



## AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS SERVING WITH PASSION



MoA Officials who were deployed to the North to carryout damage assessments

They never thought twice except knowing that it was the right thing to do to help their fellow Fijians who were the unfortunate victims of Tropical Cyclone Yasa that devastated the Northern and Eastern Divisions of the country in December last year.

However, it is important to contextualize this situation; this deployment occurred a week or so before Christmas and continued through till the end of the first week of January.

At a time when Fijians, who were not affected by TC Yasa were preparing to celebrate the festivities of Christmas 2020 and the 2021 New Year, 62 officers of the Ministry of Agriculture volunteered their time in both the Northern and Eastern Divisions almost immediately after the disaster to conduct damage assessments.

These hard working men and women left behind the comforts and warmth of their homes to join others just as industrious civil servants to go out and assist their fellow countrymen whose homes and livelihoods were

destroyed.

The experience has left its mark on these officers who have since returned to their respective stations with an overwhelming outpouring of love for their fellow Fijians. The officers also distributed planting materials, provided mobile veterinary services, cleared farms and debris as part of the Ministry's immediate food security rehabilitation programme.

Field Officer Viliame Naiorosui said the experience was one that would forever be etched in his memory.

"As a field officer what we witnessed was heart-breaking because on previous visits there, we were used to seeing livestock roaming on farms and ranches and crops flourishing, now only to be greeted with livestock fatality and crop devastation added to their destroyed assets," he said.

"When we arrived, there were other organizations and government bodies present for assistance and we reached out to our farmers nearby and in-land," Viliame said.

Another Ministry staff, Opetai

Tukai said it was an honor to provide assistance to those in need at that crucial moment as well as after each day's program.

"It was the company of the team that kept our minds occupied," he said.

"In a place where devastation was at its peak with no electricity and water, what kept us going was enjoying the company of the staff around the traditional beverage."

"As the team was made of men it was understandable that most of the meals would always turn out to be soup, be it curry soup or stew soup. But we had forged a bond and it tightened with other field officers from other geographical locations who were also part of the team," he said.

Josaia Vucoka, a technical officer who experienced his first Christmas away from home said the sound of the melodious voices of the choir made up of his fellow colleagues kept the Christmas spirit alive and brought tears to the eyes after witnessing the unfortunate circumstance around them who could not enjoy Christmas. In addition, not being with their loved ones during Christmas added to the nostalgia.

"Given that most of those affected in the North were farmers, it really was heart wrenching to see their source of income destroyed," Josaia said.

Ba Agriculture Technical Officer Isei Namacamaca said it was a sad sight to see dead livestock lying on the ground. To add to the experience, because there was no water and electricity, Isei said they had to bathe in drains for the first two days on arrival to begin their deployment.

"Added to that, my whole experience of TC Winston while I was in Koro kept

flashing before my eyes making me emotional, as I knew exactly how those who were affected by TC Yasa felt," Isei said.

The Vanua Levu-deployed officers were Savenaca Tuivaga, Jone Maka, Viliame Naiorosui, Opetai Tukai, Mohammed Kadir Khan, Ananaisa Soro, Ilaisa Nayasi, Josaia Vucoka, Selestino Balecikobia, Jotame Naureure, Peni Matea, Josefa Waqanidrola, Isei Nabitu, Akuila Tuvakaikoya, Jiaoti Batibasila, Tanarusa Naveata, Samuela Musuvanua, Yogesh Maharaj, Tevita Coanikeli, Ratu Inoke Lewanavanua, Dr Anand Deo, Sant Prasad, Vereimi Mudu,

Dr Beato Lenoa, Moreen Lata, Sandeep Sharma, Ranjesh Chand, Aklesh Prasad, Ben Chand, Asween Kumar, Ravneil Prasad, Jeke Mouga, Avinesh Dayal, Sanjeev Kumar, Karishma Goundar, Roneel Prasad, Mohammed Shafeen, Shalesh Chandra, Virendra Chand, Meli Veikemuni and Jasveer Singh.

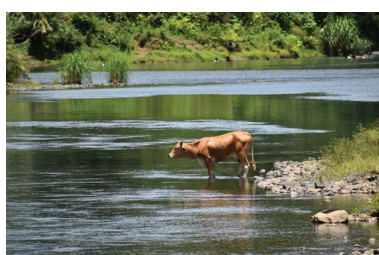
Out in the far flung Lau and Yasawa group of Islands, and across the Bligh waters to the Lomaiviti group, 21 of the total 62 officers celebrated with the accommodating villagers of the outer islands who looked after them as they usually did; with the warmth of the season.



## Cyclone can result to **HYPOTHERMIA IN ANIMALS !!**

- Animals exposed to rain and cold for an extended period of time such as weak animal in dry sheds tonight!
- Ensure that young and weak animals are provided with extra nutrition and good amount of drinking water.
- Provide dry beddings such as grass, rice straws or other dry leaves.
- Provide animals with few hours of warmth using solar lights, 100 watts incandescent bulbs or gas lanterns. Do not leave candles and gas lanterns unattended!

*Cold stress affects the proper flow of blood in the whole body of the animal which can eventually result in death.*



## Do you have milk surplus?

### What Bulk Suppliers can do?

- Maintain milk in proper cold storage while awaiting pick up.
- Observe extra hygiene practices when handling stored milk.
- If unsure of pick up schedule, use milk as additional feed for calves and other stocks to keep your herd healthy during this weather condition.
- Contact your respective milk collectors for further details of collection.

### What else to do with uncollected milk?

- Heat freshly collected milk in low fire until boiling and let it boil for 3-5 minutes before consumption.
- Surplus milk can be sold or shared to your neighbors as additional food supply during this disaster period.

### Value Adding! Make cottage cheese.

- The milk can also be used as extra nourishment to your other animal particularly for the young and weak ones while we protect ourselves from the cyclones.

