



FLORICULTURE BUSINESS ALLOWS ASINATE TO EXTEND HER HOME



Asinate Tabua in her greenhouse at Korotogo Village

The agriculture sector has demonstrated that despite the global pandemic of COVID-19, which brought the world including Fiji to its knees; it continued to thrive, almost unaffected by the impact.

A success story that proves this point is that of Asinate Tabua, 61, of Korotogo Village, in the district of Conua, Nadroga.

Speaking in i-taukei, Asinate explained she did not feel the economic impact of COVID-19 despite the closure of hotels. She said the churches continued to provide her with business.

Asinate is a floriculturist whose love for flowers was nurtured whilst growing up. She supplied to a nearby hotel in pre-COVID times until her retirement in 2016. After retiring, her former employer continued to engage her services due to the demand for tropical flowers for the wedding market by tourists who opted to exchange their vows in that resort.

She thanked the Ministry of Agriculture for its timely assistance in providing her with a greenhouse that allowed her to expand her business.

She encouraged women who were not in full time employment to take up floriculture as a means to earn income.

Further, she urged women to always plan ahead and work hard so they could look after themselves instead of relying on others.

Asinate plans to build another nursery following the success of her current one, which was provided under the Ministry's Women in Agriculture program. The program supports women and women's groups for active participation in agriculture development through its first objective of commercializing floriculture for cut flowers and green foliage production and the establishment of nurseries.

IT'S FARMING FOR ME, SAYS FORMER TOURISM WORKER



Manoj and his wife Aruna Devi working in their nursery

Despite 16 years in the tourism industry, Manoj Kumar, 58, is not in any hurry to return there even when Fiji opens up to international visitors from 1 December 2021.

The former tourism employee residing on Votualevu Cemetery Road, Nadi said COVID-19 forced the change when he was laid off.

"I went to the Ministry of Agriculture and they helped by giving me a nursery kit. I want to thank the Government of the day. I look forward to more assistance so I can expand more.

"I started with one nursery planting coriander, cabbages, and other vegetables. Then I earned more and built another one. I got the pine posts and fitted it with a sprinkler system," Manoj explained.

In this second nursery he plants coriander, tomatoes, capsicums, eggplants, and chillies to name a few. However, his main commodity is coriander.

"It's easy to plant and grows in one month."

Manoj explained his expansion only began from the first assistance of the first nursery kit.

"Now I am also planting outside the nursery. I have only four acres of land as my share but I am making use of all of it. I am planting cassava, lime, lemon grass, duruka, and a bit of sugarcane," he said.

He has a steady market for his vegetables and sells almost every week making around \$400 in sales.

His water source is from a creek nearby that he pulls via a water pump through to his irrigation system set up around his land.

Farming has certainly made Manoj a happy man which is evident in the way that he carries himself around his farm.

From his vegetable farm, Manoj has since expanded into poultry farming investing into chickens and ducks which has seen him supplying eggs as well. He also has a tractor to help him with land prep activities.

"I do not think I will return to the industry when it re-opens, I will just continue farming and expand. I will stick to farming," he said.

As to whether he intends to return to the industry he spent quite some time in when it fully re-opens in less than two weeks, Manoj said he was confident that he had made the right choice.

"I used to make more when I was working, I am just waiting for the industry to open so I can do better," he said.

He said he used to plant before the global pandemic hit Fiji so after COVID-19, there was no choice but to farm full time.

MEAT INSPECTION AND MEAT SURVEILLANCE

MEAT INSPECTION

The Ministry of Agriculture through its Regulatory Section, under the Fiji Meat Industry Act 1969 provides meat inspection services to inspect and pass meat that is free from disease and safe for human consumption.

Illegal Slaughter

No person should sell any meat unless slaughtered and processed from registered slaughter house or a registered poultry slaughterhouse.

Casual Slaughter

Refers to the slaughter of animals for Magiti purposes such as weddings, funerals and other ceremonies. Encourage your community members to request for Ministry of Agriculture officers to inspect the meat before human consumption.

Registered Slaughterhouse

Means a slaughterhouse registered under the provisions of the Meat Industry Act 1969 or any regulations made thereunder but does not include a poultry slaughterhouse.

Registered Poultry Slaughterhouse

Means a poultry slaughterhouse registered under the provisions of Meat Industry Act 1969. The premises are used for the slaughtering, processing, freezing, packaging or storing of the meat of the poultry.

Meat passed for human consumption are stamped and meat certificates issued.

Meat Inspector, Ms. Marie Firomena Kaitu'u on routine check at the Fiji Meats Industry Board slaughterhouse in Nakasi



Process For Having A Registered Slaughterhouse, Poultry Slaughterhouse Or Rural Slaughterhouse

- Any person desiring to establish a slaughterhouse should apply in writing to the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture for the registration of the premises as a slaughterhouse 3 months prior to the commencement of the building. Applications should be accompanied by such specifications, information and particulars as the Permanent Secretary may require.
- The applicant should also obtain the permission or approval of the relevant local authority where such permission or approval is required.
- Site Selection - Concrete building, not within heavily populated area. Proper drainage. Accessible in all weather. Not near swamps or rivers.
- Separation of various processing departments.
- Proper waste disposal - passed and approved by the Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Approval by Ministry of Agriculture with all conditions to be met.

MEAT SURVEILLANCE

- Monitoring programs conducted to control the sale of illegally slaughtered meat.
- Inspectors are empowered to enter any premises for the purpose of carrying out the provisions made under the Meat Industry Act.

- During surveillance, the team inspects the quality of the meat, storage of meat, processing area(s), hygiene of its butcher/meat areas, personal protective equipment (PPEs) and the handling of meat, packaging and labels.

Legislation

- Any person who fails to comply with the provisions shall be guilty of an offence under the Act.
- The guilty person shall be liable on conviction to penalties determined by the Court.