

PACIFIC AGRICULTURE POLICY DIGEST

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PAFPNET
HAVE YOUR
SAY



WHAT'S
COMING
UP

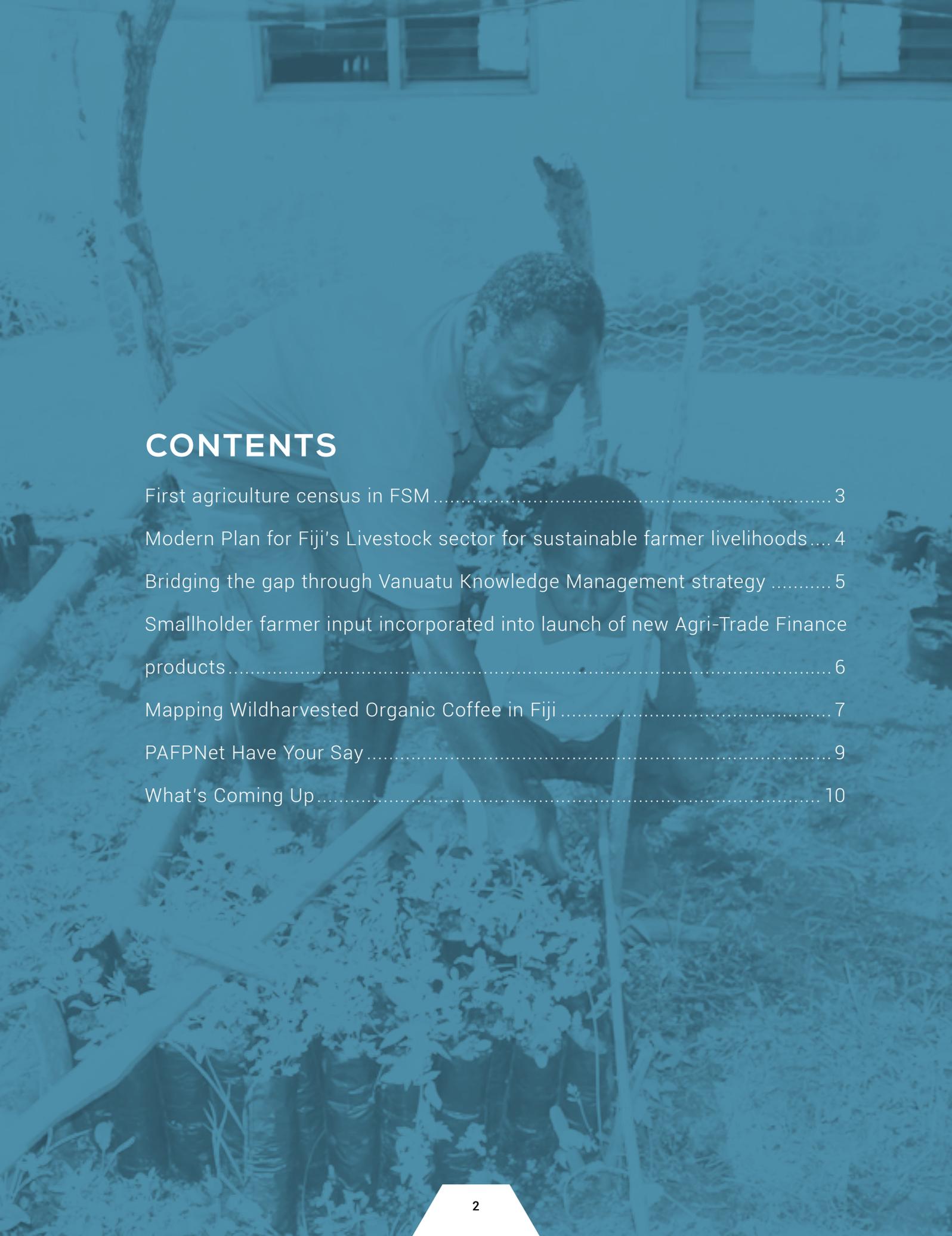


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FIRST AGRICULTURE CENSUS IN FSM

FSM is preparing for its first Integrated National Census of Agriculture in over 50 yrs. Despite the fact that agriculture contributes approximately 15% of GDP in FSM, no national level census has been conducted since the 1960's. The Census is a nation-wide effort to capture data on household activities on crop production, forestry, livestock and fisheries. The Census is the first of its kind; a multi-sector cooperative effort which will create an opportunity to empower their natural resource management and statistics agencies in evidence-based policy management and development. It will provide much needed data for multiple areas of national development including:

- Assessment of FSM's capacity in food security
- Governmental support to the sectors to meet national development goals
- Baseline data for climate change and disasters related impact assessments.

SPC, with funding from the EU supported intra-ACP Pacific Agriculture Policy Project, is providing a package of support to the Census. This includes technical assistance on training of survey enumerators; support for establishing data entry systems; data analysis; as well as logistics costs for conducting the survey. This support was recently formalised through signatures of a SPC-FSM Memorandum of Understanding.

On the 18th of January a five day training of 26 Enumerators for the Census was commenced. The training included coaching of participants on team management elements of the project, reviewing the Census questionnaire and practising and testing the questionnaire through mock exercises.

"This training is a milestone for our Agriculture Policy and 'a dream come true' for those of us who have been in this work (agriculture) for years" explained Mr. Adelino Lorens, Chief of Pohnpei State Agriculture Division.



This census will help us to take stock of our natural resources, guide us in developing them, and put them on reserve for traditional use.

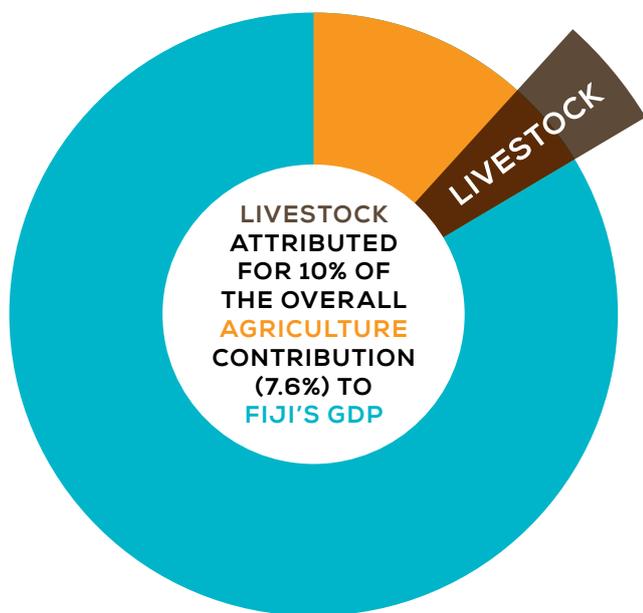
*– Assistant Secretary,
Pohnpei State Agriculture Division
Jane Chigiyal*



Work is ongoing on the development of the data entry system for inputting the results of the Census so watch this space for more news on the development of this work.



MODERN PLAN FOR FIJI'S LIVESTOCK SECTOR FOR SUSTAINABLE FARMER LIVELIHOODS



The Fiji Livestock Sector Forum themed "Livestock for Livelihoods – New Generation" was organized to help draft Fiji's first ever Livestock Sector Strategy. The forum was hosted 60 participants at the Tanoa International Hotel in Nadi, Fiji from 11 – 15 May 2016.

The three-day workshop was jointly hosted by the European Union-supported Pacific Agriculture Policy Project, the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the Fiji Livestock Sector Strategy Working Group. The Fiji Livestock Sector Strategy was established to help re-energise and modernise the local livestock industry to meet the production and consumption needs of the next generation which is key for sustainable livelihoods.

According to the Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture Mr. Uraia Waibuta, "The strategy should also strengthen linkages to domestic, regional and international markets, in line with Fiji's National Agriculture Policy 2020." The European Union Ambassador to Fiji and the Pacific, H.E. Andrew Jacobs said, "The livestock sector has great potential for Fiji. The European Union through the Pacific Agriculture Policy Programme (PAPP) is pleased to support its growth through this new strategy, and we look forward to its successful implementation. I am convinced it will make a big difference to the success of livestock farmers."

The strategy will develop a clear plan for livestock development given the challenges the sector faces including Fiji's continued import imbalance for livestock products, the demands from the growing tourism industry, and a renewed national government push for the agriculture sector.

The objective of the workshop was to formulate and validate the draft Fiji Livestock Sector Strategy and draw on outcomes from the national Livestock Forum held in May, 2015.

1. To validate the draft Fiji Livestock Sector Strategy
2. To prioritize the actions under the Livestock strategy
3. Discuss on going status of the Livestock sector strategy working group
4. To present an updated inventory of the livestock industry in Fiji



BRIDGING THE GAP THROUGH VANUATU KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Vanuatu's agriculture sector is making new headlines thanks to a number of new initiatives promoted by its Ministry covering agriculture information transparency, proactive programs for key sectors such as livestock and extension as well as a focus on new growth areas such as agritourism.

On 7 – 9 March, a Knowledge Management workshop was organised by the Vanuatu Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity (MALFFB) in collaboration with the EU Pacific Agriculture Policy Project (PAPP) implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Technical Centre of Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) to help strengthen the linkage between extension and rural advisory services through the knowledge management process.

The three day workshop brought together over 20 participants to share knowledge and discuss gaps and issues being faced in their respective organisations and institutions.

The workshop identified a number of advisory services in-country but linkages amongst these advisory services are often perceived as weak. The participants indicated that there is a need to establish links amongst key actors to enable information and knowledge sharing.

The workshop was opened by the Director of Forestry, Hanninton Tate who stressed the importance of transferring information. According to Mr. Tate, acquiring the information is not the issue but rather having it packaged and distributed to farmers, fishermen and others is what is left outstanding.



Knowledge Management would be very important and necessary for research and extension. It would provide an avenue to both retain and disseminate information generated to consumers particularly farmers

*– Sandy Hoffman Mael, Livestock Trainer,
Vanuatu Agricultural College*



After the duration of the workshop, expectations of easier farmer accessibility to agriculture policies, research and information is hoped to be achieved and continued.

This workshop was a follow up from the regional knowledge management workshop which was held in Vanuatu September 2015.

SMALLHOLDER FARMER INPUT INCORPORATED INTO LAUNCH OF NEW AGRI-TRADE FINANCE PRODUCTS

Access to finance is a well-documented constraint for businesses in many developing countries including Fiji and other Pacific islands. This issue is particularly exacerbated for the agriculture sector in the Pacific region given smaller markets, high costs of business, under-developed capital markets and a relatively smaller commercial agricultural sector.

The European Union through the Pacific Agriculture Policy Project (PAPP) implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC) is helping to provide farmers better links to markets by ensuring that farmers can access key services such as finance.

On 12 February 2016, SPC held a consultative workshop for up to 25 selected farmers with Merchant Finance Limited (MFL) to discuss lending and saving products for the agricultural sector. MFL is developing a range of new Agri-Trade Finance banking products to cater to the needs of farmers and other smallholder agri-business stakeholders in the agriculture sector who participate in some aspect of selling or purchasing. All selected farmers had some form of purchase contracts and provided valuable input into the design of such products.

David Hickes, a representative of the farmer groups selling to hotels in Sigatoka welcomed MFL's initiative in anticipation of the upcoming launch. He stated that, "the participatory approach taken via the consultative workshops is very important.



This has allowed farmers' voices to be heard in determining their financing needs

– David Hickes, farmer representative



SPC's Pacific Agriculture Policy Project Adviser, Vili Caniogo applauded MFL's thinking, stating that bold steps were needed by the financial community now to address this long-held issue. MFL welcomed the collaborative approach taken to hear directly from farmers who were already in the business of contracts. MFL also welcomed the collaboration with SPC given strategic and technical linkages directly with farmers and buyers.

Further collaboration is planned by SPC and MFL around a more detailed programme of awareness and support at least in the early phase of the rollout of the new products.

MAPPING WILDHARVESTED ORGANIC COFFEE IN FIJI

PAPP is working in partnership with the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) to support the development of organic production and certification in the region, and build niche market linkages for smallholder farmers.

During February POETCom, with support from PAPP, initiated a five day mapping and data collection pilot project for organic certification of wildharvested coffee for the Bula Coffee Company at Sigatoka. The pilot was conducted by POETCom staff, working with an SPC Land Resources Division Geographic Information System (GIS) Technician, and an Extension Officer from the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture.

Availability of accurate maps that show where crops are grown is a basic requirement for organic certification. This can be difficult for wildharvested products, such as Coffee, as the plants are picked from the trees where they stand in the forest, and are not situated on a defined land area like a regular farm. Generating maps using simple hand-held GIS tools is one way that farmer groups can show where their products are harvested from, and therefore comply with their certification requirements.

According to Mr. Kolinivalu, there has not been any assistance from the Fiji government to date for this commodity. "With the support of this pilot mapping project the Fiji government will now be able to see evidence that coffee is being harvested and organically certified in Fiji" said Mr Kolinivalu.

This pilot project was instigated as a result of the lack of such baseline information on coffee farming in the Pacific. Results and lessons learned from this pilot project will be used to inform upcoming work on GIS mapping of smallholder coffee farmers in the Solomon Islands.



At the conclusion of the pilot week, organic harvest areas were recorded and mapped for 15 wild coffee farms in the West of Fiji, totalling of 727 acres of land. A spatial database of this information was created including records of harvest areas, land managers and coffee yields.

Development of strategies for development of the coffee industry in Pacific island countries can only be done based on good quality information and data being available to policy-makers. This is one example of how:

Pilot training objectives:

1. To continue the Organic Certification for wild harvested coffee for the Bula Coffee Company at Sigatoka
2. Creation of maps inclusive of the wild coffee harvesting areas that were planned for Organic Certification



PAFPNET HAVE YOUR SAY

The Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Policy Network (PAFPNet) is a regional network that helps connect the people of the Pacific by facilitating sharing of experiences on issues related to agricultural and forestry policy at home and further afield.

This newsletter will feature PAFPNet discussion topic for the month of October.

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"Re-building the Agriculture sector and Farmer Livelihoods – Post – Disaster"

For the first quarter of 2016 PAFPNet hosted the discussion topic themed, "Re-building the Agriculture sector and Farmer Livelihoods – Post – Disaster" where in just 2 years, both Fiji and Vanuatu have faced their most devastating natural disasters on record. Six questions were underlined for the discussion that triggered an extensive and thorough exchange of views and altogether 15 replies were received. Thank you very much for participating!

Tropical cyclones Winston and Pam, both Category 5s, have caused cataclysmic losses in both countries. Extreme weather events like TC Winston and Pam are not unexpected in the Pacific, which is one of the most vulnerable areas in the world to natural disasters due to powerful tectonic forces constantly shaping the region and the occurrence of unusually warm ocean conditions. Scientists and Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have predicted that the natural disaster frequency has risen and that their intensity will be more and more severe, hence causing major destructions especially to small and vulnerable countries such as Small Island Developing States (SIDS).





Increasing unplanned urbanization, migration patterns, and people occupying high-risk areas in greater numbers, however, increase the impact of natural hazards on population. Although disasters do not respect borders, nor distinguish between economic levels, their impact is always much more detrimental to vulnerable populations in low income countries.

It has been highlighted in the discussion that preparedness is very critical, and this requires training of relevant agricultural public and private stakeholders on Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) methodology; developing template for data collection; and ensuring that a sound baseline is in place and updated regularly. Assessments tend to move much faster and more efficiently where good baselines are in place.

A study or investigation needed to be done on the indigenous knowledge and should they be credible incorporate them in post disaster strategies. Also it is important to note that there are certain level of resilience relating to this knowledge that are present within communities, the form and manner in which the assistance are delivered should not interfere with the traditional resilience mechanisms which are in existent as this may lead to communities heavily depending on outside assistance in future disasters rather than being able to deal with some of the issues themselves.

There are some mechanisms in place that are working well to prepare farmers, agricultural officers not only to be prepared to reduce the impacts of hazards but also to respond effectively in a timely and resourceful manner. It is about having a good pre-disaster risk reduction plan and also a good post disaster process in place – prepare to respond.



WHAT'S COMING UP

DATE	ACTIVITY	VENUE
April		
4-6	Pacific Organic Tourism and Hospitality Standard Development Workshop	Nadi, Fiji
7 or 8	M&E Visit – Kaiming Ginger factory	Navua, Fiji
4-8	Vanuatu Agritourism Strategy Workshop	Vanuatu
11 – 15	PAPP Technical Working Group Meeting – Regional Ag Strategy	Suva, Fiji
18 – 20 (TBC)	Niue Policy Bank Launch	Niue
18- 9 May	AgINTEL Phase II	Cook Islands
May		
17 – 19	Capacity Building to Support National Agriculture Policy Awareness and Adoption Train the Trainers Workshop	Suva, Fiji
Week of 23 May	Samoa Ag Sector Plan & Policy Bank launch & Training	Samoa
June		
3	SPC – PIFON Board Meeting	Fiji
Mid-June	Tonga ASP launches & training	Tonga
Mid-June	PAPP Steering Committee Meeting	Fiji

PAPP operates in the 15 Pacific ACP countries (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu), and Timor-Leste.

PAPP aims to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers by strengthening their linkages to markets, improving access to information, research, and knowledge, and by improving the policy and operating environment for farmers through evidence based policies.

Within the twelve months since the commencement of the project there have been a number of activities, as detailed in this newsletter, structured around PAPP's 3 Key Result Areas (KRA):



1. Strengthened regional agricultural development strategy



2. Improved dissemination and adoption of applied agricultural production research



3. Agricultural enterprise development through improved market linkages

For additional information on the PAPP project,
visit our website PAFNet web portal:

<http://www.spc.int/pafpnet/>

For feedback, comments and contributions please contact:

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lrhelpdesk@spc.int

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SPC – The Pacific Community

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D I S C L A I M E R

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