



*Power Tiller machine
delivered to MK Farm
Fresh*

p2

ACHIEVING THROUGH SHALLOT FARMING

p3

*“Every new seed planted
brings hope.”*

p5





WELCOME

It is my pleasure as the Permanent Secretary of MAL to present to you the 4th issue of our monthly newsletter. As we already know, we are living in uncertain times with Covid-19 impacting all core sectors including agriculture sector, economy, education, health and the globe. Despite the challenges, MAL remain committed to its mandatory responsibilities thus continue to strive in service delivery to fulfil its vision and mission. This publication brings you achievements of the ministry for the month of January-February. This is a wonderful opportunity for MAL to embrace this communication medium and to fully maximize its capacity to disseminate agricultural news, success stories and information to meet the needs of its readers. We are grateful that you're taking your time to read it. Please share it with your friends and disseminate it through your respective network. This publication is produced by MAL information & Media Unit team.

Power Tiller machine delivered to MK Farm



Mr. MacDonnell Hiva, MAL, Coordinator National Agriculture Livelihoods Improvement & Export Based Expansion (ALEBE), seen standing inside the truck assisted by workers as they try to lower the machine at the farm site.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its Guadalcanal Province Extension office has delivered a Power Tiller machine to MK Farm Fresh at Takaboru Community, Northwest Guadalcanal on Tuesday 23rd February. The power Tiller was purchased by UNDP for the Model Farm Program under MAL's National Food Security and Enhancement Program for 6 Provinces including Guadalcanal. The assistance is expected to boost farming activities and productivity to ensure households and communities have access to nutritious food supply. "An official handing over will be arranged to coincide with a demonstration day to train farm workers on how to operate the machines. "The support is expected to boost farming activities and to ensure the Model farms are developed further into commercial farm to achieve its aims and objectives," Chief Field Officer (CFO) for Guadalcanal Province MAL, Agriculture Extension office, Mr. Joseph Wotomaru said. Mr. Wotomaru on behalf of MAL thanked the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP SI) for responding to the MAL's request for funding these model farm programs. He also

acknowledged Mr. MacDonnell Hiva, MAL, Coordinator National Agriculture Livelihoods Improvement & Export Based Expansion (ALEBE) for their support and time in facilitating the successful delivery of the power tiller machine to MK Farm Fresh farm site. He said the Model Farm is a sub component of MAL's National Food security and Enhancement program aimed at Promoting and assisting vulnerable communities to improve Food and Nutritional status to ensure every households have access to nutritious food to promote healthy and happy family and to reduce increased cases of Nutrition Disorders in Solomon Islands. He stated that other farming issues to be addressed under the project to ensure sustainable production of nutritious food readily available in target communities include:

1. Climate risks and impacts,
 2. Soil degradation (Soil health issues),
 3. Pest and diseases infestation and conservation of plant genetic resources (Conserving and preserving of our indigenous crops).
- MAL through its Guadalcanal Extension office and the Ministry of Health, Guadalcanal Province Health Authority is implementing the programme to improve Nutritional Disorders in

Guadalcanal by promoting and delivering the following activities;

- Development of model farms/gardens,
- Training programmes on health, nutrition and agriculture jointly delivered through MAL and Ministry of Health extension networks and
- Distribution of seeds, equipment and tools.

"MAL in collaboration with UNDP Solomon Islands under the Governance for Resilient Development in the Pacific Project (Governance Resilience) train the beneficiaries on risk management.

"The Model Farm Projects is being implemented in six provinces which include; Makira, Isabel, Central Islands, Choiseul, Western and Guadalcanal province.

"This means farmers with support of MAL officers will need to acknowledge certain risks which might impact the success of the farms in each province, and design management measures to mitigate these risks.

"Doing so will enhance the resilience of the model farms in the face of climate change and disaster events, as well as ensuring that they meet the needs of all people in the community including youth, elderly, and all genders," MAL Guadalcanal Province CFO, Mr. Wotomaru stressed.

He further said that this is a four (4) years project and for Guadalcanal province, it will be implemented by Guadalcanal Province Agriculture Extension office in collaboration with the Provincial Health Promotion division in Guadalcanal Province.

At the same time Mr. Wotomaru acknowledged MK Farm Fresh for taking on board the initiative and for its continuous engagement, promotion and production of nutritious food crops to support food security in the country. Meanwhile, owner of MK Farm Fresh, John Maeli Kauvera said he was grateful for the Power Tiller Machine, which would make farming work easier.

He then thanked MAL and UNDP for the support and for choosing MK Farm Fresh as the recipient of the machine and tools under the Model farm project.

Mr. Maeli is a popular person and one of the suppliers of Guava fruits and vegetables to the Honiara markets. He planted over 10,000 guava trees.

Most people (resellers) usually buy guava fruits from his farm and resell it at markets in Honiara. He involved in intercropping farming.

Achieving through shallot farming

Owning a 'dream home' is his only wish.

Eddie Voko, 27, resides at Barana community and is of Guadalcanal and Choiseul province percentage. With 5 children, Mr. Voko is a determined and struggling father. He dreamed of building a permanent home (house) for his children. Year in, year out, the struggle is real since he has no paid job (formal employment).

With sheer determination and fantasy of a 'dream home', Mr. Voko continue to explore paths and possibilities that would transpire his dream realism.

Mr. Voko tried out many opportunities and involved in timber milling (Saw-milling) – a job he gave-up then and became a full time farmer. "I left saw-milling for reasons only known to me and decided to concentrate on family farming/gardening," Mr. Voko told MAL Media in an interview.

Mr. Voko said he earn good money from vegetables and root crops sales (marketing) than what he usually get from timber milling then. "Farming is better than anything. It's our livelihood. You earn whenever you crops and vegetables are ready for selling. Every day you become richer from your farm sales," Mr. Voko attested.

Mr. Voko involved in intercropping,



Eddie Voko in-front of his new permanent home that he build through money acquired from shallot sales. The home is in construction phase and is nearing completion.

however, his main focus is on shallot cultivations.

"I concentrated on shallot farming because it is the only vegetable that made my dream become reality – through shallot sales, I manage to save some money and build my family home."

Mr. Voko frequently sold his shallots at the Honiara Central Market but then round mid-2020 a Chinese businessman approached him at his home for a deal – a tradeoff arrangement that seen Mr. Voko as the main supplier of shallots to the Chinese businessman in Honiara.

He said to him that was a dream come through as the arrangement

that agreed upon between him and the buyer – the Chinese man, empowered him to do little savings as well cut the market transport expenses.

"I usually transport my shallot produces to the main Honiara market for sale but then after this new arrangement, I have stopped as the buyer himself have to travel to my home and purchase his prearranged orders.

"This arrangement really helped me and my family because I spend no money on transport and market fees as before. I just wait for the buyer to call me by phone and provide details of how many orders he

want us to prepare prior to his arrival for purchasing and collecting. "I use plastics and a scale to weigh orders. I charged \$15 per kilogram. I supply twice a week – Thursdays and Sundays. I usually make 100kg per day and 200kg for two days. So, for simple math, I earn \$1500 per day and for that two days I can earn \$3000," Mr. Voko stated.

Despite the prosperous operation, Mr. Voko said the real challenge remain as invasive pest and diseases like the African Giant Snail (GAS) which continues to damage his gardens. "And the reason I chose to focus on shallot farming is, it is a repellent plant and insects and even GAS cannot attack it."

Mr. Voko while acknowledging the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) toward developing the agriculture sector and supporting farmers throughout the country, calls on MAL to visit his community and support them with farming tools and also pest and disease remedies. I want to grow other crops but snail (GAS) is a real threat – it damages our garden vegetables and root crops," Mr. Voko stressed. He encourages people who have nothing to do or do not have formal job to engage in gardening/ farming to support their families and livelihood.

Determination pay-off for Gwango Community Farmers Association

Hard work and sheer determination paid off for Gwango Community Farmers Association (GCFA) at Suafa Bay, North Malaita after they received a cheque worth of \$4,216.80 from the sale of 175.7 litres (3 barrels) of virgin coconut oil to Kokonut Pacific Solomon Islands (KPSI) in December 2020.

GCFA Secretary, Michael Samo said the cheque payment was the first of its kind for the association to have received after its formation in 2013 and the establishment of its Direct Micro Expelling (DME) Coconut Crushing Mill project in 2019.

"It's a big achievement for GCFA," Mr. Samo said. Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) funded the project.

"The money was worth the hard work and efforts that we put together to ensure we achievement our goals – one of which is to earn money from the government funded project to keep the association operating and also help community members to improve their living standard and livelihood," Mr. Samo added.

However, Mr. Samo said operating a business



The Direct Micro Expelling (DME) Coconut Crushing Mill building at Gwango village, Suafa Bay, North Malaita.

or initiating such community association especially in the rural areas is really challenging thus requires determination and patience.

"Capital (money) is the real issue. However, with the little funds that we acquired from few organised community fundraisings enable us to get the project this far and thus, it is now bearing fruit," he said.

GCFA was formed in 2013 and registered at the Company Haus.

It comprised of communities within the vicinity of Gwango village, Suafa Bay, North Malaita.

It aimed at engaging community members in all works of live to participant in such income generating initiative to support their families and at the same time improve their standard of living and promotes peace and harmony within the community. GCFA received the project from MAL in 2016. Implementation process was a bit slow then, however, the community determined and completed the construction of the Direct Micro Expelling (DME) Coconut Crushing Mill building in July 2019, which was then handed over to the community by the then Director (Acting) of

MAL, Planning and Land Use Management Department Mr. Simon Iro Sefa.

Mr. Samo on behalf of GCFA and members, thanked the government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and stakeholders for recognising their needs and for the support rendered toward the project.

"This is the first step towards success and the community members really valued this as a great opportunity for them to excel in life," Mr. Samo articulated.

SI and NZ join forces to control Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle

Solomon Islands has formed a new partnership with New Zealand to step up the response to the invasive Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) which, if left unchecked, would pose a serious threat to food security and coconut and palm oil industries.

On Friday 15th January 2021 a Grant Funding Arrangement was signed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Ethel Tebengi Frances, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, McKinnie Dentana, and the Acting New Zealand High Commissioner, Hannah van Voorthuysen that commits approximately SBD\$10 million over a two year period to strengthening management and control of the CRB in Solomon Islands.

The partnership supports biosecurity officials to control and prevent the spread of existing CRB infestations. A new strain of CRB from Guam (CRG-Guam) is proving resistant to current biocontrol measures and has the potential to impact 50-90% of coconut, oil, sago and beetle nut palms without intervention.

The new partnership will therefore increase provincial CRB surveillance, clean-up and management activities; establish internal quarantine protocol to limit the spread of CRB between provinces; and collect and analyse CRB samples to inform integrated pest management practices. It builds on work completed by MAL to map out sites of CRB infestation across Solomon Islands which is informing the response. In 2020, MAL Biosecurity officers worked with New Zealand-based AgResearch to conduct delimiting



From left, Acting New Zealand High Commissioner, Hannah Van Voorthuysen, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ethel Tebengi Frances, and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, McKinnie Dentana after signing the Grant Funding Arrangement to support the fight against the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB).

surveys in the provinces, and sent beetle samples to New Zealand for testing. Findings from this work will enable biosecurity officers to prioritise high risk infestations in the provinces and support communities to manage, control and potentially eradicate CRB infestations. Speaking at the signing ceremony, Permanent Secretary of MAL, PS Ethel Tebengi Francis said Solomon Islands is very grateful to the New Zealand government for this timely funding support.

"We are so blessed that New Zealand again saw it fit to continue supporting the nation in this fight to control coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation on our coconuts and oil palm plantations."

"This funding comes at the right time when all the impacts of COVID 19 is putting a lot of pressure on our economy. As a country we need

to look at how to recover and the coconut and palm oil industries are those that we need to focus on because they bring in a lot of money into the economy."

PS Ethel also acknowledged the previous partnership arrangement with New Zealand that was implemented through the Pacific Community (SPC) and thank the Acting New Zealand High Commissioner for the trust of her government to accept the request made by Solomon Islands government to implement the funding on our own and she promise that MAL will do its utmost best to deliver to their expectations.

Acting New Zealand High Commissioner Hannah van Voorthuysen noted that this partnership is complemented by a broader NZ\$18m programme supporting Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and

Vanuatu to manage the spread of CRB across Melanesia. This includes research through New Zealand Crown Agency AgResearch to find new biocontrol methods as well as support for regional awareness, surveillance and coordination by The Pacific Community (SPC).

"This is a destructive and difficult pest to manage," she said, "community driven eradication measures will be supported through high-quality scientific research and regional efforts as we work collectively to rein in the beetle's destruction of coconut and palm trees that are essential for food security and livelihoods in Solomon Islands."

Director of Biosecurity Solomon Islands, Francis Tsatsia emphasised that CRB is still a major and very serious threat to Solomon Islands. The Coconut pest has unique life cycles and biology which makes it very difficult to contain and eradicate. It is very crucial everyone understand how best to manage the pest to reduce its population. "The message for communities remains simple: cut, burn and kill. If you suspect you have CRB, can see visible damage, and if the palm looks like it will not recover, then cut down the tree. Use or burn the wood straight away, as this will reduce the chance that the CRB spreads, or the larvae inside the tree continue to grow. Tidy your community areas of rotting wood, and manage compost and manure carefully to ensure that the beetle breeding sites are minimised".

If you notice CRB in your community, or see signs of damage, please report it promptly to the BEEC office on 131 CRB Toll Free line.



A MAL Biosecurity officer checking Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) traps near the Honiara port area.



The Director of Biosecurity Solomon Island (BSI), Francis Tsatsia explaining the difference between a female and a male coconut rhinoceros beetle.



The High Commissioner, Georgina Roberts found a beetle in a bucket trap, so was able to check out the real deal.



British High Commissioner Dr. Brian Jones and Hon. Minister of Agriculture Senley Levi Filualea flanked by ministry staff with the donated items.

BHC hands over vegetable seeds & gardening tools to MAL

The British High Commission in Honiara on Monday 18th January handed over millions of vegetable seeds and gardening tools to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL).

British High Commissioner to Solomon Islands and Nauru, His Excellency Dr. Brian Jones handed over the more than 5 million vegetable seeds and about 618 gardening tools to the Ministry.

"Every new seed planted brings hope. And in 2021, a sign of hope for the future is even more important," remarked High Commissioner Jones when handing over the items.

He said the UK Government is proud to support the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock replenish its stocks of vegetable seeds and garden tools, to ensure that they can support vulnerable gardeners across the provinces.

"At this time of year, as we face cyclone season, a good supply of

seeds is the best form of savings account in the rural areas. Even if a disaster hits and damages vegetable gardens, a supply of seeds can get people's gardens growing again and restore food security. And as low-lying areas of Solomon Islands face uncertainty in the future from climate change, food security is ever more vital."

Dr Jones said 2021 will be a tough year, even as we see the shoots of our recovery from Coronavirus worldwide.

"I am pleased to support the Ministry in its agricultural extension work, ensuring people have access to good quality seeds and the tools to grow them, across the provinces of Solomon Islands," he adds.

Receiving the items, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Hon. Senley

Filualea expressed gratitude to the people of Great Britain for seeing fit to donate seeds to the people of Solomon Islands through his ministry.

"As you are aware, the Solomon Islands budget for 2021 is not yet decided on due to the many uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. But our needs are still there and are many. The need to ensure our people can live through this pandemic times and the need to keep our economy afloat are great challenges for us at this time.

"The challenges of the 2019 COVID is still here with us in 2021. We were hoping that this year will be different but as you may hear from the global news on status of this COVID-19, it is increasing again.

And despite some efforts on availability of the vaccine, we were also informed that it will take months before Solomon Islands can even have some vaccine available and the vaccine programs other countries our rolling out as well will take months. Which means we will still have months of negative growth and food insecurity before we can all come out of this pandemic," Hon. Minister Filualea said. He said the gifts, are timely. "These are New Year gifts for our farming household around the country and I am honoured Excellency Dr. Brian Jones to receive these gifts on their behalf. "My ministry will ensure the distributions will reach far wide to all provinces in the country."

Hon. Minister Filualea on behalf of the DCGA government, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and people of Solomon Islands thanked the United Kingdom government for the timely support to the people of Solomon Islands.

"Every new seed planted brings hope."



PICTURES HIGHLIGHTS OF THE HANDING OVER CEREMONY

Training empowers South Choiseul Kava farmers

Total of 30 farmers has successfully completed two days of Kava training workshop held at Siva community, Katupika ward 2 in South Choiseul Province from 15th-16th December 2020.

Taqu Conservation and Marine Protected Area financed the training through the management of Chief David Hakezama from Boeboe village and facilitated by Chief Field Officer (CFO) from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL),



Chief Field Officer of MAL Extension Department MacDonald Hiva, standing from right front row with farmer participants that attended the training.



Demonstration on pruning, nursery, mounting and weeding.



Chief David preparing kava cuttings to present to the participants.

Extension Department in Honiara, MacDonald Hiva and James Tahopa, Senior Field Officer (SFO) for Western Province Extension office.

Farmer participants from villages including Boeboe, Siva, Makaqa, Viviruni, Ludurango, Zarana, Lituni, Potutu, Luqubule and Taqu Island attended the training.

Purpose of the training is to guarantee farmers know the importance of growing kava in Solomon Islands; able to learn the agronomic practices of growing kava and to learn and be able to identify the noble varieties of kava from the wild varieties.

In his opening remarks, Provincial Member for Katupika ward 2, Honourable Benjamin Harrison stressed

the importance of engaging in income generating activities and kava development is one apart from copra production.

He further emphasised the importance of the Katupika farmers to actively participate in agricultural activities as one source of livelihood for the rural people.

Topics covered include;

- History and importance of kava in SI
- Varieties and characteristics
- Nursery establishment & methods
- Planting methods & land preparation
- Variety identification and Pruning
- Earthing/mounding and spacing
- Shade management and nursery

Planting materials were also supplied to all the participants after the workshop by Taqu management.

Trainer and CFO for MAL, MacDonald Hiva said participants had expressed joy and gratitude toward the training as this has been the first ever training for them to have, especially, on kava and they have learned a lot from it.

“For those who have planted kava, they will improve and corrected some of the practices not properly done after the workshop. For those who have received new planting materials, they will commence on nursery and try to apply what they have learned during the two days’ workshop,” CFO Hiva said.

In his closing remarks, board mem-

ber of Anarvon Conservation management Mr. Rence expressed his delight with the training and thanked Taqu management for supporting the training initiative as an avenue to empower the rural people of Katupika.

“Under the Anarvon management household survey, it was found that in Katupika, marine resource is rated number one and Agriculture is the second priority according to the Katupika traditional livelihood

practices.”

Host community (Sivai) supported the training by providing free accommodation and venue while the United Church Women Fellowship (UCWF) group in Sivai was acknowledged for their assistance on catering services.

Mr. Rence then recognised Chief Poloso for his consent to host the kava training as well as the permission to use his kava plot for practical purposes.

He also thanked James Tahopa and MacDonald Hiva from MAL for facilitating the training to Katupika ward farmers and everyone who contributed towards the success of the two days practical training.

COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS WARNED

BSI: Importing seeds for planting of any sort without an “import permit” is illegal

Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) has warned companies and individuals that it is illegal to import seeds for planting of any sort and sell it in the country without obtaining an ‘import permit’ from BSI.

The warning came following a successful joint operation carried out in Honiara on Monday 25th January 2021 between BSI officers and the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) officers on shops that breached the BSI Act 2013 with the importation and selling of planting seeds without BSI authorized import permit.

Eight (8) Chinese owned shops from Point Cruz, Central Market, China Town and Kukum area were caught to have unlawfully smuggling and selling planting seeds without an import permit at the time of the operation.

“All items found in the shops during the operation were confiscated and brought to BSI office for further verifications before destroying,” Samuel Hone of the BSI Compliance & Auditing said.

“During our search and interview with shop owners it is evident that they have breach the Biosecurity Act 2013 because they do not possessed or displayed any permit to import plants and plant product into Solomon Islands.

“Even planting seed packets are written with foreign languages that Solomon Islanders cannot read which are not recommended by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) standard for selling to the public. No permit to import plants and plants product obtain from Biosecurity office, MAL. No proper label to identify plant botanical names, no numbering or coding of packets and accompanying list is provided to link their botanical names.



Moana Kelly of BSI and a Policer officer inside HY shop at Pt. Cruz also found selling seeds without an import permit.



Jean Manepora'a of BSI questioning a shop owner found to be illegal selling seeds without import permit.

“Labelling on the seed packets are different from what is actually inside the packets. Seed packet labelling are not from the approved sources of Biosecurity Solomon Islands and there is no specific expiry date on the packets,” Mr. Hone explained. “The 8 shop owners have been advised to pay a non-compliance penalty fee of \$5,000 each, failure to do so within 14 days means facing prosecution,” he added.

BSI confirmed that five (5) shop owners have already turned up and paid their fines while the remaining 3 are retailers only.

Francis Tsatsia Director of BSI thanked RSIPF for supporting his officers during the joint operation and looks forward to similar future collaborations.

Mr.Tsatsia said the raid is very important and the support of the Po-

lice to ensure this is supported and implemented under the law is critical.

“Biosecurity must ensure what is regulated under the Act in terms of goods imported and exported must be adhere to at all times. There is a procedure established under the Biosecurity Act on how to import seeds for planting in this particular case. Seed for planting is a regulated good which means it has some elements of risk associated with if imported without Biosecurity risk analysis processes. Other pests and diseases that are seed born can be transmitted through seed and can spread to Solomon Islands if Biosecurity process is not follow. The risk is real and in most cases cannot be detected by eye sight,” he added.

“Not all countries can supply seeds for planting to Solomon Islands. Only those that meet Solomon Islands import condition can supply seeds for planting into Solomon Islands. Biosecurity has a list of approved companies where seed can be imported from,” he said.

He further said that it is important to note that anyone either companies and individual who are interested to import any seed for planting from overseas must consult Biosecurity office to get update information on how to import and to ensure your source or the supplier is approved under Biosecurity law.

“It is a requirement by law that you must have an import permit issue by Biosecurity Solomon Islands first before you bring in seeds for planting into Solomon Islands.

“There is a penalty by fine and imprisonment if companies or individuals found breaching any of this very important requirement. This is important to ensure we do not bring in any pests and diseases into Solomon Islands.”

Livestock department continue to deliver services to farmers

Livestock Department within the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) remain committed to its responsibilities as it continue to provide Livestock and Veterinary services to livestock farmers in the country.

On 19th and 22nd January 2021, MAL livestock officers visited a breeder piggery farmer at White River in Honiara and performed four successful castrations on male piglets.

Castration is the procedure of removing the testicles of male animals.

Reasons for castration is to;

- Prevents male animals from acquiring undesirable sexual traits.
- Aids in growth and fattening.
- Improves quality of meat.
- Prevents undesirable breeding.
- Makes the animal easier to handle.

The team also used the opportunity and provided the piggery farmer with free advisory



Principal livestock officer, Eddie Wainonu conducts the castration procedure with the aid of the piggery farmer.

Need advice on Livestock & Veterinary services?

CALL: 20226

Or Visit us at the Livestock Department of MAL
Located opposite the Ministry of Lands
Honiara

services. Principal Livestock Officer (PLO), Max Maetoloa

Lazarus said injection to manage external parasite on sows (adult young female pigs) was also performed.

Mr. Lazarus said the undertaking is part of the ongoing activities of the Ministry (MAL), Livestock Department to support animal farmers with veterinary services such as treatments, castrations, feed formulation and other general livestock advisory.

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock assist poultry farmers

Total of 20 poultry farmers has been supported by the Livestock Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) to boost their farm productivity.

Funded under the Covid-19 livelihood Sector preparedness and response programme, through its Livestock Department, the assistance is expected to increase production of poultry meat and eggs locally in preparation for any possible future Covid-19 lockdown.

MAL, Principal Livestock officer, Eddie Wainuni said, of the 20 project recipients, 10 are broiler farmers and the other 10 are layer farmers with a majority of 12 are those resides in Honiara City and eight (8) are farmers from Guadalcanal province.

“In order for a farmer to acquire such support, livestock officers must first conduct an assessment to verify whether that farmer is a genuine one, has already raised livestock, access to market outlets, access to supplier for stock and feed and have some knowledge on raising poultry,” Mr. Wainuni explained.

“This is a MAL ongoing support programme managed by the Livestock Department. The level of support is based on approved funding.

“These funding is from the 2019 program being delayed due to cash flow. So for this, it is the first delivery. The second delivery under the project will



Four of the 20 project recipients receives their project delivery documents from MAL, Principal Livestock officer, Eddie Wainuni on the right.

be carried out in due course for 50 more local chicken farmers.

“Flight restrictions due to the COVID-19 impacted greatly on availability of chicks in the country,” he added.

The project support include Stockfeed with feeding and drinking equipments.

These successful farmers will collect their day old chicks, stockfeed and equipments from Vuvula Poultry Limited.

MAL boosted Sape farm with \$618K brand new Backhoe

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) last Friday 5th February officially handed over a brand new backhoe to Sape Farm management to provide greater opportunity for Sape farm to maximise on productivity. Purchased from George Wu Company, the backhoe cost MAL \$618,000.00. The money (\$618 K) is from the savings Sape farm management made from the 2.7 million funding support agreement MAL and Sape farm signed in 2020.

The backhoe will assist the farm with the establishment of proper drainage system to avoid flood waters from coming into the farm during rainy seasons, assist with the removal of large boulders from the farm as well as assist with the establishment of a farm road within the farm. Speaking on behalf of the Permanent Secretary at the handover ceremony, Deputy Secretary Technical of MAL, Michael Ho’ota said this is the first time that MAL has procured such a machine for a farming entity, in this case for Sape farm.

Mr. Ho’ota said agriculture is a risky undertaking (business) so we have to use the available tools and technologies currently at our disposal to ensure that we have a viable and sustainable farming business.

He said MAL is pleased with Sape farm commitment adding the government through MAL will explore opportunities and look at how it can improve (this) cassava industry to maximize production and benefits to farmers and the government.

The Deputy Secretary Technical also emphasized the importance of farm mechanisation in the agricultural sector to make the works of farmers easier. Thus increasing production at the farm level.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) coun-



Sape farm managing Director, Dr. Paul Bosawai Popora receive keys of the donated backhoe machine from MAL Deputy Secretary Technical (DST) Michael Ho’ota. From back, on the left is Nichole Nonga of FAO, Jimi Saelea, FAO country representative, Director of Planning Department, MAL, Mr. Peter Trena and Director of Extension Department, MAL, Mr. Andrew Menanolu.

try representative, Jimi Saelea said FAO is happy to work together with MAL toward the growth of agriculture sector in the country to improve livelihoods and ensure food security.

“FAO is mandated to address various issues including food insecurity, sustainable livelihoods, nutrition, health, forestry, fisheries, as well as climate change.

“FAO is pleased to be part of the handing over ceremony today. FAO’s funding support pro-

vided through its programmes with MAL to address issues such as food security and livelihoods are meant to assist beneficiaries such as Dr. Paul Bosawai Popora improve their farming activities. And what Dr. Paul Bosawai Popora is doing here is what the government through MAL must look serious at addressing commercial agriculture for both the domestic and export market, going forward to improve the country’s economy, enhance livelihoods and



The newly donated backhoe machine. The backhoe will assist the farm with the establishment of proper drainage system to avoid flood waters from coming into the farm during rainy seasons, assist with the removal of large boulders from the farm as well as assist with the establishment of farm roads within the farm. Picture insert, top, is Dr. Paul inside the backhoe cabin.

ensure food security” Mr. Saelea said.

Mr. Saelea further said that it is encouraging to see MAL donating the backhoe that will help the farm with the establishment of proper drainage system as well as assist with the establishment of an all-weather farm road system within the farm, and also provide greater opportunity for the farm to maximise on productivity.

Receiving the gift, Managing Director of Sape farm Dr. Paul Bosawai Popora expressed grati-

tude to the national government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) and FAO for seeing it fit to procure and donate the backhoe to Sape farm.

He also thanked FAO for its continuous commitment to agriculture development in the country through MAL/government.

“I understand there are few challenges that every one of us facing but it’s an opportunity behind all these challenges,” Dr. Paul said.

“We have a lot of risks. We have survived at least three cyclones, three heavy flooding and we have to use our hands to dig using modified ridges and while everyone sleep we swim in the rains to divert flood waters from coming in or inundating the farm.

“Now that we received the backhoe it will make work much easier for us to establish proper drainage system to deter or avoid flood waters from coming into the farm and to establish a farm road in the farm that is mechanization of Agriculture to reduce farm lossage. Therefore, we would like to express our profound gratitude to the government through MAL with the collaborative support from FAO for the donation of the backhoe.

“The biggest risk is to loss the whole farm when there is flooding. Therefore, I would like to also thank Sape farm team/workers for their hard work in saving the farm through flooded waters over the past months.”

In response DST, Michael Ho’ota recognized Sape farm management for their commitment in developing the farm to where it is now today. He also thanked Sape farm for its contribution to food security in the country.

The handover ceremony also coincided with the first harvesting of Sape farm.

In May last year 2020, the Government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) and Sape farm management signed a 2.7 million funding support agreement that will see cassava root crop transform into an industry in the future.

The funding agreement and partnership was an initiative to support the government’s Food Security Programme.

The funding support agreement catered for farming machineries and tools, processing and refrigeration machines and working capital. ■

MAL committed to deliver Sape & Varivao Food Bank projects

The Government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) remain committed to deliver Sape Farm and Varivao Holdings Ltd National Food Bank projects despite budget pressures brought to by Covid-19 pandemic.

Under the National Food Bank project, MAL to support the construction of pack houses as storage rooms for Cassava root crops for Sape Farm at Ngilibiu, North Guadalcanal Plains and for Varivao Holdings Ltd at its Ranadi site.

The projects were part of the government’s initiative to support its (government) Food Security Programme in the country. “...now we are focusing on economic recovery so will increase production to export more cassava and other root crops this year onward,” MAL Permanent Secretary Ms Ethel Tebengi Frances said.

The PS said that “since production of cassava increased in the country, there are a lot of interests from international buyers and so we will support our farmers to produce to that interests, so yes, a lot of exciting times ahead.”

“Implementation of the projects should have been started last year, however, due to budget limitations, it has been reprioritized and waiting for this year’s development budget.”

Despite the slow progress as the government processes and Covid-19 pressures is concerned, MAL is devoted to deliver and would like to



Above pictures shows a newly planted cassave plot and a cassava plot ready for harvesting.

thank both project recipients for their understanding and patience. MAL also conveyed its gratitude to Sape Farm management for its partnership with Varivao Holdings Ltd for the export of cassava to Melbourne Australia last year.

Deputy Secretary Technical of MAL, Michael

Ho’ota conveyed the appreciation in a hand over ceremony of a new backhoe to Sape farm on 5th February to maximise on productivity. He said Sape Farm should have process its own cassava for direct export but due to delay in construction of a pack house storage room for the farm they have to initially collaborate with



MAL Deputy Secretary Technical (DST), Michael Ho’ota.

Varivao Holdings for export market.

Mr. Ho’ota assured that government through MAL is remain committed and will make sure it delivers the projects this year as soon as the 2021 national development budget is blessed and ready for implementation.

Meanwhile, Sape Farm managing Director, Dr.

Paul Bosawai Popora said they are taking the alternative and partnered with Varivao due to the pack house construction delay but thanked the government through MAL for its boundless efforts and continuous commitment towards the growth of agriculture in the country.

He said this month (February) they are working

in partnership with Varivao to process and produce 14 tonnes of cassava for export market.

“We have potential now on the ground with more than 300 to 400 tonnes which about 400,000 kilos of cassava where equivalent to about a value of \$800,000 thousand dollars. If we go with close economics of cassava multiply by 2 annually that’s about 1.6 million and then multiply by 0.3 for government tax to improve our economy.

“So there are lots of things we are yet to do apart from what we see now on the ground,” he said.

At the same time DST, Michael Ho’ota said cassava is becoming one of the important upcoming industries in the country adding the ministry is eyeing ways to improve it in the future.

“Initially Sape farm was established and supported by the government through MAL for food security. We were worried last year that import of rice could be stop because of Covid-19, and so, we quickly came up with plans and develop cassava production here (sape farm), so that if rice import affected we can still have option on stable food to ensure everyone in town have food,” Mr. Ho’ota emphasized.

Sape Farm has expanded over the past 8 months and currently has 21 hectares of cassava and 20 hectares of potato on the ground. ■

Biosecurity officers intercept, confiscates concealed goods

Biosecurity officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) on Thursday 25th February impounded dozens of concealed goods from a shipment at the Ports International wharf in Honiara.

The goods were seized after officers found that the importer, My Solo LTD, breached the country's biosecurity regulations by importing the products without a valid import permit.

"Importing products without an authorised BSI import permit is an offence under the biosecurity laws and offenders may face penalties for non-compliance or court of law," Biosecurity officer, Jordan Lavia who involved in the operation said.

"The carton of goods were concealed inside a shipping container in multiple locations in a manner intended to avoid detection and examination by our biosecurity officers.

"However, through a collective effort with the customs officers, we manage to remove the items. All



Chief Surveillance officer, BSI department Crispus Fanai, Biosecurity officer, Shelly Naqu and Jordan Lavia displaying some of the confiscated goods at the Ports Biosecurity Office, Honiara International Wharf.

the products are from Malaysia. The goods also include, pork meat which currently under Biosecurity ban at the moment and other meat products prohibited under biosecurity laws for importation," Mr. Lavia said.

Biosecurity Director, Francis Tsatsia while applauding his officers for the

great efforts said his office have directed that a formal investigation process will be carried out into the matter with the intention to charge and prosecute the offender with biosecurity offences before court.

Mr. Tsatsia also warned businesses and individuals who avoid biosecurity requirements to take extra safe-

guard and follow the right procedure and requirements.

He also assured the public and trading companies that Biosecurity Department of MAL continue to facilitate legitimate trade, however the office (BSI) will robustly pursue and punish non-compliance with biosecurity regulations.

Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI) officers involved in the successful operation include; Jordan Lavia, Shelly Naqu, Hellen Voda and Cathy Vigimana.

The confiscated items now awaiting destruction.

The confiscated items/products are listed below.

1. Dried Chicken Claw: 5.5kg
2. Dried Beef : 1.8kg
3. Dried Pork : 4kg
4. Dried duck : 3kg
5. Fresh garlics: 2ctn
6. Duck eggs: 5ctns
7. Chinese herbs : 5ctn
8. Sausage: 16 ctn
9. Duck Claw: 1 Ctn

Biosecurity officers probe alleged beetle incursion on Noni

Officers of the Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) are currently investigating an alleged Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (Oryctes Rhinoceros) attack on Noni plant at Baunasaitonga Noni Farm in East Guadalcanal.

Following reports of the incursion, BSI Surveillance officers on Wednesday 17th February quickly responded to see the damage and collected samples/specimens for diagnostic work.

"At the moment we suspect the beetle to be Xylotrupes gideon, and not the quarantine pest, Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) as previously alluded by some people,"

Chief Surveillance officer, Crispus Fanai said.

He said, according to records, Xylotrupes gideon is recorded in Solomon islands and Papua New Guinea. However, we need to verify this with our counterparts in Australia to confirm if it's a sub species.

"We have reports of this beetle from a Guava farmer from Aruligho in West Guadalcanal some years back attacking his Guava fruits. What this beetle is doing is new to us.

"Since we do not have records of this beetle attacking Morinda citrifolia (Noni) we need to do more research and seek our overseas partners for advices. It may take some time to fully diagnose the pest.



Left is Leonard Ale, a farmer with Biosecurity Officers collecting samples at Baunasaitonga Noni Farm in East Guadalcanal for diagnostic work and verification purposes.

"The beetle is active during night times, thus, hand picking and destroying during the day could reduce the damage and population," Mr. Crispus said.

He assured farmers and the public that the outcome to confirm the beetle species will be made known to the public once the result is available in due course.

Mr. Crispus also urges farmers and the public to call BSI free toll number 131 once they sighted such strange discovery or report to the BSI/MAL so that officers can attend to reports and carry out authentication work than publishing misleading information in the media platforms that could bring uneasiness to our farmers.



Biosecurity officers, Jean Manepora'a and Moana Kelly collecting specimens for authentication work.



Specimens/samples collected by the Biosecurity officers for diagnostic work.

Farmers urged to purchase seeds from genuine suppliers

Local farmers and the general public are cautioned to purchase seeds of any sort for planting from genuine suppliers as some shops were found to be selling unsolicited and unauthentic seeds.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI) Department issued the statement after MAL Biosecurity officers confiscated dozens of seeds illegally smuggled into the country and sold by some businesses/shops in Honiara.

Director of BSI Francis Tsatsia said it is important that farmers and the public are reminded to purchase quality seeds from trusted and approved dealers/sellers.

"There are some shops that are selling seeds that are unauthentic or not genuine as they are not sourced from BSI approved suppliers. Even some were found to be selling vegetable seeds with labels on the seed packets that are different from what is actually inside the packets," Mr. Tsatsia said.

He added that a genuine seed dealer/supplier should have sell seeds that are properly packed in packets with proper labelling that specify the expiry date and written in English and not in foreign languages. It is important to also source seed where suppliers go through scientific procedures and process in screening seeds to re-



BSI officers confiscating vegetables seeds and seed packets with foreign languages.



duce the risk of pest and disease contamination." "It is obvious that packets of seeds confiscated by my officers were found to be smuggled into the country as seed packet labels are not from the approved sources of Biosecurity Solomon Islands and there is no specific expiry date on the packets. To make it worst, all seed packets are written in foreign languages making it more difficult for indigenous Solomon Islanders to understand or read which not recommended by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) standard for selling to the public," Mr. Tsatsia explained.

He said though the country yet to have a machine or laboratory to do seed testing, it is criti-

cal that farmers told to get quality seeds from genuine and approved suppliers to avoid yield loss.

"Getting value for what you spend your money on is important. Do not spend your money on seed products that can only guarantee 50-70 percent yield.

"This would not only help avoid yield loss but save the farmer and environment as sowing of unsolicited seeds or seeds that are not sourced from BSI approved suppliers is risky and may bring resultant impact on food production, the spread of crop diseases and related health and environmental problems," Mr. Tsatsia said.

Discover strange pest incursion?
Call toll free number 131

Or email: enquiries@biosecurity.gov.sb



Feraladoa Mothers Union equipped with farming tools & vegetable seeds

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its Honiara Urban City Agriculture office (HUC) has supported Feraladoa St. Peter Mother's Union group of Tuvaruhu Parish in Honiara with essential farming tools and vegetable seeds.

Funded under MAL livelihood and food security sector program for smallholder vegetable farmers, the assistance aimed at boosting the group's backyard farming activities to guarantee fresh produce are available for daily household consumption.

Delivering the tools and seeds on Monday 14th February was Ms. Caroline Harunari, MAL Officer in Charge of Honiara Urban City Agriculture office (HUC).

"MAL is pleased to support you with these tools and seeds to help sustain your livelihood and food security during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. And lest we forget, our healthy wellbeing which are also threatened by non-communicable diseases (NCD) due to the change of our eating habits," she said.

Ms. Harunari added that the rapid change of choice amongst our eating habits from locally grown healthy foods to processed/manufactured goods is a ticking time bomb for our healthy wellbeing against NCDs in Solomon Islands, thus, farming family households and community groups everywhere



Caroline Harunari, MAL Officer In-Charge of Honiara Urban City Agriculture office, far right, with members of Feraladoa Mothers Union group at the handing over ceremony.

are encouraged to engage more in gardening of root crops, growing vegetables and fruits for daily consumption. "It is not only healthy but also supports your savings which is among the important objectives of the livelihood and food security sector program for smallholder vegetable farmers in this country."

Excited leader of Feraladoa Mothers Union Linnie Meinoda thanked MAL for the timely assistance saying such support is the first of its kind for her group to receive from the government or any other or-

ganizations.

"We are very excited that you have recognized our request.

"We have been doing our best but in places like our community it is quite difficult to grow vegetables due to lack of space and tools.

"But with this support my group looks forward to working closely with you (MAL) to ensure what we receive today is fully utilize so that we can all achieve the objectives of this new partnership," Ms. Meinoda said.

The assistance worth \$4,602.00. Farming items purchased at Island Enterprise and delivered to the

group include;

- 1 wheelbarrow blue metal tray
- 4 hand hoe
- 4 bush knife 22 inch
- 1 by 1.8x 50 meter shade cloth green
- 1 by 12mm x 30m garden hose
- 4 mini fork with wooden handle
- 10 packet seeds of Chinese cabbage Wong Bok
- 10 packet seeds of Chinese cabbage Pak Choi
- 3 packet seeds of Chinese cabbage Kwang moon
- 27 cotton gloves
- 1 cotton gloves w/ black dots
- 7 shovel square mouth gtv5205

Businesses comply, fine 5k each for non-compliance

Six businesses in Honiara has paid their fines of \$5000 each to the Biosecurity Solomon Islands of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) for violating the country's (SI) Biosecurity regulations. The six firms are from the eight business houses/shops raided by the Biosecurity officers and the RSIPF officers in a joint operation on 25th January 2021 for breaching the Biosecurity Act 2013 regulations by smuggling seeds in the

country and sold it without an authorized Biosecurity "Import Permit" to the public. Samuel Hone of the BSI Compliance & Auditing said the fines were imposed on those companies for non-compliance with the Biosecurity Act 2013. "From the 8 shops that we investigated and confiscated seeds, six has paid their fines while the other two shops are only retailers therefore they are not eligible to pay the

non-compliance fines as the non-compliance fines only applies to companies and individuals who illegally imported seeds from overseas into the country. "A total of \$30,000.00 was paid and collected by BSI so far," Mr. Hone confirmed. Meanwhile, Director of Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI) Francis Tsatsia thanked those companies for complying and for coming forward to settle their fines.

He said that this is a great example that everyone, especially companies and individuals who want to import seeds must learn from to avoid falling in such unfortunate situation in the future. He also thanked his officers and the RSIPF officers for the successful joint operation conducted that resulted in the seizure of smuggled seeds and bringing those breaching Solomon Islands Biosecurity law to pay the legal costs.

See related stories on page 7,11 & 14

Biosecurity destroys confiscated goods



Biosecurity Operation team destroying the confiscated goods at the Biosecurity Quarantine site at Ranadi.

NOTICE FROM BIOSECURITY SOLOMON ISLANDS

Are you an Importer or Exporter finding difficulties to import and export plant and animal products in and out of the country (SI)?

Then, follow the recommended links provided below for more information from the Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI) official website, as it provides a Step-by-Step Guide with detailed important information about the processes and procedures for Solomon Islands Importers and Exporters.

BSI official website: <https://www.biosecurity.gov.sb/>

Importers: <https://www.biosecurity.gov.sb/Importers>

Exporters: <https://www.biosecurity.gov.sb/Exporters>

Travelers: <https://www.biosecurity.gov.sb/Travellers>

News & Resources: <https://www.biosecurity.gov.sb/News-Resources>

About us: <https://www.biosecurity.gov.sb/About-Us>

Contact: <https://www.biosecurity.gov.sb/Contact>

You can also consult our friendly Biosecurity officers for assistance at Biosecurity department, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Headquarter (HQ), Catholic Chancery Building located opposite the Iron Bottom Sound Hotel (IBS) or call us on phone: 24657 or email: enquiries@biosecurity.gov.sb

Biosecurity officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) Friday, last week destroyed the dozen of concealed goods which was impounded from a shipment at the Ports International wharf in Honiara on Thursday 25th February. The goods were destroyed at the MAL Biosecurity Quarantine site at Ranadi, East Honiara, together with the smuggled seeds earlier confiscated from eight shops in Honiara during a joint operation by Biosecurity officers and RSIPF officers on 25th January 2021. The goods were seized after officers found that the importer, My

Solo LTD, breached the country's biosecurity regulations by importing the products without a lawful import permit. Biosecurity Director, Francis Tsatsia said the destruction was safely done, however, he added that such destruction would send a strong message that the Biosecurity department will not tolerate such act/practice to thrive as it puts the country's biosecurity at jeopardy. "Importing products without legitimate BSI import permit is an offence under the biosecurity laws and offenders may face penalties for non-compliance or court of law," Mr. Tsatsia explained.

He also warned businesses and individuals who avoid biosecurity requirements to take extra safeguard and follow the right procedure and legal requirements. Mr. Tsatsia while applauding his officers for the great efforts said his office have directed that a formal investigation process will be carried out into the matter with the intention to charge and prosecute the offender with biosecurity offences before court. "The carton of goods were concealed inside a shipping container in multiple locations in a manner intended to avoid detection and examination by our biosecurity of-

ficers. "However, through a collective effort with the customs officers, we manage to remove the items. All the products are from Malaysia. The goods also include, pork meat which currently under Biosecurity ban at the moment and other meat products prohibited under biosecurity laws for importation," Biosecurity Officer, Jordan Lavia said. "It is important that companies and individuals wishing to import goods or any sort of planting materials to comply with biosecurity legal requirements. Non-compliance will see those breaching Solomon Islands Biosecurity law to pay the legal costs," Mr. Lavia stressed.

Biosecurity warns seed importers to comply

Companies and individuals wishing to import and sell seeds from overseas into the country are strongly advised to comply with the Biosecurity 2013 regulations/Act.

Director of Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL), Francis Tsatsia, issued the warning after his officers together with the RSIPF officers confiscated dozens of illegally smuggled planting seeds from eight shops in Honiara during a joint operation on the 25th of January 2021.

Mr. Tsatsia said the discovery showed people who have no respect to our (SI) laws adding those who continue to violate the Biosecurity Act and involve in such unlawful practice/importation may face legal consequences.

"It is the responsibility of Biosecurity to (must) ensure what is regulated under the Act in terms of goods imported and exported must be adhere to at all times.

"There is a procedure established under the Biosecurity Act on how to import seeds for planting in this particular case. Seeds for planting is a regulated goods which means it has some elements of risk associated with if imported without Biosecurity risk analysis processes. Other pests and diseases that are seed born can be transmitted through seed and can spread to Solomon Islands if Biosecurity process is not followed. The risk is real and in most cases cannot be detected by eye sight," the Director explained.

He further said for companies and



Biosecurity Solomon Islands Director, Francis Tsatsia.

“ It is a requirement by law and companies or individuals that want to import seeds must have an import permit issued by Biosecurity Solomon Islands first before they can bring in seeds for planting into Solomon Islands.

individuals to have certification to import seeds of any sort for planting and selling in the country they must obtain an "Import Permit" from BSI.

"It is a requirement by law and companies or individuals that want to import seeds must have

an import permit issued by Biosecurity Solomon Islands first before they can bring in seeds for planting into Solomon Islands.

"It is also important for companies and individuals to (must) consult Biosecurity office to get update information on how to import and

to ensure your source or the supplier is approved under Biosecurity law. Non-compliance to these legal requirements will resulted in fine and imprisonment as these requirements are important to ensure we do not bring in any pests and diseases into Solomon Islands," Mr. Tsatsia emphasised. He stated that BSI has a list of approved companies where seeds can be imported from adding not all countries can supply seeds for planting to Solomon Islands. "Only those that met Solomon Islands import condition can supply seeds for planting into the country. "Seed for planting is just one regulated article which is prescribe and requires a permit prior to importing. Other plants and their products, animal and their products also have the same requirements if anyone is interested to import to Solomon Islands. It is best to check with Biosecurity staff first if you are to bring any plants, animal and their products into Solomon Islands," he added. Biosecurity Solomon Islands (BSI) is a department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL). Guided by the Biosecurity Act 2013, and associated regulations and orders, the Biosecurity Department is responsible for maintaining effective biosecurity to protect the country from pest and diseases, controlling pests and diseases that may enter the country, negotiating market access requirements for agricultural goods being exported and imported and facilitating trade in compliance with international standards. ■

See related stories on page 7,11 & 13

About us

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) is one of the government's key ministry responsible for formulating, executing, monitoring and coordinating the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) agricultural policies. It has two broad set of responsibilities and functions; one is related to policy and the other is linked to the provision of technical support and regulatory services. With the aim to manage natural resources and improve quality and quantity of production of staple and commodity crops and livestock, MAL continues to work together with government, NGO's and private sector partners in its service delivery to facilitate and support the development of commercial agriculture and livestock in Solomon Islands.

To find out more, click and follow the link below:

<https://solomons.gov.sb/ministry-of-agriculture-and-livestock/>

Our Services

Ministry services include;

- Facilitate and support the development of commercial agriculture in Solomon Islands.
- Facilitate research, development and marketing of high value cash crops.
- Facilitate acquisition of Russell Islands Plantation Estates.
- Support agro-forestry in the country (SI).
- Promote oil palm development in other parts of the country.
- Facilitate and support the development of livestock industry.
- Enhance and promote sustainable agriculture development in Solomon Islands and ensure the sector contributes to economic growth, stability, food security, good health and rural development through improved rural livelihoods.
- Promote, improve and ensure leading agricultural developments in Solomon Islands are profitable and environmentally sustainable through the provision of timely and quality agricultural information, research, extension, education and regulatory services throughout the country.