



CHANGE MINDSET AND TAKE UP FARMING, DAIRY FARMER URGES ITAUKEI YOUTHS

A dairy farmer is calling on iTaukei youths to change their mindset and to use the land readily available around them.

Uraia Tutini, 47, of Navuso, Naitasiri who is a new dairy farmer who had started off planting ginger and dalo five years ago after he resigned from his full-time employment, has urged iTaukei youth to venture into agriculture instead of pursuing formal employment as many graduates are also vying for the same job.

Explaining in vernacular, Uraia said dairy farming had always been his long term plan so when he resigned that was exactly what he did.

I worked for 20 years, he says, before leaving to utilize the land. He cleared the land to begin his crop farming, which lasted two years before he switched to livestock.

Today, Uraia boasts a stock of 100 cattle, with a total of 15 cows, 30 pregnant heifers, and 30 bulls and steers with 25 calves.

He said there were no excuses for the iTaukei; "The land and the sea should be made use of," he said.

"There are many graduates today who are also looking for jobs, and there are many youths in the villages who are not doing anything, I urge them to take up farming," he implores.

He said there were many income-generating activities that one could undertake on the land to earn a regular

income.

He said farming was not easy, there were a lot of challenges but he believed all good things came from overcoming challenges.

Uraia's day starts at 5.30 am where he is off to his dairy farm to milk his ten milking cows with the help of another farmhand who lives close by his Navuso farm.

Between the pair, they collect 40 to 50 litres of fresh milk daily, which is then delivered to their regular customers who order from them at \$2 per litre. By 9 am, Uraia's work is done for the day, the rest of his time is spent with his family until he is off to bed at 9 pm.

He said he treats going to the farm daily like his office.

"It is my office because it is where I do my work and where I learn my income. Besides my morning milking program, I also spend time checking the fences, checking up on the rest of my stock, and carrying out some maintenance work.

This is his daily routine Monday to Sunday, seven days a week.

Mr. Tutini explains that since taking up farming he has been felt healthier and has gotten fitter, rarely falling sick and having a lot of time for his family; "This was not the case when I was working, I was always travelling, working long hours and there was never enough time for my family.

"It is good that I am home more



Mr. Uraia Tuni at his farm in Naitasiri.

often and I can teach my children, and be there for them, and watch them grow," said the proud family man.

Besides his dairy farm, Uraia also receives orders for beef meat from butchers and iTaukei funerals.

His philosophy is that of hard work and being willing to face challenges that come your way.

"I am doing that, farming has helped put food on the table, pay the bills, educate my children, paid for the fuel for my car, and I even manage to put away some savings.

His leased land spans 42 acres of flatlands and another 33 acres of hilly terrain. At the moment he is only using between ten to 20 acres of land for grazing.

The Ministry of Agriculture assisted Uraia with materials for his milking shed, which he built early this year in February. His goal is to purchase an automated milking machine by the end of this year. At the moment he and his farm hand are manually milking his cows.

Currently, he is working on fulfilling the requirements needed to be a

registered supplier with Fiji Dairy Limited.

He has thanked the Government and the Ministry of Agriculture for helping him kick start his dairy farm which included the provision of fencing materials and technical advice. He promises that his milk production will increase because of the helping hand given to him.

His dream is to build a milking shed similar to the ones overseas.

Uraia said this is his dream and he is confident of achieving them through an iron will and hard work.

BASIC INFORMATION ON DAIRY FARMING

Economic importance

- Food- Milk, ghee, yogurt, paneer etc
- Money - Sales of milk.
 - Sales of surplus stock.
 - Sales of value added products - ghee, paneer etc
- Meat - from surplus stock.
- Employment - family and hired labor

Breeds

- Friesian
- Jersey

Backyard farming

Few cows are kept (not more than ten (10), usually tethered and the milk or dairy products produced are used for home consumption. They are also milk suppliers that provide fresh milk to consumers every morning eg Town Suppliers. They also make and sell ghee to consumers.

Smallholder dairy farms

- These are small farms that are supplying to the Processor - Fiji Dairy Limited.
- The number of Milking Cows (Dry & Wet) ranges from 10 to 30. Milking is done by hand and twice a day (morning/afternoon).

Commercial dairy farm

- These are big dairy farms with higher number of dairy cows, which supply milk to Processor - Fiji Dairy Limited.
- They use milking machines to milk the cows.
- They have their own cooling storage tank to freeze milk overnight on the farm.
- All farms are located in the Central Division.
- They use large amount of Concentrate feed.
- How to start a dairy business

(Smallholder)

- In order to operate a dairy farm you should comply with the following:
 - Have a minimum of 10 cows.
 - Have a proper milking shed with milking cans and containers.
 - Have special room for milk storage.
 - Should have concrete floor.
 - Should have the dairy registered under your name.
 - Dairy should be licensed and renewed every year.
 - Should have a good and reliable water supply.
 - Cows should be tested for Tuberculosis and Brucellosis.
 - Have good and sufficient grazing pasture on the farm.
 - Proper Waste disposal and be environmental friendly.

Proper hygienic practices should be followed

- Properly wash the shed every day after milking.
- Clear drains to allow dirty water to flow away from milking shed.
- Properly wash the equipment with hot water daily.
- Keep the grass short and keep the dairy clear.
- Seven days post calving no sale of milk.
- Milk should be strained through clean strainer.
- Udder should be washed with clean water before milking.

Management of Dairy Cows

- They should be well fed with good feed and adequate water.
- Cows should be kept in shade during hot days.
- Replace breeding bull in every 3 years in order to set maximum production.
- Select good animals, which have good dairy characteristics.
- Pregnant cows should be well fed and cared.



Milking at Koronivia Research Station Dairy.

Calves

Many cases of calf mortality happen at the time of parturition (calving) or a short while after the birth of the calf.

- Disinfect naval with iodine solution.
- Colostrum in the first day of life of the calf is essential, for nutritional reasons and for diseases prevention. At least 2-3 litres per meal.
- In the first two-four weeks of life, the risk of infectious diseases is the highest.
- Clean water should be always available to calves from the first day of life.
- Calf shed should be clean and dry at all times.
- Feed good quality meal making it

and water available at all times. They will only nibble a little at the start but intake will gradually rise.

Diseases of Dairy Cows

Mastitis

- Symptoms**
- Painful udder
 - Small udder
 - Hard udder
 - High udder temperature
 - Cows not feeding properly
 - The milk appearance will be watery, flakes, clots, or pus.

Treatment - treat infected teats with Intra mammary tubes (antibiotics). Also note of milk withholding periods before

consuming milk.

Ways to Increase Production

1. Select Production and breeding stock carefully.
 - Good breed
 - Large and spacious udder
 - Free from diseases
 - Good conception
 - Medium teats and docile animal
2. Proper feeding
Feed cows a balanced diet according to their maintenance and production needs.
3. Provide adequate water supply.
4. Use of good management practices.
5. Safeguard the animals from diseases.
6. Select the best method of marketing and best outlet.