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PIFON supports Mucuna technical exchange

Fiji farmer organisation, Tei Tei Taveuni (TTT) is working with the Sabeto Organic Producers Association (SOPA) to establish demonstration trials using the legume Mucuna (*Mucuna pruriens*).

TTT has been using Mucuna extensively with its farmers to help improve soil fertility on the island of Taveuni. Mucuna acts as a cover crop that suppresses the growth of weeds and also traps moisture within the soil in addition to its nitrogen fixing capability.

As part of the technical exchange, TTT has provided seed and expertise to SOPA and will make regular follow up visits. SOPA will be trialing Mucuna in both papaya and breadfruit orchards and will also be following a package of practices from TTT to produce seed for further plantings.

Alex Sandys of Tei Tei Taveuni (TTT) assists Livai Tora of the Sabeto Organic Producers Association (SOPA) in planting mucuna for seed production in Nadi, Fiji.



PIFON represented at 29th International Horticultural Congress 2014

Eight members from three farmer organisations presented scientific papers at the International Horticulture Congress (IHC) 2014 which was held in Brisbane, Australia from 17—24 August. They were amongst 3000 other delegates from various parts of the world who also presented papers at this "Horticulture Olympics". The IHC is held every four years with the next one scheduled to be at Istanbul, Turkey on 12—16 August, 2018.

Visit <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/radio/program/pacific-beat/ideas-exchanged-at-horticulture-olympics/1359220> to listen to Radio Australia's interview with PIFON Manager, Kyle Stice who authored several papers including one entitled "The past, present, and future role of Pacific Island farmer organisations in empowering rural people to take advantage of economic livelihood opportunities".

Tei Tei Taveuni (TTT) opens its Resource Centre

Tei Tei Taveuni (TTT) officially opened its Resource Centre on 12th March 2014. The Centre is funded by AusAid under the Fiji Community Development Project (FCDP) and is located at Waiyevo on the island of Taveuni. The resource center is a venue for hosting farmer meetings and also features facilities whereby farmers may come and view video documentaries on farming, a small library, and even free internet access.

In response to the difficulties faced by farmers in accessing fertilizer on the island Taveuni, TTT now also offers a range of environmentally friendly fertilizers which has been sourced both locally and from overseas.



Attendees at the TTT Resource Centre official opening — Waiyevo, Taveuni, Fiji.



TTT boasts its newly developed video documentary viewing area within its Resource Centre

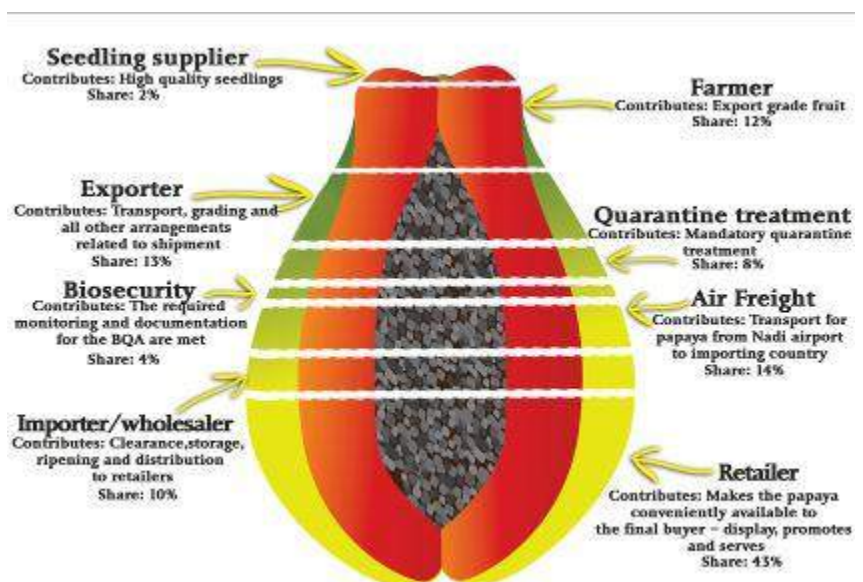
With additional funding, TTT hopes to further develop the library for both print and video media as well as become an outlet for the sale of seed and other farm inputs as required.

Pacific Agricultural Value Chain guide set to be launched

The concept of value chain analysis will hopefully be much easier to understand and apply for Pacific Island farmers and stakeholders thanks to a new guide set to be launched in November 2014.

This manual was produced by Koko Siga Pacific with funding assistance provided by The EU-ACP Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA).

The manual will be printed by the SPC EU funded Pacific Agricultural Policy Project (PAPP). PIFON will be supporting training using this manual beginning in Vanuatu and Fiji.



Official launch of PIFON's very own website

Months of brainstorming and countless visits to and fro the website developer's premises for discussions and mashing of ideas regarding it's proposed look and feel, finally paid off on July 16 2014 marking the official launch of our very own website - www.pacificfarmers.com.



The FJ \$4,000 website was developed and is being hosted by TechWorld Computers (Fiji) Ltd.

The establishment of the website aims to achieve our objective of providing our regional national farmer organisations with key contacts, information and the technical expertise required to achieve overall viability.

An e-bulletin was sent out as an official notice to our newsletter subscribers informing them of the existence of the website. We now currently boast about 150 subscribers altogether since the launch.

On this site and through our new e-bulletin system, you should expect to see the high-

lights of activities of our member farmer organisations (FOs). It is also our vision that this website will be an easy access archive of relevant information resources (publications and videos). Do have a look at the different resources that we have already loaded and the categories that they can be searched under.

We certainly need your help to continue to populate the website with publications and videos. The publications will be listed under your farmer organisation name and also by related topic(s). Do email us your publications and/or video links to info@pacificfarmers.com.

A PIFON Initiative: Simple Movie Making Technology for use by Farmer Organisations



As its new initiative, PIFON is now introducing the use of inexpensive tablets installed with a movie editing software to:

- Visually demonstrate a new technology
- Visually describe standards
- Showcase a successful farmer etc.

Hence, one does not need to be a professional film producer with expensive equipment to make a video worth watching.

Through this initiative, extension officers and even farmers can produce their own videos by shooting and editing all on one device—the tablet. These videos can then either be projected onto a wall or screen using a small projector connected to the tablet and/or even uploaded onto the video-sharing website, YouTube, for wider dissemination and public viewing.

Utilizing farmer organisations to improve the access to high quality seed for Pacific island farmers

A PIFON funded scoping study is currently being carried out to identify the constraints and opportunities to accessing reliable and desirable vegetable seed for commercial, semi-commercial and subsistence production in 5 Pacific countries (Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu).

A consultant from TerraCircle which is an international development consultancy firm working mainly in the South-West Pacific Australia region, is being employed to conduct this study and address constraints utilizing a participatory value chain mapping methodology. An indirect outcome of this may be improvements to seed supply systems within some FOs and retailers of seed resulting from their participation in the surveys and informal discussions between FOs/retailers and the TerraCircle consultant and/or local consultant within the course of the research.

Through this scoping study it is envisioned that the following information will emerge:

- The vegetable varieties currently available in each country whether open pollinated or hybrid
- The systems that are in place for seed production and distribution - who is selling seeds?
- The priority needs of farmers, if any, in relation to new varieties (what crops, what characteristics etc ?)
- The capacity in each country, if any, to introduce new seed material (quarantine etc.), to make seed more readily available (farm stores, hardware stores, farmer organizations etc.), to produce open pollinated seeds (private farmers, farmer organizations, research stations, universities etc)

PIFON represented at SIDS Conference

PIFON was represented at the United Nations Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) by its Chairman, Afamasaga Toleafoa who is also Chairman of the Samoa Farmers Association (SFA). The conference was held in Apia, Samoa earlier this month from the 1st—4th of September, 2014.

SFA was a co-organizer of the IFAD sponsored parallel event involving a series of visits to agricultural producers engaged in quality production for niche markets. The other co-organizers were FAO (Rome), Women in Business (WIBDI) for their organic coconut oil and vegetables, the World Bank funded Samoa Agriculture Competitiveness Enhancement Project (SACEP) and SFA for vegetables and Tahitian lime.

Visits to see fresh limes being packed and processed for NZ and to view quality vegetable production for the local market was organized and conducted by SFA. Commercial production of limes for exports is a new initiative piloted by SFA a few years ago.

Afamasaga made a presentation on behalf of PIFON on “Enhancing Private Public Sector partnership on food and nutrition security for Economic Development” as part of the SPC side event on building resilient Pacific Communities for Food and Nutrition Security.



KGA promotes food garden models as part of its post-flood rehabilitation efforts

Farmer organisations can play a key role in post-flood rehabilitation programmes in the Pacific. Kastom Gaden Association of the Solomon Islands, as part of its response to the food garden recovery efforts for two of its communities affected by the flash floods of April 3-5, 2014. Two model gardens were established by the Kastom Gaden Association at Papangu and New Birao, near the Ngalibiu River on the Guadalcanal Plains. These two villages were greatly affected by the flood and lost food gardens which were either washed away or covered with thick sediments by the over-flowing river.

It took KGA at least two days to conduct training for its members on various good gardening practices that they were promoting, such as, organic farming, intercropping as well as having a nutrition-balanced garden planted with crops that would provide energy, body-building and protective foods for the families. Quick growing and maturing crops such as vegetables as well as longer maturing root crops and even small livestock in the form of chicken in mobile chicken houses, were incorporated into the garden models.

Apart from training and establishing the model gardens, KGA also distributed “African or Vanuatu Yam” (*D. Rotundata*), local yams (*D. Alata*) and pana (*D. Esculenta*). It also distributed seedlings from their nursery which includes, cabbages, eggplants, watermelons, as well as tomatoes and slippery cabbages (*Abelmoschus manihot*) from Solo Environment Beautification (SEB) - another collaborating partner working to help victims of the recent flash flood.

The KGA Board acknowledges the support of the Australian government through their post-rehabilitation programme that enabled the villagers to recover from the effects of the devastating flood, and be more self-reliant in food security. The program has also helped to build the communities resilience capacity to adapt to the effects of climate change and future disasters.



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