices. As a major source of protein, Fiji currently imports around 4,000 tonnes of different pulses at a value of about \$9 million dollars.

5. Young Farmers Business Incubation Scheme

The Ministry aims to engage 100 youths aged 20-30 years for intensive hands on training over a three-year incubation period, with a focus on youths with land readily available for agricultural purposes and who are already engaged in farming. These

youth farmers will be required to target quality produce for local and export market and will be pegged with a buyer/exporter who will also provide



requirements for quality and assist maintaining high-quality produce. Young farmers will be guided towards farming as a business, and the initiative is also anticipated to address Fiji's increasingly aging farmers in rural communities. As a demand-driven project, a Steering committee will oversee crop planning, crop types and farming systems, with buyers and exports to also play important roles.