



NETANI OWES IT ALL TO GINGER



Mr. Netani Vuetimeiwaasa Kuila (left) the Ginger Farmer of the Year Award winner for 2020 Central Eastern Agriculture Show.

Netani Kuila knows firsthand what it feels like to have his pleas lend on deaf ears, and to ask but receive naught in return.

His humble beginnings taught him perseverance and fueled his determination to succeed, no matter how long it would take; success which inevitably would come his way.

"I know how it feels like to knock and receive no answer, to implore yet fail to receive recognition, to lean and ask for assistance but to get nothing in return."

Mr. Kuila, who hails from Vanuavatu in Lau inherited land from his namesake and father, Netani Kuila Snr in 2004 after his

father handed over the reins of the farm to him. He soldiered on despite many shortcomings, a life lesson which his children have learnt by watching their father toil through his many struggles.

"Everything belonged to my father, and as he grew older, he handed us the responsibilities of managing the three farms. 80 % of which was crops with 20% poultry," he said.

The commercial farm is a farm operated by the Kuila family household, inclusive of Mr. Netani's siblings and their respective children, who all work towards a common goal; "When it comes to harvesting and planting, the family

all come together in unity to achieve what is required."

Ginger has been the family's mainstay commodity since the farms' establishment in Waibau and in 2010 the family diversified to poultry.

"The price of ginger price was not getting any better and we thought to venture into something that could complement our income during rainy days and that's when we thought to take up poultry farming," said Netani Jnr.

They purchased land in Bau Road, Nausori, which was solely for their poultry farm, with 5 poultry sheds operating there to meet the supply and demand component

expected of them from their main target market - Goodman Fielder.

"Our expansion and diversification was all made possible from the ginger income and every year we would be advised to invest into something solid," he said.

Before the 2010 diversification, the family bought 30-acres of land in Wailese to support the production of ginger. The 2020 harvest saw the family harvesting 16 tons of ginger, an accumulated total from both their Wailese and Waibau farms.

"The 2020 harvest has been the highest compared to the ginger harvested for the last 16 years and we owe it all to the family for their combined effort," he said.

In 2017 the family paid off their loan to the Fiji Development Bank, all through income earned from the ginger and poultry farm income, a large percentage of which was derived from the annual ginger income takings of approximately \$45,000.00 - \$50,000.00 earned on an annual basis.

"We couldn't have achieved all of this had it not been for my father, he has set such a high farming standard for us to achieve and it is this standard that we live by every day, it cannot be altered, the farming operation is well structured.

His goodwill to help farmers and those who are often turned down extended when COVID hit the global economy by keeping all his staff on the farm and helping farmers that needed help.

"It may seem like we have money in the bank but it is the well-

structured farming management that has managed us to pay it all off and to purchase items for the poultry sheds with cash," he said.

"Although assistance was not awarded to us despite our constant requests, we kept moving forward, we kept planting, we kept harvesting, and we kept achieving the goals that we set to achieve every year," he said.

Good things often come to those that wait and work in silence and it earned him the award of Best Ginger Farmer during the 2020 Central/Eastern Agriculture Show held at Syria Park in Nausori from the 15th-16th October 2020.

"Working to feed the nation and contributing to the Gross Domestic Product of the country is what we are happy to do and receiving the prize is a testament to the hard work my family endures.

"As I once said I know how it feels like to knock on doors that are not answered, I know how it feels like to be challenged and told I couldn't do it and it often hurts us to see those that are assisted not flourish because of the lack of knowledge of the land and how its resources could be utilized," he said.

"Manage your time wisely, invest in something that will generate income, and try all areas of help that you can get, and an important detail to note is that wise financial management is of the essence."

GROW GINGER FOR CASH



White ginger

RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

- White Ginger
- Red Ginger

SEED RATE

Immature: 7500kg/ha
Mature: 5000kg/ha

PLANTING TIME

August - September

SPACING:

Slope Land

Immature: 60cm between rows and 15cm within rows.
Mature: 60cm between rows and 20cm within rows.

Flatland

Immature: 90cm between rows and 15cm within rows.
Mature: 90cm between rows and 20cm within rows.

FERTILIZER APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- Poultry Manure - 10 tonnes/ha. Mix well with soil at land preparation at least 2 weeks before planting.
- NPK 13:13:21 - 1000kg/ha. Apply 500kg/ha at planting and 500kg/ha at 3 months after planting. Alternative to NPK is Hydro Complex Fertilizer

- Apply 700kg/ha in 2 split applications at ½ at planting and ½ at 3 months after planting with 2 top dresses of urea at 3 leaf stage and 5 weeks after planting.

- Urea 46% N - 300kg/ha. Top dress immature and premature in 3 split applications of 100kg/ha first at 2 to 3 leaf stage, second at 8 weeks after first application and third at 4 weeks after second application.
- Hilling to be followed after each application of Urea for better development of rhizomes.

Soil analysis is always necessary to check the soil fertility before recommending fertilizers.

WEED CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

- Atrazine pre - emergence weedicide 64g/16L knapsack. Spray immediately after planting when the soil is moist. This suppresses the growth of weeds to allow ginger to germinate.
- Glyphosate at 100ml/16L knapsack for weed control, inter row or in the drains once the ginger plant is 1 month old

and above.

- Hand weeding is highly recommended.

DISEASE CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

- Pythium Rot - Treat planting material with Sundomil 3.5g/L of Water for 5 minutes.
 - Spray affected plants with Sundomil at 50g/15L of water.
 - Remove and destroy diseased plants.
 - Improve drainage.
- Eelworms or Nematode
 - Root knot nematode and burrowing nematode - hot water treatment by immersing ginger planting materials at 52°C for 10minutes. Spread and dry planting materials for 3 - 4 days, shrinking rhizomes must be discarded as these are symptoms of infected materials.
 - Practice crop rotation (ginger - dalo - cassava - fallow) to break nematode life cycle.
 - Sanitation - remove all rhizomes from the field after harvesting.
 - Proper selection of seed - choose healthy seeds with

healthy eyes.

- Keep ginger weed free all the times.

INSECT CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

Tuber Scale Insect

- Pre-planting treatment
 - Use clean planting materials. Dip in Ridomil at 55g/15L of water to control fungal disease.
 - Dip rhizomes in Diazinon at 60ml/15L of water before planting.

HARVESTING

Immature ginger harvested in February to March. Mature ginger harvested in July to August, when ginger tillers completely died out or full senescence.

YIELD

Immature ginger - 20-25tonnes/ha, red ginger yields higher on fertile soil. Mature - 25-30tonnes/ha, this will be higher if ginger is well managed and practices are correctly carried out.

FOOD VALUE

Good source of Energy, Potassium, Calcium and Sodium.