



TC Yasa Rice Rehabilitation program Commenced for Northern Division



Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy announcing the rice rehab program to farmers in Luvuluvu settlement in Bua.

A rehabilitation program for the rice farmers launched on Tuesday (29.12.20) will focus mainly for rice production throughout the Northern Division. The initiative was formulated to elevate the rice industry in the Northern Division after the tropical cyclone Yasa.

While speaking to the farmers in Bua, the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy said the rehabilitation program is aimed at getting rice production underway immediately post TC Yasa as part of Ministry's rehab efforts.

This rice rehabilitation program will mainly include land preparation work for rice farming and will be active for 10 weeks.

"Under this program, farmers will only have to pay a subsidized rate of \$15 for one hour. Through contracted machinery owners and operators, the Ministry of Agriculture, in partnership with Fiji Rice Limited, will fund remainder of the cost," said Minister Dr. Reddy.

Minister Dr. Reddy further reiterated that rehabilitation is being done considering the damages the rice industry suffered.

"We understand that most of the rice farms here in the North have sustained damages or been destroyed by the TC Yasa, but we don't want you to wait or have any excuse, as under this programs we are engaging local tractor owners to work for the government and

assist in land preparation," he said

Minister Dr. Reddy added that all required land preparation work will be outsourced to local tractor owners throughout Vanua Levu who will be willing to work jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture and their remainder cost will be accommodated upon the work completion.

Minister Dr. Reddy thanked Chair of Fiji Rice Ltd, Mr. Sharma for his quick response and financial support to make to get this project of the ground.

He further added that farmers who lost all their rice seeds during the cyclone will be able to get new stock of required rice seeds from the Ministry of Agriculture by contacting their locality staff.

WETLAND RICE CULTIVATION

IMPROVED VARIETIES

Sitara, Cagivou, Boldgrain, Star and Nuinui are the recommended varieties

They are:-

- Short statured- Do not lodge (fall over)
- Early maturing (110-130 days)
- Respond to fertilizers (high yield)
- Not sensitive to day length.
- Long slender grains.
- Good grain quality (better prices).
- Hard fluffy rice on cooking.
- High yielding.

YIELD

- 4 to 6 tonnes/ha

FOR HIGH YIELDS

- Use improved varieties
- Use good cleaned seeds
- Prepare field well
- Follow good cultivation practices
- Control weeds and pests and diseases

GOOD FIELD PREPARATION

Good tillth up to 15-20 cm deep for:

- Better water & weed control
- Better rotting of weeds and trash
- Easier puddling and leveling.
- Even plant growth.

Rain fed:

- First ploughing in October/ November
- Followed by 1 or 2 harrowing, another plough & harrowing Puddle & levelled.

Irrigated:

Proper rotation for incorporation of weeds and trashes. Puddle and leveled.

Note:-

- Band the fields to retain water
- Level well for better water control
- For rain fed - transplanting is better
- For irrigation - transplanting or broadcasting.

SEED RATE

- For transplanting – 7.5 -10.5kg/ac or 18 -26kg/ha
- For broadcasting – 26 – 30kg/ac

or 65 - 75kg/ha

- For Mechanical Transplanter – 13kg/ac or 32kg/ha

GOOD & CLEAN SEED

Use seeds that are:-

- Pure with low moisture content
- Uniform-large seeds
- Good germination
- Free from weed seeds
- Free from seed-borne diseases and pests.

SPACING

Transplanting - 25cm between rows and 25cm within rows with 3-4 seedlings per hill at 3-4 weeks after germination.

NURSERY AND SEEDING

A. For transplanting seed bed.

- Prepare fine seedbed near water source and near to the planting site.
- Seed bed area 1/20th (500m²) equivalent to the area to main paddy field to be planted.
- Prepare 1-1.5 metre wide raised nursery beds of any convenient length with provision of drains of 50cm width between beds for good management.
- Sow the sprouted seeds on the nursery beds using a seed rate of 26kg/ha.
- Apply adequate fertilizer with basal P and K and top dressed with N if soils are poor.
- Protect the seedlings from insect pests.
- Uproot and transplant seedlings in 3-4 weeks (18-21 days)

Sprouted seed method

- Immerse rice bag in water for 24 hours.
- Remove bag from water and cover with rice straw for 38-48hrs.
- Turn bag once or twice and keep it wet during the period.
- Remove sprouted seed from bag and sow in prepared seed bed.

For Broadcasting

- Prepare the land well with 15-20cm deep in dry conditions.
- Allow water in the field and pud-

dle the field twice followed by perfect leveling

- Sow sprouted seeds at a rate of 70 - 80kg/ha.

GOOD CULTIVATION PRACTICES

- Maintain water level for weed control (3cm-5cm)
- Hand weed when necessary
- Apply fertilizer at correct time-and correct dozes.
- Look out for pests and diseases where necessary use chemicals for weeds, pests and diseases.

FERTILIZERS FOR TRANSPLANTED RICE (1 ha)

For seed bed

- 2.5kg super phosphate as basal at land preparation and 1.0kg Urea after one week of germination.

For the Field:-

- At final puddling/ planting; 80 kg/ac or 200kg/ha (SSP) Super phosphate and 34kg/ac or 84kg (70%) Muriate of potash.

- Urea (N) - 3 weeks or 25 days after transplanting; 49kg/ac or 122kg/ha (70%)

- At panicle initiation stage (50 to 65 days from seeding) - 21kg/ac or 52kg urea (30%) and 14.5kg/ac or 36kg Muriate of Potash (30%).

Fertilizers For Broadcast Rice (1 ha)

- At final puddling apply 80kg/ac or 200kg of superphosphate and 34kg/ac or 84kg of potash.
- On 3 to 4 week old crop, top dress with 49kg/ac or 122kg of urea.
- At panicle initiation stage (50 to 65 days from seeding) apply 21kg/ac or 52kg of urea and 14.5kg/ac or 36kg of Muriate of Potash.

WEED CONTROL

Control weeds with:-

- Proper land preparation
- Proper water control
- Hand weeding
- Use of Weedicides

CHEMICAL CONTROL

- Broad leaf weeds and sedges - Apply MCPA 1.5L/ac or 3L/ha or 85 110ml/16L of water. Spray 3-4 weeks after transplanting and before booting for transplanted and 6 weeks after germination and before booting stage for drilled or broadcasted rice.
- Narrow leaf weed/Grass weeds-spray Propal at a rate of 300 -350ml/16L of water when using knapsack, 30 knapsack per hectare or 4L/ac or 10-11.5L/ha.

PEST CONTROL

Plant Hoppers:

Most destructive – sucks plant juice, causes wilting, and death. Spray Bifenthrin 30ml/ 16L of water using knapsack, or 40ml/16L of water using Mistblower, spray Diazinon at 48ml/16L of water or apply Malathion at 30ml/16L of water.

Rice Armyworm:

Cuts leaves and panicles, spray Carbicide 29g/16L of water in a Mist blower or spray Bifenthrin at 30ml/16L of water using knapsack sprayer and 40ml/10L of water when using a Mistblower.

Rice Leaf Roller:

Attacks leaves, spray leaves with Carbicide at 29g/16L of water using knapsack sprayer, and use 39g/10L of water in a Mist blower and apply Bifenthrin at 30ml/16L of water. Spray when required Leaf roller damage

DISEASE CONTROL

No serious rice disease in Fiji.

SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER

- With improved varieties 2 crops a year can be harvested.
- Traditional varieties are not suitable for double cropping.
- Fine grain varieties fetch better prices in the market.
- For maximum yields from improved varieties, maintain high levels of management.

HARVESTING

- Harvest when it is about 80% mature.
- Thresh immediately after harvest to maintain grain quality.
- Dry immediately after threshing to 11 – 13.5% moisture content for seed purpose and 14% moisture levels for milling.

STORAGE

- Fill in clean bags.
- Keep in well aerated cool and dry place.
- Stack bags on planks away from walls.
- Chemicals can be used to control grain moth and rice weevil. Drying may also help often.

GROSS MARGIN

- Transplanted - \$1,012.00 - \$1,214.40 per acre or \$2,500.00 - \$3,000 per hectare.
- Broadcasted - \$769.12 - \$931.04 per acre or \$1,900.00 - \$2,300 per hectare.

