



## CREATING WEALTH FROM THE LAND – MATAQALI NATUSASA SETS DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Participants of the training in Nawaqabena after graduation.

Taking ownership of their natural resources and creating wealth from their land is at the top of the priority for Mataqali Natusasa.

Following a three-day Farm Management training held at Nawaqabena for 29 members of Mataqali (landowning unit) Natusasa in Vunidawa Village, Serea, Naitasiri - their knowledge on implementing business models on their farms was reinvigorated and they now look to better days ahead and view farming as a business

as a beacon of hope and a way forward.

Prior to the Farm Management training conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Mataqali had already developed the 'Natusasa Concept' whereby members were allocated five acres each of their Mataqali land with the vision to undertake farming as a stepping stone towards further development for their Mataqali.

Mataqali Natusasa development committee

member Elenoa Nimacere said the development plan was earmarked to empower the members living in the village to create wealth by fully utilizing their land which had been classified by the Ministry's Land Use Section as suitable, arable land for crop farming.

"Our way forward is such that after each lot owner of the subdivided five-acres per family receive their Land Use and Farm Management plan, the development committee will help them reach their goal in helping with planting material from within the Mataqali and other organizations including the Ministry of Agriculture," she said.

"From next month all farmers have planned to be physically present in their subdivided land and camp for a week and operate in clusters to start with land preparation."

Ms Nimacere said the development committee members will monitor and evaluate the progress every month and meet with the farmers to resolve problems

that stunts progress.

"We have asked the Ministry of Agriculture to start a task force with us so we can work together to help us to reach the goals of each individual, the Mataqali and the Yavusa."

As for training participant, Sekonaia Rawaimila, attending the training has been a blessing as he was accustomed only to the traditional farming methods with little to no regard for farming as a business.

"The training has truly broadened my knowledge on various farming practices and business models and I will surely implement it so it has a greater impact on my life and my family," said Mr Rawaimila.

Meanwhile, Senior Agriculture Officer (Farm Management) Ms Naomi Naiqumu said the training was intended to empower the farmers to treat their farming not only as a business but as a rewarding form of employment too.

"A major component of the training is to teach farmers' the basics of farm planning as

most are subsistence farmers and to impart the importance of having goals and setting and implementing the plans to help achieve those goals," she said.

A majority of the farmers are dalo farmers who contribute to the total 40% dalo production rate from the province of Naitasiri.

Additionally, the training was also to empower them to understand their land classes, soil type and the type of crops suitable to plant on their land which would encourage them to take ownership of their natural resources and its sustainable usage for the benefit of their future generations.

"Their main commodity is dalo, apart from dairy, and seeing as they are located in a rural area, the need to enlighten them to boost their farming to another level and to treat it as a business, with us also sharing the various development initiatives that are available to them is vital to see that they do indeed grow and develop," said Ms Naiqumu.

## FARMERS URGED TO MAKE USE OF LOCALITY OFFICERS

The Ministry of Agriculture's presence in rural farming locations must be utilized by the farming communities as technical knowledge shared by locality officers is critical for the development of agricultural-based undertakings.

It is equally important for farmers and locality officers to maintain working relationships and for farmers to take heed of technical information shared during scheduled farms visits and meetings.

This was shared by the Senior Agriculture Officer (Naitasiri) Mr Apenisa Rarasea when speaking to Mataqali Natusasa of Vunidawa Village, Serea during the recent 'Farming as a Business' training to farmers of the Mataqali at Nawaqabena in Naitasiri.

Mataqali Natusasa has also recently launched the 'Natusasa Concept', a development based plan targeted at improving the livelihoods of their members.

"Farming has always been a

way of life for most of us here and the potential is great in the area for more development to be brought here," he said.

"You are all experienced farmers and there are techniques that you have been following that allows you to excel in your production and this training is being brought here to boost your potential and elevate your living and farming standards to another level."

He also urged farmers to make use of the agriculture station near them for assistance and technical advice.

"There is assistance provided, and you should feel free to access the assistance with your locality officers for your farms and the concept that the Mataqali has initiated," he said.

"It is empowering to take note of the initiative the Mataqali is taking towards the betterment and building of a secured farming plan, this

different direction will create an impact if you take heed of the farming as business training you have been a part of."

Mataqali Natusasa development committee member Ms Elenoa Nimacere said the Natusasa Development concept was a generational prosperity concept; "Through this concept, we will be able to have a better standard of living, better houses, clean drinking water and electricity," she said.

"It will put food on the table, improve health conditions and provide better education for our future generations and enhance our contribution to social obligations."

The Natusasa concept is designed for its members, who have each been allocated five-acre lots per farmer from the Mataqali land, with a target to undertake farming to gradually improve their standard of living.



Participants working in groups during the training.