

Welcome to our 8th edition of the Agriculture Policy Digest. The Digest is prepared by the European Union supported Intra-ACP Agricultural Policy Program (APP*) which is implemented in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions. The Pacific component of the Program or “PAPP” (Pacific Agriculture Policy Project) is implemented through the Pacific Community (SPC) and has been in place since July 2014.

This 8th Edition contains stories about:

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We hope you will enjoy reading these stories.

Also you will find previous Issues of the Digest at <http://pafpnet.spc.int>

Don't forget to subscribe to receive upcoming editions of this Digest and to see what is coming up for PAPP; and HAVE YOUR SAY through PAFPNet!

** The APP 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. More information about the APP can be found on <http://pafpnet.spc.int>*

1. Improving Seed Selection, Storage and Distribution Systems

The recent catastrophic cyclones in Vanuatu and Fiji are putting the spotlight back on seed banks (and other measures for plant propagation) to help farmers rehabilitate their farms post-disaster and also adopt more proactive, adaptive measures for plant selection to improve their crops.

A recent PAFPNET discussion on rebuilding the agriculture sector and farmer livelihoods post-disaster suggested that access to seed stocks in the Pacific region was limited. Many countries do not have national seed banks, and there limited resources to establish and maintain seed banks for multiplication and distribution of high quality planting materials.

In Tonga, a seed storage and distribution centre has been established at **Hango Agriculture College** (HAC). The College seed centre and nursery enable HAC to select, store and distribute seeds to farmers. The seedbank will also source additional plants provided through *SPC's Plant Genetic Resource Centre (CePaCT)* with EU-APP support, which already provided a wide range of plants and seeds in 2016. (See [this story](#).) A fruit tree seedbank is also planned with breadfruit and other fruit trees supplied by MAFF.

At the launching of the Hango Seed Centre, the Minister for Agriculture, Hon. Semisi Taelangi Fakahau commented that it was in line with work on a national seed policy which is under development and he thanked SPC and FAO for their support. The new Principal of Hango, Rev. Mr. Tu'ipulotu Finau, said the donor assistance was timely as it strongly supports the new Hango College vision to upgrade the training offered to include degree certification. The seed training can be easily integrated into the curriculum, with the nursery providing a hands-on practical site for the students.

Other recent seed activities in the region supported by SPC include:

- **Pacific farmer exchanges on Open Pollinated Seeds in Queensland (October 2016), Australia involving** 11 farmer organisations from Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, PNG and Timor-Leste as well as Australian farmer and research networks. (See the [Seed Learning Exchange Report](#)). This followed from a large farmer exchange on seeds in the Solomon Islands in November 2016, involving 60 farmers from Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Timor-Leste, Fiji, PNG and Solomon Islands, which focuses on the seeds value chain and sharing of practices (See our PAFPNet [story](#).)
- On a recent visit to **Kiribati**, SPC's Soil Health team spent time training staff on saving seeds from *Amaranthus* and other crops in the course of conducting training on the use of compost to increase vegetable production on atoll soils. Agricultural production in both Kiribati and Tuvalu is restricted by lack of seeds, as well as water shortages, salinity and poor soils.
- The **Integrated Crop Management project** has been working with Fiji's Ministry of Agriculture on the development of new varieties of fruit crops, including capsicum and chilli. The project is breeding the new varieties to produce sufficient quantities of foundation seed, which is then cropped and harvested to create an adequate supply of seeds for distribution to farmers.
- Studies for Pacific farming networks relating to **Improving Access to High Quality Seed** compiled by Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON), covers opportunities and constraints related to accessing seed in 5 member countries - Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Samoa and Fiji ([PIFON Scoping Study Report](#)).
- Through EU-APP support, PIFON also compiled a study in 2015 on Timor-Leste's National Association of Commercial Seed Producers, ANAPROFIKO which is the national umbrella

association of seed producer groups in Timor-Leste. It promotes the development of the commercial seed trade to achieve seed security and seed sovereignty leading to food and nutrition security. Since that study, ANAPROFIKO has now leveraged funding support from the IFAD/SDC-funded MTCP II program. (See report on [‘National Seed System for Released Varieties’](#)).

- SPC regional **survey conducted on seeds challenges** reached 1060 PAFNet members. A summary of the responses can be found [here](#).
- **Technical training on open pollinated seed production in Sigatoka, Fiji** in August 2017. This 3-day workshop trained 23 Ministry of Agriculture extension officers and farmers on the processes of plant selection for development of new varieties, and the processes of seed extraction, drying and storage. The group learnt about new varieties of tomatoes (such as the new Fijian variety ‘Rio-gold’), capsicums, eggplants and other crops that are being developed, and how to advise on seed saving so that farmers’ own seed supplies will stay ‘true to type’ i.e. maintain the characteristics of the crop that have been identified as preferred by consumers. Extension officers and farmers heard directly from representatives of the tourism industry who were able to highlight strengths of local produce as well as identifying problems with the supply chain that cause quality problems. The workshop identified that the tourism industry needs better information on when they can expect local sources of crops to be available. Farmers wanted information on visitor numbers and how they relate to the tonnages of different crops that the industry needs.

Workshop participants harvesting the recently released tomato variety ‘Rio-Gold’ to learn processes of extraction, washing, drying and packaging.

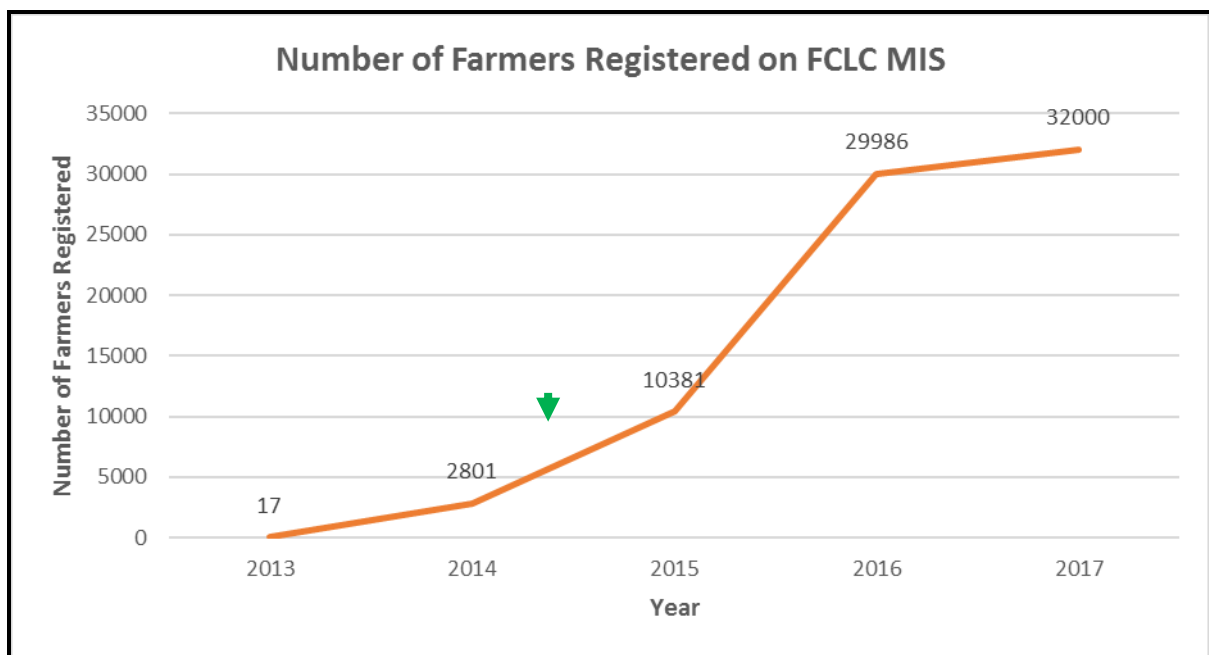


2. Fiji Crop and Livestock Council Farmers Increase Registration

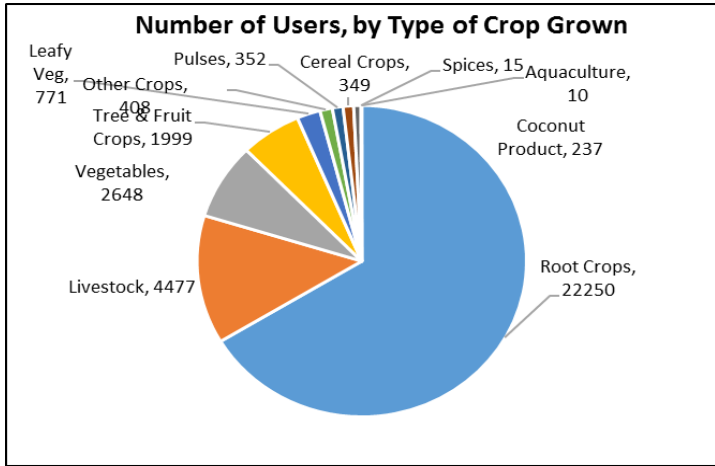
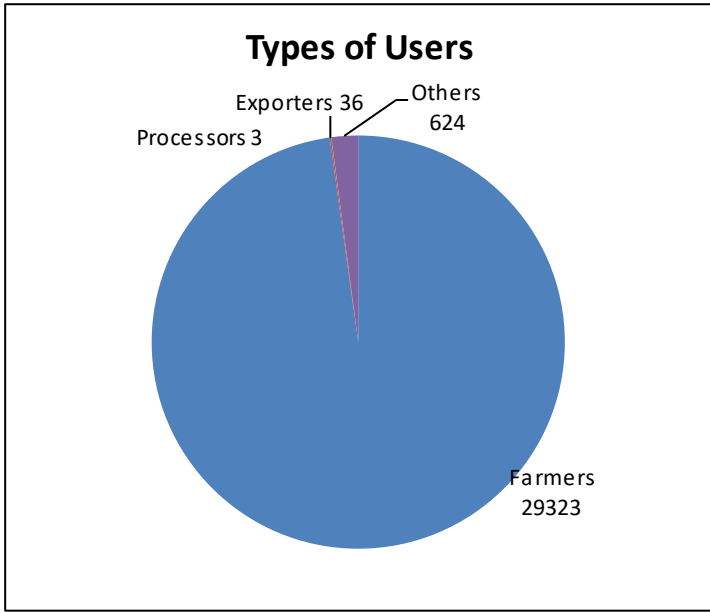
The Fiji Crop and Livestock Council ([FCLC](#)) was established and launched by the Fijian Government in 2010 as part of a broader policy move to transition Fiji from a sugar-based economy to a more diverse agricultural economy. An early priority for FCLC was to register and better organise farmers from all over the country – an ambitious goal. Thanks to EU support through ITC and SPC-APP, FCLC has established an SMS platform (the Market Information System, or MIS) and as of December 2016, registered over 25,000 farmers from all over Fiji. At the same time, FCLC has organised this large network into 12 commodity associations and seven sub-sector/regional associations.

The Chief Executive Officer of FCLC, Ms Jiu Daunivalu, stated that FCLC was a “milestone for farmer representation in Fiji that will provide an opportunity for growers and buyers to communicate like never before”. She commented that, as a new network, they needed further advocacy and financial resources to help build the network. She thanked the EU for support for putting in place the system and technical assistance to accelerate registration.

From an initial database of 2801 farmers in 2015, SPC’s assistance enabled an increase in FCLC’s MIS registration to 10,970 in mid-2016, and over 25,000 farmers at the end of 2016. FCLC is today one of the largest farmer organisations in the Pacific region.



A breakdown of the types of members included is shown in the figures below:



*Figures as at December 2016

FCLC's SMS-based MIS delivers real-time pricing and market data direct to farmers' mobile phones, empowering them to make more informed decisions about harvest, sales and transport. The MIS also allows farmers to send and receive production queries by text message, and to connect directly with buyers through a buyer-seller matchmaking platform. The MIS system can also be used to communicate key messages such as upcoming training, extension advice and weather alerts.

Approximately 4000 kava farmers are now using the system.

3. Building Agritourism Value Chains in the Pacific

The SPC APP [Study of national-level Agriculture Plans and Policies](#) (2016) showed that agritourism was a priority for many Pacific countries. A program of work involving SPC, the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), the Pacific Islands Private sector Organisation (PIPSO) and other partners to support farmer linkages to hotel and restaurants started in 2015. This included:

- **Organic Auditor Training** – In 2015 seventeen young women and men from seven countries, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Palau, Australia and New Zealand benefited from the first organic auditor training event carried out in the Pacific islands. The training was funded by the APP and was delivered by the International Organic Inspectors Association together with the support of the National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA) and Biogro, in partnership with POETCom. The aim of the training was to build Pacific-based capacity in organic inspection, ultimately contributing to lower costs for third party organic certification in the Pacific Island region.
- **Buyer-Seller Marts** - PAPP and other partners are helping build farmers' capacity to better supply local food to hotels and restaurants. Market networking with hotels and training for farmers from Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea over 2015-16 was aimed at ensuring that farmers are well equipped with basic tools and knowledge to help them negotiate and supply to hotels. A summary of these market and training events can be found [here](#).
- **Agritourism Plan of Action** - PAPP assisted Vanuatu in formulating a new national three-year Agritourism Plan of Action, with support from the New Zealand Aid Programme. It is pleasing to note that Vanuatu has taken the lead in the region in driving agritourism linkages. This has included the formation of a national AgriTourism Steering Committee (ATSC) and organising the first national Agritourism Festival in November 2016. The Agritourism Action and Implementation Plans can be downloaded from the [Vanuatu Agriculture Policy Bank](#).
- **Pacific Organic Tourism & Hospitality Standard (POTHS)** - PAPP is also assisting organic pathways in the tourism sector. In 2016 PAPP partnered with the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) to develop a regional Organic Tourism and Hospitality Standard (POTHS). Certification to this standard would qualify tourism operators to use the "Organic Pasifika" mark in their branding and marketing.



- **Organic Menu Pilot, Vanuatu** - In early 2017 PAPP supported pilot development of the first organic menu which is compliant with the POTHS. An international culinary consultant worked with young farmers involved in the Farm Support Association (FSA) Youth to Table project* to scope the available supply of organic produce, and built relationships with chefs at Breakas Beach Resort in Port Vila. The chefs developed a series of recipes utilising locally-available organic ingredients which appeal to the hotel's clientele. Creating organic recipes for the tourist market builds demand for organic crop supplies from the local community, and fosters a 'farm to table' supply chain that allows young people to earn an income through organic farming. This implementation of the POTHS will facilitate improved value

chain linkages between Pacific producers and the important tourism and hospitality industry.

Some of the dishes developed during the pilot included Taro Leaf Soup, Pineapple Split with Coconut Caramel, and Island Chocolate Pudding with Monkey Banana and Mango:



*The Farm to Table project is a partnership between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and the Pacific Community's Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom), and is funded by the Sustainable Development Goals Fund (SDG-F).

4. Transforming access to agricultural research and extension through an online Pacific information system

A new online research information system is currently being built by SPC EU APP to better capture and disseminate agriculture research reports in the region. The *Pacific Agriculture Research Information Bank* consolidates research reports from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu and already has **over 37,000 digital records** uploaded onto the system.

Malcolm Hazelman, the chair of the Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services network (PIRAS) noted the importance of such e-libraries.

“For too long, it has been difficult to access research reports by the multitude of partners in the region. Without some central reference, it’s conceivable that we are recycling research in some areas.”

Vili Caniogo, APP Adviser, stated that database was an ambitious but worthwhile exercise. *“The database will go some way in reducing duplication and providing evidence for research and extension interventions”*. He stated that the system emphasised voluntary sharing and would respect the rights of authors or countries, fully knowing that some reports were subject to intellectual property constraints.

The establishment of such a database addresses a key priority identified by a Forum of over 150 Researchers and Extension Officers held in Samoa in 2015. The database is expected to become an important resource for extension officers to assist smallholder farmers improve their productivity.

The database is already receiving additional external support from IFAD through the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) and the Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA).

A key outcome from the Forum was agreement to establish the Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services network (PIRAS) as a platform to facilitate information sharing and networking, and to collaboratively build the capacity of research and extension services in the Pacific.

The research database will be officially launched at the next PIRAS Forum, to be held in Fiji in August 2017. Stay tuned for further updates on PIRAS activities in the next Policy Digest.

* For more information on PIRAS visit <http://pafpnet.spc.int/research-and-extension/pacific-island-rural-advisory-services-piras>

5. Discovering the power of knowledge through video documentation

Explore the true meaning of knowledge sharing through the voice of people in Northern Pacific. Discover how a sub-regional workshop on knowledge management encouraged information gathering, documentation, knowledge transfer and sharing. Experience diverse cultures, lifestyles and extraordinary people who were engaged in a series of events to develop their stories on agriculture - learn more about writeshop, participatory rural appraisal, storyboard and social media.

Watch the video here: <http://pafpnet.spc.int/resources/photo-gallery/video-gallery>

6. WHAT'S IN THE AGRICULTURE POLICY BANK? – HIGHLIGHTS

KAVA QUALITY STANDARDS AND STRATEGIES – Fiji and Vanuatu

Fiji

(i) Fiji Kava Standard 2017



Kava is an integral part of life in Fiji and across the Pacific, both culturally and economically. Fiji's kava industry is valued at around FJ\$66 million per year, benefitting over 21,000 kava farmers. Between 2010 and 2013 kava production in Fiji grew by just over 30 percent, and in that period kava export earnings doubled from FJ\$3.8 m to FJ\$7m. However there is widespread recognition that the international market for kava has suffered over recent decades due to concerns around the lack of quality standards, lack of testing and traceability, as well as awareness around what kava varieties were being exported and consumed.

The Fiji Kava Standard has been developed in response to these concerns, and covers Quality Factors, Contaminants, Hygiene, Labelling, Sampling Methods and Methods of Analysis. The Kava Standard was launched in March 2017 in conjunction with the Kava Quality Manual.

(ii) Fiji Kava Quality Manual



The [Fiji Kava Quality Manual](#) was launched in March 2017. The manual has been developed to help kava producers and suppliers in Fiji provide customers with the best quality kava, in line with the Fiji Kava Standard. The aim is to ensure that Fiji kava:

- is produced and stored according to good hygiene standards maintaining its quality,
- is safe to consume, and
- is locally and internationally renowned and recognised as a quality product.

The Manual is a guide for all involved in the production of kava – farmers, middlemen, processors and exporters – and is a tool for improving the quality of the kava produced and sold by Fiji. It contains an outline of good agronomic practices; a description of the Fiji kava varieties; weed, pest and disease management; harvest and postharvest handling; and other best practices.

To view these documents, Visit the Fiji Agriculture Policy Bank – <http://pafpnet.spc.int/policy-bank/countries/fiji> - click on 'Ministry tab and then sub-sector strategy tab'.

Vanuatu



Vanuatu National Kava Strategy 2016-2025

Kava is an integral part of Vanuatu society and is the third largest export commodity from Vanuatu. It is estimated that local consumption alone contributes over VT2 billion per annum to the economy. However the birth of the commercial kava industry has brought challenges relating to both quality and quantity. In response to this, the Vanuatu Ministry of Agriculture put together a National Kava Strategy to address gaps in the production and marketing chains. It covers nursery establishment and management, field transplanting and management, processing, value adding, marketing and trade.

The Kava Strategy is part of a series of documents produced by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to assist in implementing the Vanuatu Agriculture Sector Policy (2015-2030).

To view this document, Visit the Vanuatu Agriculture Policy Bank <http://pafpnet.spc.int/policy-bank/countries/vanuatu>

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE SECTOR PLANS – Tonga and Vanuatu

Tonga



Tonga Agriculture Sector Plan 2016-2020

The first ever multi-stakeholder, sector-wide plan for agriculture in the Kingdom of Tonga – the Tonga Agriculture Sector Plan (TASP) – was launched by the Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Semisi Fakahau, in July 2016. The Plan was developed by the Ministry of Agriculture & Food, Forests and Fisheries and the national Agriculture Sector Growth Committee with support from the World Bank, UNDP, IFAD and the EU Agriculture Policy Programme.

The TASP has four key components leading towards the overall goal to increase and sustain resilient agriculture livelihoods: Climate Resilient Environment; Enabling Environment; Sustainable Livelihoods & Healthy Food; Sustainable Growth & Foreign Exchange Earnings. The first five-year phase of the TASP is estimated to cost around T\$42.2 million, for which the MAFFF is now seeking both government and development partner support.

You will find versions of the TASP, along with summaries in Tongan and English, at the Tonga Agriculture Policy bank: <http://pafpnet.spc.int/policy-bank/countries/tonga>

What else is in the Tonga APB? You will find the Tonga Fisheries Sector Plan, Framework for Action on Food Security, National Agricultural Census Report, Codes of Practice for Forestry, and more.

Vanuatu



Vanuatu Agriculture Sector Policy 2015-2030

The Vanuatu Agriculture Sector Policy outlines how the Government of Vanuatu will help bring about sustainable development in the agriculture sector over the next 15 years. The focus of the Policy is on pillars for inclusive sustainable Social, Economic and Ecological development and well-being for the people of Vanuatu. Themes identified include Research & Extension, Production & Market Access, Capacity Building, Finance, Land Use, and Climate Adaptation. In addition to this Policy, Vanuatu has already developed policies for biosecurity and fisheries, and sub-sector strategies for kava and coconut, with a fruit and vegetable strategy

underway.

The Agriculture Sector Policy, along with summaries in English, Bislama and French, can be viewed on the Vanuatu Agriculture Policy Bank <http://pafpnet.spc.int/policy-bank/countries/vanuatu>

What else is in the Vanuatu APB? You will find the Vanuatu National Livestock Policy, Kava and Coconut Strategies, Forest Policy, and more.

Do visit your own National Agriculture Policy Bank

<http://pafpnet.spc.int/policy-bank>

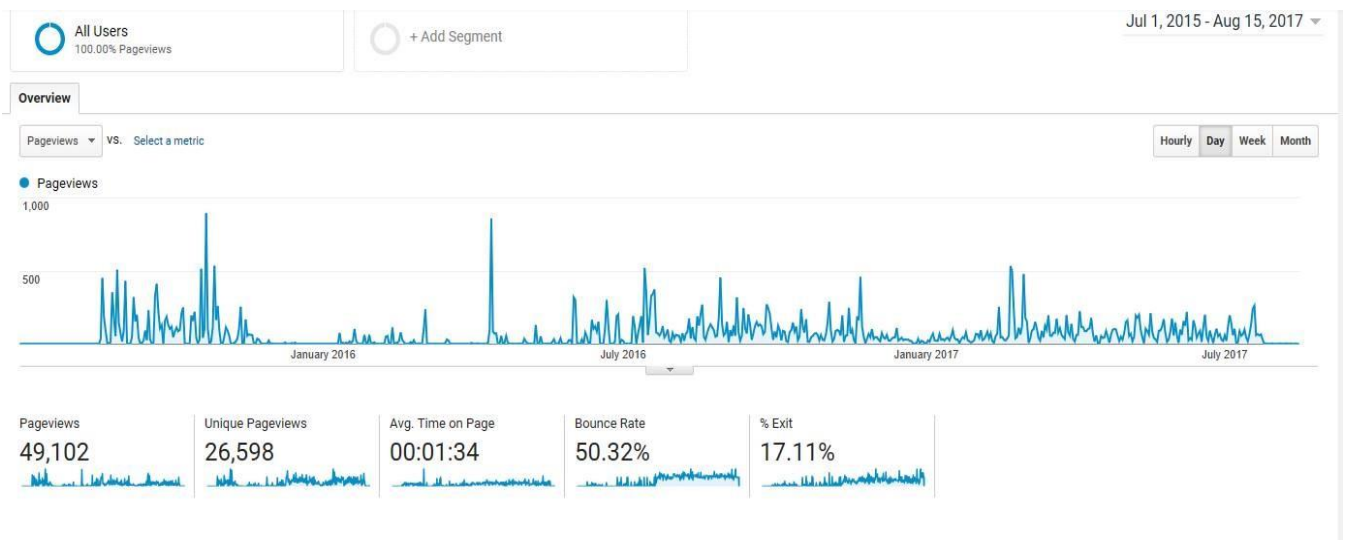
7. PAFPNet UPDATE

JOIN the Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Policy Network (PAFPNet) and engage in constructive dialogue and exchange with a variety of stakeholders! You will have the opportunity to widen your network scope by connecting with people who share common interests and goals. As a member of the network, you will also have access to various types of information such as job opportunities, fellowships, training and you will be kept up to date on issues related to agriculture and forestry policy. Help us grow the network.

Statistics: PAFPNet members = 1,072 with 23% Female, 77% Male, 30% Private sectors, 30% NGOs, 40% Government, 30% Farmers, 30% Researchers/Scientists, 60% Policy and 30% Youths.

PAFPNet portal: 49, 102 + 3132+ Page views with 3132 users.

To become a PAFPNet member, please send an email to AnjuM@spc.int



What's coming up?

DATE (2017)	EVENT	VENUE
29-31 August	The Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services (PIRAS) Annual Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update/ Launch of the Pacific Agriculture Information System (PAIS) • Endorse the Research & Extension Strategy (RES) 	Nadi, Fiji
31 August – 1 Sept	APP Steering Committee meeting	Nadi, Fiji
August	Taro training & small APP Planning meeting	Apia, Samoa
August – October	Fiji Kava Quality Manual & Kava Standard roll-outs (training) with FCLC	Fiji (Central, Northern, Namosi)
10-13 September	GFRAS Annual Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pacific Agriculture Information System (PAIS) awareness; and • Research & Extension Strategy (RES) Awareness 	Townsville & Ingham, Australia