



## NON-SUGAR AGRICULTURE SECTOR REACHES BILLION DOLLAR MARK IN NOMINAL GDP IN 2018, AGRICULTURE REPORT REVEALS



A pineapple farm in Ba.

The non-sugarcane agriculture sector became a billion dollar industry in nominal GDP in 2018, a recent agriculture report revealed.

The '2020 Key Statistics on Fiji Agriculture Sector' Report was prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture's Fiji Agriculture and Rural Statistics Unit using official statistics from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics.

The Report showed that the non-sugarcane agriculture sector in 2018 amounted to \$1.076b in nominal GDP and continued to maintain the billion dollar mark a year after that.

In 2019, non-sugar agriculture sector made it to \$1.218b in nominal GDP.

In addition, the Report stated that Fiji recorded a milestone in 2020 by achieving the highest value of \$106.7m from the domestic export of fresh/

chilled produce (crop and livestock).

Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy said the 2020 figures of the domestic exports of fresh and chilled produce of crop and livestock was analysed over an eight-year period since 2013 and even took into account the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I cannot over emphasize just how important this fact is – it is a major achievement that in a period of eight years, the agriculture sector surpassed the \$100m mark. Eight years!

"I must thank all farmers, exporters, and all those who made this remarkable feat achievable. Vinaka Vakalevu for making the non-sugar agriculture sector great again," the Minister said.

The Report said in terms of Agriculture Trade (inclusive of crop, livestock, fisheries, forestry, sugar,

mineral water, beverages etc) in 2020, Fiji's earnings from agricultural exports, which accounted for 60.1per cent (\$686.7m) of the national domestic exports, decreased by 7.8per cent.

However, for export of crop and livestock only (in all forms, value added and fresh/chilled), which accounted for 22per cent of the national domestic export earnings, increased by 7.1per cent.

Further, the Report stated a positive growth was also recorded for both value and volume of only fresh/chilled produce domestic export by 25.8per cent and 16.3per cent respectively in 2020 compared to 2019.

The domestic export of fresh/ chilled produce accounted for 9.3per cent of the national domestic export earnings.

## MINISTRY INUNDATED WITH APPLICATIONS FOR CASH FOR CULTIVATION INITIATIVE

The Ministry of Agriculture has received an overwhelming response from farmers applying to be part of the Cash for Cultivation initiative.

This was confirmed by the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy during a press conference on Tuesday.

Minister Reddy said during this second phase of the Cash for Cultivation programme, which was launched following the second wave of COVID-19 in Fiji, the targeted number of 3,000 farmers was exceeded shortly after the announcement was made.

"Now in the second phase of the Cash for Cultivation programme which was launched after the second round of COVID-19, and with thanks to the Government of Australia for the budget of FJD\$800.000 we are targeting 3,000 farming households.

"We have received 3,344 applications. Out of that, 1,805 has been processed and we are quickly looking at making the first tranche payment," said Hon. Reddy.

"So at the moment, we have reached the target of 3,000 and we are not accepting any more expression

of interest. In case we get additional funding, then we will open up for phase 3," he added.

The verification process has so far been concluded for 1,805 of the applications received so far with 1,388 applications approved thus far and are set to receive their first tranche payment soon.

Minister Reddy said the geographical distribution of approved applications by division was 461 for the Western Division, 576 for the Central Division, 111 for the Northern Division and 240 for the Eastern Division.

"The numbers reflect the situation on the ground and we are very happy that the highest numbers are in the Central and Western Divisions so we look forward to processing their first tranche payments quickly so they can get on with the fieldwork (land preparation) and once they've completed it, we will provide the remainder of \$125.00."

The Ministry is working with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to implement the programme with donor funding from the Government of Australia.

## VULNERABLE FAMILIES IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS TO RECEIVE ROUROU PLANTING MATERIALS

Families living in informal settlements in the Central Division will soon receive dalo suckers to help feed their families nutritious dalo leaves known locally as rourou.

This was announced on Tuesday during a press conference by the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy.

"We are looking at supplying 1,892 households with rourou planting material of the dalo variety to start off from this week as this is a targeted project," he said.

"We've got 50,000 dalo suckers with us now to start off with and we will be providing each household in these target areas with 10 dalo suckers each," added Minister Reddy.

With dalo suckers being able to grow their leaves in a relatively short period of time, it was an opportunity for families in the targeted informal settlements to plant these suckers for their food security.

"The targeted areas will be the lock down areas and the informal settlements. We're looking at targeting the vulnerable population and the squatter settlements in the Central Division," said Hon. Reddy.

"Only these areas will be considered for this round whereby we will be providing about 50,000 suckers to about 1,892 households. Again, I reiterate that this is only for the informal settlements and lock down areas in this first phase of this particular

project, so we are quite excited about supporting these households starting from tomorrow, both in the Central Division parts of the Western Division, particularly in Nadi," he added.

Amidst the lockdown, it has been realized that families have faced challenges accessing fresh fruits and vegetable. As much as this has been addressed through the home garden seed packages, the Ministry of Agriculture is complementing this by supplying these targeted households, affected by COVID-19 with 10 suckers of this variety of dalo that is grown for its leaves.

Once established, a family of four, every fortnight, can sustainably harvest enough leaves for their meal.



Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment - Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy

