

PAPP Activities – August 2016

1. Fiji – New Caledonia Farmer Organisation Capacity Exchange

The European Union (EU) supported SPC Intra-ACP Pacific Agriculture Policy Project (PAPP) Team Leader Vili Caniogo visited facilities in New Caledonia with a team from the Fiji Crops and Livestock Council (FCLC) on the 22 – 26 August, 2016. There were around 17 stakeholders that participated in this exchange.

Following the signature of the MOU “Network of Chambers in the Pacific”, the purpose of the visit is to strengthen the links between Fiji Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) / FCLC and the Chamber of Agriculture (CANC) in New Caledonia & partners in order to develop technical cooperation economic development between both countries.

FCLC has 11,000 farmers, making it one of the largest National Farmer Organisations (NFOs) in the Pacific. The efforts have been funded by EU and implemented through the Pacific Agriculture Policy Project (PAPP).

SPC, through PAPP is helping to build stronger service provision of Pacific NFOs for their member farmers through exchanges like these.

2. Boost for animal disease surveillance in Tonga

SPC PAPP’s Animal Production Extension Officer conducted a week-long training (22-26 August) on animal disease surveillance in Tongatapu, to ensure that Tonga maintains a proactive animal disease surveillance system that will safeguard livestock products for human consumption and reduce the risks of zoonotic diseases spreading to humans.

This follows with increasing dependence on livestock and livestock products from the Pacific region, there is a need to improve animal disease surveillance systems in order to safeguard the livestock sector from exotic diseases.

According to the World Animal Health Information Database (WAHIS), the Pacific region is generally free from major transboundary zoonotic diseases, including Avian Influenza (HPAI) as well as Foot and Mouth Diseases (FMD), and the establishment of better animal disease surveillance systems will help maintain this status.

The 17 participants received practical training in recognising animal diseases through the different body systems, for example respiratory systems; collecting livestock population data through farmer interviews; enhancing skills in developing representative surveys for the detection of animal diseases, as well as processing of samples for laboratory analysis.

The training also included a field survey to detect the presence of Brucellosis and Leptospirosis in pigs from 14 villages in the Central, Eastern and Western parts of Tongatapu.

The training is part of SPC’s wide-ranging technical and scientific support for Tonga, based on the government’s development priorities which have been set out in a five-year Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Government of Tonga and SPC last year to strengthen mutual cooperation.

3. Timor Leste farmer organisations signs LOA with PIFON

As part of the current partnership in place between the EU funded Pacific Agriculture Policy Project (PAPP) and the Pacific Islands Farmer Organisation Network (PIFON), a scoping study was undertaken in Timor Leste in February this year. The scoping mission aimed at assessing the current status of farmer organisations and on opportunities (for existing National Farmer Organisations (NFOs)) for engagement with PIFON, is / as part of the capacity building work between the two partners, in supporting farmer organisations in strategic planning, business planning and preparation of funding proposals.

The New inclusion to the PIFON network, ANAPROFIKO, the National Association of Commercial Seed Producers, is now officially the National Implementing Agency (NIA) for Timor Leste under the International Fund for Agricultural Development and Swiss Development Corporation funded MTCP II program. ANAPROFIKO is the national umbrella association of seed producer groups in Timor Leste and has signed its Letter of Agreement (LOA) with PIFON on 23rd August, 2016. ANAPROFIKO promotes the development of commercial seed trade to achieve seed security and seed sovereignty leading to food and nutrition security.

Activities under its MTCP II program work plan for 2016 include training on seed quality control and proposal writing.

4. PAPP and Sustainable Agriculture. ESCAP-SPC workshop 9-11 August.

Regional initiatives supported by PAPP such as strengthening agricultural policy, agricultural statistics, and research and extension services are critical for supporting the development of sustainable and resilient agriculture. This was clearly demonstrated during the discussions at a south-south forum between Asia and Pacific government officials on sustainable and resilient agriculture.

The forum took place between the 9th and 11th of August and was organised by the United Nations Economics and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the Pacific Community (SPC). The forum brought together government officials and experts with the aim of sharing information on tools and practices for mainstreaming climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into national agricultural plans.

The PAPP team took part in the discussions and presented on the development of regional strategies for agriculture, agricultural statistics and research and extension services. Discussions amongst the group underscored the importance of stronger agricultural extension services for helping farmers implement practices which will help their resilience to disasters and adapt to climate change. It also re-emphasized the importance of regional indicators to help monitor and promote sustainable agriculture and food security. These discussions help underscore the importance of PAPP's ongoing initiatives. The outcomes of the ESCAP-SPC workshop will be presented to Heads of Agriculture in Vanuatu in 2017 where PAPP also hopes that the regional strategies on statistics and extension services will be put forward for endorsement.

5. Farmer Breadfruit learning exchange between Fiji and Tonga

A training organised by the Pacific Islands Farmer Organisation Network (PIFON) supported by the EU funded Pacific Agriculture Policy Project (PAPP) facilitated a breadfruit learning exchange for 11 farmers from Tonga and Fiji. The group visited the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT) on the 5th August, 2016.

The farmers were briefed on tissue culture breadfruit systems, demonstrated and practiced the technique of transferring tissue culture plantlets to the pots in the screen house for the hardening process. Activities and projects performed by CePaCT were also presented to the participants.

The Pacific Breadfruit Collection plot contains the diversity of Breadfruit trees collected from countries around the Pacific (the Dreu Lo, Dina, Nailega, Koqo & Balekana from Fiji; Puupuu from Kiribati; and the Ulu Fiti, Puou, Ma'afala & Ulu Ea- Puaa from Samoa). The farmers were quite interested when taking a tour of the Breadfruit plot and the methods of propagating breadfruit.

6. Samoa Launches New Five Year Agriculture Sector plan

The Samoan government recently launched the Agriculture Sector Plan (ASP) 2016-2020, aiming at improving the quality of life in Samoa and advancing Samoa's attainment of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

PAPP in collaboration with FAO and the World Bank SACEO project, provided technical assistance to the Samoa Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in reviewing the previous ASP (2011-2015) and developing their new Agriculture Sector Plan (2016-2020) which commenced implementation in July 2016. The launch event was also partly funded through an SPC Financing Agreement in place with Samoa MAF.

The Agriculture sector plan aims at strengthening government partnerships, particularly with the private sector, Non-Government Organizations (NGO's) and development partners to leverage agriculture's potential to promote and enhance health, prosperity, job creation and resilience. The plan includes an implementation plan and performance monitoring framework.

Consultations involved all stakeholders from Savaii and Upolu.

Planning is underway for an official launch of the Samoa Agriculture Policy Bank later in 2016, and the Agriculture Public Expenditure Review (AgPER), occurring in partnership with the World bank, is progressing.

Visit the Samoa Agriculture Policy Bank (APB) <http://pafpnet.spc.int/policy-bank/countries/samoa> for the new ASP.

7. A supply chain and financial investment proposal for virgin coconut oil to the Australasian markets from Malekula in Vanuatu.

The Cocoa Growers Association (CGA) is a farmer's organization based out of Malekula in Vanuatu with a total membership of approximately 600 farmers who are predominantly small holders of cocoa, coconut and kava plantations. The association was born out of farmer's desperation in 2005 to establish a long term marketing solution for their cocoa crops. Unstable prices and unscrupulous business tactics more than often had put these small holder farmers at a disadvantage offering low buying prices for their dry and wet cocoa beans. At the end of the day the farmers felt that take home money was not worth the effort.

Recently overseas investors in the Australian market have expressed interest in acquiring Virgin Coconut Oil from CGA. This has sparked new interest where CGA sought the assistance of the Pacific Community to conduct an inventory of CGA's member plantations and to develop a supply chain model that would enable CGA to tap into the VCO markets in Australia.

Data collection methodologies involved the use of handheld GPS units in field visits and boundary traversing of individual farmer plantations, interview questionnaires and data collection, spatial data maps obtained from the Ministry of Lands and Forestry in Port Vila.

8. Organic farming – A farm-to-table approach

With technical support from PAPP a technical assistance trip followed on from the inception visit and workshops for the “Engaging Youth in Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu in Organic farming – A farm-to-table” approach took place on the 20 June - 8 July 2016 in Vanuatu.

The primary purpose was to finalize the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) organic standards which was partly funded by the EU Pacific Agriculture Policy Project with the Farm Support Association (FSA) based on crop group, identify and develop specific Extension materials required for training, follow up on 1st PGS training update, farmer registration and initial certification training on other interested grower groups and individual.

The visit also facilitated identification of grower groups who are interested in PGS which resulted in a total of 8 groups comprising of around 1000 farmers. Majority of these groups are existing ones with proven performance on the market but it’s just the organic certification part they need hence the PGS training guide. Also need to mention the strong support from government which really assist in this work. The role of Farm Support Association (FSA) as the national implementing agency was clarified and areas where they need capacity support or to delegate to other partners was clearly identified.

9. *Talanoa* (informal dialogue) with Media in Samoa on strengthened Pacific agriculture reporting with a focus on Agritourism and capacity building on KM storytelling

Ten key media stakeholders from both Samoa and American Samoa, representatives from the Government of Samoa and social media influencers from Samoa participated in a *talanoa* session to develop awareness on Agritourism and Knowledge Management storytelling techniques ahead of the 2nd Pacific Agribusiness Forum on Monday 29 August, 2016 in Apia, Samoa.

Key outcomes emerging from the *talanoa* included the need to strengthen links between government ministry focal points and press officers with media, improving media access to key evidence based agricultural policy information as well as creating more awareness around available information (such as the existing Pacific Agriculture Policy Banks).

Participants were also lead through capacity building scenarios to strengthen a more KM focused style of storytelling to be incorporated into reporting on the Agriculture sector with a focus on Agritourism.

The session was the precursor to communications support by the PAPP project towards the 2nd Agribusiness Forum which included coordination of local media in Samoa, social media reporting (with previously trained youth bloggers from Fiji and Tonga) and the development of KM stories for independent blogs, media and CTA KM4ARD blog.