

## OUTSOURCE PROGRAMME PROVIDES RELIEF FOR FARMERS



Alipate Tabuakatudrau of Serea, Naitasiri is grateful to the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways for assisting him with land clearing and digging works.



Emoni Madrai of Viria, Naitasiri was also assisted through the Outsource Programme

In the 2023-2024 financial year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways has already assisted 617 farmers in the Central Division through the Outsource

Programme.

This programme enables drainage, irrigation, land clearing and land preparation works to be carried out

through a 50/50 payment scheme.

Farmers who apply for the assistance will pay half the cost of works and the Ministry will pay the other half.

According to Principal Agricultural Officer (Central) Adriano Tabualevu, the interest had really spiked in its first year of initiation.

“This was the first time that we had arranged for the Outsource Programme as it gave opportunities for companies to hire out their machines on a 50/50 payment basis. Farmers in the Central Division have shown their appreciation as works have become faster and they do not have to rely on the Government machines which are often tied up with works in other divisions,” explained Mr. Tabualevu.

“We already have farmers in our waiting list and this goes to show the huge demand for land preparation works. Mechanized farming is truly the way to go now if farmers want to switch from subsistence level to semi commercial and commercial farming.”

Several success stories have emerged from the assistance and Emoni Madrai, a 40-year old dairy farmer in Viria, Naitasiri can attest to the successful implementation of his farm road through the Outsource Programme.

He has managed to expand his dalo farm and provide a dry road and paddock for his cattle to move freely during milking session.

“My farm was always bogged due to rain stuck on the road and it was difficult for my cattle to move around. Forty hours of digger works for the farm drains were carried out and now my cows are moving around freely in the paddock without fear of being stuck in the mud. I also managed to have land preparation works included in the total works carried out in which I planted 3,500 dalo of the tausala variety,” explained Mr. Madrai.

“Thank you Ministry of Agriculture

and Waterways for the huge assistance,” he smiled.

Another farmer, 43 year old Alipate Tabuakatudrau of Serea in Naitasiri is also grateful for the huge assistance that was rendered to him.

“I have 20 acres of land which I acquired back in 2015. It was covered with African Tulip trees so I didn’t have a clue what to plant at that time,” smiled Mr. Tabuakatudrau.

He went on to say that he only started utilizing a small portion of his land as he found it difficult to find the finances for land clearing works.

He planted cassava, dalo and ginger and started saving money for hiring a digger for land clearing works.

“Early this year after another successful visit to the Agriculture Station, I finally managed to have my name included in the list for the Outsource Programme. The machines were hired for a total of 60 hours and more land was cleared which will soon be planted with more crops,” he smiled.”

“I must thank the Ministry for Agriculture and Waterways for the huge assistance as I am now able to expand my farming activities.”

He hopes to penetrate the export markets soon and is calling upon young men and women across Fiji to utilise the land as it has so much to offer.

“There is nothing sweeter than earning money from the sweat of your brows,” added Mr. Tabuakatudrau.

Meanwhile, the Ministry will incorporate the same program in the next financial year and is encouraging farmers to visit their nearest agriculture station for more advice and information.

## KADAVU SCHOOL RECEIVES MINISTRY ASSISTANCE

Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways travelled to Richmond Methodist High School in Kadavu recently to conduct proper fencing training for 15 vocational students and 30 farmers.

Through the Commercial Agriculture Development Programme (CADP), Dairy in School Initiative by the Ministry, the training equipped students with basic knowledge on dairy farm management in preparation for the dairy farm which they hope to expand for the school.

The Head of the Department of Agriculture Science, Mrs. Sera Nailiko, said the students were grateful for the opportunity to learn how to construct fences for a dairy farm as this practical activity enabled the students to apply their classroom learning using the hands-on approach.

“The practical sessions with the agricultural staff have reinforced the skills they learned in the classroom,” said Mrs. Nailiko.

She mentioned that the hands-on training for fencing has been very informative for them.

“While most of the students come from a crop farming background, they now have a better understanding of the materials needed and the processes involved in fencing should they venture into dairy farming as well.”

“Throughout the fencing training, discussions have been very positive as

some students hope to return to their villages and talk to their families on dairy farming as another potential source of livelihood,” smiled Mrs. Nailiko.

Sikeli Vasuca, the Ministry’s fence training specialist was very satisfied with the hands-on training shown by the vocational students.

“They learned the importance of proper fencing and various fencing techniques to ensure the animals’ protection.”

He reminded the students about the potential of dairy farming as a profitable option for diversification, especially for those primarily engaged in crop farming.

Principal of Richmond Methodist High School, Viasi Gukirewa is grateful to the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways for the huge assistance and says that they are trying their utmost best to turn their school into a self-support school where their meals can be harvested straight from the farm to the students plates.

“We have a total roll of 129 students out of which 67 are boarders. This school has the capacity to enrol 250 to 300 students from across the island of Kadavu. Most families have opted to send their children to the urban centres and we are trying our best to change that mindset and have more students in the coming years because of improved nutritious and healthy meals and quality



Students of Richmond Methodist High School in Kadavu during their fencing practical session

education,” said Mr. Gukirewa.

“The training was certainly an eye opener and I know that the students have truly appreciated the opportunity to erect the dairy fencing materials

which were supplied by the Ministry. We have plans to expand into poultry farming and hope to also produce and supply fresh milk to our neighbouring communities in the near future,”

explained Mr. Gukirewa.

The Ministry will also supply the school with heifers, a breeding bull and the construction of a dairy shed.