



DR. ANAND: NEVER BE AFRAID TO EXPAND YOUR HORIZON



Dr. Anand Deo (2nd from right) and Dr. Beato Lenoa (3rd from right) with the livestock team at Batiri Research Station during the mobile veterinary clinics provided by the Ministry of Agriculture following TC Yasa.

Decades ago, a young energetic farm boy from Nacula in Dreketi dreamt of becoming successful in life, and that humble vision made him, over time, unfold into one of the most sought-after personnel in Fiji.

Dr. Anand Kumar Deo is the Ministry of Agriculture's Principal Veterinary Officer and prior to his appointment had been providing his expertise in Australia as a Veterinarian.

He reminisced on all the memorable times he experienced in Fiji before migrating to the Land Down Under, sharing his drive to succeed was his primary motivation.

"If you want something in life, put your heart and mind into it, remember to pray about it, and have faith, you will get it," he said.

"Sacrificing is also the compass to success, for me personally, the road hasn't always been easy, or even straight, I had to make a lot of sacrifices for my family, my studies, and my social life to get to where I am today," said Dr. Anand.

His career began after he graduated with a Diploma in Tropical Agriculture specializing in livestock from the Fiji College of Agriculture.

"I worked with the Department of Information while waiting for a post with the Ministry of Agriculture and my

first Agriculture work was in the Pig Section of the Ministry where I worked for two years," he said.

"Afterwards I was posted as a Locality Livestock Officer for Serua/Namoli based in Navua and it was there that I enjoyed every ounce of being a field officer, visiting places, and sometimes, I had to be the only officer around," said Dr. Anand.

The career-oriented man then grabbed the opportunity to broaden his horizons and to further his studies at Gatton College in Queensland, Australia to study Bachelor of Applied Science in Rural Technology.

Inspired by his former boss and lecturer at the Fiji College of Agriculture (FCA) Dr. Peter Saville, his passion for the Veterinarian profession was fulfilled when he decided to study an undergraduate program, namely the Bachelor in Veterinary Science at the University of Queensland in the following year.

"It was a rare profession back home and I one day decided to try and switch, I took a leap of faith and to this day, I have not regretted the decision I made years back," he said.

After graduating, Dr. Anand returned home and served as Veterinary Officer with the Ministry of Agriculture and was posted to the Western and Central Division before resigning and migrating

to Australia to continue his passion.

While still with the Ministry of Agriculture, he was also engaged at FCA as a part-time lecturer for livestock students.

His love for VET work led him to take up the reigns once more when he returned to Australia, picking up from where he left off in Fiji.

He is vastly experienced, having worked at various veterinary clinics, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, as Manager Food Safety/Animal Welfare, Area Technical Manager, an On-Plant Veterinary Officer based in all Australian States and Territories, and later as a Veterinary Officer in the Policy, Animal Biosecurity Branch of the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Canberra.

"My work as a Vet in Australia involved a lot of travelling and I enjoyed it, my last official trip I did in Australia before taking this post with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fiji was being a live animal export Veterinarian," he said.

"We travelled by ship to deliver live animals from Australia to China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Middle-East."

"Now I am back in Fiji to work with the Ministry of Agriculture and I hope to come and instill and share my work experience with the officers for the betterment of the Animal Health and

Production Division," he said.

"I left Fiji to study in Australia, returned to Fiji to work, and again went for greener pastures to Australia and now I am back in Fiji to once again serve," said Dr. Anand.

"I am not trying to boast about my qualification or where I have worked but merely trying to encourage and challenge you that anything is possible when you put your heart into it, you may stumble along the way but always remember to rise," he said.

"When others have faith in you, it truly gives you wings. I am grateful to all those in my profession and my wife and three daughters who have given me that strength and allowed me to reach heights I never expected."

"Invest in yourselves, when you come across training opportunities go

for it, learn new things, develop your skills and passion and sacrifice for a better tomorrow," he said with a smile.

At the height of the recent TC Yasa, Dr. Anand was part of the deployed officers from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Northern Division for Rehabilitation work.

"It was a good feeling to be able to serve and assist the community you grew up in, offering your service for the betterment of livestock farmers in affected places and placing smiles on their faces while tending to their livestock is heart-warming."

"I became a Vet to get my hands dirty, added to my love for animals, and to advocate my passion to treat animals the same way you would treat your children," he said.



Dr. Anand Deo (right) treating a goat with eye damage at Bulileka in Labasa.

OVER 23,000 HOUSEHOLDS NEEDED IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING TC YASA



Ministry staff sorting out kumala cuttings at Seaqaqa Research Station before distribution.

Following TC Yasa, an estimated 23,725 households in Zones 1 and 2 were identified to have needed immediate assistance, revealed Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, the Hon. Dr Mahendra Reddy in his Ministerial Statement to Parliament on Monday, February 8.

The Minister provided an update to the House on the assistance provided by the Ministry of Agriculture following TC's Yasa and Ana.

He revealed the immediate assistance rendered to affected households was made following the findings from the Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) where after 72 hours of TC Yasa, the Ministry recommended the provision of three months food ration to NDMO for households in Zone 1 and 2.

"In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture commenced the immediate food security response which included

the distribution of vegetable seed packages for home gardening, root crop cuttings, and other planting materials targeting household in Zones 1 and 2, which is estimated to be 23,725 households," he told the House.

The Hon. Dr Reddy said over 19,000 affected households were provided home gardening seed packages, over 7,000 households received kumala and bele cuttings, and 2,000 households given cassava cuttings as part of the Ministry of Agriculture's immediate response within six weeks post TC Yasa.

"In addition, the Ministry distributed live chicks, starter and growers to more than 1,000 poultry farmers and over three metric tonnes of sugar to 190 bee farmers to assist in the rehabilitation of their stock.

"Due to significant loss of livestock from TC Yasa, Vets from our livestock division were deployed

through mobile clinics to provide immediate free veterinary services to affected livestock farmers.

He said as part of the Ministry's early intervention, this veterinary team provided free services to livestock farmers, including the provision of free veterinary medication, and helping with the rehabilitation of their livestock.

And, the Minister revealed, it was the first time that the Ministry's TC Yasa Detailed Damage Assessment (DDA) collected data via hand-held devices using the online Kobo Toolbox software application.

"This online system ensured the timely collation of DDA data at Headquarters during assessment period. The survey captured over 19,000 household interviews from affected farmers which comprehensively assessed the impact of TC Yasa," the Hon. Dr Reddy explained.