

It's Dairy for Titilia



Titilia Bolakoro controlling the calf into the shed at her farm

Not everyone wakes up before the rooster crows and heads straight out to the farm before the crack of dawn.

To even awake in the early hours of the morning is a huge ask in itself but that is exactly the type of dedication and commitment that Titilia Bolakoro has

shown for past two decades on her dairy farm.

Rain, hail or shine, regardless of the weather, she is out on her dairy farm every morning, something which has become second nature to her.

The 54-year-old Naluwai native was born and raised on a dairy farm, and after 20 years of marriage in Naocosaqa settlement

in Nabaitavo, Naitasiri she continues to ply her trade in the same industry upon which she was reared from.

"I was born and brought up in a dairy farm back at Naluwai, so dairy farming was nothing new to me when I decided to become a full time dairy farmer and after getting married, I took control of

my husband's farm and helped him in his farming," she said.

"My husband's family have been dairy farmers since the 50's and they've come a long way since then, I just stepped in and helped to revive the farms production level.

After marrying in 1997, the couple concentrated efforts in raising the standard of their farm by applying differing techniques with mixed results.

Through trainings conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture and consultation with stakeholders and other experienced farmers, the couple soon reaped the rewards of their labour.

She has consistently supplied approximately 25 liters of milk per day and earns a decent living from the dairy farm to support her family.

"There have been a lot of changes in the dairy industry as compared to the past because the Government has committed itself to helping farmers and making their

work easier like constructing farm access roads and other agricultural developments, which is good for us," said Titilia.

She also acknowledged Government's exhaustive effort to assist and support farmers in the dairy industry in order to achieve its potential, highlighting the onus was also on farmers to do their part for the industry's benefit.

"It is our responsibility, as farmers to look after our animals, we should ensure they are secured in the fence and have the frequent Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) and Brucellosis tests done in order to prevent animals from catching these diseases," she said.

Her only wish was for more farmers to show interest in the dairy industry as it could be a lucrative venture if one remained committed to it.

She has optimistic plans for the future, plans which involve a fully automated milking system to ease her burden and she hasn't shown any signs of giving up on her

goal.

"We have a 5-year development plan to fully develop this farm to a level that we have envisioned, to have proper milking sheds, to have more calves and milking cows, to secure fully automatic milking machines and in the long term a vehicle to assist transport our milk to chilling centers," she said.

Her advice, work smart and work together; "I would like to advise dairy farmers and other farmers who are interested in the dairy industry to work smartly and closely with each other, do things communally as this is our strength and most importantly to take heed of technical advice given by the Ministry of Agriculture, this will only boost and enhance the dairy industry for everyone."

Such is the life and drive of Titilia Bolakoro, dedication of this like will ensure the dairy industry is headed in the right direction.

Taveuni Women's Groups Receive VCO Machines



Minister for Agriculture Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy and senior Ministry officials with participants of the 12th Coconut Wholenut Processing training after officially handing over their VCO machines

Six women's groups on the island of Taveuni and neighboring Kioa Island received Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) machines as part of a recently concluded training under the Taveuni Coconut Centre program.

While officially handing over the VCO machines at the Agriculture Research Station in Mua, Taveuni on Wednesday, Minister for Agriculture Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy reiterated the

Ministry's expectations that these trained women's groups would take advantage of the opportunity afforded to them through the training.

"Any knowledge you gain, ultimately, if the knowledge does not contribute to new growth and development, if it does not contribute to the society benefiting from it, then that knowledge has no value.

"At any point in time, we as an agriculture institute, or any educational

or development agency, one of our core businesses should be creating new knowledge, and I do hope that through the training which you have completed, you have indeed gained new knowledge; and it is my pleasure to hand over to you these VCO machines which we anticipate will impact your life and the quality of your life, while also contributing to national development," he said.

In addition, Minister Reddy

emphasized the importance of maintaining quality as part of venturing into a small and micro-enterprise; "I would just like to caution you, that during such small-micro enterprises who are all producing a particular product, there could be an issue of quality weakness."

"In your case, given that you want to produce VCO, you must ensure that you maintain standards in quality. If you want to continue to have a permanent place in the market, I do hope that you seek the advice of experts to help you maintain quality in order to secure your market so that when the time comes, the demand is there for your products to be sold in the market," he said.

"Conform to the quality standards and I can assure you that the market, through AMA, will be readily available to purchase your products," Minister Reddy added.

Dateline Women's Group representative Maria Akanisi thanked the Ministry of Agriculture for supporting women's empowerment; "The presentation of these machines today will ensure we can put what we've learned to practice, which at the same time will upskill us and enhance our knowledge of value-addition and Virgin Coconut Oil production.

"We now realize how important and unique the coconut plant is to our society, something that we learned from the

training and we're grateful to the Ministry for facilitating the handing over of these machines which we truly believe will help us to achieve our goals in our various groups as we seek to utilize this most abundant resource," said Mrs. Akanisi.

Six women's groups from Taveuni and the neighboring island of Kioa were part of the two week VCO training at the Mua Research Station including Dateline Women's Group, Kioa Women's Group, Matei Women's Group, Mua Women's Group, Duavata Women's Group, and Welagi Women's Group.

The 12th Coconut Wholenut Processing training under the Taveuni Coconut Centre (TCC) program was held in July this year. It was held to economically empower and enhance coconut knowledge, targeting women's groups, youth groups, villages and communities on the island on whole nut processing and how to fully utilize coconut products, while slowly diversifying from the copra industry.

More than 100 farmers groups have participated in the Coconut Wholenut Processing training with the same number of VCO machines being handed over to the participating groups throughout the training series.

DAIRY FARM REGISTRATION AND RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS



Available land



Proper dairy shed



Good ventilation



Proper stock yard



Hot water available for cleaning purpose



Available can stand and also hygiene practices and management of farm



Dairy Cattle Testing for TB and Brucellosis



Available and efficient water source



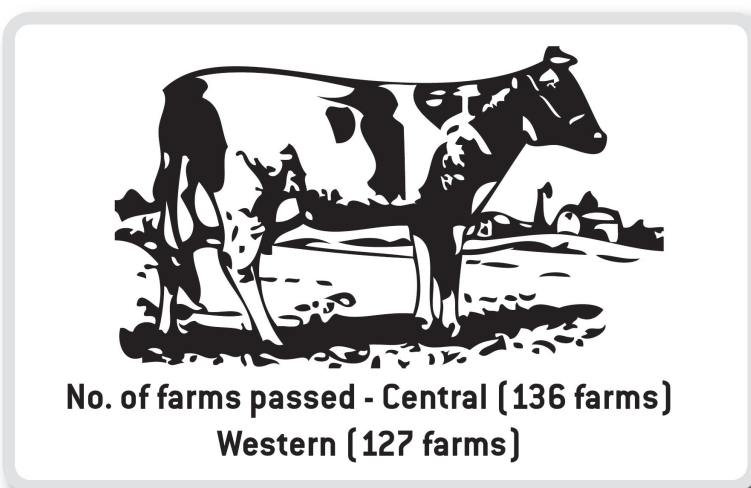
Proper fencing



Available pasture



Proper storing equipment



No. of farms passed - Central (136 farms)
Western (127 farms)



(+679) 338 4233



Ministry of Agriculture Fiji



Fiji Agriculture



agrihelp@govnet.gov.fj



www.agriculture.gov.fj