



## South Guadalcanal records huge surge in Kava involvement

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**Selwyn Meplu**  
Noni Development Program Coordinator  
MAL Extension Department





## WELCOME

It is my pleasure as the Permanent Secretary of MAL to present to you the 7th 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 July-August. 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.

# Putting livestock farmers in the driver's seat

At the New Zealand camp behind Henderson area there is a potential pig breeder farmer called Chris Susa.

Mr. Susa involved in small-scale pig farming and currently has three breeding sows and a working boar.

Lately, officers from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its livestock and veterinary services department visited the farmer on request and provided hands on practical training for Mr. Susa and his family members.

The livestock team were on a regular animal Health services for piggery farmers in and around Honiara suburb at that time of the visit.

Deputy Director for Livestock Hearley Atupule said during the farm visit his officers were able to teach the farmer's wife and children on basic iron injection procedure, piglet handling and animal welfare.

"We gave the farmer (Susa) and his family an opportunity to do hands on practical about iron injection in a right way under the supervision of our livestock officers. We also provided them practical on teeth clipping procedures in piglets to avoid piercing (biting) the sow's teats, as the four main teeth of the piglet are removed.

"Other new pig management skills and knowledge acquired by the farmer during the day include tail docking, which is a vital husbandry method which are done to piglets soon after birth to avoid biting of tail by other piglets which can lead to inflection," Mr. Atupule said.

He said the demonstrations provided by his officers are well received with great appreciation from the farmer, Susa.

The Deputy Director said that this is not the first time they had provided such training to livestock farmers in Honiara and on the outskirt but it is their continuous service support to livestock farmers in the country to guarantee they have knowledge on general animal husbandry.

The livestock team included; Hearley Atupule, Deputy Director Small Livestock; Max Lazarus, Principle Livestock Officer Research and Joe Keniratoa from Research Department.



Pictures depicting officers from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its livestock and veterinary services department visited the farmer on request and provided hands on practical training for Mr. Susa and his family members. The farmer's wife and children were taught on basic iron injection procedure, piglet handling and animal welfare.



# South Guadalcanal records huge surge in Kava involvement



Hauvalisi Kava farmers With GP extension staff at a Kava farm – Tina Delta.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its Guadalcanal Extension office has noted huge involvement of communities in Kava farming in the remote South Guadalcanal in 2021 compared to 2018.

A team from MAL Guadalcanal Province Extension office toured the region from 8th-18th last month (July) on a kava follow-up and processing demonstration mission aligned to South Guadalcanal Kava Intervention and recorded the increase in statistics.

Team leader and Chief Field Officer (CFO) for Guadalcanal Mr. Joseph Wotomaru said his team visited 6 wards in the region and compared to data collected in 2018 it shows a huge increase of 52 per cent.

"We visited the same 6 wards in 2018 through where we recorded a total of 48,061 kava plants being planted. However, from data collected during our recent trip to South Guadalcanal it indicates an increase compared to year 2018 as there are 101,165 kava planted which is approximately 50.6 hectare of kava being planted to date. This depicts an increase in the number of kava plants by 52 per cent from 2018 to 2021."

He said his team executed two (2) activity during the field trip which include kava field assessment and processing trainings or demonstrations to increase capacity of farmers.

"The demonstration exercises specifically focused on harvesting, washing and cleaning, selection of chips and roots, cutting and chopping of roots and Chips.

"The processing demonstrations conducted are important to increase the capacity of famers on the standard market requirements so that farmers

can be able to produce quality and marketable kava products, hence improving income generation and reducing poverty in the rural areas. The field assessment and trainings was conducted purposely to assess kava farms and to collect the latest field data. This is to measure the impact of the trainings conducted and the planting materials we distributed to the farmers since 2018 – 2020 with the aim of increasing kava production from 1.2 metric ton (MT) in 2018 to 5 MT by the end of 2023 in the region. "Data collected could also be used for planning purposes as well as for further farmer support to ensure sustainable kava production in South Guadalcanal," Mr. Joseph added.

He said the trip was a success and a crucial one as information or data collected will assist Guadalcanal Province Extension office to verify the status of each kava farm and to project the total area planted in the target areas and possibly plan out the type of support the farmers need.

The team also delivered British High Commission seed and tools support to Avuavu lead farmers associations, Avuavu Secondary School and La-loato Community High School (CHS).

Mr. Joseph thanked MAL management and Guadalcanal Provincial Government for the support to the trip to ensure the program is implemented to support farmers in the remote South Guadalcanal region. "Increasing kava production in South Guadalcanal will not only benefit the famers but it will also have a positive impact to the provincial and the nation economy."



Matilda Tineia, GP Extension Survey and data officer collecting data during the tour.



Moffat Viniago, kava farmer from Hauvalisi and two Guadalcanal Province extension officers.



# Mrs Wate is new MAL Deputy Secretary of Administration and Strategic Planning



The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) new Deputy Secretary of Administration and Strategic Planning (DSASP) at the center, as flanked by Deputy Secretary Technical (DST) Michael Ho'ota and MAL Human Resource Manager, Paurina Galo Akwai.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) has a new Deputy Secretary of Administration and Strategic Planning (DSASP). She is Mrs. Elda Leah Wate.

Mrs. Wate replace Under Secretary Administration (USA) now renamed as Deputy Secretary Administration and Strategic Planning Oswald Ramo who retired in 2020.

Prior to taking up the DSASP role, Mrs. Wate worked as Assistant Accountant General-Management within the Ministry of Finance, Treasury Division (MoFT).

Mrs. Wate served the government for many years and held few positions in other line government ministries which include the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Public Service and recently the Ministry of Finance & Treasury (MoFT).

Hailed from Western Province, Mrs. Wate held a Degree qualification in Accounting from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) and a Master of Business Administration from the University of the South Pacific (USP).

"I am honoured and humble to take up this position and it is all about hard working and perseverance to reach this far. I gave credit to my former superiors, former ministries, I served under. They are my mentors and my stepping-stone it's not who you are but it's a collective effort and coordination that has to be recognized within the organisation that will uplift and bring changes. Am just a another helping hand in trying to have positive mind to make others believe in yourself to be successful in whatever roles we assigned with, whether it is small or big the level is – we all part of the team to achieve," Mrs. Wate said.

When asked of her top priorities Mrs. Wate said,"Well - Things does not happen overnight, it takes time and effort. But I would like to see improvement in the procurement processes because it leads to non-compliance that caused delay to projects and service delivery. So on target for simple procurement training.

"The second priory is to close the gaps in the establishment including the provincial centres. It is always good to fill vacant positions through promotion and recruit below unless a very technical position.

"I have been instructed by the Permanent Secretary to support our planning team develop an active database on the genuine farmers so that resources is made available to genuine farmers and everyone else we need

to reach and to have a vibrant networking with the right people. Also for monitoring and evaluation, purpose would be much easier and on target. And the most challenging one – is for MAL to have its own home to accommodate everyone under one roof. Time will tell," the new DSA courageously said.

The Permanent Secretary Ethel Tebengi Frances in welcoming the new DSASP said that she is excited to have another helping hand as the ministry for a long time only had one Deputy Secretary Technical.

"She was highly favoured amongst the other candidates because of her wider SIG procurement knowledge and other government processes where the ministry wish to improve on. MAL has to improve its support to farmers around the country and we must make efforts to do it better every time. One area I wish to see MAL improve on as well is project delivery and we can only improve on this if we have robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place. I am looking forward to supporting Mrs Wate supervise this work for MAL,"PS Frances said.

Other areas the Permanent Secretary wish to see our new DSASP fully engaged in is the management of our (MAL) development partner portfolio, supporting the ministry with policy developments and ministry reporting. Mrs. Wate received an overwhelming congratulatory messages from MAL management and staff as she took office and commence official duties at her new work station at MAL Headquarter on Monday this week (26th July).

Human Resource Manager (HRM) Paurina Galo Akwai in welcoming Mrs. Wate to MAL thanked her for accepting the offer for the position of DSASP and to be part of the MAL team.

She said the ministry and staff are looking forward to working closely with her toward development of agriculture sector in the country. Meanwhile, PS Frances said, "MAL team has been looking forward to this extra support and we are grateful you able to leave your comfort zone to take up this role and new challenge. Rest assured of our support. We wish you Gods wisdom and protection for this new role and MAL family," PS Frances said as she joined MAL in welcoming Mrs. Wate to the Ministry. The DSASP directly supervises Corporate and Planning teams, however, any technical related work will still be referred to Deputy Secretary Technical.

Michael Ho'ota is MAL Deputy Secretary Technical (DST).



Existing and prospecting Noni farmers in the country are recommended to seek technical advice from the responsible authority that is the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its Extension Department for specifics on Noni crop.

Noni Development Program Coordinator within MAL Extension Department, Selwyn Meplu uttered the statement as many farmers seen going into nurturing this new cash crop with little knowledge about it.

"Since Noni is a new crop, it is important that farmers get correct information about it from MAL research and extension officers to make sure they know how to grow it sustainably in the country," Mr. Meplu said.

He said Noni is a new crop and from initial assessment it highlighted numerous issues with regards to noni varieties, farming systems, planting methods, nutrient requirements, irrigation requirement, pest and diseases. Therefore, it is necessary that farmers must seek information and guidance from MAL on how to sustainably grow it in Solomon Islands to support livelihoods."

He said only through research work and technical advice from rightful authority (MAL), some of the highlighted issues can be identified and resolved.

"Advice to the current noni farmers and other interested farmers from other provinces and parts of Guadalcanal Province, as a Noni Program Coordinator, is to seek advice from MAL Extension program coordination office, as mentioned the nature of noni fruit is perishable and requirement is that it must reach the processing unit (factory) within 12 hours from field picking. Therefore, growing noni in other provinces or parts of Guadalcanal province outside the catchment area of KG Noni Factory is not advisable until such time a roll out of noni growing development strategy is developed by relevant agencies. The advice is, processing unit/factory first, then noni planting roll out to other provinces, as noni only takes 7- 8 months for fruiting," Mr. Meplu explained.

"Noni development which is now an industry is a private initiative by private sector (North West Guadalcanal Constituency Subsistent Farmers Association) initiated by Member of Parliament for Northwest Guadalcanal Hon. Bodo Dettke as a constituency Development program. And thereon, farmers outside the constituency see going into noni growing with great interest, in recent years especially North East and Central Guadalcanal. Recently, farmers from the provinces within the country were enquiring about the crop with great interest to go into noni farming.

"With that, recently in 2020 government (SIG), through MAL Extension Department take on board the Noni Development program under its Sustainable Economic Growth and Export Strengthening (SEGES) development programme. The coverage and program development concentration was within Variana, West Guadalcanal and Barande in East Guadalcanal. The reason was that; the harvested noni fruits must reach the noni processing factory within 12 hours, in order to maintain quality as required by the product quality assurance," Mr. Meplu emphasized.

On 12th July 2021, MAL through its Extension and Research departments staged a successful Noni field day at T.W. Enterprise Noni Farm located at the former Livestock Development Authority (LDA) area in the outskirt of East Honiara.

## Noni farmers told to seek guidance from MAL

“**Since Noni is a new crop, it is important that farmers get correct information about it from MAL research and extension officers to make sure they know how to grow it sustainably in the country.**

**Selwyn Meplu**

Noni Development Program Coordinator  
Extension Department, MAL

The field day has attracted 49 farmers from East Guadalcanal, Central Guadalcanal and Honiara suburb to share their experiences, sharpen skills and learn firsthand facts about noni crop/tree.

Mr. Meplu said the field day was the first of its kind and an important one for farmers to learn and share experiences together regarding noni husbandry.

"The field day demonstrations are important for the farmers, because the noni agronomical issues faced by noni farmers are identified and highlighted in actual situation out in the noni field by specialised technical professionals rather in the office or classroom training. Also, less time is required to reach more farmers by addressing their common problems and issues regarding their noni farming," Mr. Meplu added.

Meanwhile Mr. Meplu on behalf of MAL applauded and acknowledged the noni farmers that attended the successfully staged Noni Field Day at T.W. Enterprise Noni Farm.

He said without the farmer's presence, the field day would not have achieve its aims and objectives.

Developing the Noni industry and others like kava and cassava is one of the key policy priority of the Democratic Coalition Government for Advancement (DCGA) therefore the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) remains committed to it.

[See related story on page 8-9.](#)



# MAL “delivery” workshops held

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) held two workshops in mid-July to kick-off MAL's new approach to the implementation of its priority projects, via its newly-appointed Delivery Team. The first session -- “Introduction to Delivery and Prioritisation” was held on 13th July with MAL's Senior Management Team, while the second session – “An Impactful Delivery Team” was held on 15th July with the six members of the Delivery Team.

The purpose was to guarantee delivery team understand, adapt, and apply the methodology to the Ministry's high priority projects in the ways that would drive the most impact.

The workshops was led by MAL Permanent Secretary Ethel Tebengi Frances, with support from Deliver's consultants, Joseph Waleanisia and Jasmin Johnson by online zoom from Switzerland.

“Delivery methodology or practice is a high-impact method of working that prioritises implementation and focuses majority of effort on the “doing.” Delivery hopes to strengthen ways of working and support implementers in improving outcomes for the people of the Solomon Islands. “The key aspects of the delivery approach are: having good data to monitor progress, doing thorough fieldwork to really understand the realities on the ground, taking targeted actions to unblock challenges, and practicing discipline of action with regard to work routines. This helps to rapidly improve the intended outcomes of the initiatives, and thereby creates lasting results for the people of the Solomon Islands.

“The methodology will be employed by MAL's newly appointed Delivery Team, which consists of nominated members from across MAL. The delivery team is being supervised by the Planning Division and so they will report directly to the Permanent Secretary through the newly appointed Deputy Secretary for Administration and Strategic Planning, Mrs. Elda Wate.

As a coordination and support unit, the Delivery Team, will aim to help line departments unlock challenges and accelerating progress, while breaking silos and coordinating across divisions,” Consultant Jasmin Johnson said. “The delivery approach is widely used across the world, including in Samoa, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, the UK, South Africa and the USA, with encouraging results. MAL's Delivery Team is the first of its kind to be implemented in the Solomon Islands.

“Many governments have beautiful plans and strategies, but often the challenge is in effectively implementing the activities in these documents. “The Delivery Team will zero in on exactly this task, building on existing



“**The key aspects of the delivery approach are: having good data to monitor progress, doing thorough fieldwork to really understand the realities on the ground, taking targeted actions to unblock challenges, and practicing discipline of action with regard to work routines.**

strengths, lifting up the work of implementers, and solving problems together in an effective way. As MAL commences the implementation of an ambitious new 10-year sector strategy (ASGIP), effective delivery of last results to citizens will become all the more important,” she said. The Permanent Secretary of MAL Mrs. Frances requested support in late 2019 from the International Fund for Agriculture Developments (IFAD) to review MAL delivery systems so it can effectively improve its projects and program efforts. IFAD responded and negotiated support from South Korea to finance the Technical Support to MAL. The “Delivery Associates” was then engaged by IFAD to support MAL introduce the delivery approach at MAL.

# MAL and SIPFA signs MoU to support development of pig industry

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its Livestock Department has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Solomon Islands Pig Farmers Association (SIPFA) on 4th August 2021 towards development of the country's pig industry.

Permanent Secretary Ethel Tebengi Frances signed on behalf of MAL while John Kwaita who is the Chairman of SIPFA signed on behalf of the association members.

The MoU formalized the willingness of MAL to allow SIPFA to use and rent a portion of its (MAL) property or land known as the Honey House near Burns Creek in East Honiara for the purpose of selling and distribution of stockfeed to pig farmers in Honiara and the provinces, in support of developing the pig and pork industries.

Chairman of SIPFA John Kwaita said quality Stockfeed has always been the biggest challenge for the Piggery and Poultry industry in the county. The availability and affordability of quality Stockfeed for the local livestock industry is key to the success of this industry in the country.

“Therefore the signing of this MOU between MAL and SIPFA for the lease of MAL Property at the Burnscreek Honey Association site is a step into the right direction. With a further support from the government, we are anticipating the establishment of a proper shed for the production of Stockfeed for Piggery which will benefit all our Association members and many more local farmers across the country,” Mr. Kwaita said.

Mr. Kwaita on behalf of SIPFA members acknowledged and thanked MAL for the support towards setting up of this very important component of Piggery Industry in the country, and for their (MAL) continuous support to Livestock Industry in Solomon Islands.



MAL Permanent Secretary Ethel Tebengi Frances and Chairman of SIPFA John Kwaita signs the MoU as reps from MAL and SIPFA watches in witness.

# MAL delivers farming machines to Maepua model farm in Makira



Field demonstration after the official handing over of the machines at Maepua Model farm site.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its Makira-Ulawa Province Extension office has boosted Maepua model farm in Central Makira with the delivery of new agricultural machines.

MAL based Makira-Ulawa extension officers officially handed over the inputs worth around \$33,000.00 to Maepua Model farm through Banabas Tolei and a farmer group consist of over 32 registered food crops farmers from Kaonasughu to Hao, West Bauro in central Makira constituency,

The inputs included a power tiller machine or a walking tractor, a Power Base Garden Tiller along with their gears.

Principal Field Officer for Makira-Ulawa Province, Petra Urahora said the machines will help the farmers improve labour efficiency and their farming system and practices in order to help enhancing their food security and livelihood in combating Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and also be able to have surplus food crops for small income for farming families.

“The program is designed to promote and support safe, sufficient and nutritious food for families and everyone in order to help combat the increasing rate of Non-Communicable Disease (NDC) in Makira province and the country as whole,” Mrs. Urahora added.



She said that other farming issues to be addressed under the project to ensure sustainable production of nutritious food readily available in target communities include:

- Nutritional related disorders (increase in NCD) in Makira
- Climate risks and impacts,
- Soil degradation (Soil health issues),
- Pest and diseases infestation and conservation of plant genetic resources (Conserving and preserving of our indigenous crops).

She said Maepua model farm is MAL's first funded food security model farm to be established in central Makira apart from other food production model farm established in Makira in the past under Non-Government Organisations (NGOs).

“The project will benefit 15 communities and two National Secondary schools which include Waimapuru NSS and Saint Stephen Pamua NSS as the the Maepua model farm catchment area covers Kaonasughu to HAO. “Currently a total of 32 farmers have registered with Maepua food security model farm and the number of members will increase in the near future to 40 or 50 farmers (members). Maepua model farm has a management committee to coordinate farm trainings for its members, work activities on farm/and members farm plots and support with movement of the farm machineries to support other members at their communities or schools,”Mrs. Urahora said.

Recipients of the project conveyed their gratitude to MAL and UNDP for their collaboration and great support and especially for the timely assistance during this time of Covid-19.

Mrs. Urahora also thanked MAL and UNDP for the supported rendered. The programme was part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) National Food security and Enhancement program under its Model Farm project 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. Under the programme, MAL together with UNDP and its stakeholders will deliver 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.

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

The machines was procured by the UNDP Solomon Islands Markets for Change (M4C) Project with funds from the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund with approval from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.



# Noni farmers learn together during field day, lauds MAL



A field day that offered excellent opportunities for Noni farmers in East Guadalcanal, Central Guadalcanal and Honiara suburb to share their experiences, sharpen skills and learn firsthand facts about noni crop/tree was successfully held on Monday 12th July 2021.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its Extension and Research Departments hosted the one day event at the T.W Enterprise Noni farm located at the former Livestock Development Authority (LDA) area in the outskirt of East Honiara. Total of 49 Noni farmers participated in the field activities.

Field day participants (farmers) learned practical methods on identifying pest and diseases, noni varieties and awareness, noni propagation or nursery, tree management, post harvesting and harvesting management and appropriate farm management.

The field demonstration activities were conducted to ensure farmers know how to manage their farms or noni trees for increase crop yield as well as the quality of their produce. Participants really admired the initiative.

Deputy Secretary Technical (DST) Michael Ho’ota said since Noni is a new crop, it is important that farmers get correct information about it from MAL research and extension officers to guarantee they know how to grow it sustainably in the country.

“Being a relatively new crop, MAL is challenged with having necessary agronomical information for Noni farming in Solomon Islands since it was not a crop under past governments list of priority crops for development and therefore no research has been done on the crop.

“...MAL research is to embark on agronomic research of this crop. Without research we will not be able to advice on how to sustainably grow this crop in our country. Initial assessment has highlighted several issues with regards to noni varieties, farming systems, planting methods, nutrient requirements, irrigation requirement, pest and diseases.”

Therefore, he said the field day was an opportunity for farmers to get correct information from MAL Research and Extension staff in addressing some of the issues highlighted adding other technical issues will be identified and resolved through research.

Deputy Director of Research Department Martin Jaiki thanked all farmer participants for being able to attend and make the field day a success.

“Without you farmers this event would not have been successful. Thank you everyone who have involved in organising this event.”

“Noni is a very new crop in the country and we farmers and agriculturists know very little about it (Noni). But through collaborative efforts of farmers and MAL we can develop and improve this crop based on technical and scientific knowledge as well as MAL supported trainings for farmers to bring up this new industry.”

He said that developing a new industry is not an easy undertaking but requires everyone’s (farmers, MAL and stakeholders) input to create a successful noni industry.

T.W Noni farm manger and owner, Tamra Wale also thanked MAL for choosing her farm as the demonstration field to carry out the field activities where she believed many farmer participants have learned a lot through the information and experiences that has been shared together.

She urged farmers to go back and apply what they have learned to their farms to boost their productivity.

Bernard Garo Chairman for Northwest Guadalcanal Noni Farmers Association (NWGNFA) acknowledged MAL for making the opportunity possible to make sure farmers have the chance to broaden and sharpen their knowledge on this cash crop.

“What happen today is not by chance. MAL is ordained to be here today. It is by Gods plan that we are able to be here today so that we can work together for this initiative of making Solomon Islands one of the most powerful country to be in this new industry, Noni.”

Mr. Garo also thanked farmers for making all sacrifices to be part of the event.

“You are the key people. Without you farmers, this industry will never happen. Your presence today gives signal to MAL to take on board this initiative and you will be the front liners in this industry.”

Deputy Secretary Technical (DST) Michael Ho’ota, Extension Director Andrew Melanolu, Planning Director Peter Rarahabura, Bernard Garo Chairman for North West Guadalcanal Noni Farmers Association (NWGNFA), senior officers of MAL Extension and Research Departments and Noni farmers from East Guadalcanal, Central Guadalcanal and Honiara outskirt attended the field day.





# SINU agriculture students on attachment; learns about MAL various departments roles



Biosecurity officer Danny from left with SINU agriculture practical students during a field visit to MAL corn farm at MAL Research Centre at King George, East Honiara.

Over 20 students undertaking agriculture studies at the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) undergo work attachment at various departments of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) as they learn and familiarise themselves with roles of each departments. The 10 weeks assignment is a requirement and is part of their academic assessment. Biosecurity & Publicity Officer from the Biosecurity Department of MAL, Jean Manepora'a said, total of 17 students are currently undertaking their five weeks practical at the Biosecurity department apart from those who have their practical training at other divisions within the ministry. However, she said due to Covid-19 restrictions students are restricted from airport and seaport offices/areas but only allowed to undertake practical at the Surveillance Unit, Post-office (mail) and Biosecurity department at the MAL Headquarter. "Under Surveillance Unit students are assigned to conduct Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) monitoring in Honiara by checking traps, collecting samples from established traps in various location within Honiara area and as well as collecting samples for identification and dissecting by surveillance officers. Students were also assisted by Biosecurity officers through field visit to corn farms and collected specimens for rearing and identification purposes. Biosecurity doing surveillance on corn farms especially is to check for presence and or absence of Fall Army Warm (FAW). "Fall Army Worm (FAW) is an alert pest for Solomon Islands. It is not yet present in the country but found in other neighbour countries. As confirmed by other counterpart countries, it is an invasive pest and its major host is corn."

Mrs. Manepora'a added that practical students only involved in general and partially detection surveillance work as guided by biosecurity officers but any technical or specialist lab work are restricted only for surveillance staff. "The practical provided an opportunity for them to learn and get to know the importance of Biosecurity in the country as well as roles and functions of the ministry. "Having this student's gain experience in various sections within BSI department and other departments of MAL is important as it prepares them for future career as we might not know in the future one of these students will be working here (MAL)." Meanwhile, speaking on behalf of the students, Margaret Kiko thanked MAL for accepting their request to have their practical training at the ministry. "This is a great opportunity and we thank MAL management for giving us the chance and support." She said the field visits and practical work will help a lot towards their academic assessment. Students are from the Faculty of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry particularly through the department of Agriculture. Mrs. Kiko said most of the students who involved in the practical are those undertaking diploma in agriculture second year and Bachelor in agriculture year 2, 3 & 4. The student's attachment with MAL, Biosecurity department expired on the 6th of August 2021.



Students take a closer look at pest specimens confined in an established trap with the assistance of a Biosecurity staff.



A practical student with Biosecurity Officer Danny during a field visit to MAL corn farm at MAL Research at King George, East Honiara.

# MAL supports T.W Enterprise Noni farm with agricultural equipments



(L-R) Deputy Director (supervising) Lily Wame, Bernard Garo Chairman for Northwest Guadalcanal Noni Farmers Association (NWNFA), MAL Deputy Secretary Technical (DST) Michael Ho'ota, T.W Noni farm manager and owner, Tamra Wale receives the donation from DST Ho'ota, Deputy Director of Research Department Martin Jaiki, Director of Extension Department Andrew Melanolu and Chief Field Officer Roy Timothy during a brief handing over ceremony at the T.W noni farm area.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its Extension Department has supported T.W Enterprise Noni farm with essential agricultural equipments.

T.W Noni farm is located at the former Livestock Development Authority (LDA) area in the outskirt of East Honiara.

The donation was delivered by MAL Extension team during a Noni field day held at the farm for Noni farmers from East Guadalcanal, Central Guadalcanal and Honiara suburb to share their experiences, sharpen skills and learn firsthand facts about noni crop/tree on 12<sup>th</sup> July.

Chief Field Officer, Roy Timothy said the support was part of MAL Sustainable Economic Growth and Export Strengthening (SEGES) programme, focusing on SEGES output three (3) that is to promote Noni Research, production and processing in the selected Provinces. He said the ministry through its Extension Department happy to support farmers to thrive in their farming production to support their livelihood. Mr. Timothy said although the support may perceived as small but he believes it will contribute towards development work of the farm. Meanwhile, T.W Noni farm manger and owner, Tamra Wale expressed gratitude to MAL for the donation. She said the equipments is an advantage to the farm and she will make

sure farm workers utilise them to improve farm production. She then thanked MAL for its continuous assistance towards farmers throughout the country to make sure they support their livelihoods through farming. Tools delivered include secateurs, poll pruners, loppers, bush knives, brush knives, chainsaw, wheel barrow, watering can, spade, seedling trays, ladder and polybags. The farming equipments are procured by MAL from Island enterprise and ITA hardware in Honiara.

The four main objectives of the SEGES programme is to;

- Make sure farmers, associations, producers, buyers and exporters are empowered to increase productivity and to increase revenue earnings.
- Enhanced copra productivity through rehabilitation and support to CRB activities
- Enhance Cocoa Productivity through Rehabilitation and Genetic improvements
- Support Kava developments to increase productivity in all the Provinces

For help and technical advice on agriculture development, call the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Extension Department.

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# MAL boosts Makira farmer's capacity on kava pre-processing and management

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through its Makira-Ulawa Province (MUP) Extension office has successfully conducted a two-day training on kava pre-processing and management for kava farmers at Ubuna in Ward 7, Arosi from 30th July to 1st August 2021. Focused on theory and hands-on practical (demonstration) sessions, the two-day training aimed at improving farmer's technical knowledge and capacity more specifically on kava management and pre-processing which include harvesting, cutting, sorting, drying and marketing. Total of 59 farmers from ward 5, 6 and ward 7 at Arosi attended the training. "The two-day training was a success and a good representation of both men and women farmers which shows the seriousness and interest of the farmers to learn about this new introduced cash crop (kava)," MAL Principal Field Officer (PFO) for MUP Agriculture Extension Office Michael Tanisapa said. He said the training was identified as one of their office key activity for the year as aligned to the National Government through MAL redirection policy which aims by strengthening its export crop programs. "Increasing production of the targeted cash crops and making sure farmers meet market requirements are of paramount importance. And to guarantee farmers acquired knowledge to improve their farm output, MAL through its MUP Extension office have so far implemented some activities through provision of projects to farmers, support of technical advices, awareness and trainings to boost their capacity"

Mr. Tanisapa said like other cash crops in particular cocoa and coconut, Kava development has since grow and observed as one of the great economical crops grown my many farmers in MUP. Therefore, since it was identified as a potential crops in Makira, and because it's a new introduced crop for farmers, we seen the need to transfer new technical information to the farmers so that they could be able to independently manage their farms. Not only have that, but to ensure production increased with expected maximum benefits."

He said farmers learned a lot from the theory and hands-on practical (demonstration) sessions.

Other objectives of the trainings are;

- To train farmers on various technical aspect of kava processing.
- To ensure quality kava sold to markets.
- To ensure kava production will increase as many famer will venture to Kava project now and in future
- To improve and encourage more farmers to involved in kava development in Makira Ulawa Province.
- To create self-job opportunities for rural people by venture to Kava projects.

Mr. Tanisapa said similar awareness on kava pre-processing along with demonstration activities for farmers and public was also conducted by MUP Agriculture Extension officers during the Makira-Ulawa second appointed day celebration held in Kirakira from 3rd to 5th August 2021.

Participants acknowledged MAL through its Extension office in Makira for facilitating the training which they say the new skills and basic knowledge acquired from the training have given them more confidence to continue participate in kava farming likewise help them manage their farms for better quality and productivity.

They also thanked MAL Extension officers in Kirakira for their continuous support and dissemination of new Agriculture information and technology to the farmers in the province.

Mr. Tanisapa expressed boundless gratitude to the participants for their patient and commitment shown during the training and also acknowledged MAL management through its Extension department in Honiara for continuous support to the MUP Extension office.

MAL Extension officers who facilitated the training are Michael Tanisapa, Casper Manelogu, Gabriel and Cecil Sigiani.



A demonstration on kava cutting performed by MAL officers to participants.



MAL officers go through kava washing demonstration with farmers. Picture below are Kava dried chips.



# More farmers benefit from MAL Export Crop Programme

More farmer groups in Guadalcanal Province took delivery of farming equipments under the Export Crop Programme 2021 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL). They are Hauvalisi (Babanakira) Kava farmers association in the remote South Guadalcanal and Numbu noni farmers group in North East Guadalcanal vicinity and two noni farmers from Gilbert Camp settlement. The delivery was done through the MAL Guadalcanal Extension Office.

The freshly introduced programme, "Export Crop Programme 2021" replaced the previous Sustainable Economic Growth and Export Strengthening 2020 (SEGES) Programme as aligned to government redirection policy, however, continue to maintain similar support to farmers, producers and exporters. Chief Field Officer (CFO) for Guadalcanal agriculture Extension, Joseph Wotomaru said the support was part of the MAL Export Crop programme 2021 – 2024 which aimed at empowering farmers and buyers to improve productivity and revenue earnings. The support included distribution of wheel barrows and pruning tools purposely to support farmers with their harvesting and to manage their noni and kava plants and at the same time enhancing farm productivity. Mr. Wotomaru said the delivery included wheel barrows, garden folks, secateurs (pruning scissors) and other essential farming materials. "Farmers that part of the two farmer groups or association are the ones (farmers) that will be benefiting directly from the support as they will be using the tools to improve their farming activities," Mr. Wotomaru explained. Mr. Wotomaru added that for Hauvalisi (Babanakira) Kava farmers association in the remote South Guadalcanal, the support will really help them because their only main transport for loading farm produce to the coast is by wheelbarrow. Mr. Wotomaru said the recipients (farmers) are really happy and acknowledged MAL for the assistance which will certainly aid them in their farming undertakings. He then thanked MAL Extension Department management for the facilitation and procurement of the farming tools under the programme and ensuring they are safely delivered to the farmers.



Above are pictures of the delivery.

The distribution was part of MAL's continuous support under its Export Crop programme 2021, a Medium Term Development Programme (MTDP) of the ministry which is being implemented until 2024 to boost farmer's agricultural productivity and to improve their revenue earnings. Farmers from other provinces also received similar support under the programme. The main objectives of the Programme is to;

- Make sure farmers, associations, producers, buyers and exporters are empowered to increase productivity and to increase revenue earnings.
- Enhanced copra productivity through rehabilitation and support to CRB activities
- Enhance Cocoa Productivity through Rehabilitation and Genetic improvements
- Support Kava developments to increase productivity in all the Provinces

## 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.

## Find out more about MAL

Click link here: <https://cutt.ly/VEhJkKj>

## Our Services

- 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.

## Feedbacks?



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## Livelihood Committee reviews Honiara lockdown plan, develop Savo Volcano preparedness & response plan



Permanent Secretary of MAL, Ethel Tebengi Frances, Centre, front row with Livelihood Sector Committee members and representatives from government stake holders that attended the one-day review workshop.

A one-day workshop meeting to review the Honiara Lockdown Plan and to develop the Savo Island volcano preparedness and response plan was held by members of the Livelihood Sector committee (LSC) on 4th August 2021 at the Heritage Park Hotel in Honiara.

The aim of the workshop is for the committee to review the current Honiara Lockdown Plan 2020 in light of the Covid-19 Delta Variant that is badly affecting our pacific neighbours and for the committee to develop the Savo Island Volcano preparedness and response plan.

Chairman of LSC and the Deputy Secretary Technical (DST) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) Michael Ho'ota said LSC is one of the six committees under the arrangement of the National Disaster Operation Committee (NDOC) and legally setup in accordance to the National Disaster Council (NDC) act 1989 and the National Disaster Management Plan 2018.

"LSC is a representative of many agencies, both government and non-government organisations and it plays an important function during disaster by developing a livelihood disaster plan, assessments with National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) and respond to gardens, market, crops and facilities, tourism, forestry, fishing, village and communities, economic activity and heritage," Mr. Ho'ota said.

Mr. Ho'ota said on the 5th of July 2021, the Covid-19 Oversight Committee (OSC) established under the Prime Minister's Office directed the National Disaster Council (NDC) to task the National Disaster Operations Committee (N-DOC) to initiate the detail operational planning on two specific planned operations. "One of these two directives was for N-DOC

to lead the review of the current Honiara Lockdown Plan 2020 and its associated Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs). The directive has come about as a result of the increase number of community transmissions of the covid-19 Delta variant Fiji and other neighboring countries are experiencing. And also due to some unusual activities on Savo Island the committee was advised by NDOC through the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification (MMERE) for us to develop or come up with a Savo Volcano preparedness and response plan."

He said it was a fruitful meeting because it captured wider stakeholder's contribution to the plan.

The review also permitted the committee to identify challenges and make recommendations.

LSC members are representative of the ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Ministry of Forestry and Research (MoFR), Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR), Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour & Immigration (MCIL), Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), Honiara City Council (HCC), United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), UN women, UNICEF, World Vision Solomon Islands (WVSI), Oxfam, Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI), PHAMA Plus and Kastom Garden Association (KGA).

The review activity was supported by the UNDP Disaster Risk Management (DRM) project which is being implemented with the financial support from the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).



LSC Chairman Michael Ho'ota (standing) pay close attention to one of the group during a group activity discussion session.



Some of the members during group discussion as they review the Honiara lockdown plan.

## Training to address gender challenges women face in the agriculture and rural sector successfully held



The "Gender mainstreaming in Agriculture and Rural Sector" Participants with the Permanent Secretary of MAL Ms. Ethel Frances (centre, front row), Director Women Development Division Ms. Vaela Devesi (third from left, front row), Trainer Ms. Pauline Soaki (first on the left, front row) and Director IPAM Mr. Solomon Manea (fourth from left, front row) and FAO FIRST rep Nichol Nonga (seventh from left, front row).

A three-day training aimed at addressing some of the gender challenges women face in the agriculture and rural sector was successfully held from 27-29 July 2021 at the Heritage Park Hotel in Honiara.

Focused on gender equality, analysis and mainstreaming, the training provided an opportunity for twelve females and eighteen males Solomon Islands Government staff from the ministries of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL), Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA), Public Service (MPS) and Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) to learn more about gender mainstreaming and strengthen their capacities on how to apply a gender perspective when working on policy, planning, programming and budgeting processes within their sectors.

In a joint statement issued by FAO-EU /FIRST, SPC, MPS, MWYCFA and MAL, it said gender mainstreaming is a priority of the Solomon Islands Government especially in the areas of agriculture and food systems where women perform many important but sometimes not-so-visible functions on production, processing and marketing of agricultural products, as well as other connected roles such as the management of natural resources or those related to food and nutrition security.

"Acknowledging the complexity of the food system and the need to address its different elements from a multi-sectoral perspective, the training followed a collaborative approach that explored synergies and shared understanding of the different issues among participants to generate co-ordinated solutions.

"The workshop was conducted in partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and European Union's (EU) 'Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation (FIRST) Programme', the Pacific Community (SPC) together with the Institute of Public Administration Management (IPAM) of the Ministry of Public Service and MWYCFA.

"It was designed with a practical approach that will allow the participants to identify new ways of performing their current duties in a way that acknowledges some challenges that women face in agriculture and the food system, and addresses current gender gaps through women empowerment and the provision of equitable opportunities for all.

"The gender training modules used in this training were developed by SPC, for IPAM as the training arm of government, and complemented by specific chapters on agriculture and the rural sector designed by FAO-EU/FIRST. To provide the participants with appropriate and relevant examples, the training modules built on the findings and recommendations of the FAO/SPC 'Country Gender Assessment of Agriculture and the Rural Sector in Solomon Islands' published in 2019," the statement said.

Speaking during the opening part of the workshop the PS, for Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, Dr. Cedric Alepedava, during his key note address implies at how important gender equality is for Solomon Islands Government staff and was quoted as saying, "Because we have issues of growing inequalities and high incidence of violence against Women and Girls in Solomon Islands, the government is very supportive

of such a gender training workshop as this one."

He also said that "Gender equality is not a women's issue only but should also concern and fully engaged men, women boys and girls".

Three SIG staff participants, Ms. Rieka Kwalai from Fisheries, Mr. McDonnell Hiva and Mr. Frank Odon from Agriculture also expressed their appreciation of the workshop and were quoted as saying "We appreciate attending this gender mainstreaming training workshop because it has given us new insights on how to identify vulnerable gender groups, knowledge and understanding of what gender equality, gender analysis and other gender terms mean and how they can be applied at work."

"It is envisaged that at the completion of the training, staff will have received improved knowledge, skills and competencies that will enable them to address gender mainstreaming, gender awareness and gender equality issues among farmers and the public in Solomon Islands, and will begin implementing the recommendations from the agriculture gender assessment.

"The training is an integral part of the FAO-EU FIRST Programme and Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (PGEP II) project implemented by SPC," the statement said.

Speaking during the closing ceremony before issuing certificates to the participants Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Live-

**"The training is an integral part of the FAO-EU FIRST Programme and Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (PGEP II) project implemented by SPC.**

stock (MAL) Ethel Frances congratulated everyone for a very successful workshop and quoted from the Bible, "Genesis chapter 1: as the basis of the gender equality, it is written that since men and women were created from each other they should support and help each other as that's what God requires from them".

The Director of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, Ms. Vaela Ngai in her closing remarks stated the implication for the productive sector in gender, is quite critical and important – especially the need to be gender sensitized, to ensure that all our recovery efforts do not overlook the most vulnerable groups in our societies – the women, girls, elderly, and people with disabilities."

The training was conducted both virtually and face-to-face with support from the MWYCFA, FAO and SPC technical officers.



# EMPOWERING ALL LIVESTOCK KEEPERS TO A DEPENDENT-FREE FUTURE

*With Hearley Atupule*  
Deputy Director - Livestock Technical Services  
Department of Livestock and Veterinary Services, MAL

## ALL CREATURES, GREAT AND SMALL

Who are livestock keepers? The farmer in east kwaio with a herd of cattle, the chief in Temotu raising three chickens, the villager in Choiseul keeping a few local pigs and a school teacher in Renbel keeping a single hive of bees. All hold livestock and all have a role to play in meeting his or her needs.

## BENEFITS FROM KEEPING LIVESTOCK

For our rural people in Solomon Islands- there are many benefits from keeping livestock –from the largest Brahman Bull to the smallest insect-honey bees.

Livestock are a form of currency. For many people, animals represent savings. The sale of livestock and manure can mean quick cash in hard times. Income from livestock and their many products – milk, eggs, meat, leather, honey – can allow poor families to put food on the table, improve their nutrition, send their children to school and purchase medicine for themselves and their animals.

Livestock also act as a kind of social glue. Loans and gifts of livestock connect people to other family members, as well as to communities and institutions. In many societies, bride dowries are paid in livestock. Herders who share livestock with their relatives also share the risks brought by drought and disease. Livestock are used to resolve conflicts, pay debts and settle scores/(compensations).

A family's place in society is often measured by the amount and kind of livestock it owns. When women own livestock, their social status can be improved, empowering them to participate in decision-making. Livestock serve a practical function too. They carry heavy loads, help plough fields and provide means of transportation. Their manure fertilizes the soil. Most livestock graze on straw, grass, kitchen scraps and other waste, and thus convert unusable materials into high-quality food for humans. Their meat adds protein to cereal-based diets and can improve the nutrition of children. It contributes to the basis of food security even to the isolated location in the Solomon Islands populace.


The presence of livestock reduces the need for human labor in the fields.



SOLOMON ISLANDS in today's Livestock industry concept-how far do we go? Or where are we now? What is the way forward? To a dependent –free future?

Farmers in various levels, categories and sectors are all struggling to strive whatever form of livestock enterprises they are involving in.

Livestock are farmers' BANK on FOOT.

"Our action is our future." 



“Livestock are farmers’  
BANK on FOOT.”  
- Hearley Atupule