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CONSTRUCTION OF STATE OF THE ART GREENHOUSE WELL UNDERWAY



Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy with Fiji's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Ambassador to Canada H.E. Mr. Satyendra Prasad at the state-of-the-art greenhouse site at Koronivia Research Station.

The construction of the Ministry of Agriculture's first-ever state-of-the-art greenhouse at its Koronivia Research Station (KRS) is progressing according to plan.

Fiji's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Ambassador to Canada His Excellency Mr. Satyendra Prasad while inspecting the site on 14 February at KRS, was briefed on the capital project works currently undertaken there during a site tour led by the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy and senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture.

In a meeting with H.E. Mr. Satyendra Prasad, Minister Reddy acknowledged the partnership from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFIL) for agreeing to partner with the Ministry of Agriculture through funding of the greenhouse as it underscored the importance of enhancing Fiji's food security preparedness.

Minister Reddy said due to the global COVID-19 pandemic exposing the vulnerabilities of the global economy, it also underscored the importance of food security and managing food security risks accentuating the urgent need to adapt and to be forward-thinking on a multi-faceted approach to achieve sustainable agricultural development.

The Greenhouse project is earmarked to alleviate some of these key challenges

locally. This project enhances food security preparedness through a stable and accessible supply chain for seeds and planting material in Fiji through 3 main objectives;

- Building a bio-secured climate-controlled greenhouse facility to increase the productivity of the Government's central crop nursery, promote multiplication, adaptive crops, and to secure the supply chain for seedlings throughout the country at all times;
- Building a strong information network of crop nurseries nationwide, and;
- Support research capacity including 22 female research staff.

Currently, the KRS nursery is essentially a field nursery containing over 60 crop varieties and doubles as a multiplication center, with the Research Station being a key repository for food security supplying seedlings throughout Fiji.

In the long-term, the Greenhouse Project is anticipated to provide a stable repository and supply chain comprising public, private, and farmer nurseries that provide local seeds and planting material at all times; with an expected increase in crop yield and overall productivity due to healthy and resilient crops.

The greenhouse is estimated to cost over CAD 210,000.00 (FJD 339,272.00).

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MINISTRY ROLLS OUT SMALL FARMING EQUIPMENT PROGRAMME



Minister for Agriculture Hon. Dr Mahendra Reddy and senior officials with recipients at Ratu Cakobau House.

The Ministry of Agriculture has begun the delivery of its Small Farming Equipment (SFE) programme, which is a new inclusion to the Ministry of Agriculture's ongoing commercial agriculture development programmes,

to successful farming applicants. The inception of the programme saw six farmers from the Central Division receive their Small Farming Equipment from the Ministry of Agriculture at Ratu Cakobau House in Nausori on 24 February.

While handing over the offer letters to these farmers, Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy said the SFE programme, which incorporated the one third, two third assistance model of government assistance had undergone a stringent and rigorous vetting process to choose its successful recipients.

"We are looking at assisting 44 farmers through this programme and out of that number, you're

the six chosen from the Central Division and I want to congratulate you for your efforts.

"These implements are inclusive of mini-tractors, rotary tillers, front end loader attachments, cutters/shredders, mills and mini-dryers etc," he said.

Minister Reddy highlighted that through an allocation of \$240,000.00, these 44 successful farmers would be assisted to procure the small farming implements.

Furthermore, he said the programme would now be implemented every financial year if funding was available and farmers would be able to apply for the same programme again during that time.

"We have got more than 83,000 farmers who are engaged in full time agriculture, and realistically speaking, no Government can support 83,000 farmers in a year, however, we will progressively deliver our assistance to all farmers, over time," said Minister Reddy.

DALO TRAINING CONDUCTED TO ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE FOR NAMOSI FARMERS



Practical for dalo farmers on organic fertilizers

A two-day training to boost the capabilities and knowledge of dalo farmers from Namosi was conducted to improve dalo production from the province and to meet market demands.

The training conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture's Farm Management section for the four districts of Naqarawai, Veinuqa, Namosi and Wainikoroiluva in Namosi was held at Wainimakutu Village last week and included segments on practicing sustainable farming methods to consistently deliver for the market.

Consequently, the Namosi province contributes 40% of the total dalo production in Fiji with farmers supplying to local exporters. Speaking to the training participants, Commissioner for the Central Division Mr Joseva Navuku encouraged them to take raise and develop their farms towards the commercial level for the benefit of their livelihoods and communities. "Your efforts are highlighted in the dalo production statistics

for the Central Division and to a larger extent, in the country's GDP which is commendable and for that, we thank you for your hard work and dedication."

"As Dalo is the main earning commodity for this province, it is also motivating to see the assets and the quality of life here in the province which is a testament to your production levels and purchases made from dalo farming; and to those that are coming up, set targets and remain committed to achieving it for the betterment of your family's livelihood," he said. Mr Navuku also reiterated to farmers the need to take heed of technical advice to increase their production levels and to also be mindful of sustainable land management practices.

"The country is experiencing changes in weather and climate patterns and this training and the information shared with you during the training will help you to better your production yields and improve in-field management." "Tonnes of dalo is harvested

here weekly and the possibility of moving to feed local and overseas markets is high if you work smart and work together." Additionally, Commissioner Navuku said in order to protect the ecosystem of Namosi, the need to farm responsibly to avoid the loss of the richness and fertility of the land was vital.

Training facilitator, Agriculture Officer (Farm Management) Ms Lusiana Tumaitoga said the training was part of the Dalo Development Programme and was intended to boost dalo production. "The training by the Ministry of Agriculture looks at areas such as farming as a business, agronomy practices of dalo, soil pH level testing, dalo pest and disease control and sustainable land management," she said.

"These farmers supply to exporters and it is vital that they are constantly refreshed on the market demand, sizes and prices and farming techniques to meet those demands and supply." Mata-ni-Tikina (Namosi) Petero Leveni said as a dalo farmer, the traditional knowledge and farming tactics that they grew up with was what they had always practiced but the training was a welcome one as it introduced new convenient farming techniques.

"I want to thank the Ministry of Agriculture for bringing this dalo training to our farmers here in Namosi, we were comfortable continuing to plant dalo through the traditional methods and who would have also considered bringing the training to us because we have planted dalo our whole lives, however, I am glad to be part of the training because it has taught me a lot of new and worthwhile lessons regarding dalo farming," said Mr Leveni.

Similar dalo training will also be held for farmers in other parts of the Central and Eastern Divisions.

HR FAREWELLS HEAD OF FINANCE & ASSETS OFFICER



HR Division farewell outgoing Head of Finance Mr. Ajay Singh (middle) and EO Assets - Mr Manasa Wainibalagi who is transferred to Lautoka Office

Emotions and gratitude flowed freely as staff of the Human Resources Division farewelled former Head of Finance, Mr Ajay Singh and Assets Executive Officer, Mr Manasa Wainibalagi who have gone for greener pastures.

Mr Singh resigned to join the Agro Marketing Authority of Fiji (AMA) while Mr Wainibalagi has been transferred to the Lautoka Agriculture Office.

The Head of Human Resources Development and Services, Mr Ben Chand in his farewell speech thanked the gentlemen for their contribution to the productivity of the Ministry.

“Life’s journey does not stop here. It creates

opportunities for us. We continue to build bridges wherever we go. You will continue to create networks and friendships where you are heading and the journey continues,” he said.

“Manasa, thank you for the contributions you have made. In your capacity you have taught us a lot of things in regards to Assets. I am sure, the learnings you take from here will be shared with the team in the West and that will lift their spirits to a different level, in terms of outputs.”

HHRDS thanked Mr Singh for always imparting knowledge to staff and for always empowering employees about the future.

“Congratulations, on your new role. The knowledge you share with us in terms of finance has always been an educational one. Thank you for your patience and capability in showing my team great respect.”

The former Head of Finance amidst his busy finance schedule is also a musician who also teaches music. Mr Wainibalagi, on the other hand is moving to rejoin his family in the West. With heartfelt gratitude, the duo thanked the Ministry Headquarters for the opportunity to work there.

“Although we have some challenging times in the Ministry, good things are always expected out of it. Keep motivating your colleagues to grow. I will cherish all the two years of memories I have had with Agriculture,” Mr Singh said.

Mr Wainibalagi thanked all the staff for the support and guidance to his team.

“Though, there may have been ups and downs within my unit, I would like to thank everyone who have assisted. Seeing the potential and bearing with us; we appreciate working with everyone. Please forgive us if expectations were not met or sometimes we would make your work hard,” he said.

The Human Resources team wished the pair well in their new roles.

EP&S DIVISION HOLDS SECOND QUARTER MEETING

The Head of Economic Planning and Statistics Division acknowledged the work done by her team and their achievements for the second quarter during their meeting at Nadave on Friday, 18 February.

Acting Chief Economist, Ms Sera Bose in her opening remarks reminded her team that that was the platform to come together as a team, like they did for the first quarter that allowed them to consult and engage.

“Look out for each other’s strengths. We will look at what we did last quarter, what we are doing in the next quarter, and our inputs. These are important. I encourage you to speak out and be as participatory as possible,” she urged her team.

Discussions during the full day meeting centred around briefs from the Animal Health and Production Senior Agriculture Officer, Mr Sanjeev Mani; Crop Extension Officer-in-Charge, Mr Mohammed Kadir; and Policy Analysis

from EU Consultant, Mr Andrew Jacques. Also there were presentations on the 2021 Agriculture Production from Field Supervisor Miss Ita Tunidau; an overview and distribution analysis on the Commercial Agriculture Development Program by Economic Planning Officer, Mrs Sokoveti Nairairai; the Analysis and Findings of the Exporters Survey 2021 from Economic Planning Officer, Mr Timoci Bogidua; and a roundtable discussion with a Monitoring and Evaluation update, together with the plan for Quarters 3 and 4 by Ms Barbara Temo.



A group photo of MoA Officials who attended the EP&S Quarterly Meeting



Regional Manager Central - Mr. Mohammed Kadir during his presentation in Nadave

NEW APPOINTEES



Mohammed Shakeel
AA Stray Animal
Savusavu [Project]

Joanna Sokokivavalagi
STA Mushroom [Project]



Alanieta Tamani
Telephone Operator
Labasa

Shaveen Lal
Driver HRDS



Sainivalati Valala
Watchman Vet Lab
KRS [Project]
(Research)

Timoci Toga
SAO Kadavu
(Extension)



Alan Prasad
Procurement
Officer(Finance)

Asheika Devi
SIA Hindi Radio (I/C)



Ilai Naulu
AA Meat Inspection -
Vuda Abbatoir

Vishal Nagaiya
Driver HRDS



PHOTO GALLERY



HR staff during the staff farewell



TB Testing done by AH&P staff on Koro Island



Extension Officers during their second quarter meeting in Korovou



MoA Senior Officials attending the National Kava Committee Meeting in Nadi



Hon. Dr Mahendra Reddy received a courtesy visit from the New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, Her Excellency, Charlotte Darlow and her team



Land Use staff conducting field trial



MoA Officials with SPC Rep after conducting a training on dalo farm management



SAO FM - Ms Naomi Naiquimu conducting farmer training in Somosomo, Taveuni