

Newsletter

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PIFON to host Fiji Farmers Forum

The Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) in partnership with the Fiji Crop and Livestock Council will host a two-day Farmers Forum and Farmer to Farmer Learning Exchange in Deuba, Pacific Harbour from 01 – 02 August, 2017.

The Forum aims to bring about awareness on the importance of advocacy and policy engagement through the sharing of case studies and introduce tools to help farmer organisations be more effective in engaging with government.

The farmer to farmer exchange aims to promote the sharing of technologies and lessons learnt through direct engagement between farmers.

Proposed participants to this event will comprise of:

- Farmer organisation representatives across Fiji’s agricultural sector
- Representatives from Fiji Ministry of Agriculture
- Representatives from relevant NGOs and development partners

The event is funded by the World Rural Forum.



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PIFON supports the World Rural Forum’s Decade on Family Farming endorsed by the UN General Assembly.

PIFON signs contract as a collaborator on PARDI 2

PIFON has recently signed an important partnership agreement under the Pacific Agribusiness Research in Development Initiative Phase 2 (PARDI 2) which will provide an important opportunity to influence the agenda of the project towards directly meeting the needs of Pacific Farmer Organisations and their smallholder farmer members.

PIFON will be the integral link between the research outcomes of this project and the regional FO members, having a major project role in supporting research activities and disseminating project information and research findings.

PARDI 2 will have a country focus in Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu being model representatives within the region. The project will build on the achievements of its predecessor PARDI aimed to provide sustainable livelihood improvements in PICs. The overall aim of this project is “To identify and understand how agribusiness development opportunities can contribute to improved economic growth and livelihoods in the Pacific”.

PARDI 2 is a 4 year project funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).

PIFON supported farmer - farmer exchange bears fruit for Tonga export industry

PIFON believes that there is great value in farmer-farmer exchanges and the recent success story from Tonga supports this concept. Nearly 18 months ago a series of technical exchanges took place between Nature’s Way Cooperative (NWC) and the Growers Federation of Tonga (GroFed).

In June 2017, GroFed sent its first trial shipment of export sunrise papaya to New Zealand. Not only did the consignment pass the MPI screening but there was also good feedback from the customers of Fresh Direct. “The customers’ feedback was very positive on quality” says John Hunter of Fresh Direct.

The GroFed team acknowledges the hard work and team effort from all the stakeholders involved for contributing to the success of its first trial shipment – Tonga Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestries (MAFF), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, NZ (MFAT), Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program (PHAMA), Tonga Airports Limited, Air Terminal Services in Tonga, Air NZ Cargo. PIFON is also acknowledged for supporting and facilitating the farmer-farmer exchanges on value chain, production and postharvest handling.



Commercial papaya farmer Livai Tora working with Tongan farmers on their first papaya blocks

PNG WiA pushing irrigation technologies to mitigate against drought

PIFON member, Papua New Guinea Women in Agriculture Development Foundation (PNG WiA) partnered with the PNG National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) and the Korean government through the Korean Invention Promotion Association (KIPA) to introduce and provide simple appropriate water harvesting and irrigation technology to the rural farmers in PNG using solar energy.

This is an innovation that will support sustainable rural farming for food security and income during extreme drought conditions. The solar powered option is an improvement in the already introduced technology of Rope and Washer Pump technology that NARI has been promoting for the last 15 years. The technology has reduced labour and drudgery hence increasing the level of efficiency and overall production. Twelve pumps and associated crop irrigation systems have been successfully installed in farmers' fields and one on-station at Laloki. An appropriate technology manual has also been launched and distributed to the model farmers and interested farmers and stakeholders.



Solar Powered Rope and Washer Pump Technology Demonstration

PNG WiA promotes solar powered agro-processor machines

Papua New Guinea Women in Agriculture Development Foundation (PNG WiA) has begun a program to promote the use of solar powered agro processing machines by its rural members. The machines being promoted serve a number of functions including: rice polisher, corn huller, coconut scraper, hammer mill and cassava grater.

An initial training was conducted with funding from PIFONs MTCP II project for 34 participants on 19 April 2017 in Mutzing in the Markham valley of the Morobe Province in PNG. The farmers involved in the training have a greater understanding on the technology and how it can be utilised to reduce labour hours and increase food preservation options for rural families.



Solar machines on display before training

Growers Federation of Tonga plays key role in policy awareness and advocacy

Growers Federation of Tonga (GroFed), a PIFON member in Tonga, is playing a key role in creating awareness on the proposed 'Water Bill' in Tonga for its smallholder farmers. As the coordinator of the Agricultural Sector Growth Committee, GroFed has also coordinated with other actors in the agricultural industry to advocate Tongan legislators to reconsider the bill in its current form. If the bill is passed, growers who have invested in water supply in their own farm property will lose their rights to own and take water from their water source. This bill has been deferred by Parliament in 2016 for further public consultations.

GroFed is also actively involved in pushing for investment in farm irrigation for smallholder farmers in Tonga. Currently around 80% of farmers in Tonga are reliant solely on rain water for irrigation and GroFed feels that there is much more to be done to improve access to irrigation which will improve the quality of produce and help farmers to mitigate against natural disasters such as drought. On this issue, GroFed is working as a key member of the taskforce for agricultural irrigation which has been recently established.



GroFed is involved in policy awareness and advocacy for its smallholder farmers in Tonga

PNG WiA promotes Traditional Vegetables in Agriculture Show

Papua New Guinea Women in Agriculture Development Foundation (PNG WiA) was represented at the NARI Annual Agriculture Innovation show promoting traditional leafy vegetables hence strengthening the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) funded Traditional Vegetable project. The show which was a first of its kind, took place on 04 May 2017 focusing on the values and nutritional component of PNG's indigenous vegetables and addressing climate change via seed saving.

According to reports on the last drought that occurred in PNG two years ago, it was the traditional vegetables that sustained the people whilst all introduced vegetables perished.

The importance of seed saving, crop diversity and conservation were key lessons learnt from the show.



Understanding the nutritional value of Indigenous vegetables and how to preserve them whilst cooking was also an objective of the NARI Agriculture Innovation Show

PIFON partners with CTA in strengthening Value Chain Analysis in the Pacific

PIFON has recently signed a contract with the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation (CTA) to support the implementation of a project titled “Leveraging the Development of Local Food Crops and Fisheries Value Chains for Improved Nutrition and Sustainable Food Systems in the Pacific Islands”.

Under this project, PIFON will be carrying out VC analysis on the following nutrition-sensitive crops for domestic markets:

- * Green coconuts – Samoa
- * Pineapples – Vanuatu
- * Root crop chips - Tonga
- * Indigenous nuts – Solomon Islands
- * Taro - Fiji

PIFON is working with national consultants to carry out the VC analysis and then will work to pull together these national reports into the larger study.

The overall theme of this study is on linking agriculture to schools and PIFON is excited about how rural farmers can capitalize on these market opportunities and make a positive contribution to the nutritional situation.



Vanuatu Pepper Value Chain analysis

Assessing impacts of farmer oriented Value Chain trainings

PIFON is working in partnership with the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation (CTA) and the Pacific Island Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO) to assess the impacts of PIFON supported value chain trainings across the Pacific. The value chain trainings being assessed include:

- ◆ Value chain training for Ginger in Fiji (through Fiji Crop and Livestock Council)
- ◆ Value chain training for Papaya in Tonga (through Growers Federation of Tonga)
- ◆ Value chain training for Vanilla in Tonga (through MORDI trust)
- ◆ Value chain training for Taro in Fiji (through Teitei Taveuni and Tutu Rural Training Center)
- ◆ Value chain training for Papaya in Fiji (through Nature's Way Cooperative)
- ◆ Value chain training on Spices in Vanuatu (through Farm Support Association and Venui Vanilla)

Key lessons learnt from these value chain trainings will be documented in a report and video format to ensure wide exposure.



Linking farmers to reforestation programmes — PIFON representation at Fiji REDD+ consultation

Farming and forestry have often been kept separate in the Pacific with different government departments, policies and programs. However, it is becoming ever more apparent that many of the most sustainable farming systems in our region are those that maximize the benefits of a range of tree and plant crops. This approach is often referred to as agro-forestry.

PIFON's Breadfruit and Seeds Program aims to enhance these agro-forestry systems through providing access to traditional vegetable varieties and promoting breadfruit orchard development. These activities have been identified as good strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate change and tie in well with Fiji's National Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) policy.



PIFON was represented at the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) workshop at the Novotel in Suva on 22 May 2017, to show its interest in ensuring its national members play a part in the overall Fiji National REDD+ project. The Farmer Organisation concept was presented and ingrained into the Fiji REDD+ project document at this workshop lobbying for PIFON members, Tei Tei Taveuni and Tutu Rural Training Centre as probable participants in the Fiji REDD+ replanting and reforestation programs.

SESA is a critical phase of the REDD+ Programme which is facilitated by the Fiji REDD+ Secretariat, supported by the National REDD+ Steering Committee and funded by the World Bank.

Traditional farmers in the Pacific know the value of agro-forestry systems and PIFON hopes to promote these practices as a strategy to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

PIFON signs contract to support Pacific Coconut Project

The coconut is undoubtedly the most important tree in the Pacific. Over the past few decades the economic significance of this important tree to the Pacific has been subject to major international shifts. With funding from the European Union, the Pacific community has recently launched a new project entitled "*Coconut Industry Development for the Pacific Project*" or CIDP which aims to better position Pacific Island nations to take advantage of these opportunities.

PIFON is proud to announce that it has recently signed a contract to support the CIDP over the next 16 months. Through its network, PIFON will be providing a range of expertise to CIDP to carry out market studies and value chain analysis for a range of coconut products from the region. PIFON through its national farmer organisation members will help to provide a 'farmers perspective' to the development of this sector in the various countries.



Drinking coconuts on sale in Melbourne, Australia. The last few decades have seen major shifts in the world demand for coconut products and CIDP aims to help better position Pacific Island nations to take advantage of these opportunities.

Upcoming Events

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
July 11 — 13, 2017	CIDP Regional Coconut Workshop	Nadi, Fiji
Aug 01 — 02, 2017	Fiji Farmers Forum	Deuba, Fiji
October 2017 (TBA)	Pacific Week of Agriculture	Vanuatu
October 11 — 13, 2017	Pacific Women In Agriculture Conference (PWIA)	Apia, Samoa
October 16 — 20, 2017	International Global Breadfruit Summit (IGBS)	Apia, Samoa

We acknowledge the projects and our partners:



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