

Span



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USP at Alafua celebrates students achievements



USP Chancellor, Ulu-o-Tokelau, His Excellency Alikali Faipule Kelihiano Kalolo award degrees, diplomas and certificates



The University of the South Pacific graduation in Samoa.

The University of the South Pacific Alafua Campus in Samoa ended its 2012 academic year with 91 students graduating from various disciplines including agriculture, arts, commerce and science.

The delayed graduation was a happy event that also gave the graduands and their families a good reason to celebrate after Cyclone Evan. The graduation was cancelled from its original date on the 14th December 2012 and moved to the 17th January 2013 because of Cyclone Evan.

USP Chancellor, Ulu-o-Tokelau, His Excellency Alikali Faipule Kelihiano Kalolo conferred degrees and awarded diplomas and certificates while Pro-Chancellor and Chair of the University Council Mr. Ikbai Jannif officiated the graduation ceremony which was also attended by the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Dr Esther Williams who delivered the graduation address.

Some SAFT graduates that graduated in Samoa

Master of Agriculture

Ramona Sulifoa

Bachelor of Agriculture

Sateki Fangupo

Rennier Gadabu

Postgraduate Diploma in Agriculture

Hikaione Loumoli

Binesh Prasad

Makilua Puniani

Ratu Toloi Vasuidreketi

Diploma in Tropical Agriculture

Phillip Reti

Sama Sapakuka

Postgraduate Diploma in Agriculture Economics

Dinesh Kodituwakku

Inside this Issue

Acting VC Congratulates USP graduands in Samoa2

Strengthening Floriculture Development in Tonga3

Emeritus Professor Roger Field has been made a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit5

Food supply at the market affected by Cyclone Evan6

Yam a root crop for cyclone season7

New Director of the USP Pacific Centre for the Environment and Sustainable Development (PACE-SD).....8

Grafting, landscaping and organic farming: John Oimae9

Acting VC Congratulates USP graduands in Samoa



“Graduates, we have often said that your success today is not the end but the start of another journey. You should all be proud of your achievements and I join your families, your governments, your sponsors in congratulating you. I urge you to be good ambassadors of USP and serve your communities and countries well.”

“A hearty congratulations to you all. You have all worked hard and now reaping the benefits. It is pleasing to see a number of our alumni returning to do postgraduate studies. There is no end to

learning. Lifelong learning is important and key to our development as Pacific peoples.”

“With your certificate, qualifications and your knowledge, I am sure that you are ready to go out and serve your country and community, and the region and also the world. Use wisely the knowledge gained to “change the world.”

“Congratulations to you all, and I wish you well. The future is what you make of it and much is expected of you. Faafetai lava.”



Strengthening Floriculture Development in Tonga

Fihinoa Fakaulu



Tonga has reached a state of development through floriculture, which was done in four day training in the month of November 2012.

According to, Chair of the Flower Girl Association in Tonga, Tuna Fielakepa, the purpose of this Project is to find some way to help women.

"In the launching of the training, Dr. Vili Fuavao, FAO Subregional Representative mentioned that the purpose of this project is to find some way to help women."

"The reason behind this is because women are identified as the backbone of community development, if we look at development in building or in water, women are the first one to participate, so it is accepted that since they are the backbone to this they will perform the project successfully", Mrs. Fielakepa added.

Three purposes were put out while the training was on track, first is that this project is for commercial purpose, second is environmental purpose and third is part of the preparation of the Kingdom for the Pacific Mini-Game to be held here in 2019.

Mrs. Fielakepa elaborated more on the three purposes.." the first purpose is to give women an opportunity to do something in a very simple way to gain money, not only that but when women grow flowers, it will help to beautify the environment and help in advertising our country in tourism and lastly this is part of the preparation for the Pacific Mini-games which will be held here in Tonga in 2019".

Director, Institute for Research, Extension and Training in Agriculture (IRETA), of the University of the South Pacific, Alafua Campus Apia, Samoa, Mohammed Umar with Dr Sagawa from Hawaii were here in Tonga to conduct the training, which started at Tongatapu and ended in the island of Vava'u.

Meanwhile according to Mr. Umar, while here in Tonga he said that they spent some time looking at the range of ornamentals grown and traded in Tonga and general interest among growers to get involved in floriculture production. We found through our consultations that within government and the community the interest was very high.

Continued to page 4



Strengthening Floriculture Development in Tonga

Continued from page 3



"It was wonderful, when I found out that many elderly ladies that participated in the training were retired teachers and principals and a lot of others who are highly educated women, and that really helped, because they are the ones who will take the lead, motivate others, stand up and reinforce the kind of messages that will make this project sustainable," Mr. Umar added.

The Flower Girl Association, is looking forward to perform their immediate and first goal which is to try and make the project succeed.

"One of our immediate mission and goal is to make sure that the plants that were distributed are well looked after, this is through meetings so that we can see what problems do the members of the association are faced with so that we can help out," Mrs. Fielakepa added

Meanwhile, Mrs. Fielakepa said that one of their working plans for the future is to train women on how to run a business.

"Since commercial purpose is one key purpose of this project we are looking forward to training participants on how to run business, because in that

way they will learn how to make their business sustainable, by learning simple things in business such as, budgeting their money and saving."

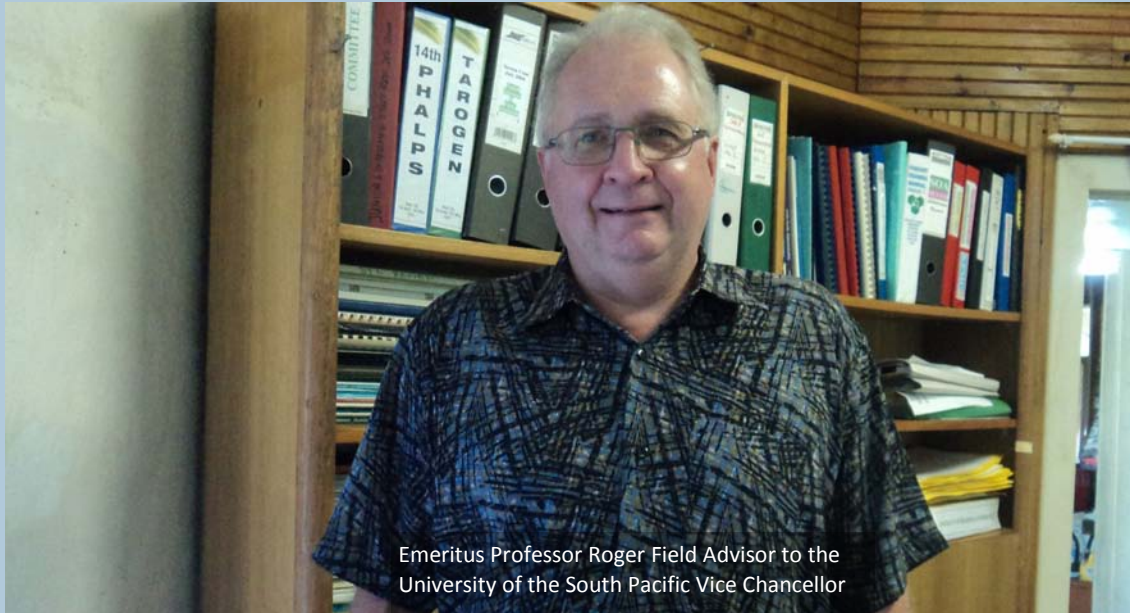
The Flower Girl Committee has more than a 100 members as of now. For the Tongatapu training more than 140, largely women, turned up for the training.

The Tonga Floriculture project will have 6,000 anthurium plants and 7,000 orchids both dendrobium and phalaenopsis. The two sites chosen for this project are Tongatapu and Vava'u. In this training, 140 largely women participated and planted over 4,000 anthurium and 800 orchids. In Vavau, close to 40 again largely women were trained and they planted around 2,000 anthuriums and 200 orchids. As part of this project all participants will be supplied with plants once they have established their own nurseries.

The Project was funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization or the FAO, with a joint partnership between the FAO and the Government of Tonga through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Fisheries.



Agriculture Advisor to USP Vice Chancellor made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit



Emeritus Professor Roger Field Advisor to the University of the South Pacific Vice Chancellor

Emeritus Professor Roger Field Advisor to the USP Vice Chancellor who also dedicated 41 years to Lincoln University has been made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to education and land-based industries.

Previously as the Vice-Chancellor of Lincoln University Emeritus Professor Roger Field promoted agriculture and the land-based industries of New Zealand.

Professor Field said he felt honoured, humbled and very pleased to be recognised for this work and also acknowledged those who worked with him to achieve so much.

"I've been very fortunate to lead a strong team of people at the Lincoln University."

"I recognise without the support from a lot of people that there would be no awards. There needs to be some acknowledgement that you cannot do all these things by yourself."

"Its very important to recognise the importance of education and research to support agriculture and the land-based industries."

As the Advisor to the USP Vice Chancellor he assists

in developing Agriculture in the Alafua Campus by providing assistance and advice in the many different areas such as funding and others. One of the objectives is to lift the profile of the Alafua campus.

He emphasised the importance of the recognition of agriculture in the South Pacific as it is very vital to the local economies and future threats of climate change. This will also be part of his work as the Advisor to the USP Vice Chancellor.

Professor Field was a member of the senior management of Lincoln and University from the mid 1990s and Vice-Chancellor from 2004 to 2012. He was appointed Professor of Plant science in 1986 and subsequently became Head of the Department of Plant Science. He became Emeritus Professor of Plant Science in 2004 on becoming Vice-Chancellor. He was a member of the New Zealand Vice-Chancellor's committee from 2003 and was Chair in 2008 and 2009. He served on the Council of the Association of Commonwealth Universities from 2008 to 2011. He has been an Academic Auditor for the Australian Universities Quality Agency and is currently a member of the University Quality Assurance International Board, Dubai. He was also the Director of Te Tapuae o Rehua and Chair of the South Island Dairying Development Centre.

Food supply at the market affected by Cyclone Evan

Samoa Bureau Statistics



Produce sold at Local market



Produce sold at Local market

Agricultural food supplies according to the Samoa Bureau of Statistics' survey at the Local Market in December 2012, recorded a downturn of 14 percent in overall volume. This loss in volume was due to bad effects and flooding caused by cyclone Evan which led to decreases in supplies of most agricultural produce with the exception of taro, coconut and taro palagi. Despite the negative effects of cyclone in December 2012, current volume was 4 percent higher than that in December 2011.

With limited availability, the average price level in the month under review increased 4 percent from the previous month but when compared to December 2011, current price level was 37 percent lower. The increase in average price level in the month under review can be attributed to the rise in the prices of most commodities with the exception of ta'amu and breadfruit.

Taro seemed unaffected by the wet weather in December 2012 with its supplies increasing 37 percent. Strong demand for taro also pushed its average price up 10 percent. When compared with December 2011 with the prolonged dry season damaging many taro crops, current taro volume was four times higher while price was 56 percent lower.

The average supply of banana, taamu, yam, breadfruit, vegetable produce such as cabbage decreased compared to the previous month and December 2011. This was not the case for taro, taro palagi and coconuts as their supply increased compared to the previous month and December 2011.

The number of sellers at the market on the days surveyed in December 2012 was reduced 23 percent to 146 from last month, a level that was also 23 percent lower than that of December 2011 as most agricultural produce sellers were absent from the market due to the bad weather.



Produce sold at Local market

Yam a root crop for cyclone season

Cyclones and recent floods are a regular threat to Samoa which often leads to injuries and loss of human lives as well as the destruction of homes, food and seed stocks. In addition, damages to agricultural production leads to loss of main income source, which affects their ability to cover day-to-day expenses, such as food, water, electricity and medical fees.

Cash crops, such as bananas and taro, are often severely damaged during cyclones and flooding, uprooting and flooding the former and causing rotting in the latter.

To meet food needs, at-risk communities may cope with food shortages by developing cultivation techniques for root crop tubers, such as yams. Yet, even root crops can be damaged and lost through cyclones and floods, leaving villagers nearly destitute.

However, the losses to yam crops can be minimized if the cultivation techniques are improved and the crop is domesticated. The yam is hardy and regrows quickly after the withering of the above-ground part of the plant. The yam has higher yield for the area planted and can be grown in green houses, pots or in the garden because it does not require large amounts of land or soil.

Yams are an important staple food crop in the Pacific and widely cultivated in most of the Pacific Islands but the methods of production and storage vary considerably from place to place.

Also the times for planting, harvesting and storage vary. Occasionally, yams are left unharvested. But the most common practice is to harvest the yams and store them in a special structure —diffused light houses. At harvest time, many yams are immediately eaten or taken to the market. But most are stored to be eaten or marketed during the 5 months or longer following harvest. Some of the harvested yams will be used as planting setts for the next season and may be stored up to 6 months.



Source: FAO & IRETA

New Director of the Pacific Centre for the Environment and Sustainable Development (PACE-SD), USP Appointed

Dr Esther Williams (DVC—USP)

Professor Elisabeth A. Holland was appointed the new Director of the Pacific Centre for the Environment and Sustainable Development (PACE-SD).

Professor Holland is an internationally recognized scientist for her work on the Earth System. She was a co-recipient of the 2007 Noble Peace Prize for her part in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). She is an author of 4 of the 5 IPCC reports, serving as a US, German and now Fiji representative. Professor Holland is a Leopold Fellow, was a Professor at the Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry, and served as a Senior Scientist and Leader of the Biogeosciences Program at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado, USA where she worked for more than 2 decades. While relatively new to the Pacific Islands region, Professor Holland is passionate about working collaboratively to weave together science, policy and traditional knowledge to sail towards a sustainable future for Pacific communities.



esteemed scientist and specialist join us. Her leadership, her passion and knowledge of work on Climate Change and the Earth System will greatly raise the University's profile, leadership and work in this important area.

The University is fortunate to have such an

We welcome Elisabeth to the University and wish her well.

Storing yams

Jill W. Wilson (IRETA) & Linda S. Hamilton (SPRAD)

In the Pacific Islands, yams are frequently stored in barns. These can be simple in design like the Tongan barn, or they can be very elaborate like the ceremonial storage barns of Papua New Guinea.

In other countries, yams are stored on covered tables or hanging one by one from an elevated horizontal pole. These elevated horizontal poles are made of wood or bamboo and are supported 1-2 metres above the ground.

Whatever the type of store used, the following principles should be considered when building the structure: adequate shade; protection from rain; good ventilation; security against animals, rats, thieves

Before the yams are put into the store, sanitation of the store, selection of sound tubers and during the period of storage regular inspection, rapid disposal of spoiling tubers and continued sanitation are important.

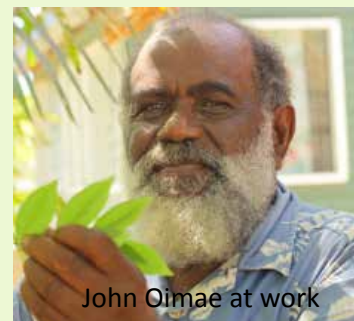
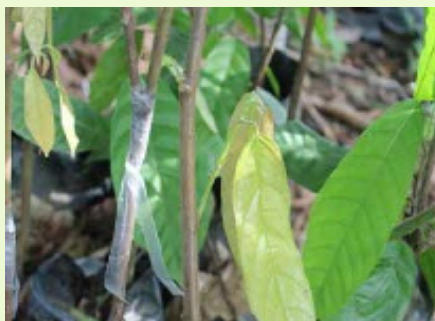
These features are important when building the store: shade can be provided by either live or dead plant material or from iron sheeting; live shade is obtained by building the store under the shade of growing trees, or by planting posts of fast-growing trees around the store; other plant material shading can be made from palm leaves, mats and grass thatch. Iron Sheetting can also be used but it will keep the store too hot unless it is also shaded with live shade or palm leaves.



Grafting, landscaping and organic farming: John Oimae



Oimae says grafting provides new potential for farmers.



John Oimae at work

AgrikulsaNius

A mango tree that produces fruit all year round, a rose bush or a hibiscus plant with different coloured flowers or even bush limes and mandarin fruits growing on one tree. All this says John Oimae is possible thanks to the power of grafting.

Oimae a long time Dodo Creek soil specialist is an avid fan of grafting. Today he runs his own landscaping business in Honiara, growing plants in his own nursery for landscaping jobs around the capital.

Among his clients are the Central Bank, Kitano Mendana Hotel, the National Parliament and now MAL.

Grafting is only done on request due to a shortage of poly bags in the country, but the topic still brings joy to Oimae, who spoke to Agrikulsa Nius of the endless possibilities that grafting offers. "For farmers who want to harvest mangos I can give them trees that season throughout the year and ones that are short, and easy to harvest."

While grafting is something he does for fun, much of his professional life has been dedicated to soils having spent over 15 years in the Ministry's Research Division, classifying soils across Solomon Islands.

"I've travelled across the country drilling and taking samples of all the different land types. All that information I still have right here in my head."

It's this strong knowledge about the state of soils across the country that has made Oimae a strong advocate of organic farming. He says organic farming is the best way of overcoming soil degeneration that is common in his home village in Kwara'ae and surrounding areas.

"We did a survey of these areas and found that only 14 per cent top soil is left, while in the interior of

Malaita there is 39 per cent. This is simply because of over cultivation through the generations has depleted the soil of essential nutrients."

He says making the change to organic farming is the best way to counter poor quality soil and bring fertility back.

"When it comes to soil fertility we can't waste anymore time. We have to care for our soil. Where will we feed our people? Our future is in agriculture."

Organic farming says Oimae is quite simple – using anything that rots to enrich soil quality, from kitchen scraps such as kumara peel to vegetable scraps and leaves from trees.

All this is packed into a box, where it rots and is broken down into compost. It's essential that you can see worms eating through the compost as they are the ones that bring nitrogen into the soil, adds Oimae.

"Plants need nitrogen, without it they can't grow properly or more importantly produce fruits."

The results from organic farming are now starting to show in Malaita with Oimae pointing to the success of farmers in the Dala area, where taro has returned after more than a generation.

"The taro taste even better than the ones grown inland, this shows what organic farming can do."

"I also believe in organic because of the quality of the food. When you go inside the stores the food is all chemicals. Even the chickens are full of chemicals. Organic is all natural."

He says the health benefits of organic farming offer a potential marketing tool for farmers. Oimae is adamant that people especially the expat community are willing to pay more for quality organic produce.

"Organic means no chemicals; if you grow an organic garden and you label it as organic it means it's pure." •

January Images



Florist who conducted floral art demonstration



Participants of the Floriculture training in Vavau



USP Chancellor, Ulu-o-Tokelau, His Excellency Alikali Faipule Kelihiano Kalolo conferring degrees



Dr Sagawa meets the Queen of Tonga



Phalaenopsis orchids



USP graduation in Samoa