



## ANSWERING THE CALL OF THE LAND



Mr. Taitusi Sorovatini at his farm.

A change in perspective a decade ago allowed Taitusi Sorovatini to view farming as the best possible avenue of achieving his dreams.

Ten years ago, 47-year-old Taitusi Sorovatini of Lovu Village, Gau in Lomaiviti had no immediate plans to improve on his farming practices as he was accustomed to the norm of planting for one's own semi-subsistence purposes.

To his credit, he later had a change of mind and took his farming exploits seriously as a means to a better life for him and his family; and has since seen him realize his dream to build a house his family would be proud to call their home.

He planted his Yaqona, and drew up a three-year plan. He has now reaped the rewards of his labour as he pondered on his years as a young man and farmer.

"I was used to planting and harvesting without a plan, the money obtained from the sale of yaqona was always a waste during my youth," he said.

"It was after I began thinking of the future of my six children that I decided to put aside my selfish ways and focus on improving our lives.

His home began as a small lean-to structure but through the revenue generated from his farm, he built on this humble foundation and set about transforming it into his dream home, constructing a house worth approximately \$30,000.

He credits this achievement to his three-year plan, and with the added blessing from his local Methodist Church Minister, he has never looked back.

The father of five daughters and a son has expanded his family vision and harvested a portion of his other yaqona farm for the purchase of his new 75-horsepower outboard motor and fibreglass boat.

"These are some of the things farming can do when you put your soul and heart into it, you take care of it and it will take care of you,"

he said.

"Through farming I was able to buy my building materials for my wooden house from Suva something I never thought I would achieve."

Apart from the building of his home and its current extension, the outboard motor fiberglass purchasing, this dedicated man of Lovu has also set aside yaqona for the education of his children and has replanted yaqona for the family's solar-electrical system instalment worth \$7,000.

"If there was something that I have learnt over my farming years, it is to have reverence for the Lord and to have wisdom."

"When you possess this, you will be able to achieve the targets you have set for yourself, and also, through farming, you will be able to provide the same things provided by a white-collar job for your family, maybe even more," he smiled.

## TAILEVU YOUTHS URGED TO VALUE AND EXPAND AGRICULTURE, CREATE EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports planting a tree during the tree planting campaign to youths of Veinuqa village.

Tailevu youths were challenged to expand and create employment for more young people in their communities after undergoing a two-day Farm Management training recently.

Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports, Hon. Alipate Nagata in his closing remarks at Veinuqa village in Tailevu (11-12 November) also

encouraged the 30 youths to value agriculture.

"We need an agricultural sector that is ready to bounce back. We need ecological stability that ensures that resources are available for our future generations," Hon. Nagata said.

"The Fijian economy has been challenged by the changing

weather patterns thus the Fijian agriculture sector demands young and innovative minds to propel the country forward."

The training was conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Forestry. The training focused on equipping youth about sustainable living.

Through the Farm Management training, the youths were required to set goals for a better future.

"Consider how you can utilize this valuable training in the near future; sharpen your individual skill sets and knowledge and set goals that you can and will achieve."

He added the Ministry of Youth and Sports with its stakeholders were committed to provide focused and sustainable training programs aimed at up skilling youths in agriculture.

The Assistant Minister said the Ministry of Youth and Sports promoted organic agriculture to ensure sustainability in the face of significant impact caused by climate change.

Navitilevu youth participant Tuibau Irinavula, 23, was thankful for the training aimed at teaching youths agricultural skills and youth empowerment.

"This training has opened our eyes to the potential that is all around us through Agriculture and Forestry for sustainable livelihood," said another youth, Maca Adisoga, 23.

The Non-formal Education training program of the Ministry of Youth and Sports aims to provide equal opportunities to any young person who may have dropped out of the formal education system and is searching for ways to succeed in life.

## TAILEVU YOUTHS URGED TO TREAT FARMING AS A BUSINESS



Youths educated on the Artificial Insemination process

Tailevu youth farmers were challenged to enhance agricultural practices to boost their production for sustainable livelihood and resources, during a recent Farm Management training.

The two-day training was held to empower women and youths on how to operate and understand farming as a business. 30 youths attended the training conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture at Veinuqa Village.

Training facilitator and Agriculture Officer, Ms Lusiana Tumaitoga said during the workshop that developing skills in youths were essential in rural communities.

She said the Farm Management training was designed to encourage farmers to move from subsistence to commercial farming.

"In most rural areas, farmers especially youths are unaware of the potential they have in terms of farming thus we enlighten them on areas to take farming to another level," she said.

"The training will enable them to make sound decisions, understand their responsibilities of meeting their operational costs."

The youths were also taught

the importance of keeping farm records and understanding the agronomic practices of crops.

"It comes with dedication and allowing yourselves to be educated and equipped with new ideas that will bring about changes," Ms Tumaitoga told the youths.

Youth participant, Eremasi Sekiveikau said the training would certainly boost his farming because he would practice what he learnt during the training.

"In all my years of farming, I never really took into consideration all the things that were taught. Farming to me was just to feed my family and not really for commercial purposes," he said.

"Through this training, I am able to know the importance of record keeping, setting short and long term goals and working towards it."

Mere Muriololo said as a woman participant, the training also highlighted the available assistance for women in the Ministry and the impact women could make in society.

The youth farmers were also taught about Sustainable Land Management, Agronomy and Animal Health and Production practices.