



STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Review Report of the Fiji Rice 2013-2017 Annual Reports



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
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Chairperson's Foreword

The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs is pleased to submit to Parliament, the Review Report of the Fiji Rice 2013-2017 Annual Reports.

Fiji Rice Limited was first established as Rewa Rice Limited in the early 1960s before going through a name change. The Executives of Fiji Rice Limited were invited to provide a submission to the Committee during which key achievements and challenges during the period under review were discussed.

The Committee recommended for Fiji Rice Limited, in full consultation with key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture to formulate a comprehensive Strategic Plan to align it with the Ministry's Commodity Development Plan.

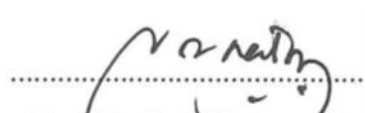
The Committee believes that when marketing Fiji grown rice, the industry in collaboration with relevant stakeholders could promote brown rice as it is known for its rich source of dietary fiber, which can reduce risk of Non Communicable Diseases.

Furthermore, it was noted that there is an issue of aging farmers as the younger generation are not as willing to take up rice farming. The Committee in its recommendations stated a need for stakeholders to work together to develop initiatives, policies and a conducive environment to make rice farming a more lucrative career choice.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to the CEO of Fiji Rice and his team members as well as representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture for making time to present before the Committee.

Finally, I would like to thank our Committee Members who were part of the team that produced this report: - Deputy Chairperson Hon. Veena Bhatnagar, Hon. Sachida Nand, Hon. Inosi Kuridrani and Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Parliamentary Staff who have given us invaluable support.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend the Review of the Fiji Rice 2013-2017 Annual Reports to Parliament.



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Hon. Vijay Nath (Chairperson)

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Fiji Rice Limited was first established as Rewa Rice Limited in the early 1960's and was rebranded to Fiji Rice Limited after 50 years. The rebranding enabled the company to put the country on the global map and to ensure that Fiji becomes a well-known brand among the global leaders.

The rebranding was part of Government's and the company's effort in building a strong brand Fiji across all government entities especially the commercial enterprises. On that note, in 2016, the company made a profit before tax of \$132,439 and this increased to \$361,721 in 2017.

Committee Remit and Composition

The Committee is made up of five (5) Members of Parliament, three (3) of which are Government members and two Opposition members. According to Section 109(2) (a) the Standing Committee is responsible to look into matters related to economic development, finance, banking and taxation.

2.0 Findings and Recommendations

1. Given the ongoing challenges faced by Fiji Rice Limited and the Rice sector in Fiji, the Committee recommends that Fiji Rice Limited, in full consultation with key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture, formulate a comprehensive Strategic Plan to align it with the Ministry's Commodity Development Plan.
2. The Committee noted that local production mainly constituted brown rice which had significant health benefits especially in terms of mitigation against non-communicable diseases. The Committee recommends for all relevant stakeholders to collaborate and design an effective awareness and marketing strategy to further promote local rice consumption.
3. The Committee noted the Agriculture Education Framework in place at FNU and other institutions and was concerned that most graduates were not progressing to actual farming. The Committee recommends that further assessments be conducted on this issue and that options be considered to address the matter.
4. The Committee noted, like all other agricultural sectors, there is an issue of aging farmers as the younger generation are not as willing to take up farming. The Committee recommends for various stakeholders to work together to develop initiatives, policies and a conducive environment to make farming a lucrative career choice.
5. The Committee recommends for Fiji Rice Limited to present their Annual Reports in a timely manner and to include more data in terms of their operational output during their financial year to enable the Committee to make more informed recommendations.

3.0 Sustainable Development Goals Analysis

The Committee acknowledges the work of the Fiji Rice Limited in its efforts towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

SDG 5 – Gender Equality and empowerment for Women and Girls.

The Committee was pleased to note that 10% of the total household rice farmers are women, furthermore a woman farmer had been the highest producer from the Nausori area. Fiji Rice welcomes more women farmers.

SDG 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Fiji Rice has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Fiji Development Bank and has provided a very good package for the rice farmers to enable them to access finance. The Ministry of Agriculture's Research Unit continuously educate the rice farmers of any new development through their field days, and farm works being done. The UN has also supported these training programmes.


SDG 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

One of the major setbacks in agriculture is Climate Change, the Ministry of Agriculture's Research Unit looks into varieties of rice on those which could survive in high salinity, varieties that can tolerate drought as well as flooding in certain low lying areas, so this rice can stay in standing water for a while given the fact at different stages, they can survive.

4.0 Conclusion

To conclude, the Committee acknowledges the activities carried out by Fiji Rice Limited and looks forward to more recent Annual Reports.


Members Signature




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Hon. Vijay Nath (Chairperson)



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Hon. Veena Bhatnagar (Deputy Chairperson)



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Hon. Sachida Nand (Member)



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Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau (Member)



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Hon. Inosi Kuridrani (Member)