



STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

REVIEW OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 01ST JANUARY TO 31ST JULY, 2016



**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD



I am pleased to present the review report on the Ministry of Agriculture Annual Report for the period 01st January – 31st July 2016.

The Committee's oversight function is to scrutinise government departments with responsibility within the committee's mandate and make recommendations relating to any aspect of functioning, administration, legislation or proposed legislative program, budget, rationalisation, restructuring and policy formulation as legislated under the Parliament

Standing Orders.

In the deliberations stage, the Committee focused on the overall operations of the Ministry including its functions and strategic objectives for 2016.

The Ministry of Agriculture has embarked in an endeavor to ensuring equal participation in capacity building in Agriculture for women.

The Committee in its deliberations, took note that during the review period, TC Winston had severely destroyed key crop commodities, livestock and infrastructure in Fiji. The Ministry of Agriculture recorded losses however, it had to reorganize its plans and activities to ensure that the overall Ministry's strategic goals to increase exports and reduce imports and to ensure food security for all Fijians is maintained and achieved.

Moving forward, the Ministry will continue to vigorously pursue its commitments and ensure that all its plans are risk informed and the sector is prepared for likely impacts of climate change.

The Committee wishes to commend the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture and the Senior Officers of the Ministry for their contribution towards the final compilation of the Committee's report to Parliament.

Last but not the least, I wish to extend my appreciation to all the Honourable Members of the Committee namely Hon. Jale Sigarara, Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca, Hon. Jese Saukuru and the Secretariat Staff for the successful compilation of this bipartisan report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sanjay Kirpal', with a date '21' written to the right.

Hon. Sanjay Kirpal
Chairperson.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
SG	Solicitor General
OMRS	Open Merit Recruitment Selection
TC	Tropical Cyclone
ROI	Rural and Outer Island

RECOMMENDATION

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources has conducted a review of the Ministry of Agriculture Annual Report for the period 01st January – 31st July, 2016 and recommends that Parliament take note of its report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Agriculture 2016 Annual Report for the period 01st January –31st July was referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources on Thursday 27th May, 2021 during the sitting of parliament and referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources for scrutiny.

The committee proceeded with its mandatory function legislated under Standing Order 109(2) (c) which allows the Standing Committee on Natural Resources to examine matters related to forestry, agriculture, mining, environment, fisheries, water and marine services.

Standing Orders 110(1)(c) further authorizes the Standing Committee to *scrutinize the government departments with responsibility within the committee's subject area, including by investigating, inquiring into, and making recommendations relating to any aspect of such a department's administration, legislation or proposed legislative program, budget, rationalization, restructuring, functioning, organization, structure and policy formulation.*

A standing committee must report to parliament any other matter referred to or initiated by the committee, as soon as it has completed its considerations and deliberations as stipulated under SO 121 (1) (b).

The members proceeded in deliberating the six monthly Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture by asking questions, the written responses of which were collated and presented in this report. Together with the other pertinent issues relating to the operations of the Ministry, forms the basis of this report to be presented to parliament for endorsement.

1.1 PROCEDURE AND PROGRAM

Due to COVID 19 Protocols mandated by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, the Committee met virtually as per the Committee's work plan. Furthermore, the Members adhered to the directive issued by Hon. Speaker to meet virtually for health and safety reasons during this Pandemic.

2.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

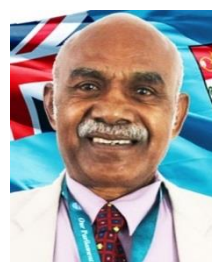
The substantive members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources are as follows:



Hon. Sanjay Kirpal
Chairperson



Hon. Jale Sigarara
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca
Opposition Member



Hon. Alexander O'Connor
Government Member



Hon. Jese Saukuru
Opposition Member

3.0 THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

3.1 VISION AND MISSION

Upon the initial stages of report deliberations, the Committee took note of the Ministry of Agriculture's Vision, Mission and Values as highlighted below;

Vision

To influence market forces through vibrant and sustainable agriculture activity that reduces poverty, reduces the risks of food insecurity and increases the contribution to GDP.

Mission

To excel in the provision of customer focused and market driven services in the agricultural sector.

Values

Good Governance, Commitment, Integrity, Honesty, Impartiality, Professionalism, Courtesy, Partnership Equity, Responsiveness, Responsibility, Innovation.

3.2 FUNCTIONS OF THE MINISTRY INCLUDED;

To accelerate agricultural product diversification into crops and livestock products where competitive advantages have been identified;

- To facilitate private sector development;
- To promote food security; and
- To ensure sustainable development in the non-sugar sector.

3.3 LEGISLATED FUNCTIONS OF THE MINISTRY

The Ministry derived its core mandate from the Presidential Decree 2007 and is currently responsible for about 28 legislations.

It is envisaged that all the acts specified under the ministerial assignment must be reviewed and ensured that there is no conflict between policy interpretations of existing acts.

4.0 FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Ministry of Agriculture, is mandated to ensure accelerated growth of Fiji's Agriculture Sector, product diversification and identify competitive advantage and opportunities, facilitate public/private sector engagement, promote food security and ensure sustainable livelihood for all Fijians.

The Committee gathered its findings through parliament research papers, findings from the committee site visit and as well and from the written responses from the Ministry of Agriculture. The findings of the Committee included the Ministry of Agriculture achievements and highlights

4.1 MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1.1 The department's major highlights and achievements is shown below;

The Ministry's activities in 2016 were aligned to the 5 Government's Key Pillars namely:

- Pillar 4 Enhancing Public Sector Effectiveness and Service Delivery
- Pillar 5 Achieving Higher Economic Growth while Ensuring Sustainability
- Pillar 6 Making more Land Available for Productive and Social services
- Pillar 7 Developing an Integrated Development Structure at the Divisional Level
- Pillar 8 Reduce Poverty to a Negligible Level by 2015

The Ministry's 2016 approved outputs as approved by the Ministry of Finance can be seen on page 10 of the annual report.

TC Winston Overview:

- The total value of damages caused by TC Winston to the Agriculture Sector is \$208.5 million and 44,879 Farmers affected (*details of damages can be seen on page 12 of the annual report*).
- The Northern Division suffered the most damages during TC Winston. Bulk of the damages sustained was in the Northern Division with \$93.8 million, whereas in the Western division was \$52.8million, Central division was \$40.5million and \$21.2million in the Eastern Division.
- With Yaqona being one of the major commodities for local and export market and of high value, it suffers \$116 million of damages, the total value of standing crop of yaqona before the cyclone was \$498.8 million.
- Dalo is the other major commodities for the local and export market that has been destroyed by the cyclone. "The total value of the damage to the taro (Dalo) was around \$20 million.
- The rehabilitation programme was implemented in three phases (immediate, midterm and long term) with a total budget of \$2.2million. Immediate relief and rehabilitation work was carried out concurrently with the assessment (*details on age 13 of the annual report*).
 - The Ministry's total budget was \$48.3 million with actual expenditure of \$26.6 million.
 - The Agriculture (Crop & Livestock) GDP for 2015 was \$542 million.
 - The Agriculture (Crop & Livestock) Production for 2016 was 100,162mt.
 - The Crop & Livestock Export was \$224 million.
 - The Crop & Livestock Import was \$717 million.
 - The Crop Extension Division:
- The Division's core responsibility is service delivery. Their role is to extend proven information from researches to farmers, assist and enhance the transitioning of farmers from subsistence to semi and commercial level. The Division was allocated \$8.8million through Capital Programmes for the development and expansion of Crop Commodities. There were 18 approved Capital Programmes which is 38% more than the 2015 budget allocation.
- The achievements of the Division were based on the following outputs:
 - Output 1: Maintaining Food Security Through the Provision of Extension And Research Services for Crops, Livestock And Veterinary Services
 - Output 2: Quick Economic Recovery Through the Implementation of Demand Driven Approach And Other Commodity Projects
 - Output 3: Assist in Poverty Alleviation by Capacity Building of Farmers to Increase Production
 - Output 4: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources Through Flood Protection Programmes and Other Sustainable Land Management Practices
 - Output 5: Ensuring Equal Access for Women In Agricultural Development

The achievements of the Division were based on the following outputs:

- Output 1: Maintaining Food Security through the Provision of Extension and Research Services for Crops, Livestock and Veterinary Services
 - Output 2: Quick Economic Recovery Through the Implementation Of Demand Driven Approach And Other Commodity Projects
 - Output 3: Assist in Poverty Alleviation by Capacity Building of Farmers to Increase Production
 - Output 5: Ensuring Equal Access for Women In Agricultural Development
 - Output 6: ROI Communities to Meet Basic Needs, Improve Living Standards Through Agriculture Development
 - Output 7: Portfolio Leadership, Policy
- Full details can be seen on pages 26-28 of the annual report.
 - Land & Water Resource Management Division:
- The role of the Division is to mitigate flood risks which may result in damage to agricultural crops, livestock, property and human live. Provision of efficient and effective drainage to maximise agricultural land utilization. Increase crop yield and enhance food security with timely and efficient irrigation services. The Division was allocated \$13.4million through Capital Programmes.
- The achievements of the Division were based on the following output:
 - Output 4: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources through Flood Protection Programmes and other Sustainable Land Management Practices
- Full details can be seen on page 31 of the annual report.
 - Land Resource Planning Division:
- The core role of the Division is to promote sustainable land use practices with major emphasis on land conservation and land degradation issues, updating farm management manual and capacity building for farmers and agriculture officials in the areas of farm business planning and farm business advisory services. The Division was allocated \$0.68million through Capital Programmes for the development and expansion of Livestock Commodities/Farms.
- **The achievements of the Division were based on the following outputs:**
 - Output 1: Maintaining Food Security Through the Provision of Extension And Research Services For Crops, Livestock And Veterinary Services
 - Output 2: Quick Economic Recovery Through the Implementation of Demand Driven Approach And Other Commodity Projects
 - Output 3: Assist in Poverty Alleviation by Capacity Building of Farmers to Increase Production
 - Output 4: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources Through Flood Protection Programmes and other Sustainable Land Management Practices
 - Output 5: Ensuring Equal Access for Women In Agricultural Development
 - Output 7: Portfolio Leadership, Policy
- Full details can be seen on pages 33-35 of the annual report.
 - Economic Planning & Statistics Division:
- The core function of the Division is to formulate the Agriculture Sector development policies, appropriate strategies and subsequent program activities in accordance with the Government Strategic Plan, establish and enhance effective sustainable linkages with external organizations, including global donor agencies at bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral levels, analyses policy and assess its impact to the agriculture sector. The Division was allocated \$8 million through Capital Programmes for the development and expansion of Livestock Commodities/Farms.
- **The achievements of the Division were based on the following outputs:**
 - Output 1: Maintaining Food Security Through the Provision of Extension And Research Services For Crops, Livestock And Veterinary Services
 - Output 2: Quick Economic Recovery Through the Implementation of Demand Driven Approach And Other Commodity Projects
 - Output 3: Assist in Poverty Alleviation by Capacity Building of Farmers to Increase Production

- Output 7: Portfolio Leadership, Policy Advice and Secretariat Support
- Full details can be seen on pages 37-39 of the annual report.
 - Human Resource Finance & Information Division:
 - The core role of the Division is to formulate and review current organizational structure and implementation of public service reform, implement the best practices in managing human resources and effective delivery of service therefore ensuring good governance in the administration and deployment of financial and other resources. The Division was allocated \$8.5 million through Capital Programmes to assist the Division in undertaking its core role.
 - The achievements of the Division were based on the following output:
 - Output 7: Portfolio Leadership, Policy Advice and Secretariat Support
- Full details can be seen on page 41 of the annual report.

4.2 MEMBERS SELECTED QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY RESPONSE.

4.2.1 The selected questions and response is tabulated hereunder, note that the rest of the questions and it’s response from the Department is attached on the annexures;

No:	MEMBERS QUESTONS	RESPONSES FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
1	<i>Under the List of Legislations and Regulations of the Ministry of Agriculture, has it considered enacting an Organic Act?</i>	The Ministry is currently pursuing compilation of a National Organic Policy and is currently reviewing its existing list of legislations. An Organic Act could be considered in the long term and the Ministry is carrying out studies on an effective deployment strategy through a pilot approach, followed by phased deployment across relevant areas in Fiji. Any organic policy and action plans should be linked to the overarching objectives of the country’s agriculture policies in order to make them mutually supportive, and for Ministry of Agriculture, this is now part of our plan and under our strategic theme “Adoption of sustainable resource management and climate smart agriculture practices” where the Ministry aims to achieve a 25% increase in number of farmers adopting organic production with secure market access by end 2023.
2	<i>How many of the Legislations and Regulations are under review by the Ministry?</i>	There are currently 23 pieces of legislations under review by the Ministry listed below: 1)Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act 1966 2)Ginger Council of Fiji Act 1996 3)Agricultural Marketing Authority Act 2004 4) Goat (Ear-marks)

		<p>Act 1955 5)Banana Export and Marketing Act 1960 6) Land Conservation and Improvement Act 1953 7) Birds and Game Protection Act 1923 8) Land Development Act 1961 9)Brands Act 1928 10) Meat Industry Act 1969 11) Coconut Industry Development Act 2010 12) Pesticides Act 1971 13) Co-operative Dairy Companies Act 1974 14) Pound Act 1877 15) Copra Industry Loans Act 1976 16) Protection of Animals Act 1954 17)Dairies Act 1965 18) Stock Improvement Act 1932 19)Dogs Act 1968 20) Trespass of Animals Act 1955 21) Fencing Act 1955 22)Veterinary Surgeons Act 1956 23)Fruit Export and Marketing Act 1906.</p> <p>The review was assigned to Mr. Julian Moti who had achieved a reasonable amount of progress. However, with his untimely passing away in December 2020, the work had stalled.</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture is in discussion with the SG’s office as well as development partners and agencies to get support in this area to recommence the review and complete the work that was undertaken by late Mr. Julian Moti</p>
3	<i>According to Pillar 6, what was the successful rate of production in the sustainable land management farming concept conducted by the Ministry under the review period?</i>	<p>During this six-month period, the Land Resource Development Division trained 50 farmers on sustainable land management farming concepts of which 10 farmers were assisted with land clearing and preparation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture production in 2016 was over 100,000 mt from January to July.
4	<i>According to Pillar 7, how many were assisted in the Rural and Outer Islands (ROI) program</i>	<p>During this time, the Rural Outer Island program supported 19 projects, all of which involved farmer cluster groups made up of ten or more farmers from the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kadavu Island • Lomaiviti • Lau • Tailevu • Naitasiri
5	<i>According to Pillar 8 it states, “Reduce Poverty to a Negligible Level by 2015”. How successful have</i>	<p>Most programs implemented by the Ministry throughout each Financial Year addresses issue of Poverty as one of the targeted outcomes. The</p>

	<i>the plans been achieved by the youth groups and women groups during the review period?</i>	Ministry through its Annual Plans ensure that Youth and Women Group are covered in this intervention. 31 women's groups were trained and assisted in the Cottage Industry Program from January to July 2016. In addition, the Ministry continued to subsidize Agricultural Schools such as Tutu Agricultural School and Navuso Agricultural School to support the Youth in Agriculture Program in each Financial Year.
6	<i>Can the Ministry clarify whether there were other alternative commodities provided by the Ministry of Agriculture to sustain the livelihood of the worst affected communities such as Koro, Taveuni and Wainibuka/Ra?</i>	These areas were allocated with assorted vegetable seeds and planting materials such as kumala, cassava and yams.
7	<i>According to the Achievement of Human Resources Finance and Information System Division; a) Reference to sub-output 1, can the Ministry please clarify which Act, Legislation or Policy was formulated and its progress?</i>	The OMRS policy and Training policy were formulated. No Acts and legislation review was conducted during this period
8	<i>According to sub-output 3, can the Ministry please clarify the percentage coverage of agriculture stations linked to internet and intranet?</i>	During this time, six agriculture stations were connected to the internet and intranet. Given that the Ministry now has 79 stations, the percentage of connectivity throughout this time period would be 17.72 percent. The current coverage rate is 40.51 percent, achieved through progressive work done over the past years. However, given the fact that some additional stations have been added recently, the percentage of connectivity would have been higher. The Ministry's objective is to enhance connectivity across all its station, and work is being done progressively to improve the infrastructure, which also includes other utilities in addition to communications.

5.0 COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Archaic Legislations - the Committee recommends that the Ministry of Agriculture considers employing a Legal Officer to be responsible for reviewing all Legislations who, in turn will consult the Desk Officer in Solicitor General’s Office prior to final sign off by SG. E.g. Pound Act 1877; Branding Act 1928; Fruit Export and Marketing Act 1906; Stock Improvement Act 1932.

2. The Committee recommends that the Ministry should raise awareness and support on the various agriculture projects and encourage more people towards farming.

3. Budget support of the Ministry of Agriculture – Government to focus more on the agriculture sector by means of Monetary and Technical Support, particularly in the livestock industry and crustaceans.

4. Incentives such as seedlings distribution, small grants to farmers, mechanization, export incentive sustainability to be prioritized.

5. Fiji Embassies abroad to be more proactive in searching for overseas markets for local products to improve exports and reduce imports.

6.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

6.1 GENDER EQUALITY ANALYSIS – SDG 5

The Fiji Parliament Standing Orders to consider gender equality and ensure that the impact on both men and women is exploited in all matters.” SO110 (2): Where a committee conducts an activity, it shall ensure that full consideration will be given to the principal of gender equality so as to ensure all matters are considered with regards to the impact and benefit on both men and women equally.

The Ministry of Agriculture has embarked in an endeavor to ensuring equal participation in capacity building in Agriculture for women.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The committee commends the Ministry of Agriculture through its achievements and initiatives in the 2016 January – July Annual Report.

As this Annual Report was prepared after TC Winston, the Committee noted the aggressive and vigilant performance of the Ministry in reviving the affected areas.

The Committee noted that Agriculture like other Natural Resource-based sectors is very much prone to natural disasters and therefore recommends that a lot of effort should be put in for its restoration and rehabilitation.

8.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE

The substantive members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources have approved the use of their e-signatures on the table below.

Members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources	E-Signature
Hon. Sanjay Kirpal, Chairperson	
Hon. Jale Sigarara, Deputy Chairperson	
Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Government Member	
Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca, Opposition Member	
Hon. Jese Saukuru, Opposition Member	

APPENDICES

Published written evidence

Written evidence and supplementary information was received from the Ministry of Agriculture and can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link:

<http://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-natural-resources/>