

Parliament Sitting -Thursday 5th September, 230/2019

230/2019 Hon. Ratu Suliano Matanitobua to ask the Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development, Waterways and Environment.– Can the Minister inform Parliament on the total number of recipients of the seedlings provided by the Government of India in 2016, by gender, age and Province.

Honourable Speaker, I wish to reply to question 230/2019 by Hon. Ratu Suliano Matanitobua, and I thank the Honourable member for the question.

Hon. Speaker, the Ministry of Agriculture acknowledges the Indian High Commission and the Government of India through its generosity in supplying vegetables seeds for the rehabilitation of farmers who were affected by the devastating Tropical Cyclone Winston in February 2016. In addition, the Ministry recognizes the Executive Management of the Office of the Prime Minister for their support in negotiations and other logistic arrangements that enable the securing of this assistance from the Government of India. These combined efforts is a clear reflection of the aspiration of the Fiji First Government in ensuring food and nutrition security for all.

Hon. Speaker, the consignment of seeds weighing 5207 kilograms was handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture Rural & Maritime Development & Disaster Management on 28th October, 2016 by his Excellency the High Commissioner of India to Fiji, Mr Vishvas Sapkal whereby the following quantity of seeds were received.

Seed Type Received by Quantity

Seed Type	Quantity (kg)
Watermelon	960
Tomatoes	123
Rock-melon	130
Cucumber	1572
English Cabbage	392
Pumpkin	120
Eggplant	350
Okra	940
Cowpea	620
Total	5207

Source: Crop Extension-Seed Distribution Report, 2017

Seeds were transported to all geographical division on the 1st week of November for distribution.

Seeds Distribution by Geographical Divisions

Seed Type	Western	Northern	Central	Eastern	Total Quantity (kg)
Watermelon	280	260	280	140	960
Tomatoes	35	29	35	24	123
Rock-melon	60	35	35	0	130
Cucumber	447	447	459	219	1572
English Cabbage	105	105	105	77	392
Pumpkin	30	30	30	30	120
Eggplant	85	85	85	95	350
Okra	350	240	350	0	940
Cowpea	260	360	0	0	620
Total	1652	1591	1379	585	5207

Source: Crop Extension-Seed Distribution Report, 2017

Hon. Speaker, allow me to enlighten the House on the process undertaken to ensure that the assistance was received by farmers throughout Fiji. The Ministry recognized the damage assessment report compiled after these Natural disasters as the basis for this important exercise. The damage and loss assessment survey is usually undertaken by the Ministry's Extension Officers after any natural disaster to gauge its devastating impact on the sector.

For the India Seed Distribution - seeds were repacked in 20, 50, 100 and 250 grams packages to ensure wider distribution to affected areas. Pre-packaged seeds were distributed to schools and farmer groups. A total of 13,926 farmers throughout Fiji were assisted whereby 5% (697) were commercial farmers, 25% (3,481) were semi-commercial farmers and 70% (9748) were subsistence or back-yard gardeners.

Seed Distribution by Province by Total Number of Farmers

Division	Province	Total Number of Farmers
Western	Nadroga Navosa	1093
	Ba	2344
	Ra	567
	Total	4004
Northern	Cakaudrove	998
	Bua	840
	Macuata	2035
	Total	3873
Central	Rewa	1824
	Tailevu	796
	Serua	780
	Namosi	1253
	Naitasiri	120
	Total	4773
Eastern	Lomaiviti	541
	Lau	373
	Kadavu	362

	Total	1276
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Source: Crop Extension-Seed Distribution Report, 2017.

Hon. Speaker, 12% (1671) of these farmers were females. These farmers are usually head of household or owner of the farms throughout the country. In distributing the seeds, the Ministry is fully aware of the importance to consider Gender equality to ensure that all sectors of Fiji's population benefit from such assistance. It is also imperative to note that most male farmers assisted have their spouses and children who actually operates their vegetable farms. Farmers assisted were between the ages of 20 to 50 years.

Seed Distribution by Division by Total Number of Female Farmers

Division	% by Division	Total Number of Female Farmers
Western	4	557
Northern	3	417
Central	4	557
Eastern	1	140
Total		1671

Source: Crop Extension-Seed Distribution Report, 2017.