



Summary Report on a “AgriTourism Experiences in the Pacific” Talanoa

26th–27th February 2019, Tokatoka Resort, Nadi

Pacific Agribusiness Research in Development Initiative 2
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The Agritourism Experiences Talanoa two-day event was an intensive, interactive workshop helping emerging and existing agribusinesses develop farm-based tourism products. A first for the region, it focussed on supporting agribusinesses to better understand how their farms and their stories could be developed into quality experiences for visitors to the region.

The Talanoa was hosted by ACIAR's Pacific Agribusiness Research in Development Initiative 2 (PARDI2), with support from the International Finance Corporation, Pacific Islands Development Forum and Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON).

It brought together 75 participants from Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga, targeting Pacific agribusinesses and small-holder farmers intending to venture into agritourism and also included policy and decision makers, tourism industry experts, academics, researchers. It provided a unique opportunity to discuss current market trends and opportunities and challenges to developing agritourism experiences in Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu. It offered practical advice and support for agribusinesses interested in developing agritourism products. It also addressed research and support required for new operators to enter the market and existing ones to expand and grow their revenue and streams from tourism.

The Talanoa had four objectives which guided the presentations, group work activities and discussions. These were as follows:

- Sharing experiences and ideas of existing and new operators, tourism industry experts, policy and decision makers;
- Identifying opportunities to develop new agritourism products that increase the value of tourism to communities and target high yielding tourists;
- Reflect on the current situations for agritourism in Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga with a focus on successes and barriers; and
- Identify the business, market research and product development support needed to develop or improve agritourism experiences that meet demand and increase the value of tourism to local economies.



The speakers at the Talanoa, all experts in various aspects of tourism, provided valuable insights into areas of agritourism. They included; Mr Thomas Valentine of Tourism Fiji, Executive Chef Lance Seeto, Ms Jessie McComb of IFC and Ms Malisa Raffe, owner of Flavours of Fiji Cooking School. These topics covered agritourism trends and market intelligence, situation analyses of agritourism experiences in Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga, in addition to sharing lessons from developing niche products. A well-known Fiji celebrity

executive chef and Fiji's Food Ambassador, Lance Seeto, indulged the participants with his 'delicious story' on how to capitalize Fiji's unique culture and cuisine.



Participants were engaged in group work activities to design an agritourism experience product where at the end of Day 1, each group pitched their product in a simulated trade show.

Building up to the trade show, groups received tips from inbound operators on how to work with them regarding their products and build on their respective unique marketing or points of difference. They also learnt how to define the target market for their agritourism product and develop a pitch to promote the new experience or investment. There was also sharing of lessons learnt by operators. At the end of Day 1 participants were equipped with greater knowledge on product design and tourism value chains, in addition to gaining a better understanding of the agritourism experience market and how to market such experiences.

Day 2 centered on product development. Participants attended pre-scheduled one-on-one appointments with a range of tourism experts to confidentially discuss their business ideas, opportunities and challenges. Advice on product development was provided in these categories; (1) Business management – including pricing, finance, community engagement, business management/set up; (2) Markets and marketing - including market research,

website development, branding, social media and pitching; and (3) Product design -including guiding, interpretation, product ideas and feedback.



This session was designed to have an expo-like feel, where experts such as web designers, business management consultants and financial advisors held booths. Participants had 15 minutes appointments with various consultants and advisers.



The Talanoa programme ended with visits to three sites who were providing agritourism experiences in the Nadi area. They were Vee's Farm, Rise Beyond the Reef Sales Outlet 'Na Sitoa' and the Bulaccino Farm.





Participants were invited to provide feedback of the Talanoa through an evaluation survey. Respondents commented on how informative and useful the workshop had been for them. For participants thinking of venturing into agritourism experiences, the workshop gave them confidence of going ahead to start up, through the knowledge gained by the various speakers, the group activities and the one-on-one appointments with the consultants.

Some challenges highlighted in the evaluation survey included financing for initial start-up costs, insurance premiums for liability insurance, compliance with regulations, government and other regulatory bodies' and finance institutions red tape, land leases – converting from agricultural lease to tourism lease, finding markets for their products and mentoring. In the areas of technical assistance sought, other than financing and/or investment, advisory services and mentoring were the highest sort after forms of assistance.



Event Materials

For presentations, materials and useful links from this event, visit our website. The website also allows participants to request further advisory assistance from the PARDI2 team.

www.pardi.pacificfarmers.com/agriexperiences-talanoa-materials/



Appendix A: Concept Note

CONCEPT NOTE

Talanoa: AgriTourism Experiences in the Pacific Islands

Have an agribusiness? Want to see how attracting visitors and tourists to your farm may improve your agribusiness product? Have an existing agritourism experience and want to improve it? Join us to learn lessons from existing operators and partners and identify opportunities to increase the value of tourism to your business and the local economy.



Objectives

- Share experiences and ideas of existing and new operators, tourism industry experts, policy and decision makers;
- Identify opportunities to develop new agritourism products that increase the value of tourism to communities and target high yielding tourists;



- Reflect on the current situation in Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga with a focus on successes and barriers;
- Identify the business, market research and product development support needed to develop or improve agritourism experiences that meet market demand and increase the value of tourism to local economies.

Outcomes

- Identify opportunities to develop agritourism products that increase the value of tourism to local economies with a focus on supporting agribusinesses to diversify into tourism.
- Identify needs and key market research questions of agritourism operators that partners should address over the coming two years and appropriate methods for communicating results.

Background

Experiential tourism continues to grow globally with travelers increasingly looking to connect with their holiday destinations in a more culturally immersive way. A 2018 Expedia Group survey found that the top three factors for travelers selecting a holiday destination included specific activities, once in a lifetime experiences, and cultural experiences. In order for destinations to capture the attention of travelers, businesses must develop and offer exceptional experiences that tap into the unique cultural and nature of a destination.

One key area of growth in international tourism is culinary or agritourism. In 2018, Cox & King, a global travel company, released their upcoming trends for tourism with culinary tourism at the top of the list. While food has always been an important element of experiencing a destination, tours and activities such as farm to table dining, local cooking classes, market tours and street food tours have been growing in popularity. Combined with the rise in social media such as Instagram, these activities offer visitors a way to experience an authentic slice of a destination and promote activities to others.

While the farms in the Pacific have various strengths that lend themselves to a quality agritourism, Pacific destinations are not well known for culinary or agritourism. There is an





opportunity for farms to leverage their cultures and traditions of storytelling, community-oriented structures, and diverse range of crops to build agritourism experiences for travelers. By developing and offering these experiences in the Pacific, businesses can tap into new tourism markets and provide diverse activities to existing travelers on beach-based holidays.

Developing quality and unique agritourism experiences can support countries in the Pacific to diversify their tourism offerings and support farmers to diversify their revenue streams. However, it requires bringing together the collective knowledge of tour operators, potential operators, tourism ministries and tourism marketing agencies to support growth in this area.

The AgriTourism Experiences Talanoa will bring together policy and decision makers, tourism industry experts, academics, and agribusinesses to discuss current market trends and opportunities and challenges to developing agritourism experiences in Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu. It will provide practical advice and support for agribusinesses interested in developing agritourism products and identify research and support that is needed for new operators to enter the market and existing ones to expand and grow their revenue streams from tourism.

About

Pacific Agribusiness Research in Development Initiative 2 (PARDI2)

Funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and facilitated by a consortium of partners, PARDI2 seeks to promote sustainable livelihood outcomes for Pacific Islands households through research and innovation, catalysing and informing a more vibrant, diverse and viable agribusiness sector.

IFC Fiji Tourism Project

IFC's work in Fiji is guided by the Fiji Partnership. Australia and IFC are working together through the partnership to promote sustainable economic development, reduce poverty and stimulate private sector investment in Fiji.





Appendix B: Programme

Talanoa: AgriTourism Experiences in the Pacific Islands

PROGRAMME | FEBRUARY 27th-28th 2019 | VENUE TOKATOKA RESORT, NADI

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
DAY 1 February 27th		
8:30am	Registration	
Session 1: Setting the Scene In this session, speakers will present an overview of agritourism and culinary tourism in the Pacific and globally and share lessons learned from their experiences in developing agritourism businesses.		
8.45am	Welcome and introduction	PIDF / IFC
9:00am	Welcome Address	Thomas Valentine, Operations Manager, Tourism Fiji
9:15am	Capitalising on Fiji's unique culture and cuisine	Lance Seeto, Fiji Culinary Ambassador, Executive Chef, Host & Presenter of <i>Exotic Delights</i>
9:30am	Trends and Market Intelligence in Agritourism	Jessie McComb, IFC
9.40am	Preliminary findings of situation analysis	Marita Manley / Patricia Bibi / Researchers, PARDI2
10.00am	Sharing lessons from developing niche products	Video interview Malisa Raffe, Flavours of Fiji
10:15am	<i>Morning Tea</i>	
Session 2: Product Design and Tourism Value Chains In this session participants will learn about designing and agritourism experience including product development and definition, the tourism value chain and how to work with inbound tour operators		
10:30am	Designing an agritourism experience introduction	
10.40am	Product development: Defining key elements of an agritourism product	Group Work Facilitator: Marita Manley, PARDI2
11:30am	Introduction to the tourism value chain	Facilitator: Lavinia Kaumaitotoya, PARDI2
11.45am	Tips for working with inbound operators	Inbound Operators





		Facilitator: Sachiko Soro
12:15pm	Understanding the tourism value chain and where your business fits	Group Work Facilitator: Lavinia Kaumaitotoya, PARDI2
12.45pm	Lunch	
Session 3: Markets and Marketing During group work and panels, participants will learn how to define the target market for their agritourism product and how to develop a pitch to promote the new experience or investment.		
1:45pm	Defining your markets and marketing strategy	Group discussion Facilitator: Jessie McComb, IFC
2:15pm	What visitors want from an agritourism experience. Lessons shared by operators.	Informal panel discussion by operators (South Seas Orchids, Fiji Orchid and Tukuni) Facilitator: Marita Manley, PARDI2
2:45pm	Developing a pitch for your agritourism product	Video and group work Facilitator: Marita Manley, PARDI2
3:15pm	Afternoon Tea	
3:30pm	Trade show! Presentation of product designs and group work	Group Presentation Facilitator: Patricia Bibi, PARDI2
Session 4: Product Development Clinic Introduction and Scheduling On Day 2 of the Talanoa, participants will engage in a Product Development Clinic to get advice from experts. The facilitators introduce this session and participants schedule their appointments.		
4:30pm	Preparation for product development clinic	Individual or Group Work Facilitator: Marita Manley, PARDI2
5pm	Closing	
5:15pm	Networking Event	Taste Fiji
DAY 2 February 28th		
Session 5: Product Development Clinic Participants will attend pre-scheduled one-on-one appointments with a range of tourism experts to confidentially discuss their business ideas, opportunities and challenges.		
8.30am	Expo stalls: Business management (pricing, finance, community engagement, business management / start-up) Markets and marketing (market research, website development, branding, social media, pitching)	Expo stalls and participants - individual appointments





	Product design (guiding, interpretation, product feedback)	
12.30pm	Wrap up and next steps	PARDI2 / IFC
1pm	Closing + Lunch	
Session 6: Visits to agritourism experiences (optional) During the field visit, participants will get a firsthand experience of a variety of agritourism products. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions of the business owners.		
2pm	<i>Sabeto Garden of the sleeping giant Rise Beyond the Reef store One other (tbc)</i>	