

PACIFIC AGRICULTURE POLICY PROJECT

IMPACT STORIES

Fiji Crop and Livestock Council Market Information System

✦ PAPP KRA/INDICATOR

KRA 3 – Contribute to agricultural enterprise development through improved market linkages.

KRA 3 : CONTRIBUTE TO AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH IMPROVED MARKET LINKAGES.
INDICATOR 2 : SMS BASED MARKETING INFORMATION SERVICES ESTABLISHED IN AT LEAST 2 PACPS BY END OF PROJECT.
RESULTS TO DATE : MARKET INFORMATION SERVICES ESTABLISHED IN 2 PACPS – COOK ISLANDS (AGINTEL) AND FIJI (FCLC MIS).

✦ COUNTRY/S

Fiji

✦ DETAILS

The Fiji Crop and Livestock Council (FCLC) is the national umbrella body for Fiji's non-sugar agricultural sector. Launched in 2010, FCLC is the peak industry body for crop and livestock producers across the country, and is comprised of 12 national commodity associations and seven sub-sector/regional associations that were set up to represent almost 60,000 farmers across the agricultural industry, including: Pigs, Honey, Dalo, Yaqona (Kava), Grazing Livestock, Ginger, Cocoa, Agri-Exporters, Rice, Coconut Producers/Millers, Dairy, Organics, Fruits & Vegetables.

FCLC operates on the three pillars of (i) Strengthening Associations, (ii) Providing technical services (making agriculture profitable), and (iii) Advocacy – all towards the vision of being 'Fiji's voice for efficient agriculture'. The Council was established to raise the profile of farmers involved in crop and livestock production; to act as the apex forum for advocacy and key services that are specifically designed to respond to the needs of, and reflect the reality of, agriculture with the view to drive growth in the industry.

FCLC is a member of the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) and in 2016 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the New Caledonia Chamber of Agriculture, which saw it join the Network of Chambers of Agriculture in the Pacific.

The existing supply chain for fresh produce in Fiji typically relies heavily on middlemen, and many farmers are totally dependent on middlemen to market their produce, provide transport for their produce, even providing advice on what crops to grow, and farm inputs. Smallholder farmers, for whom it is often uneconomical to travel the distance to sell directly at markets, are limited to word of mouth and occasional interaction with Ministry of Agriculture extension staff for alternate information on market pricing and trends.

It is also recognised across the Pacific that limited capacity of traditional national extension systems is a challenge to efficient dissemination of market information. Extension work is hampered by a lack of staff and resources to reach sites to collect and disseminate information. Thus, mobile phones can also help link extension services with farmers to disseminate information on crop pricing, and information on pests and diseases.





DALO (TARO) FARMER AMINIO NASOWAQA SAID:

"It costs us \$16 return to travel from Namosi to the government extension officer in Navua to find out information. An SMS costs only 8c and we receive an instant response. Information can be received on any phone, whether an expensive smartphone or a cheap non-internet phone. Using this system is much easier and good for farmers, especially given Fiji is dominated by smallholder farmers."

↗ INTERVENTION

FCLC's SMS-based Market Information System (MIS) was initially established with support from the EU-funded Improvement of Key Services to Agriculture (IKSA) project, implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC) in Fiji. However as of 2015 the system had only 5000 farmers registered on the system, was limited to using one mobile phone provider (of four available), and had performance issues when carrying out certain functions (queries, filters, data export).

PAPP carried out a two-pronged intervention to support operationalisation and expansion of the MIS. This included technical assistance to improve back-end system functionality, link with more local telecommunication providers, establish standardised procedures, setting up reporting mechanisms, and a membership outreach to increase the number of farmers registered on the system.

↗ IMPACTS

The FCLC MIS is the first in the Pacific region to be managed directly by a farmers organisation, and to deliver market pricing information direct to the farmers themselves.

The number of farmers registered on the MIS system increased from approximately 5000 in mid-2015 to over 32,000 at the end of 2016.

The FCLC MIS is most commonly used for communication of market pricing, but also has a range of other complementary functions:

- **mPrices** - a market information system used to gather and distribute price data for a range of commodities;
- **Agri Tips** - a platform for FCLC or Partners to receive and answer questions regarding Crop or Livestock issues via SMS;
- **Fiji Makete** - a buyer-seller matchmaking platform;

CAKAUDROVE DALO HARVEST SOLD AT HIGHER PRICE

A group of dalo farmers in Cakaudrove, Vanua Levu had made an arrangement with a middleman who said he wanted to purchase a truckload of dalo. After harvest the middleman said he preferred a different dalo variety and reneged on the agreement, only purchasing a few bundles.

The Fiji Dalo Association representative in Vanua Levu contacted FCLC to assist the farmers. The dalo was listed on Fiji Makete section of the MIS and within a few hours all the harvested dalo was bought by the AgroMarketing Authority at a higher price than that originally promised by the middleman.

- **mPolling** - a service where FCLC and Partners can send out polls to gather important information from farmers; and
- **mAlerts** - an easy way to send information alerts to groups of people, particularly in emergency situations.

↗ NEXT STEPS

FCLC is continuing the process of farmer outreach and registration, including utilising data gathered during the Ministry of Agriculture's recent Household Survey, as well as building on price collection processes with both FCLC staff and Ministry of Agriculture.

New registrations will continue to be carried out by FCLC, with an aim to achieve 60,000 users by the end of 2017. Simultaneously, MIS awareness events and training for registered farmers on how to best utilise the system have been prioritised in 2017.

THE PACIFIC AGRICULTURE POLICY PROJECT ENHANCES THE REGIONAL AND INTER-REGIONAL CAPABILITIES OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR TO ERADICATE POVERTY



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