



FACULTY OF BUSINESS
AND ECONOMICS

School of Tourism and
Hospitality Management

- The University of the South Pacific
Private Mail Bag, Laucala Campus
Suva, Fiji

Ph: (679) 323 2107

Fax: (679) 323 1510

www.usp.ac.fj/tourism

What are the opportunities for Agro-Tourism in Fiji

Greg Cornwall

Coordinator of Hotel Management Program

School of Tourism and Hospitality

Management

Faculty of Business and Economics

The University of the South Pacific



Agro-Tourism

- Help farmers, build bures on farms
- Link this to volunteer tourism – back packer/grey nomads
- Build dorms on farms and have backpackers pay farmers to help them farm

Helping farmers

- Teach expatriate and local chefs how to cook local food
- Teach farmers what to grow for hotels/resorts for 12 months of the year
- On each farm have an export section and a local supply section
- Create links between farmers and hotels, teach them marketing, finance
- Create co-operatives for the farmers genuinely interested and committed to the year round supply
- Local supply to hotels leads to exports as visitors develop a taste for a Contemporary Fijian Cuisine

HoP Sigatoka heart of palm



Island fries



Introduction: Importance of Localized Linkages between Tourism & Food

- Local fresh food supplies to hotels, restaurants, resorts generate positive impacts on domestic agricultural production, farm incomes
- Import substitution (64% food 66% beverage is imported, Economic Statistics Division, 2012)
- Farm to Table Tourism = CSR strategy
- Increased usage by resorts for local produce: improve profitability, living standards of rural areas (an alternative to predominantly subsistence livelihoods)



Food and Tourism

- Tourists spend 24% of expenditure in Fiji on food and 10% on beverage (Bureau of Stats, 2013)
- Food quality is not rated highly priority on the tourist survey (MOT)



Food and Tourism trends

- Concern about environment
- Interested in health/well-being
- Food is a significant aspect of the tourist's experience of a destination ('glocal').
- Driven by growing trends for authenticity & need to have a high-quality experience



Crop agency project – Taiwan/Republic of China 2011/2012.....cont



Nazim and Atu

- The project has identified two farmers who supply to the hotels:—Nazim from Natadola and Atu from Lobau who received training and assistance from Taiwanese Technical Mission to diversify their crops and supply Holiday Inn and Tanoa Plaza

White eggplant



Musket Cove Island Resort (Mamanuca Islands)



- **Reduction of food imports** – Malolo Lailai organic farm Musket Cove created its own organic farm in 2002 planting pineapples and fruit trees to add to the abundance of coconuts followed by planting of vegetables, fruit and herbs.
- Currently (2015) harvesting their first batch of honey & developing coconut plantation- oils, coconut candies, etc., to sell via their own brand.

Musket Cove – case study

Fruit – mangoes, bananas, avocado, pawpaw, sour sop, watermelon, honeydew, short coconut trees, guava, sugar cane, mandarin, lime, cumquat and passion fruit

Root crops – cassava, kumala, dalo

Vegetables – tomatoes, long beans, capsicum, lettuce eggplant, pumpkin, cabbages, cauliflower, broccoli, chili, spring onions, potatoes, cucumber, bele, sweet corn

Musket Cove.....cont

Herbs – mint, parsley, lemon grass, dill, coriander, basil, sage, rosemary

Crucial sustainable principles:

- No chemicals or pesticides used
- Soil fertilizer created from composting kitchen waste, seaweed, shredded office paper., etc.
- Over production, products then sold off to resorts (jams and juices).

Musket Cove nursery



Use of local food at Musket Cove

The Musket Cove Resort menu structured to ensure usage of organic farm produce

- **Breakfast** – lolo buns, purini, babakau, fresh lemon leaf tea, lemon grass tea (cobo), fresh fruit. Bakery items cooked daily, served with home made jam and jellies
- **Lunch** – salads, vegetables and freshly baked sandwich bread & rolls
- **Dinner** – seafood in coconut, lovo, pig on a spit with local greens and vegetables, curry vegetable with home made chutney

Meals cont.....

- Nama, seaweed (lumi), octopus, kaikoso, crabs
- Sugarcane used as skewers
- **Desserts** – coconut pie, cassava or pawpaw with sugar syrup, fresh fruits
- **Soups** – pumpkin, lettuce, dhal, rourou, tomato
- **Nibbles** – cassava, kumala, vudi, dalo & coconut chips
- **Juices** – fresh lemon, coconut (bu), mango, citrus

What Musket Cove can't grow, is purchased off local farmers and the prison services

Sinalei Resort (Samoa)

- Sinalei buys produce first from it's own staff gardens, and weekly from Apia markets.
- Other commercial growers supply lettuces, mangosteen, rambutan and other specialty fruits.
- Marketing Philosophy: 'Fresh, local and honest food.'
- Local fishermen provide octopus, fish, lobster or they shop from the markets.
- Even pork and beef are supplied from local sources.

Pacific Products for Use in Hotels

- Use of local produce
 - root crops for crisps,
 - dried fruit for baked goods, peanuts for snacks, vegetables such as bele, sweet corn, uto, in salads, tuna, kai in pasta dishes



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Sustainable tourism

- Support and promote community vegetable gardens for resorts
- Ensure tourism activities do not interfere with fragile vegetation and wildlife including mangrove and coral reefs
- Ensure reduction of pollution and waste generation



Facilitators

- Resorts want good market gardens in villages near resorts for guests to tour and to supply their kitchens
- Hotels keen to buy local as imports are very expensive
- Chefs & farmers to co-operate so as to cut down on dependence of middlemen
- Use local ingredients in a new way that is appealing to the tourists' palate



Recommendations

- Research & product replacement
- Seed research – corn, tomatoes
- Teach expatriate, local chefs, cookery teachers and students to cook “Contemporary Pacific Cuisine”
- Expand Pacific organic farming
- Increase use of local food items in menus
- Improve link between agriculture, education & tourism ministries
- Introduce new tropical fruit & vegetable lines to farmers



Recommendations.....cont

- Create an accreditation with the Ministry responsible for Tourism: “Here is our confirmation that your institution is this % local”.
- Tourism excellence awards to include a prize for best village farmer supplying resorts fresh produce
- Ministry responsible for Agriculture to get donors to sponsor retired overseas and local farmers to train young women and men in resort land owner villages
- Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Tourism to raise the profile of cooks and farmers

Further potential

- Farming of micro greens, nama, mushrooms, soya beans, garlic, spices, bamboo shoots, baby corn, mushrooms, coffee, asparagus, berries, mangosteen, rambutan, rose apple, long purple beans
- Production of advocado & candle nut oil
- Creating a 'Pacific Cuisine' will improve exports, as tourists will create a demand for our local produce

