

Span



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The need to invest in ecological farming

The impacts of climate change on agriculture and food production is taking its toll not only in the Pacific Island countries but globally. Year after year, there are natural disasters which, in most cases, overturn the efforts to promote sustainable food production. This oftentimes results in food insecurity with a seemingly never-ending reliance to importation.

The strong presence of environmentalists in agribusiness discussions manifests the wider acceptance of ecological farming as a more resilient and sustainable model to produce diverse and healthy food in the face of erratic climate patterns.

In the past decades, most of the agribusiness ventures in developed countries, where population dynamics dictate production demand, are geared towards expansion of the chemical-intensive industrial agriculture model. This model, in most respects, is flawed requiring highly stable climates, optimal conditions for highly specialised seeds, vast areas devoted to monoculture destroying biodiversity, and dependence on chemicals which pollute the environment. The high cost of production is tantamount to high food prices which impacts the world's poorer people.

The recent disasters prompt investors to look at diversifying farming systems. There seems to be a growing inclination towards a system based on diversity of nature to produce food for all: the diversity of seeds and plants; the diversity of many different crops grown at the same time in the same field; the diversity of insects which pollinate (like bees) or eliminate pests; the diversity of farming systems mixing crops with livestock. The result is a diverse range of food that is healthy for both people and the planet. This is what is popularly known as ecological farming.

“A good example of how ecological farming builds resilience to climate change is growing crops with beans, which are protein-rich and flavourful, but also can help play a role in climate adaptation. Scientists from Wageningen University in the Netherlands recently found that beans greatly improve poor soils, increase productivity of maize when grown with them, and respond well to drought. They also have multiple uses for food, animal feed, and soil fertility. These scientists found that growing maize and beans next to each other increased income by 67% without the use of any chemical fertilizers and farmers were interested in adopting it.” (extracted from a Blogpost by [Kumi Naidoo](#))



Garden plots of SAFT students embracing ecological farming.

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JICA and MNRE of Samoa bared output of its Forestry Preservation Programme

In an effort to pre-empt the massive deforestation of Samoa, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) teamed up with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to undertake a sustainable forest management programme. A seminar was conducted on the 19th of June 2014 in Tanoa Hotel to share the results of their air survey on the state of Samoa's forestland to the stakeholders. The Samoa National Land Cover map version 2013 was presented with suitable land uses.

Associate Minister Afioga Tufuga Gafuoleata Faitua thanked the Government and people of Japan through JICA for the assistance extended to the Samoan government in the form of capacity building of MNRE staff and upgrading of facilities to enable a long-term sustainable forest management. He also thanked the stakeholders and the Asia Air Survey Co, Ltd. for collaborating with MNRE staff in the generation of useful data and ground truthing.



His Excellency Kazumasa Shibuta, the Ambassador of Japan to Samoa, is thankful that they had the opportunity to study Samoa's vegetation and the environmental degradation in the country. He disclosed that Japan initiated a number of programs for climate change impact mitigation and was happy that the US\$3 million support to Samoa for sustainable forest management and ecological restoration is not for naught with the great progress reported. He attributes the good outcome to Samoan culture which is deeply rooted on beauty and nature.

The handing over of the final project report with the current Samoa National Land Cover Map ensued.

Results of the survey indicate that that there was only 3% degradation of Samoa's forests from 1999. With the technical and infrastructure support provided to MNRE, it is hoped that the trend will be further improved.

The same project implemented the revision of the Samoa Forest Resource Information System (SAMFRIS) which will allow MNRE to assess carbon stock and to predict and manage climate change threats, invasive species and natural disasters. It is now upon MNRE to manage the data sets properly with the training provided to the staff. It is indeed a project outcome which Samoa will benefit much.

The seminar also provided an opportunity for selected staff and Agriculture students of USP to learn the project outcome and how this will benefit the agriculture sector of Samoa. The students, in particular, expressed appreciation that they were recognised to have stake on the state of Samoa's forest resources.



The need to invest in ecological farming ... *continued from p1*

Brazil takes the lead in having a strong ecological farming movement. This is manifested in successfully pushing for the adoption of a national policy on agro-ecology (the science of ecological farming). Countries around the world need to look at investing in the same direction to come up with more sustainable food production initiatives.

The PICs and other small island developing countries, while contributing insignificantly to the acceleration of global climatic change, are the most vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change. As a resident of one of the small island developing country, it is my ardent hope that various intergovernmental initiatives globally will point to ecological farming as the only path to ensure healthy food for people, protect the environment and cope with climate change. Such innovations may not be quite economically appealing but there is greater likelihood that sustainable food security will be achieved in the longer term. Hopefully, this will be a subject in the forthcoming Small Islands Developing States Conference to be held in Samoa from the 28th August to 4th September 2014.

S.P.C. treaty - funded project supports first Pacific breeder's network

At a recent workshop for the Project Strengthening the resilience of Pacific agricultural systems to climate change through enhancing access to and use of diversity, held at the Vanuatu Agricultural Research and Training Centre (V.A.R.T.C.) on Espirito Santo, participants established the first Pacific breeders' network. The network is the way forward to address the lack of breeders in the Pacific to sustain breeding research, and to strengthen the capacity of countries to carry out breeding. As a long-term solution to address current challenges to food security, it is vital to breed a generation of resilient varieties of food crops that are rich in nutrients and tolerant to climate change and emerging pests and diseases.



PROJECT STRENGTHENING: Participants of the first Pacific Breeders Network attending the training-of-trainers workshop.

The project is implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (S.P.C.) through its Land Resources Division's Food and Nutrition Security Programme and its Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT). It is funded by the Benefit-sharing Fund of the F.A.O. (UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation) International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. One of the components of the project includes a training-of-trainers workshop on participatory plant breeding and plant varietal selection.

The workshop was conducted by S.P.C. plant breeder, Tolo Iosefa, and V.A.R.T.C. technical experts, Tiata Sieye, Marie Melteras and Tari Molisale, with technical support provided by Dr Roger Malapa, Acting Chief Executive Officer of V.A.R.T.C. and root crop breeder, and Dr Abraham Kauttolamathil, yam breeder consultant from India. The workshop participants were contracting parties to the Treaty (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau and Samoa), a participant from Marshall Islands, which is about to become an official party, and staff from V.A.R.T.C. and S.P.C.

They were all excited about the newly formed Pacific breeders' network. The Pacific lacks breeders and there was no existing network before this. Through this project S.P.C. has established strong partnerships with its country members to strengthen the regional breeders' network. For example, V.A.R.T.C. has produced some new hybrids of sweet potato with short nodes that are tolerant to atoll sandy conditions and produce good yields. Some of these new varieties have been sent to the S.P.C. Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees for virus indexing and sharing with Pacific Island countries and the global community.

Palau, too, is interested, as Dr Aurora Del Rosario, Research Scientist from Palau explains. 'In Palau, women are farmers and they would love to do breeding of taro, sweet potato, cassava and yam - something they haven't done before. They would be excited to produce their own new varieties,' he said.



Participants practising growing of taro, yam, sweet potato and cassava with Tolo Iosefa, S.P.C. plant breeder, Dr Abraham Kauttolamathil, yam breeder consultant, and V.A.R.T.C. breeders.

One of the project outcomes is the sharing of climate-resilient varieties to support food security in the Pacific and the global community. This is done under the auspices of the Treaty's multi-lateral system through the S.P.C. CePaCT. The current S.P.C. breeding projects are funded by the Australian Government, the Pacific Agribusiness Research for Development Initiative of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and the European Union, supported by S.P.C. plant breeder Tolo Iosefa, based in Samoa, and Dr Vincent Lebot, C.I.R.A.D. Scientific Coordinator for the E.U. International Network for Edible Aroids, based in Vanuatu.

These projects are focussed mainly on taro and xanthosoma.

At an inception project meeting held immediately prior to the workshop, participants discussed sending some seeds from this project to the Svalbard Global Vault in Norway, in collaboration with the Global Crop Diversity Trust and the Treaty. The aim is to ensure that Pacific crop diversity for its future generations is conserved.

For more information, please contact Valerie S. Tuia, Coordinator - Genetic Resources at Valeriet@spc.int or the L.R.D. helpdesk (lrdhelpdesk@spc.int). (Source: Samoa Observer, 16 June 2014)

Science Teachers Accelerated Programme formally kicks off in Samoa

After a few months of information drive and collaboration discussions, the Government of Samoa through the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) and USP formally entered into a partnership to upgrade the skills of Science teachers in Samoa. The partnership known as the **SCIENCE TEACHERS ACCELERATED PROGRAMME (STAP)** was launched on Friday 27th June 2014. Samoa's Prime Minister, Hon Tuilaepa Lufalo'i Fa'anoa, himself officially declared the commencement of the programme in a ceremony held at the university's Alafua Campus.



In his keynote speech addressed to the teachers participating in the programme, he challenged them that "failing is not an option since you have access to a lot of learning opportunities. "You should, likewise, entice the students to pursue a Science degree." he added. Currently, only 2% of Foundation students in Samoa enroll in a Science degree.

The Vice-President for Regional Campuses, Properties and Facilities Affairs of USP, Dr Giulio Massasso Paunga, reiterated the benefits of STAP for both the Science teachers and USP. "It is a lifetime opportunity, a short 2-year programme which will uplift the level of qualification of the teachers and improve the science literacy of the students." he noted. For USP, it is an opportunity to enhance its role in extending education to a wider region.



This is a first of its kind for USP.

The crowd witnessed the signing of the MOU between USP and MESC officiated by USP VP Paunga and MESC Minister Afioga Magele Mauiliu Magele.



The 60 participating teachers will be fully supported by the GOS through scholarships. The programme will be delivered

through online, face-to-face and blended learning/teaching modes. To assist teachers further, each will be issued with a tablet that will contain study materials to be used on an individual base. These delivery methods will mean that teachers will be studying from wherever they are located around Samoa during term time and face-to-face during school holidays. The programme is planned to be completed in 2016 when students will graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree.



The USP staff of Alafua Campus salutes the participating teachers for taking the challenge of learning without compromising their current teaching roles.

USP Vice-President keen on improving regional operations



In a meeting with staff and students of USP Alafua on the 27th June 2014, USP Vice President for Regional Campuses, Properties and Facilities Affairs of USP, Dr Giulio Massasso Paunga expressed intention to improve the regional operations of USP. His visit after a few weeks of being installed in office is very timely since he managed to hear the concerns of both staff and students of USP Alafua, one of the two regional campuses hosting a school. The School of Agriculture and Food Technology (SAFT) is based in the Alafua Campus.

The Vice-President took on board the issues raised, which according to him, will be considered in his future plans for the campus. The students and staff were quite happy to have had the opportunity to be consulted on matters relating to their welfare on campus.

Navua Rotuman Farmers Foodshow a success

News Bits

On Saturday, 7 June 2014, the Navua Rotuman Community gathered at the Serua Provincial Council Hall, Naitata, Navua for their 12th Annual Food-show. The wet weather during the week did not dampen the spirits of the competitors and the guests, who came from as far as Nausori, Davuilevu Housing and Suva, arrived in good numbers to witness first-hand what their brothers in Navua had yielded for the much awaited 2014 competition.

Pastor Robert Powell of the Pacific Harbour Wesley Circuit, in his prayer, reminded everyone that each competitor has been blessed and that they have to thank the Almighty God for their yields.

The Secretary, Mr. Sam George, welcomed and thanked everyone for continuously supporting the event for the last decade. He also emphasised the aim of the foodshow: the involvement of youth in the planting, maintenance and harvesting phases, participation in the koua preparations, and as ring crew, scorers, catering and kava crew, before leading the guests in inspecting the crops.

There were eight competitors with competition commencing at 9.15a.m with the Philippine ta - Maha and then the Philippine ta Roa. The 14 x taro, 8 x yam varieties were measured for weight and length followed by the 5 x Temafa (Kumara, Tapiko, Pari - 4 x varieties, Merene & Painapa). The remaining yams and temafa varieties were weighed after lunch with the last crop measured at 3:30pm.

The 2014 results were as follows:

Heaviest Taro: Mr. Pene Konrote, Navua, 7.35kg

Longest Taro: Mr. Pene Konrote, Navua, 80cm

Champion Taro 2014: Mr. Jioje Fonmoa

Heaviest Yam: Mr. Wesley Konrote, Filipine Ta, 54.8kg

Longest Yam: Mr. Wesley Konrote, Filipine Ta, 92.1cm

Champion Yam 2014: Mr.

Wesley Konrote

Heaviest Cassava: Mr Wesley

Konrote, Ul Mi'a Ta, 35.05kg

Heaviest Kumara - Mr. Sam

George, 0.8kg

Champion Ho'aga - Navua

The pronounced Overall Champion for 2014, Mr. Jioje Fonmoa, managed to retain the title for three

consecutive years.



In his inspirational speech, Mr. Visoni Ufiamorat, thanked the Navua Rotuman Farmers for 'holding on to the true spirit' of the mene'a tela a. The elder emphasized that all the competitors are winners with the Glory to be returned to the Lord. Pastor R. Powell delivered the benediction followed by the end of 2014 Food-show with a cheer by the Navua Rotuman Community youths.

The event also gave the farmers the opportunity to meet where the next year's Food Show Committee was also organised. This is a manifestation of the farmers' eagerness to continue the tradition. (Source: Report by *John Taito*)

Rotuma to improve trade with Tuvalu

Trade of agricultural commodities between Rotuma and Tuvalu has continued to be put on hold as Rotuma is not meeting the demand from Tuvalu.

Tuvalu Deputy High Commissioner Avafoa Irata says Tuvalu is now getting their agricultural needs from Suva.

"The problem we seem to find out basically is the level of exports we can obtain from Rotuma; there has been orders made in the past and they have not delivered to the amount that was ordered, so some of the importers back home are a bit reluctant to continue with the Rotuma trade. I'm not saying that we have stopped ordering from Fiji; these importers from Tuvalu are now ordering direct from the Suva port."

Rotuma Island Council advisor Major General George Konrote admits there are some issues affecting the deal and it is working closely with government on strengthening it.

"Gradable up to date we are still keeping problems but with the commitment of government to help the council in terms of trying to improve the incoming generating capacity of the members of the community I believe there are brighter days ahead as you've heard the Prime Minister - we are now ironing out the shipping problems, the storage problems, so I have no doubt following the more dialogue and discussion with the government of Tuvalu things will improve."

During a recent visit to Rotuma, Prime Minister Rear Admiral Voreqe Bainimarama told the people they need to increase their production to boost trade with Tuvalu.

A government delegation is expected to soon leave Viti Levu for Tuvalu to hold discussions on issues affecting the trade deal. (*Apisalome Coka, Fiji Broadcasting Corporation, 8 June 2014*)

News Bits

Samoa and ADB Launch Project to Boost Agriculture In Economy

Asian Development Bank (ADB) Vice-President Lakshmi Venkatachalam and Samoan Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Tuilaepa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi today launched an AgriBusiness Support Project that will provide business support services and financing to agribusinesses in Samoa.

"Agribusinesses provide jobs and income, so their development will play a critical role in promoting a sustainable and inclusive growth for the community," said Ms. Venkatachalam, who heads Private Sector and Cofinancing Operations, at the launch event.

Most agribusinesses are small-scale, family-owned enterprises with fewer than 400 employees, mostly involved in agro-industrial production such as chilli sauce or banana chips, or fresh products for export such as taro or Tahitian limes. They engage a significant number of smallholder families as suppliers of raw material. Agribusinesses are, therefore, critical for stimulating agricultural production.

The Samoa AgriBusiness Support Project aims to boost Samoa's economic performance by addressing constraints that hinder increased trade and export. The project will assist selected commercial agribusinesses grow sustainably and will work with participating commercial banks to provide suitable financing services to partner agribusinesses.

The Project will also provide tailored business support services for agribusiness. This may include, establishing contractual raw material supply arrangements with farmers, or improving product quality to fulfil importer requirements such as food safety standards. The project will closely cooperate with existing local and regional support programs in these activities.

ADB's assistance includes a \$5 million grant from ADB's Special Funds resources. The Government of Samoa is providing \$0.17 million equivalent, and some commercial financing is included.

The Ministry of Finance will be the executing agency for the project (*Source: ADB website 19 June 2014*)

Kiuva pioneers government flatland development project

The Ministry of Agriculture has begun work under its Flat Land Development Program in the Central Division following the purchase of farm machineries last month.

The ministry bought a digger, a truck, other small machineries and agro inputs totaling \$500,000 allocated under the capital program for 2014. Last week, work started at Kiuva in the Central Division.

Senior agriculture officer, Sanaila Turaga said work currently undertaken in Kiuva village is one of the initiatives by the Government under its flat land development program.

Mr Turaga said the digger will facilitate drainage works and other essential activities required in the village. He said similar drainage works will be undertaken in the flatlands of Tailevu, Rewa and Serua/Namosi.

Mr Turaga added that as part of the package, farmers who will be assisted will be requested to pay some government fees but it will be less when compared to private contractors. "One of the drawbacks of farmers in the flat land especially with drainage works had been costs because it cost them money to hire private contractors," Mr Turaga said.

"With the digger the farmers will be able to access the drainage works, and as such we look forward to have land suitable for farming and at the same time expect more production to fulfil our food security, import substitution and export promotion."

These flat land areas are renowned for producing assorted vegetables, root crops and water melons. (*Fiji Times, 30 June 2014*)



Destructive pest threatens PNG's coffee crop

Coffee growers in Papua New Guinea fear the arrival of the berry borer pest could have a devastating impact on the industry. The pest is reportedly just 20 kilometres from PNG's border with Indonesia and has the potential to destroy the majority of coffee crops.

Known locally as the poor man's crop, coffee is an important commodity in PNG, providing cash for up to 40 per cent of residents. 80 per cent of the country's coffee is grown by small holders, who could suffer huge financial losses with the pest makes its way into the country.

"Coffee berry borer has the reputation of being the most deadly coffee pest in the whole world," said Tom Kukhang from PNG's Coffee Industry Corporation. "Without any countermeasures, it is able to destroy up to 70 per cent of the crop."

Mr Kukhang told Radio Australia's [Pacific Beat](#) program countries that have berry borer beetle need to invest in extra resources to deal with the deadly pest. "It's extra work - spraying or using pesticides to control," he said. "It is very expensive and we'd like to keep our competitive edge as a coffee producer without coffee berry borer"



A magnified image of the berry borer beetle, which is known to devastate coffee crops around the world.

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research is supporting a research program into the pest.

Within PNG, the nation's quarantine organisation NAQIA is mandated to prevent pests such as berry borer from entering the country. NAQIA and Coffee Industry Corporation are working together to provide surveillance in border areas and major ports. (EIN News)

Push for diversification in PNG agriculture

Diversification in PNG agriculture is being pushed in the face of challenges such as the cocoa pod borer crisis. There's a fresh emphasis on diversification in Papua New Guinea's agriculture sector. While in recent years, the energy and petroleum sector has joined mining and forestry as PNG's big ticket revenue earners, the importance of agriculture has been at times overlooked.

Yet it's estimated that about three quarters of PNG people depend on small-scale agriculture for their food and livelihoods. Moves to develop and diversify PNG's agricultural products are gaining momentum as the sector confronts some of its biggest challenges.

Johnny Blades compiled this report:

OFARA PETILANI: Agriculture is very, very important. It is the foundation of Papua New Guinea. And it will still be foundation of Papua New Guinea. I think the most important thing is that the land is owned by the people. So they can grow their crops, build their houses and do anything in terms of their survival. I think food and income are the basis of agriculture because you can grow crops and eat from directly, or you can sell and get money.

Ofara Petilani, of the National Agricultural Research Institute, believes agriculture is the greatest natural asset that PNG people have. Land grabs by foreign investors notwithstanding, the country's traditional land tenure system continues to provide the template for widespread participation of Papua New Guineans in the subsistence economy. Mr Petilani, the Research and Development Coordinator of NARI's Islands Regional Centre says one of their focuses is teaching farmers to combine traditional methods with the modern.

OFARA PETILANI: In terms of traditional crops that they are used to - like taro, cassava, banana and other crops that they are used to - they are integrated into certain designs with probably more monetary oriented crops that should be combined together with those food crops.

Traditional food gathering and preparation remain strong in rural PNG but a growing reliance on imported foods is threatening that. A New Britain woman Antonia Petilani says using traditional methods is something she encourages all other mothers to do.

News Bits

Push for diversification in PNG agriculture... *Continued from p7*

ANTONIA PETILANI: Most of the veggies I got them from my backyard garden. I also grow veggies like cabbages, tomatoes, beans, capsicum. Also including taros and bananas in my garden so many times I don't really go far to look for those types of food.

She says there are plenty of other uses for the crops.

ANTONIA PETILANI: Oh yes, example like the coconut, we also make our own oil at home for cooking and also for our bodies like that. And also there are other things that we process like the tapioca - we grow the tapioca and then we grate the tapioca, then we dry it in the sun and make flour out of it. So for example, instead of going to the shops to buy flour, we can make our own flour at home.

However, PNG agriculture has recently been in crisis, partly because of the damage inflicted on the cocoa industry by the cocoa pod borer pest. Due to the pest, cocoa production in East New Britain plummeted by 82 percent between 2008 and 2012. Other cocoa-growing provinces, like East Sepik and Bougainville, have had a similar decline. Now, the World Bank is helping finance PNG's efforts to rebound from the borer devastation, with a US\$30 million package announced in February for the Productive Partnerships in Agriculture Project involving partners such as NARI. This involves training farmers to manage the pest and developing hybrid plants that are more pod borer resistant. A NARI-affiliated scientist Louis Kulika says one of the project's components targets 500 women farmers who are members of co-operatives.

LOUIS KULIKA: And the main goal of this is to rehabilitate one hectare of cocoa for each of the five hundred women farmers that we have who belong to the six co-operatives. And that is our main commodity crop. But for cocoa, it's not only rehabilitating the cocoa per one hectare block - the project goes further, to establish cocoa nurseries.

However the pod borer crisis has meant many cocoa farmers are faced with a stark decision if they wish to continue with multi-cropping, according to Dennis Hill who runs a Virgin Coconut Oil business out of Kerevat.

DENNIS HILL: The farmers supplying us are certified as organic. They really have to make that decision. If they want to stick with their cocoa, they have to manage without insecticides. A lot of our farmers in the long term will make the decision to stick with coconuts only, which will give them a better yield of coconuts, and our purchasing pricing reflects that, that they don't have two crops off the one area of ground.

Meanwhile, Louis Kulika says the new management practices for cocoa plantations will gradually transform the industry. He says the current way of growing cocoa, through subsistence type small holder arrangements, is no longer appropriate for managing things like the pod borer pest. Mr Kulika says the new partnership programme, the PPAP, features a diversification drive.

LOUIS KULIKA: You focus on cocoa as your main commodity crop because that is a crop that we already have established markets for. But we are also looking at galip as another crop that should diversify in terms of if indeed it becomes an industry and we believe it's heading that way.

The national government has recently earmarked more funds for road projects designed to improve access to markets for rural farming communities. But Ofara Petilani says the government should still direct more resources to capitalising on the country's agriculture potential. (*Aired on Dateline Pacific, Tuesday 10 June 2014*)

Private sector supports farmers

The private sector is showing its support of our farmers by setting up mechanisms to help them export their produce. With the launch of the Asian Development Bank's (A.D.B.) AgriBusiness Support Project last week the ANZ Bank has come on board to assist in provide suitable financing for selected farming business.

ANZ Samoa C.E.O., Mathew Fisher, following the program's launch at the Prime Minister's office last Thursday, said ANZ was thrilled with the opportunity to be part of the project. The initiative he believes will help develop agriculture exports. "Agribusiness could be one of the key businesses for export in the country," he said. "I feel setting up a fund to encourage exporting agricultural products is the way to go." He said this is why ANZ is very excited about the opportunity to grow Samoan businesses involved in the agricultural sector. Mr. Fisher said anything to encourage exporting agricultural products is a very positive thing.

He also said ANZ has been working together with A.D.B. and the government of Samoa over several months to secure this project. The AgriBusiness Support Project will provide business support services and financing to agribusinesses in Samoa. ANZ will be working with selected commercial agribusiness growers to provide suitable financial support for their services. The project aims to increase Samoa's economic performance by working on constraints that hinders increased trade and export of agricultural products.

It comes with a \$5million grant from ADB's Special Funds resources. The government of Samoa is providing \$0.17million and some commercial financing is included. ADB's Vice-President Lakshmi Venkatachalam said she believes the project is very good for smaller island nations like Samoa to help raise exports. Raising exports however, would mean that Samoa would have to improve not only on productivity but also the quality of its agricultural products and support to match international standards. The Ministry of Finance will be executing agent for this project. (*Jasmine Netzler, Samoa Observer, 23 June 2014*)

What's On Campus

American Samoa came on an exposure trip to the USP IRETA Farm

Staff from the Forestry Division of American Samoa Community College led by its Manager, Mary Taufetee, trooped to the USP IRETA Farm to explore technologies in raising livestock. The group is in an exposure trip for the purpose of up skilling or building their capacities mainly in forestry. However, they are keen to learn about livestock production which is in their future agenda.

Apart from observing and learning from Samoa's best practices, the group is also keen on exchanging ideas on some of their accomplishments particularly in forestry management. They expressed appreciation for USP's generosity in hosting the visit and is hopeful that they will be able to replicate the integration of a livestock farm in their college.

USP gears up for Savai'i Expo and Alafua Open Day

The Marketing Committee of USP Alafua is aggressively preparing for its Annual Open Day to be held on the 8th of August 2014 at its Alafua Campus. This will coincide with the Open Days in most regional campuses of USP. This year's co-chairmanship, shared by a SAFT lecturer, Falaniko Amosa, and the Campus Accountant, Desmond **Tuaiti**, promises a more improved event with the intention of showcasing the strong presence of the Campus' flagbearer, the School of Agriculture and Food Technology, the only regional agricultural school in the South Pacific.

At the same time, the Open Day will also feature some other career choices for young Samoans which can be taken either through face-to-face mode in Fiji or through the Distance and Flexible learning mode right at the Alafua Campus with satellite facilities.

This year will also mark the holding of a Savai'i Expo which is intended to show the people of the other island of Samoa what USP can best offer. The expo will be held on the 24th of July 2014 at the USP Savai'i Centre in Salelologa.

We ardently invite the whole community, residents and visitors to come to USP Alafua and Savai'i Centre to join us in the campus tours, display and sale booths, entertainment, quizzes and a whole lot more fun and exciting activities. This is one you will regret missing out.

From the Classroom



to



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TOWARDS EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION

USP's POPP Coordinator successful in his membership bid at EPLD 2014

With the Emerging Pacific Leaders' Dialogue (EPLD) coming up from the 15th to the 29th October 2014, around 650 applicants applied for sponsorship to attend the event. USP's Coordinator for the Pacific Outreach Program for Polynesia based in Alafua, Allan Alo, is among the few chosen to attend all the activities during the event at no expense. The offer was made in the light of his contribution to the development of the arts sector in the Pacific.

Membership to the EPLD is viewed to be one of the more significant events in one's working career. EPLD 2014 is concerned with improving the quality of leadership and decision-making across Australasia Pacific region. Allan is very ecstatic about the opportunity afforded by the organisers. He also expresses excitement at the chance to rub shoulders with leaders of the different sectors in the Pacific.

His Alafua family congratulates Allan in this career milestone.



CALL FOR PAPERS



Journal of South Pacific Agriculture



The management of JOSPA wishes to advise potential contributors that the deadline for this year's issue has been extended to the **31st July 2014**.

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