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NEWSLETTER

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PACIFIC WEEK OF AGRICULTURE 2019 | SAMOA

Created From Nothing | Gurafesu Farm

TINOPAI FARM & MADE NATURAL IN NEW JOINT VENTURE

National Aquaculture Forum Opens in Timor Leste

INCEPTION FOR FO4ACP

IMAGE: JEAN PIERRE NIPTIK

NEWS

NATIONAL AQUACULTURE FORUM OPENS

DILI, TIMOR LESTE - Over 100 aquaculture stakeholders met last month at the second National Aquaculture Forum to address one question: Can Aquaculture Help Alleviate Poverty and Malnutrition?

The discussion which supports the Timor-Leste National Aquaculture Development Strategy (2012-2030) focused on the development and growth of the aquaculture sector in strengthening the country's food and nutrition security.

With aims to increase fish production from current levels of 150-200 tonnes a year to 12 000 tonnes per year by 2030, Dr. Jharendu Pant of WorldFish says they aim to reduce malnutrition by increasing fish consumption from 6.1kg to 15kg person/year over time.

"About 100 tonnes of Nile tilapia (mainly the GIFT strain) are currently produced."

"The next most popular species is common carp, while a small number of farmers are producing milkfish, shrimp and catfish. In the future tilapia is likely to contribute over two thirds of total aquaculture production," he said.

In his report for FishSite, Rob Fletcher said the forum provided a platform for stakeholders to share research and development experiences and identify opportunities for fostering partnerships in aquaculture development in Timor-Leste.

Joáquim José Gusmão dos Reis Martins, Timor-Leste's Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, in his opening remarks said developing aquaculture is a key priority for the government of Timor-Leste.

"Increasing the production of fish will ensure that rural households have greater access to an affordable, nutritious source of animal protein and have an alternative livelihood option."

The government is committed to fostering strong partnerships among aquaculture stakeholders to realise its development targets," he said.

Since 2014, the Partnership for Aquaculture Development in Timor-Leste project has supported the Timor-Leste Government to develop aquaculture with a holistic approach.

Philip Hewitt, New Zealand's Ambassador to Timor-Leste said the development of seed and feed systems with suitable farmer training method and building the capacity of MAF and other partners made this possible.

"These efforts laid the foundation for the scaling out of the approach and public and private sector partners have key complementary roles in achieving this."

The director general of WorldFish, Dr. Gareth Johnstone said that Fish is essential to Timor-Leste's development strategy and that the country had made huge strides in boosting its aquaculture sector in recent years.

"The National Aquaculture Forum is a great opportunity to share the successes and lessons learned so far, and strengthen the partnerships necessary to ensure sustainable aquaculture fulfils its potential to improve food and nutrition across the country."

The forum was organised by the Partnership for Aquaculture Development in Timor-Leste (PADTL) project, funded by New Zealand Aid and managed by the CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (FISH) led by WorldFish in partnership with the Timor-Leste Government.

The forum brought together over 100 participants from diverse backgrounds, including government, trade and investment, commercial banks, academics, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, development agencies, farmers and fishers.

The forum will be held annually from 2020 and follows on from the country's inaugural aquaculture event in 2017.



*Gurafesu Farm are the organic producers of cabbage, eggplant, kumara, cassava and bananas
Image: Kastom Gaden Association*

HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS - Located on the outskirts of Honiara, Gurafesu Farm is managed by a little over 20 youths of the Molotabi community in the Malaita Province.

What makes this farm special is that it was created from nothing and in response to the growing rates of unemployment in the Solomon Islands.

Project Coordinator Tom Daoni says Gurafesu Farm are today the organic producers and suppliers of cabbage, eggplant, kumara, cassava and bananas. The problem he adds, is meeting the demands in the market place which present an interesting set of challenges for the youths.

“Our location is a little tricky because we sit in between the Valley of April and Lau, so factors like flooding and infrastructure such as proper roads sometimes get in the way of having our produce delivered from the farm to the market place.”

Previously occupied by the Livestock Development Authority (LDA) to raise cattle, Gurafesu Farm have recently begun a working collaboration with Kastom Gaden Association to help address their challenges.

Kastom Gaden Association’s Pitakia Tikai says farms like Gurafesu not only help resolve urban drift youth unemployment but also retain if not increase traditional knowledge and skills in farming.

Following a site visit in July, Kastom Gaden Association will assist in trainings for Gurafesu Farm including farm management, farmer organisations, post-harvest management and value-adding.

“The youths are keeping our values alive and they are making the necessary efforts to secure the land title which will help them for the future.”

“Our role at Kastom Gaden Association is simply providing practical assistance and technical support where we can, he said.

Project Coordinator of Gurafesu Farm, Tom Daoni welcomed the support of Kastom Gaden Association and said they looked forward to working together.



*Kimi Afeaki (kneeling) announced in July the joint venture between Tinopai Farm and MadeNatural
Image: Tinopai Farm*

NUKU'ALOFA, TONGA - Established in 1993 by Pousima Afeaki, Tinopai Farm are the producers and exporters of coconut products.

The family owned operation celebrated a milestone achievement when they announced in July their new joint venture with MadeNatural.

Kimi Afeaki said it was a strategic move that aims to strengthen the farm's ability to export a wider range of locally sourced products.

"We've been in this business for over 20 years and the challenge for us was in finding steady markets overseas."

"Our research indicated that a growing Asian, African and Pacific Islander population in Australia are currently driving the demand for products from the Pacific and its' been our doorway," he said.

While plans for fresh exports will continue, Tinopai Farm will push for a significant increase of their frozen processing products in the next few years for both local and export markets.

"Fresh exports are extremely risky and bio-security has proven to be and will remain a barrier to exports."

"While the cost has been significantly high, expanding into frozen processing has increased our purchasing capability of a wider range of products with our suppliers," he said.

The farm now exports frozen taro, cassava, coconut flesh and coconut water. Currently, the farm processes coconut cream for the local market with plans to produce more products.

Kimi Afeaki said the next step for the farm lies in staying alive.

“The impacts of Cyclone Gita had us crawling on all fours, stripping the supply of coconuts from the mainland of Tongatapu.”

“We’re extremely relieved that we’ve maintained our links to the isolated islands of Ha’apai because even though the costs are relatively higher, it’s the suppliers in the isolated islands who have kept us alive.”

He added Tinopai Farm is looking to create more income opportunities for smallholder farmers with plans to expand their existing line of coconut based products.

INCEPTION FOR FO4ACP



The Pan African Farmers Organisation (PAFO) 4th General Assembly

KIGALI, RWANDA - PIFON attended for the first time the Pan African Farmers Organisation (PAFO) 4th General Assembly as it develops its South-South relationships.

PAFO represents 40 African countries, 5 Regional Farmer Organisation networks and for the first time played host to a representative from the Pacific.

PIFON’s Lavinia Kaumaitotoya said the inception will see Pacific farmers working with farmers in Africa and the Caribbean under an ACP/EU funded IFAD programme.

“We presented the Pacific perspective and the way we operate at PIFON in the way share technical information and alot of goodwill which they found refreshing because what the Pacific offers is complementary to their activities and project.”

TILAPIA FARMERS HAVE THEIR SAY



The 1 day workshop saw tilapia farmers from around Fiji elect their very first executive committee

NADI, FIJI - PIFON's signature Farmer to Farmer (F2F) Learnings opened its first '*Tilapia Farmers Having Their Say*' workshop in July at the South Sea Orchids.

Eighteen Tilapia Farmers from Viti Levu and Vanua Levu met to discuss the formation of a farmers association and an industry plan for further development with the assistance of the Ministry of Fisheries and the Pacific Community (formerly known as South Pacific Community).

Fiji's Ministry of Fisheries Acting Principal Fisheries Officer Aquaculture, Jone Varawa said in the last inventory undertaken (2009) by the ministry, there was 425 tilapia farmers in Fiji and the government was looking to encourage tilapia farming to help address food security concerns.

"Our demand for fish is about 23kg per person in a year and because of the current seasonal ban for reef fish like coral trout and grouper, tilapia is very important to cater for the demand during this ban period."

He added Fiji has great potential for tilapia farming with its natural resources and the existing market opportunity.

Tilapia Farmer, Arun-lata Ram shared her concerns on the cost of tilapia feed which she said continually increased.

"It will be the most expensive cost for anyone coming into this area of farming, it keeps increasing."

"The feed is imported from Australia and New Zealand which is made of wheat, rice bran and soya bean including other protein and minerals which isn't available locally."

Penina Ravunamoce, an aquaculture intern of the Pacific Community said the challenge for those starting up in tilapia farming was the availability of tilapia fingerlings.

"The supply is quite low and we're also seeing the cost of feed continually fluctuating which poses a problem for new incoming tilapia farmers."

She also highlighted the need for tilapia farmers to start exploring local alternatives like tapioca or copra for tilapia feed.

The workshop also saw farmers new to tilapia farming join the one day meet including taro farmer, Amelia Vatukatakata.

“My husband and I applied to get a pond and we were one of the 23 farmers selected by the Ministry of Fisheries to be part of a project.”

“We’ve only been in this area of farming for a month and a half now, and we’re enjoying the pace which is relaxed compared to taro farming which can be labor intensive.”

She added the changing temperatures between day and night in Tavua could be a challenge for the farm and needed to be controlled.

The 1 day workshop also saw the formation of a farmers association, Tilapia Fiji.

Newly elected President, Katarina Baleisuva says she looks forward to working together with her committee in the next three years.

“This is a very big achievement for tilapia farming and having worked in the industry for six years, I’m very familiar with the issues involved with our farmers, my committee will be working together in the best interests of our members.”

PIFON’s project partner, Pacific Agribusiness Research in Development Initiative (PARDI), played an instrumental role in the introduction of the workshop.

Research Scientist, Salote Waqairatu said it was the first for Aquaculture to feature in the activities for PIFON.

“It’s been enjoyable to coordinate the arrival of lead farmers from various clusters across Fiji including Nadi, Labasa, Rakiraki, Tailevu, Ba, Tavua and Nadroga.”

Tilapia Fiji will meet for their second AGM in July 2020.

POTATO FARMERS PARTNER WITH GOVERNMENT

TANNA, VANUATU — (RNZ) Thirty Vanuatu farmers have signed a partnership with the government to grow potatoes on Tanna Island.

The Department of Agriculture has commissioned them to concentrate on farming potatoes, distributing six tons of potato seeds for use there.

Vanuatu’s Daily Post newspaper reports that Tanna is the main supplier of potatoes in the country.

Potatoes and English cabbage were among the crops introduced by French farmers during the colonial era to communities on the volcanic island, which has rich highly fertile soils.

Potatoes have since been introduced to other islands including Epi, Efate, Malekula and Santo with the government’s aim to increase the farming of different crops to achieve food security.

COUNTRY VALIDATION FOR FO4ACP

Noumea, New Caledonia — “The farms in Noumea are stunning.”

PIFON’s Lavinia Kaumaitotoya shares her first impressions of the farm tours in New Caledonia which included a Dragon Fruit orchard.

She added there is an opportunity for a learning exchange with members of PIFON around the region in tree crop and beef livestock.

Kaumaitotoya visited Chambre d’ Agriculture de Nouvelle-Calédonie in August for country validation in their participation for FO4ACP (Farmer Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) while also attending to a steering committee meeting for regional chambers of agriculture.



By Daniel C. Wahl

Sustainability alone is not an adequate goal.

The word sustainability itself is inadequate, as it does not tell us what we are actually trying to sustain.

In 2005, after spending two years working on my doctoral thesis on design for sustainability, I began to realize that what we are actually trying to sustain is the underlying pattern of health, resilience and adaptability that maintain this planet in a condition where life as a whole can flourish.

Design for sustainability is, ultimately, design for human and planetary health (Wahl, 2006b).

A regenerative human culture is healthy, resilient and adaptable; it cares for the planet and it cares for life in the awareness that this is the most effective way to create a thriving future for all of humanity.

The concept of resilience is closely related to health, as it describes the ability to recover basic vital functions and bounce back from any kind of temporary breakdown or crisis.

When we aim for sustainability from a systemic perspective, we are trying to sustain the pattern that connects and strengthens the whole system.

Sustainability is first and foremost about systemic health and resilience at different scales, from local, to regional and global.

Complexity science can teach us that as participants in a complex dynamic eco- psycho-social system that is subject to certain biophysical limits, our goal has to be appropriate participation, not prediction and control (Goodwin, 1999a).

The best way to learn how to participate appropriately is to pay more attention to systemic relationships and interactions, to aim to support the resilience and health of the whole system, to foster diversity and redundancies at multiple scales, and to facilitate positive emergence through paying attention to the quality of connections and information flows in the system.

Using the Precautionary Principle

One proposal for guiding wise action in the face of dynamic complexity and 'not knowing' is to apply the Precautionary Principle as a framework that aims to avoid, as far as possible, actions that will negatively impact on environmental and human health in the future.

From the United Nation's 'World Charter for Nature' in 1982, to the Montreal Protocol on Health in 1987, to the Rio Declaration in 1992, the Kyoto Protocol, and Rio+20 in 2012, we have committed to applying the Precautionary Principle over and over again.

The Wingspread Consensus Statement on the Precautionary Principle states: "When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically" (Wingspread Statement, 1998).

The principle puts the burden of proof that a certain action is not harmful on those proposing and taking the action, yet general practice continues to allow all actions that have not (yet!) been proven to have potentially harmful effects to go ahead unscrutinized. In a nutshell, the Precautionary Principle can be summarized as follows: practice precaution in the face of uncertainty.

This is not what we are doing.

While high-level UN groups and many national governments have repeatedly considered the Precautionary Principle as a wise way to guide actions, day-to-day practice shows that it is very hard to implement, as there will always be some degree of uncertainty.

The Precautionary Principle could also potentially stop sustainable innovation and block potentially highly beneficial new technologies on the basis that it cannot be proven with certainty that these technologies will not result in unexpected future side-effects that could be detrimental to human or environmental health.

Why not challenge designers, technologists, policy-makers, and planning professionals to evaluate their proposed actions on their positive, life-sustaining, restorative and regenerative potential?

Why not limit the scale of implementation of any innovation to local and regional levels until proof of its positive impact is unequivocally demonstrated?

Aiming to design for systemic health may not save us from unexpected side-effects and uncertainty, but it offers a trial and error path towards a regenerative culture. We urgently need a Hippocratic Oath for design, technology and planning: do no harm!

To make this ethical imperative operational we need a salutogenic (health generating) intention behind all design, technology and planning: We need to design for human, ecosystems and planetary health.

This way we can move more swiftly from the unsustainable 'business as usual' to restorative and regenerative innovations that will support the transition towards a regenerative culture.

Let us ask ourselves: **How do we create design, technology, planning and policy decisions that positively support human, community and environmental health?**

We need to respond to the fact that human activity over the last centuries and millennia has done damage to healthy ecosystems functioning.

Resource availability is declining globally, while demand is rising as the human population continues to expand and we continue to erode ecosystems functions through irresponsible design and lifestyles of unbridled consumption.

If we meet the challenge of decreasing demand and consumption globally while replenishing resources through regenerative design and technology, we have a chance of making it through the eye of the needle and creating a regenerative human civilization.

This shift will entail a transformation of the material resource basis of our civilization, away from fossil resources and towards renewably regenerated biological resources, along with a radical increase in resource productivity and recycling.

Bill Reed has mapped out some of the essential shifts that will be needed to create a truly regenerative culture.

Reed named 'whole-systems thinking' and 'living-systems thinking' as the foundations of the shift in mental model that we need to create a regenerative culture.

As Bill Reed puts it: "Sustainability is a progression towards a functional awareness that all things are connected; that the systems of commerce, building, society, geology, and nature are really one system of integrated relationships; that these systems are co-participants in the evolution of life" (2007).

Once we make this shift in perspective we can understand life as "a whole process of continuous evolution towards richer, more diverse, and mutually beneficial relationships".

Creating regenerative systems is not simply a technical, economic, ecological or social shift: it has to go hand-in-hand with an underlying shift in the way we think about ourselves, our relationships with each other and with life as a whole.

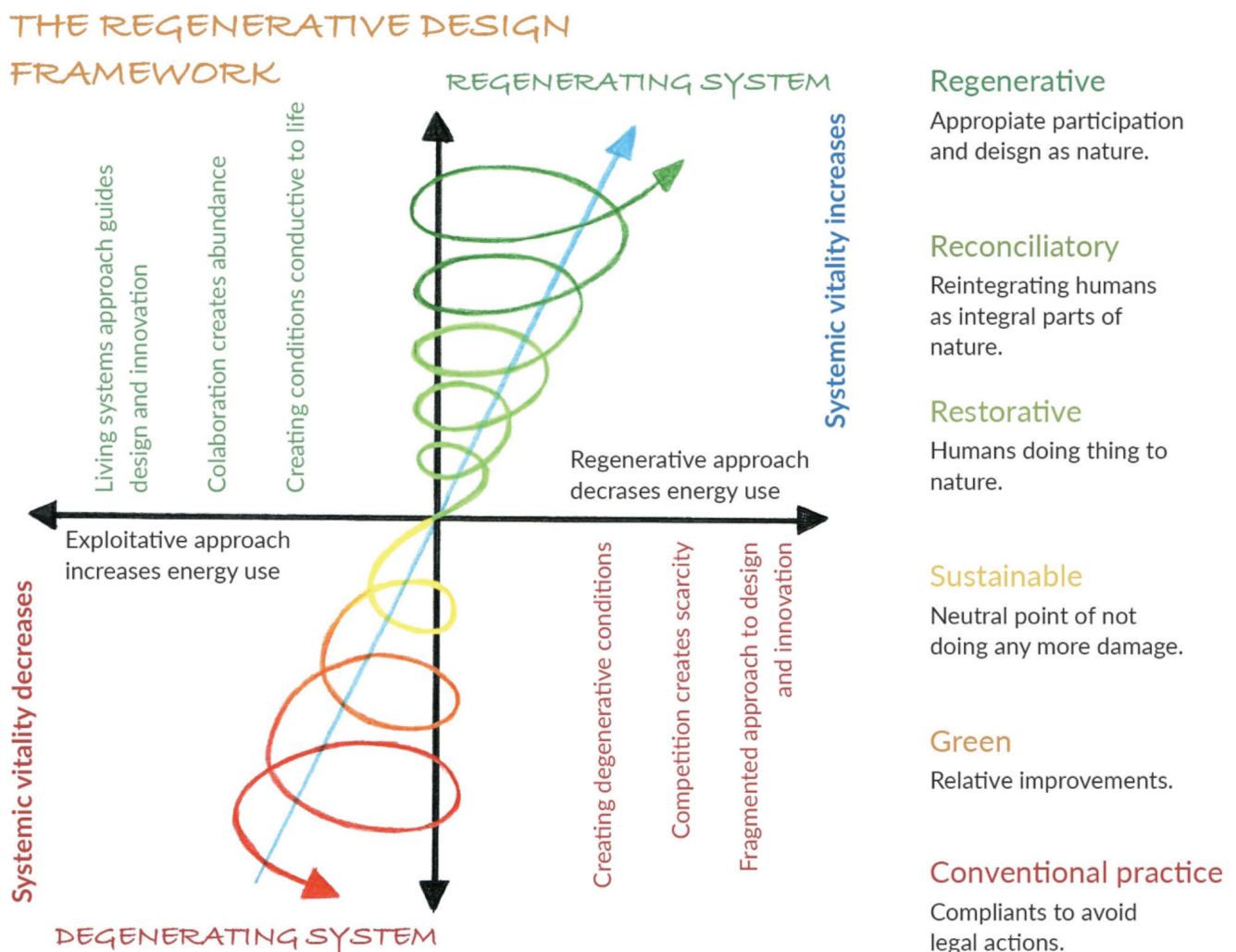
Figure 1 shows the different shifts in perspective as we move from 'business as usual' to creating a regenerative culture.

The aim of creating regenerative cultures transcends and includes sustainability.

Restorative design aims to restore healthy self-regulation to local ecosystems, and reconciliatory design takes the additional step of making explicit humanity's participatory involvement in life's processes and the unity of nature and culture.

Regenerative design creates regenerative cultures capable of continuous learning and transformation in response to, and anticipation of, inevitable change.

Regenerative cultures safeguard and grow biocultural abundance for future generations of humanity and for life as a whole.



Source: Designing Regenerative Cultures, 2016 - www.danlechristianwahl.com; Graphics: www.flavlagarglulo.com

The 'story of separation' is reaching the limits of its usefulness and the negative effects of the associated worldview and resulting behaviour are beginning to impact on life as a whole.

By having become a threat to planetary health we are learning to rediscover our intimate relationship with all of life.

Bill Reed's vision of regenerative design for systemic health is in line with the pioneering work of people like Patrick Geddes, Aldo Leopold, Lewis Mumford, Buckminster Fuller, Ian McHarg, E.F. Schumacher, John Todd, John Tillman Lyle, David Orr, Bill Mollison, David Holmgren, and many others who have explored design in the context of the health of the whole system.

A new cultural narrative is emerging, capable of birthing and informing a truly regenerative human culture.

We do not yet know all the details of how exactly this culture will manifest, nor do we know all the details of how we might get from the current 'world in crisis' situation to that thriving future of a regenerative culture.

Yet aspects of this future are already with us.

In using the language of 'old story' and 'new story' we are in danger of thinking of this cultural transformation as a replacement of the old story by a new story.

Such separation into dualistic opposites is in itself part of the 'separation narrative' of the 'old story'.

The 'new story' is not a complete negation of the currently dominant worldview.

It includes this perspective but stops regarding it as the only perspective, opening up to the validity and necessity of multiple ways of knowing.

Embracing uncertainty and ambiguity makes us value multiple perspectives on our appropriate participation in complexity.

These are perspectives that give value and validity not only to the 'old story' of separation, but also to the 'ancient story' of unity with the Earth and the cosmos.

These are perspectives that may help us find a regenerative way of being human in deep intimacy, reciprocity and communion with life as a whole by becoming conscious co-creators of humanity's 'new story'.

Our impatience and urgency to jump to answers, solutions and conclusions too quickly is understandable in the face of increasing individual, collective, social, cultural and ecological suffering, but this tendency to favour answers rather than to deepen into the questions is in itself part of the old story of separation.

The art of transformative cultural innovation is to a large extent about making our peace with 'not knowing' and living into the questions more deeply, making sure we are asking the right questions, paying attention to our relationships and how we all bring forth a world not just through what we are doing, but through the quality of our being.

A regenerative culture will emerge out of finding and living new ways of relating to self, community and to life as a whole. At the core of creating regenerative cultures is an invitation to live the questions together.

[This is an excerpt of a subchapter from *Designing Regenerative Cultures*, published by Triarchy Press, 2016.]



#PWA20



019SAMOA





By Josefa Kotobalavu (Mai TV, Fiji)

Pacific islands must work to encourage young people to change their eating habits to follow a healthier diet.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community told journalists from the region currently gathered in Samoa to drive this point home when reporting on agriculture.

The organizations Manager Operations, Performance and Systems Karen Mapusua said it was about changing taste.

She spoke yesterday at a Media Masterclass run by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in Apia, Samoa.

Mapusua said community plays a crucial role to help future generation choose a healthier lifestyle.

"Now days it very hard to change the eating habit of someone at my age but if you get to younger children and change the those taste from younger age then we have a hope."

"There are couple of things we can do obviously by trying to get our family together include more local food in the daily diet. It can help to have garden at home so that it easy just to pull out things from the garden and added in for what has been cooking,"she said.

Mapusua added that older generation needed to put in more effort to providing more local food for its youth.

The media masterclass, funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) took place ahead of the Pacific week of Agriculture which officially opened today.

Journalists from Tuvalu, Samoa, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga met in Samoa ahead of the Pacific Week of Agriculture in an initiative called Celebrating Agriculture in the News — or CAN.

CAN sought stories of agriculture from emerging journalists and communications professionals in an effort to create more media coverage of the Pacific's agricultural issues.

Mapusua reminded the media that communicating healthy messages was important.

"We need to start talking about food in school by having school garden and exposing little kids to new taste and new ideas right from their first day of school."

"We are very price sensitive consumer in the Pacific."

“We can choose rice over taro if it is cheap and that’s are big issue when it comes to food because what we eat impact on our health in a big way.”

“We have a sort of cultural struggle about still having that idea for higher values when actually our own fruits are so rich and healthy. We have a lot to offer to the rest of the world in terms of our local food, said Mapusua.”

The journalists who are part of CAN will be part of a joint pacific effort to produce agricultural research stories which are both interesting and informative.

CELEBRATING LOCAL PRODUCE & EMBRACING CULTURE



The Chefs & Mamas Cook Off encouraged the use of fresh produce from around Samoa

By Illeyah Draunidalo (Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network)

Restaurant menus in Samoa are getting a boost.

Jerry Brunt of the Orator Hotel says the culinary scene is changing as stakeholders attempt to capture local produce a growing share of the domestic market.

“We’re strong advocates of using local produce in our kitchen and we want a good return for Samoan farmers.”

“My wife Charlotte and I are heavily involved in agriculture and work closely with the Samoa Farmers Association,” he said.

Jerry and Charlotte Brunt are the owners of the Orator Hotel and recently hosted the Side Event celebrating Women in Agriculture & Nutrition: Flowers, Food & Art at the second Pacific Week of Agriculture in Apia.

“We’re also in the tourism industry and we can see agritourism as a real benefit to farmers, we want to see it grow.”

The Government of Samoa is also working with farmers to create awareness in the origins of food.

“Our food expresses our intimate relationship with the land, the sea and our ancestors,” said Prime Minister Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi.

A recipe book was produced at his request, featuring healthy Samoan meals with ingredients “from the heart of Polynesia”.

Industry leaders want farmers, chefs and governments to work together as it would enhance much needed cooperation in Pacific island nations.

“There needs to be a line of communication adopted in the Pacific among the key players, learning how the other works, understanding how local produce can be used in the menu while also addressing a consistent supply of produce,” said Chef Lance Seeto.

“Food connects people across time, cultures and generations. How else do we differentiate ourselves from the rest of the world! We’ve got to embrace our environment and culture into our cuisines.”

The Side Event was presented by PIFON and PARDI 2 together with the support of the Samoa Farmers Association, Orator Hotel, Samoa Tourism Authority and South Pacific Tourism Organisation. *

SAMOA AIRWAYS' NEW 'FARM TO PLANE' MENU TO SHOWCASE MORE LOCAL PRODUCE



Samoa Airways will serve an exciting 'farm to plane' menu starting next month following a review of the inflight product service out of Samoa. Image: Samoa Airways

By Elizabeth Ah-Hi (Freelance Journalist)

Samoa Airways is rolling out a new 'farm to plane' menu showcasing more local produce and innovative Samoan cuisine.

The overhaul of the flight menu is part of an ongoing process in reviewing the entire inflight product service out of Samoa.

It is one of many changes that Samoa Airways General Manager Commercial Robert Rounds has initiated to meet evolving and changing customer expectations in a tough aviation market.

“This airline is about people and we want to ensure that our valued passengers receive a positive and authentic Samoan experience on board Samoa Airways.” Rounds said.

“We’ve asked for a menu that reflects the vibrancy of Samoa’s culinary heritage and abundance of clean fresh food available locally. We also want to support our local economy of food growers and encourage healthy eating.”

Rounds added, “While the menu has been upgraded, changing the menu to include more local produce has actually reduced catering costs by 21%, which makes good business sense.”

Inflight meals are serviced by Aggie Greys In-flight Catering. Managing Director, Tanya Grey, welcomed the challenge of creating a menu that called for innovation and emphasis on local ingredients whilst catering to international palates — which is why they brought in Thai kitchen consultant Pim Udomdee to help with the Asian inspired dishes.

According to Samoa Airways, customers will notice “new flavours and more variety” in the new menu, which is 80% gluten free and offers 70% more locally grown meats and produce.

New snack replacements on board include a lighter take on local favourites such as ‘masi popo’ (coconut crackers) and ‘fa’apapa’ (coconut scones).

Business class customers will enjoy dishes like roast beef and vegetables with pumpkin hash or luau and breadfruit coconut curry with rice for a vegetarian option.

The new desserts include a remake of saigo pudding with papaya custard and tropical fruit salad.

The economy class menu has also been given a makeover with the addition of luau rice risotto and spicy chicken stir-fry for a dinner option. Breakfast will include crepes with papaya sauce and tropical fruits.

Currently, only the product service out of Apia has been modified with meals out of Australia and New Zealand pending a review over the next few months.

The menu is expected to launch November 1, 2019.

USE TECHNICAL RESEARCH SAYS DR. AUDREY



*Dr. Audrey of SPC says technical research can help improve food and nutrition security in the Pacific
Image: Jean Pierre Niptick*

By Iliesa Tora (Nuku'alofa Times)

Use technical research to help build resilience and improve food and nutrition security in the Pacific.

Speaking at the 6th Regional Meeting of Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (HOAFS) at the TATTE Conference Centre, Dr Audrey said the SPC has been able to help in these areas, through its Land Resources Division (LRD).

“I am proud to say that with your support, SPC has been able to gear up to respond to the call for more diverse and resilient climate smart production systems,” she said.

“I would like to point out here that, over the years, LRD has built up core competencies in thematic areas that are unique in the Pacific — even at global level — for example the work on genetic resources, Participatory Guarantee Systems for organic certification, the ground-breaking soils work on atolls with our esteemed partners.”

“SPC is proud that these services are available to the region.”

“I call on you to tap into these and other potentials for building resilience and improving the food and nutrition security and that you explore pathways to overcome some of the most pressing challenges and establish long term integrated impacts on your respective Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

“To do so we need technical and financial support and more importantly we need to work together.”

Dr Audrey said the SPC’s genetic resources centre — CePaCT has assisted the region in adapting better to climate change.

And its ‘Seeds for Life’ program is helping increase the opportunities for countries to have access to healthy seed.

She said the key threats to the Pacific Community are climate change; erosion of food systems and their consequent public health implications; the increased incidences of pests and diseases and continued pervasive barriers to trade — some of them climate change related — others due to the context we operate in.

She highlighted the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Guam biotype problem.

“We have assisted national efforts in both the Solomon Islands and in Vanuatu to curb the spread of this pest,” she said.

“We also worked with our partners in establishing a regional strategic plan to guide the research agenda, increasing training to national biosecurity services, developing guidelines for phytosanitary measures, and providing extensive coordination and technical assistance leveraging financial support for a Pan-Pacific coordinated response to the plight of the CRB.”

She added that the LRD Division has been working with the region, at both national and regional levels to strengthen biosecurity systems and preparing for biosecurity threats that would affect trade relationships in the region.

“Over the last two years we have seen an increasing interest and budding partnerships in building capacities on biosecurity and fundamental sanitary and phyto-sanitary systems and standards that are required for effective trade,” she said.

“The above are just a few examples of how LRD as your catalyst can assist you both at regional and country level not only in providing technical — research for development services but also to address country specific needs on a more bilateral basis.”

Dr Audrey said the SPC is committed to working in partnership with stakeholders and called on the region to work together as a united group.

“The cornerstone of the Pacific Community is the recognition that we are stronger with One Voice, and that we can be more efficient and effective when we choose to work together to achieve regional outcomes which will benefit us all,” she said.

She pointed to the ongoing climate negotiations and the recently completed Climate Action Summit in New York as important examples “of our strength as a united region in tackling the critical issues”.

“I invite you to actively work with us, steering and regularly conferring, so that we strengthen partnerships and multi-lateral initiatives to maximise the benefits of our many programmes and projects for the benefit of all of our citizens,” she added.

The program focused on discussing what has happened since the Vanuatu meeting two years ago and what needs to be taken on board in the next two years.

CALL FOR GENDER BALANCE

By Iliesa Tora (Nuku’alofa Times)

Women’s unpaid work in the food and agriculture sector is being recognised, Samoa’s Deputy Prime Minister has told a regional meet here in Apia.

But there is still much to be done in other areas to ensure gender equality across the board, she added.



Samoa's Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Fiame Naomi Mata'fa says much of the unpaid work women do involves the production of food for their families Image: Jean Pierre Niptick

Hon Fiame Naomi Mata'fa made the comments while launching 'Reports of the Country Gender Assessments in Agriculture and Rural Sectors (CGA-ARS)' at the TATTE Convention Centre on Tuesday night.

"I want to begin by reflecting on the broader status of gender equality in our region, in order to provide some context leading to the discussion on women's role in agriculture," she told local and regional women in agriculture at the event.

"This year marks 25 years since the Pacific region adopted the Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality in preparation for the Beijing Conference in 1995 which saw the adoption of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Next year is the 25th Anniversary of this global commitment"

"Since the adoption of these instruments, we have made some progress on the advancement of women and gender equality, and there is consensus that sustainable development won't be achieved if half the population — girls and women — are not considered or excluded."

"In the area of women's economic empowerment, there are improvements in women's access to financial services, including credit and savings, especially for women in rural areas; and there is also increased recognition of the value of women's unpaid work and its significance.

Much of this unpaid work involves the production and preparation of food for their families."

Hon Mata'fa said that Pacific women play a leading role in agricultural production "whether it might be subsistence farming to feed their families or growing cash crops to earn an income; and women's labour in agriculture is a crucial part of food production and consumption in our communities".

A literature review undertaken in 2012 on Rural Pacific Island Women and Agriculture showed that the ways in which Pacific women participate in agriculture vary by island and local cultural norms.

"Yet women's critical contributions in planting, tending, and harvesting crops and edible marine life sustain the majority of families throughout the region," she said.

Despite these findings about women's prominent role in agriculture, she said, research also indicates that women continue to be constrained by unequal access to land; limited access to training, credit, and job opportunities compared with their male counterparts, as well as an unequal time burden in which women are expected to engage in agriculture on top of their normal household responsibilities.

The event came at the end of the first day of the meeting of the Heads of Agriculture and Forestry in the region.

Hon Mata'fa said there are now more girls than boys completing senior secondary school in some regional countries and there have also been some gender specific interventions to support education and learning.

"For example, gender policies in ministries of education, and the integration of human rights in the school curriculum," she said.

"In the health sector, we have seen some progress in access to skilled medical personnel including birth attendants and more broadly, access to health facilities.

For gender based violence, we are seeing more support for survivors of violence, although more help and services are needed; and there is now a wider range of programs for young women's empowerment.

"At the policy level, 14 of our countries and territories now have a national gender policies, although one thing that is common across these policies is they are all under resourced."

She said there is concern that women representation in Parliament across the Pacific is the lowest, at 18 percent of total representation.

The week-long Agriculture Week has also taken in the 2019 Samoa Agriculture and Fisheries Show.

MAKE FLOWERS A COMMODITY CROP



Floriculture is a female dominated industry in the Pacific that has seen women make contributions towards the livelihoods of their families

By Illeyah Draunidalo (Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network)

In Fiji alone the floriculture industry is worth \$1.6million, so why is the industry's future not on the agenda at the Pacific Week of Agriculture (PWA)?

Samoa flower grower, Leaupepe Lasa Aiono says governments need to pull their weight.

"We've had a flower association since 1994 and we have close to 50 floriculturists here in Samoa but we don't know which ministry we are under."

"Is it MAF? Visitors Bureau? Nothing on flowers and I always say, hey how about flowers?" she said.

"I don't want to disclose the figures made from flowers but let me tell you, it's enough to put the food on the table, pay for holidays and give your kids a good life and education."

“Some of the women that started off with us at the association are today the owners of restaurants and real estates,” she said.

“In Samoa we like to see nice things and so everybody buys flowers.”

“The minister should have a flowers and pot plants, the CEO should have a flower arrangement, visit any of these offices and it’s really good for us here because you don’t have to beg for them to buy it, they want it!”

“It’s a shame that flower is not a commodity in Samoa because the future will be exports and already we know that bio security issues will hold us back, it’s a problem government needs to resolve.”

The floriculture industry didn’t make it to the main discussion stage at PWA.

It was relegated to a Side Event, Women in Agriculture: Flowers, Food and Art presented by Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) and the Pacific Agribusiness Research in Development Initiative (PARDI 2).

Samoa’s Minister for Agriculture Afioga Lopaoa Natanielu Mua told women flower growers that “women and empowerment in the Pacific always makes good policy given the leading role they have in all aspects of agricultural production and marketing.”

“Empowerment of farmers today, is best achieved when they are able to conduct their farm operations in an environment that is conducive and supportive of farming as business,” he said.

Industry leaders want flowers to be classified a commodity crop, as it would attract much needed research and marketing funding.

“Flowers can easily contribute at a larger scale particularly with exports around the Pacific,” said PIFON’s Anare Lewenavanua

“At our recent Farmers Having Their Say Workshop for Fiji Farmers in Nadi, we had farmers earning \$300 on average per week which is more than what some of those sitting in offices earn in a year.”

“Our leaders need to seriously consider the benefits and opportunities of floriculture, to take it forward as well as look at policies and procedures that are currently in place, or not, to truly make it work.”

Leaapepe Lasa Aiono dreams of exporting flowers but that’s unlikely until this female dominated industry is taken seriously.

“If flowers became a commodity it would be great to have somebody to come in for the Pacific and bring us together, we will be stronger and perhaps PIFON needs to do this.”

WOMEN ARE UNDER-REPRESENTED

By Iliesa Tora (Nuku’alofa Times)

Tonga is the latest country in the region to appoint women MPs, with two named in the new Cabinet of Prime Minister Dr Pohiva Tu’ionetoa.

Outgoing Minister of Agriculture, Hon Losaline Ma’asi was the lone women MP in the previous government of the late Prime Minister, Hon Akilisi Pohiva.

Hon Ma’asi is attending the Pacific Week of Agriculture.

Hon Mata’fa said the economic empowerment of women is severely constrained by compounding and intersecting barriers including discriminatory policies and legislation, as well as access to economic opportunities and decision making.

“Gender inequality in the region is also manifested in the high prevalence rates of violence against women — with women in some Pacific Island Countries (PICs) experiencing the highest rates of intimate partner violence in the world,” she said.

“That more broadly describes where we are in terms of some advances and challenges for gender equality in our region.”

“The data shows that while access to education has improved, a high proportion of our young people are unemployed, and young men in particular do not see the primary sector as a viable small business or career opportunity; and view it as a pale choice in comparison to their aspirations of getting a well-paid ‘white collar’ office job. “

“How do we turn this around?”

The Country Gender Assessments of Agriculture and the Rural Sectors (CGA-ARS) was conducted in five Pacific countries — Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

The study was led by the Pacific Community — SPC, in collaboration with the Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The studies sought to improve understanding of gender perspectives of agriculture and rural sectors in order to develop effective strategies to support food security for Pacific people.

The theme for the Pacific Week of Agriculture is “Enhanced Partnerships for Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry Systems in the Pacific”.

Hon Mata’fe said that from a gender perspective, the increasing global concerns and our own challenges at regional and national level for food security is becoming more urgent due to the impacts of climate change.

“Women are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and because of that, it is important for us to assess the gendered aspects of agriculture and rural life on an ongoing basis as part of our work, within the spirit of durable and sustainable partnerships applied in the context of the SAMOA Pathway, in line with the theme for the Pacific Week of Agriculture,” she said.

“As heads of agriculture, we need to make sure the assessments support the goals and objectives in our gender and agriculture strategies, to support women’s roles in agriculture; and to eliminate barriers that hinder their potential and maximise our capacity as a collective to promote sustainable agriculture and food security.

“One thing that we know from experience is, advancing our gender outcomes as a region and as national governments is not the job of one organisation or Ministry or sector. It is the collective responsibility of all across Government and at all levels, with partnerships with the private sector and civil society organisations.”

She said gender equality is not just about women; it is about men and women and boys and girls of all diversities. The launch of these gender assessments in agriculture reflects a strong recognition of the need to apply a gender lens to the work being done.

Findings will help in formulating concrete policies and action to advance the role of women in agriculture.

Hon Mata’fa said there is clear evidence that food and nutrition security and other benefits such as poverty reduction and increased socio-economic wellbeing are within reach when there is gender balance to ensure the whole population is engaged in the primary sector.

“We need to increase our focus and efforts to ensure that women are part of the solution because unlocking women’s power is a powerful catalyst for sustainable economic growth; and in our Pacific region the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector is the foundation of our economies; not only in the direct value of food and other commodities produced, exported and so on but indirectly in the local food and delicacies that visitors and tourists consume and enjoy, as well as the handcraft products they purchase and so on,” she added.

The Pacific Week of Agriculture will end on Friday with the Regional Ministers of Agriculture meeting.

MEET SAMOA'S TOP TARO GROWER, A WEATHERMAN TURNED FARMER



Sala Sagato Tuiafiso is developing 185 acres of leased land from the government and plants between 14 000 to 18 000 taro a month from tissue culture Image: Jean Pierre Niptick

By Elizabeth Ah-Hi (Freelance Journalist)

Apia Samoa Pacific Agriculture Week.

Everyone talks about rural migration into the city, lured by the ideals of prestige and better paying jobs in a comfortable office. But one man is bucking that trend.

Sala Sagato Tuiafiso went from government executive to being this year's taro farmer of the year, placing first for best taro and best ta'amu at the annual Samoa Agriculture Show.

Sala had a long career in the public service as a meteorologist, working in areas that included policy development around renewable energy.

He kept the weekends free for his real passion which was in farming.

Eventually the call from the land became too strong and he left behind the air conditioned office and stationary lifestyle to become a full time commercial farmer in 2015.

"Sitting in the office all day long is boring", he said.

Sala is developing 185 acres of leased land from the government and plants between 14,000 to 18,000 taro a month from tissue culture.

He sells at the local market but also exports weekly to American Samoa and is looking to explore the US market next year.

Last year his business turned over close to WST\$500,000 and Sala forecasts that figure to be much higher in the next fiscal year.

What's his secret? Slow and steady wins the race he says.

"I don't run — I just go at a slow even pace, then I analyse and improve things before moving forward," he said.

"It took me an adaptive three years to get to where I am now. Some people expect a lot of money in the first year but if you want to seriously invest in your farm — expect losses for up to 2-3 years," says Sala.

“After that it all comes back if you plan well,”

Sala stresses the “plan well” part saying that the crops you choose to plant must fit the land, not the man.

“Choose your crop according to the land and conditions it suits. Just because a taro grows well in a different district, doesn’t mean it will have the same outcome on your plantation.”

Persistence and following due diligence despite the many challenges that come with commercial farming have paid off and this farmer doesn’t have any trouble finding employees, and he pays his workers more than the minimum wage.

“I have six permanent staff and between 18 — 20 casual workers. I pay \$50 tala per person per day as well as provide morning tea and lunch. They enjoy working three days and take the rest of the week off to do chores at home.”

Following the guidance of your heart while taking care of your family can be a risky business and Sala has the white hairs to prove it but is happier because he enjoys what he does.

Switching to commercial farming means better cash flow and he can employ more people and take care of his family.

More importantly he can invest in his children’s education which is the number one priority in their family but he adds that getting involved in the family farm is equally as important.

“I’m very serious about education and my kids are doing well and they go to private schools. Of course I encourage them to get involved in the farm after school and during the holidays — give them a taste of farm life.”



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Pacific Agribusiness Research in Development Initiative

AGRI-BUSINESS MASTERCLASS



Fiji's kava industry is worth an estimated \$320 million Fijian dollars in gross sales according to a recent study undertaken by PHAMA and the Ministry of Agriculture.

It benefits many stakeholders across the value chain from farmers, processors, traders, retailers and exporters.

'Ensuring the value chain for kava and kava products continues to provide equitable income for many in Fiji relies on first understanding how everyone interacts to make it work and where opportunities lie for improving these relationships and links' said Sanfred Smith the General Manager of Fiji Kava.

Fiji's agribusiness stakeholders today opened a Agribusiness Masterclass in Nadi to build capacity to do just this through training on the importance of value chain approaches and value chain analysis.

Participants include representatives from academia, private and public sector, and non-governmental organisations.

"Value chain approaches look at everyone involved in taking a product to market and how they interact. They start with looking at what the market wants and working backwards to support producers to deliver it rather than starting with the supply chain of what producers can supply" Mr Craig Johns, one of the trainers,' explained.

The six-day programme which supports the vision of the Pacific Agribusiness Research Development Initiative in its promotion of sustainable livelihood outcomes for Pacific Islands households will focus on the basic techniques of the value chain analysis and market research.

With an aim to focus on real-world research exercises and case studies with relevant field work, Dr.Lex Thomson of Pacific Agribusiness Research Development Initiative 2 (PARDI2) says the agribusiness masterclass will discuss and undertake participatory visits to firms in relevant agribusinesses and value chains.

"We have a core team of specialists delivering the agribusiness master class in the next few days focusing on Honey, Fiji Red Papaya, Kava and Agritourism."

The agribusiness master class provides a platform for stakeholders to share research and development experiences and identify opportunities and partnerships in agribusiness development.

A panel of experts from the University of Adelaide, PARDI 2, University of the Sunshine Coast and the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network will deliver the masterclass funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.

AGRI-BUSINESS MASTERCLASS



A market always comprises both supply and demand and the interaction between the buyers and sellers of a product.

The availability of a particular product and the demand for that product are both factors which influence its price.

Nature's Way Co-operative have been supplying the Australia and New Zealand market since 1995 and Research and Extension Officer, Timote Waqainabete says the demand for Fiji Red Papaya is extremely high.

"The Fiji Red Papaya has a premium quality that is in great demand in both these markets and currently, we are only able to supply 18% of the Australian markets. There is still room for improvement in strengthening our supplies to Australia and New Zealand."

While the potential for growth in these markets are strong, Waqainabete explained the existing relationship between farmers and exporters in addition to the effects of natural disasters are the constraints they face in meeting the demand of a rising population.

"Through value chain analysis, we've identified the weakest link which we are now in partnership with Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) and Pacific Agribusiness Research in Development Initiative 2 (PARDI2) to develop more trust and transparency among our farmers and exporters that will generate more income for us and our members which will be crucial to our future success,"Waqainabete said.

Leading the discussions in yesterday's presentations on agricultural markets and market research, Dr. Wendy J. Umberger of the University of Adelaide said there were many factors that contributed towards the changes in supply and demand faced by producers.

"There are a lot of factors at play that can cause the changes including changes in tastes and preferences, population, international trade, income levels, taxes and subsidies as well as exchange rates that can affect both the domestic and international markets,"Umberger said.

Sanfred Smith, the General Manager for Kava Fiji Limited highlighted his concerns about unscrupulous producers on preparation methods of kava which he said could pose potential health risks for consumers.

"Sixty percent of our kava is geared towards the international market in Australia, New Zealand and the and the US. The concern for us is the growth of the global market which comes with its own set of regulatory requirements which if not complied withbri risks associated with the health of consumers and the general reputation of the kava industry," Smith said.

He also welcomed commitments by the Ministry of Agriculture in their aim to standardize the development phases of kava products.

Also attending the Agribusiness Masterclass is the Director of Forest Resource Assessment and Conservation of the Ministry of Forestry, Deborah Sue who says the demand for seedlings in their Four Million Trees in Four Years Programme is very high.

'At the moment, our supplies cannot match the demand for native seedlings across Fiji so we're working together with a wide cross section of communities to build up nurseries to which we provide technical training. It is important to the natural heritage and identity of the country, its environment and ecosystems.'

She added the Colo-i-suva Forest Parks will be developed into a model park that other communities in Fiji may follow.

The Agribusiness Master Class will continue this afternoon with farm tours planned for the afternoon.

AGRI-BUSINESS MASTERCLASS



Agribusinesses are being subjected to changes on multiple fronts including shifting consumer food preferences and preferences for 'clean-label' products through to sustained low commodity prices for farmers.

At the conclusion of the ACIAR PARDI2 Agribusiness Masterclass held in Nadi last week, local and international agribusiness experts revealed that these trends will have a profound influence how food is produced in the future, including in the Pacific Islands.

Western division official for the Ministry Trade and Tourism, Ms Rusieli Mua said local consumers were particularly interested in to know where the honey for sale was being produced.

"There's potential to explore this in further detail and from a marketing angle; we found that tourists were attracted to the packaging of small sized bottles which allows a much greater price per kilogram return," she said.

She also highlighted the possible co-relation between the different and little-known locations within retail stores that maybe directly linked to sales.

"We found that the better positioned a honey product is on supermarket shelves then the better its sales performance; it's a natural product and normally positioned amongst the fresh foods aisle if not directly across from it with various bread spreads. Including merchandising effort, there needs to be some form of communication with retailers in the best possible strategic location for honey which could lead to a significant rise in sales," she said.

Research and Extension Officer for Nature's Way Co-operative, Timote Waqainabete said there was an opportunity for new income stream from current seconds Fiji Red Papaya which are mainly just given away if not exported to Australian and New Zealand markets.

"In our initial scoping, desktop analysis and key informant qualitative interviews, we've discovered a lucrative market for papaya seed oil in the cosmetics industry. In 2017, global markets reported US\$148 million in earnings with US\$245 million expected in earnings in 2023. We've had a few phone calls between local and Australian cosmetic companies that's generated some real interest and we're looking to explore this further and provide samples," he said.

He added there were also options to diversify revenue and supply the market with dried seeds and fresh seeds. Nature's Way Co-operative has membership of most of the Fiji Red Papaya farmers and the Papaya exporters.

The General Manager for Fiji Kava Limited, Mr Sanfred Smith said the sector has a strong local demand and significant potential growth particularly into export markets in USA, China and Australasia.

"Kava sales in Fiji recently reached \$320 million dollars of which 92% of it is made from domestic sales; what we're seeing is that our farmers are struggling to find good quality propagation materials."

"We're also seeing how the strong demand for kava in our local markets is not only influencing price but leading to mass plantings of any available variety."

"There is little thought being given to who they are going to sell to which can also sometimes make quality certification difficult," he said.

These trends touched every part of the kava value chain, including growers, input suppliers/distributors processors and investors which Sanfred said was relevant to understand in terms of producing and meeting the growing demand for Kava.

Research Assistant for Pacific Agribusiness Research in Development Initiative — Phase 2, Ms Patricia Bibi said the biggest opportunity for AgriTourism is to influence government policy so it can cover agritourism land use.

"At the moment, land use can only be classified as either Agricultural or Tourism and the tourist licenses have been set up for the larger resorts and involve a quite detailed, lengthy and very costly process unsuited to village based applications," she said.

With Australians and New Zealanders accounting for 36% and 14% of Fiji visitors, respectively, she explained there was an opportunity to explore and develop local organic and ethical foods, gastronomy tours, home cooking and cooking lessons, hands-on interactive production tours, festivals and events around local produce, handcraft processing tours, floriculture including nature-based tourism including bird watching, plant identification and medicinal plant tours.

"They're young and between the ages of 25-35, looking for local and authentic experiences that are unique to Fiji and there's lots to show and appreciate in terms of our natural resources and culture that you won't find anywhere else in the world but Fiji," Patricia said.

The Director of Forest Resource Assessment and Conservation of the Ministry of Forestry, Ms Deborah Sue said that she and her colleague Mr Maleli Nakasava were able to collaborate well across the four themes of the Agribusiness Masterclass (Honey, Papaya, Kava and Agritourism) with industry insiders to provide insights into Forestry's 4-million tree policy and tree selection process while offering some practical activities and solutions to the four themes.