



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
HONOURABLE ASERI RADRODRO
PARLIAMENT RESPONSE
THURSDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2023

193/2023 WRITTEN QUESTION

Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu to ask the Minister for Education – Can the Minister update Parliament on the following –

- (a) how many students had graduated from FNU Koronivia campus in the course of Degree in Animal Health since the inception of the course; and**
- (b) how many have been absorbed into the Ministry of Agriculture or any other Government Ministry or Department.**

Response:

Discussions below are in two parts to address the question posed by the Hon. Assistant Minister for Education

Introduction of Programme - 2014

The FNU, College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry started the Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (BVSc&AH) in 2014, with more than 40 students. The programme runs for five and a half years, including 6 months of hands-on internship.

Only 10 students graduated from the first cohort in 2019. To date, 66 students have graduated from the university since 2019. 4 of these graduates are from other countries in the South Pacific.

Currently there are 9 students enrolled in this programme and they are in the 4th Year of the course and will complete and graduate in 2025. FNU ~~will~~^{MoA} close this programme in 2025.

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and FNU

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is responsible for registering Veterinary doctors to practise in Fiji. The Ministry and the Fiji National University are closely working together to assist with the registration of the Veterinary Science graduates.

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) has also assisted in funding further training to get the first 3 cohorts of graduates ready for a qualifying examination that will be developed and administered by the MOA.

The training, which is conducted in three phases started in 2022, and forty-four students were part of it. The third phase, a hands-on programme of twelve-weeks ended recently, on 4 November 2023, and this was completed by nine students.

The remaining graduates could not attend these trainings due to employment and personal commitments. The University plans to work closely with WOAH and MoA to offer continuous professional development trainings for the FNU graduates and other Vets who may need such training.

The lack of a Veterinary Council in Fiji is a major setback since a council could have managed most of the post-graduation events that FNU is currently involved in, including continuous professional development. Such a council will also bring all the stakeholders together to manage veterinary practice and report to the MOA.

We believe that the registration of FNU vets will greatly reduce the current shortage of Vets in Fiji and the South Pacific. More Vets are needed not only to fill vacancies but new Vets can stimulate the setup of more commercial livestock operations.

Furthermore, in response to the second part of the question, the table given below provides the data on the graduates' employment status in the workforce despite the challenges encountered in this specific area.

Tabulated below is the breakdown of the employment engagement of the 66 graduates to date.

	Employer	Number of Graduates
1	Ministry of Agriculture	6
2	Rooster Chickens	8
3	SPCA	7
4	Vet Essentials	4
5	Pacific Animals Shelter and Hospital	1
6	Animals Fiji	3
7	Goodman Fielder	3
8	On Further Studies	3
9	Other jobs	1
10	Now Overseas	4
11	Other Pacific citizens	4
12	Unconfirmed	22
	Total	66

(Source : College of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF), Fiji National University (FNU), 22 November 2023)