

Christmas Message from the Vice Chancellor

I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a healthy, prosperous, productive and enjoyable 2010. I also wish to thank each and every one of you for your contributions to the work of the University under very trying conditions. I am pleased that our finances are improving, and that we will be able to support teaching, learning and research much better next year. I look forward to your continued support and co-operation in 2010.

Regards and best wishes.

***Professor Rajesh Chandra -
Vice-Chancellor & President***



Christmas Message from the Dean FBE

IRETA was re-established in July 2009. Together with this, the School of Agriculture and Food Technology also underwent a major review of its curriculum. The main changes include two streams in the Bachelors degree. One focuses on agribusiness and the other on the science of agriculture. We hope that the work of IRETA will support research activities in the School. The new Professor of Agriculture will join the school in early 2010. The location of the School of Agriculture and IRETA in the Faculty of Business and Economics, which is the largest faculty at the University of the South Pacific has allowed us to incorporate and promote better interdisciplinary research and teaching. Agriculture still remains an important sector in many Pacific Island countries. However, the productivity in this sector has been declining despite the many opportunities that exist to raise it further. Research and Extension services are the key to developing better and evidence based agricultural policies. With the re-establishment of IRETA and reorganization of the School of Agriculture the Alafua campus is now well placed to provide some of these services to the Pacific Island countries. I thank all our partners, donors and individuals for working with us in 2009 and we look forward to another productive year in 2010.

Professor Biman Chand - Dean of Faculty of Business and Economics



Christmas Message from Samoa's Ministry of Agriculture

I sincerely hope that the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheires has delivered the service as required by the people she serves.

MAF acknowledges the assistance from all development partners here and abroad.

Greetings to everyone.

Asuao Kirifi Pouono

Chief Executive Officer

Samoa - MAF



Christmas Message from Solomon Islands

This is a time that families meet other family members after missing each other for months – even for years. And usually something special is happening back in the villages. It may be a special feast or a special food prepared only for that occasion. Although Christmas has never been a part of the ancient Pacific Islands culture, this is now the acquired Pacific Islands style.

Yes, Christmas is catching up on us. You might have planned all through the year to achieve a particular activity in your work programme but unfortunately it's time to take a break. This is also true to many hard working farmers in the Pacific region who just cannot fulfill their goals in 2009. Working life is like this. Things work well sometimes and shortcomings are also expected.

This year is a tough year for some countries in the region. We have heard about governments going through hard times due to political turmoil. And many senior public officers, some could be in the agriculture sector, had lost their jobs and may not be able to enjoy this Christmas as it used to be.

We must give high regards for leaders in the agriculture industry in our countries who, all through the year, have tirelessly kept things moving forward in spite of difficulties.

To agriculture Ministers in Agriculture Departments in the region, you have done a great job for your countries. May you enjoy this Christmas with your good families. Be rest assured God's blessing is yours this Christmas.

To all our countries' Permanent Secretaries or Secretaries, without your foresights, your officers could not do great things which will make your countries become a spotlight at the passing away of 2009.

To the rest of us: agriculture workers and farmers, without you and me these great things may not happen.



Christmas Message from Solomon Islands

If we have not done enough this year, 2010 is coming up. Let's forget any failure this year and make 2010 a year of more challenges.

To Aid Donors who have made things easier for the livelihood of many Pacific Islanders, I wish to thank you and your governments. We have seen improvements through many small and large agriculture projects in our countries. Without your assistance, we may not be what we are this year. We are looking forward to your continuous assistance in the coming year. Sorry if your engagement through various activities in our countries will not allow you to spend this Christmas with your loved ones in your countries. Pass our Christmas Greetings to your families.

We must also thank the Director of the regional organization, IRETA, for keeping member countries informed of events and activities in the region through the South Pacific Agricultural Newsletter (SPAN) and Journal of South Pacific Agricultural (JOSPA). Thanks to IRETA,s Director, Mr. Mohammed Umar.

Through the hard work and tireless effort of the IRETA these means of communications have continued to this very year. My message to our Donors is for them to refocus their attention to the Agricultural Liaison Officers' Network which is not active as before because of lack of funding.

For this Christmas, remember a song, "Please, Daddy Don't Get Drunk this Christmas". If you happen to get drunk this Christmas, don't overdo it because 2010 is just around the corner.

A Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year to you all.

Alfred Maesulia Under Secretary (Administration) -Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock, Solomon Islands

Christmas Message from Fiji

Once again the festive season for 2009 is upon us I also feel privileged to convey my Christmas Greetings to you all through the SPAN newsletter. I also commend IRETA for a job well done this year. We have a successful working relationship with IRETA and may I say that we are looking forward for the same next year and years to come.

The significance of Christmas is known to human beings all over the world. Though it is true that Christmas is celebrated as the day of the Birth of Christ into this world, yet it also symbolizes a very deeply significant truth of the spiritual life.

Jesus Christ is the personification of Divinity. He was born at a time when ignorance, superstition, greed hatred and hypocrisy prevailed upon the land.

In the midst of these conditions, Christ was born and he worked a transformation in the lives of the people. He gave a new and spiritual turn to the lives of man. There came a change upon the land. People started upon anew way of life. Thus a new era dawned for the world.

However amidst all the spiritual celebration of Christmas is also a time to reflect on our performance, achievements and to focus on tasks ahead of us.

Looking back at our performance as a Ministry over the year, I can proudly say that we have performed admirably despite the setbacks that we faced as a nation during the floods of January 2009 and numerous other challenges we encountered over the year. But we still managed to deliver with considerable measure of success what was individually and collectively required of us.

One of the major achievements was that the supply of fruit and vegetables normalized just five months after the devastating effects of floods in January 2009. This concerted effort by the Department of Agriculture and specifically the farmers in getting production back to normality was commendable. I also take this opportunity to thank all, including our donor countries for the assistance they provided in our time of need.

Exports of fresh vegetables and root crops also increased last year and continues to grow each year. The completion of phase two of the Nadi River Dredging that will minimize flood levels in the flood prone Nadi area is another noticeable achievement. The Department of Agriculture also embarked on a National Agri

Christmas Message from Fiji

culture Census, 18 years after the last census was conducted in 1991 and the first draft of the report should be ready by end of April this year. This census report will enable us all to better plan agricultural development in Fiji

Despite these successes, the agriculture sector suffered a temporary setback to milk production due to the re emergence of the Brucellosis disease in the dairy industry.

As we approach the end of another calendar year, it is pertinent that we also look ahead and set broad, overarching goals for the Department to focus on during the next year.

Christmas is a time for merry making, fun and joy with our loved ones and our friends and relatives
Mason Smith - Permanent Secretary for Agriculture , MPI Fiji

Christmas Message from Tonga

Warmest Pacific Greetings

As Pacific people, we remember and pray for those who lost their lives in the tragedy of the sunken vessel in Tonga, and also in the tsunami which left Samoa and Niuatoputapu island in Tonga devastated. During this festive season, we think of those directly affected by these tragedies.

In the Pacific Islands, we rarely think tsunami would hit us, but this is an indication that climate change is already affecting the Pacific Island countries (PICs). As we all know that food sources and water will be adversely affected, it is important that we are ready to cope and respond positively to such impacts.

We must thank all those who had given a helping hand, and especially IRETA for being the host to the International Tsunami Survey Team (ITST) in reporting the findings on the impacts of food security and social issues.

While we all suffered from the global economic crisis affecting us all in the PICs, we must thank all various donor agencies and international and regional partnership for supporting IRETA in its work plans and capacity building efforts to successfully implemented its programs and initiatives this year.

Despite all tragedies and problems we encountered this year, we should not be let down as these are realities of nature.

As Christians we have hope and strength in the Lord, as after bad times, there will be good times. With the spirit of Christmas, may I join my family in wishing you all a very blessed Christmas, and a prosperous 2010.

'Ofa lahi atu

Haniteli & Lucy Fa'anunu

Christmas Message from Marshall Island

“Warmest yokwe” to all my Ireta friends through out the Pacific region “Jeramman” to you all and may you be blessed and joyful in 2010.

Your friend, Nika Wase - Majuro Marshall Islands

Christmas Message from Janes Pasifika Travel

OUR VERY BEST WISHES FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON AND MAY JOY AND PEACE ABOUND IN YOUR HOMES.

WE WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS AND PROSPERITY IN THE NEW YEAR!

From,



Management & Staff

Christmas Message from Australia

The staff and residents of the N.H. (Doc) Fisher Geoscience

Library

Felicity

Gael

Jenny

Margaret

Chris



Geoscience Australia, GPO Box 378, Canberra ACT 2601



Christmas Message from SAFT

Greetings to all our readers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. We are approaching a very special day in the Christian calendar, the birthday of Jesus Christ celebrated all over the world. We may ask, why is it so special? Well, it is a day of hope, joy, gifting, forgiveness, love, reflection many among other things.

It is a day of hope because Jesus Christ is born on Christmas day and He is the way to the Father. Joy because He is alive and loves us. Giving gifts because that is a way to show love for others. Forgiveness because Jesus forgives us and we should also forgive others. Reflection because it is a time to think about what to do next year based on our experiences last year. So enjoy your holidays during the festive season, but while you are relaxing, I would like to thank you all for your contributions to the IRETA newsletter which has become a 'guiding beacon' for the development of agriculture and related areas in the region and beyond. In this regard, I would like to congratulate the Director of IRETA, Mohammed Umar and staff for the hard work they have put into this excellent newsletter. I also wish to thank all staff of the Alafua campus and School of Agriculture and Food Technology, for their hard work and contributions to make this year a great success and ofcourse the Vice Chancellor and the Dean of FBE and staff in Suva for guidance. Thanks are also due to all stakeholders for their support.

I urge you to think about what to do next year in terms of research, extension and training in agriculture to better contribute pertinent information for the newsletter and the region. Some topics to consider are climate change, food security, sustainable food production, pest and disease control and disaster management. Last but not least, I wish to offer condolences from SAFT and Alafua Campus staff to families who have lost loved ones during the Tsunami and hope that the country recover quickly. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the government for the excellent efforts to restore the country to normal I wish each and everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year. Soifua

Mareko Tofinga - Acting Head of School of Agriculture and Food Technology- Alafua Campus,

Christmas Message from SAFT

What a year this has been! So much has happened in 2009 that it's hard to know where to begin telling the story. But, suffice it to say that, for many people, 2009 has truly been a year like no other they have experienced, at least not in quite some time.

The year 2009 has been marked with many challenges around the region, some of which were extremely difficult, and even heart-breaking. What with sky-high commodity prices, political troubles, swine flu, road switch, maritime accidents, climate change, and then tsunami! However, difficult and heart-breaking as some of these issues and events have been, the fact of the matter is that most of us made it through and are still here. For those who have lost a love one during 2009, as I have, let's thank God Almighty for the period He blessed us with them in our lives, and let's focus on and treasure the sweet memories we formed with them. Let's remember that although we no longer see them with our natural eyes, they live on, and will forever remain in our hearts. May they all rest in peace. Amen!



The year 2009 has also proved to be a year of many triumphs. The triumph of the human spirit of compassion, resilience, and determination to focus on life and living, as demonstrated in the responses to tragic events around the region, is truly remarkable. Long live the human spirit in the form that God intended it to be!

Climate change - This gargantuan phenomenon seems to have suddenly erupted to the surface of global mass consciousness in 2009. Although climate change (or climate uncertainty, as some prefer to consider it) has been a major issue for quite some years now, the momentum of talks and views around and about it has assumed a new crescendo. But, looking at the matter, I am of the opinion that the 'modern' world has only been hiding its head in the sand and turning a blind eye for a long time, while over-milking the fattened cow that God had provided for our common good, without regard for its well-being. Generations before ours called this planet 'mother earth' for a good reason. But as with many other traditional wisdom, we, in the 'modern' generation, have failed to understand such wisdom and have, instead, come up with some 'big ideas' (many of which go against the natural balance), in order to feed insatiable appetites for power, fame, luxury, and fast-paced lifestyles. Alas, the negative impacts of many of our 'big ideas' are truly colossal and far-reaching.

Our climate did not begin to change suddenly. The fact is that we are finally seeing the fruit of the bad seeds that the 'modern' world has been sowing in the last century. Alarm bells have been ringing for many years, but the 'developed' countries, who are the main culprits for green house gas emissions, have hitherto failed to take it seriously. The difficulties witnessed in the climate change talks in Copenhagen demonstrate this.

The solutions for the issue of climate change are complex and must be dealt with on a global level. However, the Pacific Islands must take their destiny in their hands and take practical steps to deal with it, in whatever measure that can be handled at the local level. For instance, it is well known that many pacific island indigenous practices of land, forest, and marine resources use are inherently organic and sustainable. Such practices should be actively promoted. Also, in order to decrease the temptation to engage in destructive practices (e.g. indiscriminate logging), alternative ways of income generation should be sought and promoted among the people. Awareness/education campaigns for 'green practices' should not only target communities, but individuals as well. Practical steps to promote the three 'Rs' of resource use (reduce, reuse, and recycle) should be publicized at all levels of society, right down to the individual. Often, people practice the wrong thing simply because they do not know a better way. Christmas is about God's desire for peace and goodwill for all His creation, if they will accept His wisdom.

Dr. Adama Ebenebe - MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Christmas Message from Alafua Campus INJ Staff

Truly, man is, inseparable from the Spirit of God within him, and through prayerful

realization of this spirit, he can obtain healing of all life's inharmonies in body and, mind.

This message has reminded ALL God-believers that, our One Living God is, the God of ALL Creations.

He has given, Ten Commandments for All people to comply with, and His only begotten Son Jesus Christ as Saviour to the World of All people, plants and animals.

Remember the fourth Commandment to "keep Sunday Holy for our God" while the six days from Monday to Saturday to keep for,(samoans and foreigners)all people's freedom.

Yes, we will surely succeed in feeding livestock and planting crops and rely on God for life and growth. May you all have the blessings of the Christmas season, and wish you a peaceful and a prosperous new year 2010.

Best wishes,

Maiava Iose Isara



Christmas Message from IRETA

To all our SPAN readers, a very warm greeting of the festive season from all IRETA staff. 2009 invariably had been a very difficult year for many families throughout the Pacific affected by many forms of natural disasters, soaring food prices and global economic crises. We are all with you in this very difficult times. We pray to the good Lord that Xmas will bring happiness and joy to you all in those remote villages, islands and rural areas.

The unique feature of the Xmas festive season is that it is celebrated by everyone in the Pacific as an universal festival, which is wonderful. At least it gives joy and hope to everyone despite being in difficult situations.

The USP took the bold decision to re-establish IRETA in July 2009. It's a good decision. As Director, my vision is to bring back those glory days of the past and to serve the member countries and particularly the rural poor. Even though the road ahead is long and challenging the consolation is that institutions such as CTA, FAO, SPC, SPREP, UNDP, NGOs, Aid organizations and the countries themselves are supporting IRETA to succeed.

IRETA's success would translate into improving the quality of life of the rural poor. And that is what the USP management, in particular, the Vice Chancellor Prof. Rajesh Chandra and Prof Biman Prasad, Dean of The Faculty of Business and Economics under which IRETA now operates would like to see.

To all our colleagues at USP, the ministries of agriculture, the ALOs, the stakeholders and friends throughout the region and abroad, let me thank you all for your support and wish you all a very merry Xmas and a rewarding 2010. God bless. **Mohamed Umar & IRETA Staff**



Alafua Campus hosts final development dialogue for 2009

IRETA Staff



Alafua Campus hosted the final development dialogue initiated and organized by the University of the South Pacific (USP) for 2009. The USP through its Faculty of Business and Economics organized a series of development dialogues in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Samoa were the four countries chosen for this year to begin these dialogues with.

Professor Rajesh Chandra the USP Vice Chancellor noted in his welcoming address the importance of these dialogues as the opportunity that brings together government senior officials, stakeholders and USP academics in discussions for better and relevant public policy options.

He also noted that policy making is not the most challenging task but it is the implementation and evaluation that is the real challenge. This is a challenge he believes USP is ready to assist the region with.

Honorable Niko Lee Hang Samoa's Finance Minister finds this first ever dialogue event important being the first instance that the USP and representatives of all sectors involved in Samoa's development have met to discuss issues and challenges pertaining to the country's development.

However the Honorable Minister encourages the USP to continue to offer educational programs relevant to



The University of the South Pacific Vice Chancellor
Professor Rajesh Chandra



Honorable Niko Lee Hang - Samoa's Minister of Finance

Alafua Campus hosts final development dialogue for 2009...from page 8

IRETA Staff

the needs of the region. He believes that relevant programs can justify the need to increase the Samoan government financial support to the University.

The development dialogue on the 14th of December was well attended by heads of government departments, tertiary institutions, private organizations and other interested observers. The one day program was organized into the presentations and discussions on economic issues, social issues, tourism and agriculture. There was effective discussion from presentations and questions and feedback arising from these presentations. However all these discussions aim to find constructive solutions to assist policy makers to take Samoa through a new way forward.



USP Pro Chancellor Honorable Fiame Naomi, Dean of FBE Professor Biman Chand and Professor of Tourism David Harrison



Alafua Campus Acting Director Leatuaolevao R Vaa, Rev John Alailima, Honorable Minister of Finance Niko Lee Hang and Vice Chancellor Professor Rajesh Chandra



Participants of the Dialogue during the Official Opening



Sina Lima President of the Samoa Chamber of Commerce during the first session on the economic issues



Funefeai Oliva Vaai General Manager of Yazaki Samoa. One company that was evidently and hardly affected by the global economy crisis (Photos : C. Akira - SAFT/JICA)

17 graduate with agricultural qualifications

IRETA Staff

Agricultural development in the Pacific region continues to be strengthened with various assistance including and most importantly, qualified graduates coming from the School of Agriculture and Food Technology (SAFT).

Thirteen final year students at SAFT graduated with Bachelor of Agriculture in this year's graduation. There was also three other students who have completed and achieved post graduate diplomas in agriculture.

The three postgraduate achievers are Fijians with the other ten in the Bachelor's Degree. There were also two Samoans, one from Kiribati and one from Vanuatu who

received their degrees in Samoa. One Vanuatu student Roly John, won two prizes. She won the most outstanding Bachelor of Agriculture student and the Telefoni Retzlaff Prize for most outstanding results in Animal Husbandry .

Other prize winners for SAFT was Timoci Bogidua Baleinadi for the most outstanding results in agricultural economics and Praneet Sathya Goundar for the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's special prize for most outstanding extension student.



The Official Graduation Party on the top stage as the Ceremony begins



SAFT Bachelor of Agriculture graduands awaiting the beginning of the ceremony



Vice Chancellor Professor Rajesh Chandra with SPC - Best Extension Student prize winner Praneet Goundar of SAFT



SAFT students and staff were the main singers of the graduation choir

No worries over chicken supply for Xmas

Fiji - MPI

As far as chicken supply goes, between Crest and Rooster, Fiji will have enough chicken for this festive season.

According to Shaun Joils the General Manager (Fiji) of Goodman Fielder Asia Pacific, Fiji even has the potential to be 100% self sufficient in Poultry meat production.

This was revealed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Mr. Jeketani Cokanasiga and his entourage when they visited the Crest Colo-i-Suva Plant on Monday this week.

The official entourage were taken on a field tour and shown the latest state of the art technology equipment that the company is using in their production.

Mr. Cokanasiga was impressed with the various activities carried out at the plant and the high standards of hygiene which is being practiced at their Colo-i-Suva Plant.

"It's good to know that Occupational Health and Safety measures are being practiced at all times at the Plant and that waste from the Plant is properly disposed," said Mr. Cokanasiga.

With over 550 employees of which 30 per cent are women, Crest is fully integrated from breeding their own fertile eggs, hatching out, placing day old chicks in broiler farms (company and smallholder), processing through the abattoir and distribution across Fiji and the Pacific.

Mr. Joils also explained that earlier in the year, the price of lamb increased and the quality decreased, due mainly to shortages from New

Zealand.

"This had a positive impact on us as demand for chicken grew. As soon as the trend started we increased our "settings" which means we started placing more chickens in the farms to increase our stocks. Whilst the size and cut of chicken might not always be available, we will have enough chicken stock to get through Christmas however," explained Mr. Joils.

"We have increased our production of chicken from last year to now. However, it must be appreciated that to increase chicken stocks is not simple and requires capital investment to increase farm space and time to grow the stocks."

"We are currently looking to extend our growing space to allow us to increase our output, further securing Fiji's self sufficiency in chicken meat production."

Mr. Joils added that speculating on what the market requires and putting into practice is challenging as there is around a three month lag from planning to seeing the extra chicken stocks coming through.

"Again, we are planning to build our capability and increase our chicken stocks into the new year. This will also enable us to drive into the export markets which we have entered."

As part of Crest's expansion plans, they will be increasing the number of smallholder farms.

"Our partnerships with smallholders are very important to us and rural communities. Smallholders are contracted by us to grow around 7000 chickens per batch for which they are paid when the chickens have achieved the target weight and age. Our smallholder scheme has been in place now for around 10 years.

Crest now has 70 Small holder sheds, 76 Company & leased sheds, placing over 200,000 birds per week at around 10.4 million per year.

Extension division inspects capital projects

Fiji - MPI

Extension Services Division of Agriculture Department staff tour the country on certain occasions to inspect agriculture development programmes in rural areas.

One such tour was headed by Principal Agriculture Officer, Suliasi Tawake who said that the main purpose of the tour is to see that the capital projects undertaken by farmers align with those in the Ministry's business plan.

"This monitoring is an ongoing process whereby we work closely with the farmers to ensure that the projects are implemented according to guidelines and problems related to assistance under the capital programs are

addressed," said Mr Tawake.

Most farmers in the Central Division have been assisted under the Rural and Outer Island (ROI) project as well as under Export Promotion and Import Substitution Programmes.

"We are comparing the business plan, its target and the assistance given to the individual farmers and farmers group to evaluate the proper utilisation of resources provided under this assistance," said Mr Tawake.

He added that this included the farmers' achievements as well as problems that they face.

The team has already completed the monitoring of Northern Division, Serua Namosi, Rewa, Tailevu South projects and are currently inspecting projects in Tailevu North.

The hardworking Staff of Alafua Campus



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