



Supporting Fiji's agribusiness potential

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Agriculture in Fiji

Agriculture is the third largest industry in Fiji, and engages around 70% of the population primarily in subsistence agriculture and sugar cane farming.

Despite its importance to the general population, the industry has been in long-term decline, falling from 16% of GDP in the 1990s to 9.2% in 2012. Reasons for the decline include lack of international competitiveness, limited private investment, inadequate infrastructure and high input costs. The sugar industry has benefited from long-term preferential access to the EU, but this is being phased out. Consequently, there has been a slow but gradual national shift away from sugar farming towards cultivating root crops and horticulture. Dalo (taro) is a particularly important crop both as a domestically consumed staple and for export. Other important export crops include yaqona (kava), ginger and tropical fruits such as pineapples, pawpaw and mangoes.

PHAMA Pacific Horticultural & Agricultural Market Access Program

An Australian Government initiative



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Public-Private Partnerships

Central to the PHAMA approach is the development of strong public-private partnerships between governments and the private sector to help manage market access. Market Access Working Groups (MAWGs) have been established by PHAMA within the core PHAMA countries. These include exporters and relevant government agencies responsible for elements of market access (e.g. the Ministry of Agriculture, Biosecurity Authority of Fiji and Ministry of Trade and Industry). MAWGs provide the link between farmers, processors, exporters and government.

PHAMA successes in Fiji

- **Spices** – Development of shelf-stable vanilla and cinnamon pastes for home cooking, commercial food preparation and export to the Australian and New Zealand markets. With support from PHAMA, the products were jointly developed by the University of the South Pacific (USP) and local commercial spice company, 'Spices of Fiji'. Their development has significantly expanded opportunities for small-scale farmers who supply the raw produce to the company.
- **HACCP accreditation** – PHAMA has supported two of Fiji's largest fresh produce processors and exporters to achieve internationally recognised accreditation



for food safety (HACCP). Suppliers to supermarkets in Australia and NZ are increasingly required to be HACCP accredited. Meeting and maintaining accreditation standards requires significant effort and investment in processing systems, equipment and infrastructure.

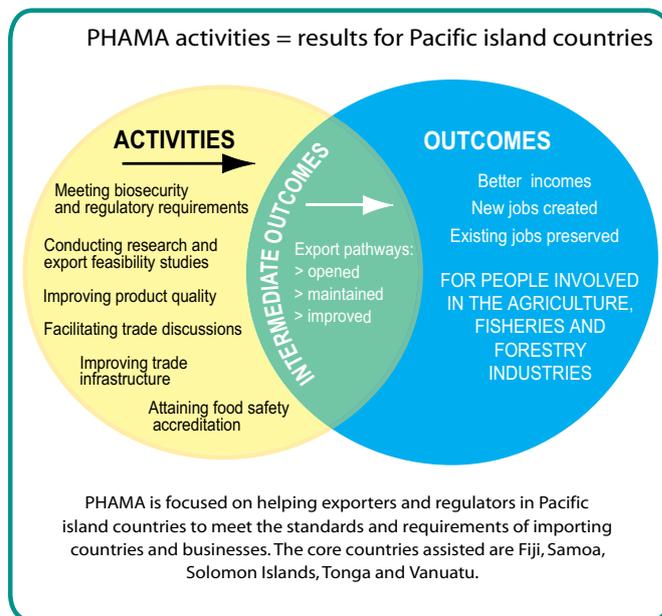
➤ **Fresh ginger** – Ginger is grown on over 550 farms (2009 figure) in Fiji. Exports doubled between 2010 and 2013 to FJD\$11.1M (AUD\$6.5M), largely thanks to exports of processed ginger. PHAMA has been helping the government and industry to develop the systems and local capacity to enable exports of fresh ginger to Australia. As a result, new market access into Australia was granted in 2013 and trial shipments began in 2014. Ongoing support is being provided to maintain the export pathway and utilise this export opportunity.

Current focus

PHAMA's strategy in Fiji is to support government and industry to utilise export opportunities for fresh agricultural products, identify and develop new export opportunities for fresh and processed products, and strengthen contingency planning and surveillance for pests and diseases of plants and animals. The current focus areas are listed below.

➤ **Root crops** – Dalo is a staple food high in carbohydrates. The area planted to dalo has increased around 20% in the last 20 years, with about one third or over 37,000 farms producing dalo valued at FJD\$59.5M (AUD\$31.5M) in 2009. Exports were FJD\$21.8M (AUD\$12.8M) in 2013. PHAMA provided support to develop and apply new standards for the production and processing of dalo to better meet the requirements of the Australian and New Zealand markets. PHAMA is also providing support to root crop exporters to achieve HACCP accreditation for their operations, and to government to develop a biosecurity plan for dalo to help protect exports from new pests or diseases.

➤ **Yaqona (Kava)** – Kava is a traditional beverage in Fiji and an important cash crop for farmers. In 2009, over 21,000 farms grew a total of 6,000 tonnes worth FJD\$66M (AUD\$42M). Exports were valued at FJD\$7M (AUD\$4.5M) in 2013. The main markets are the U.S., Kiribati and New Zealand. PHAMA has been assisting with the identification and description of kava varieties that are grown in Fiji and development of Kava Guidelines to improve export quality. Strong potential exists to regain the significant export earnings that were experienced in the 1990's when kava was exported for use as a traditional beverage and to the EU as an ingredient for dietary supplements and nutraceutical products.



➤ **Sea urchins** – There is strong demand for chilled sea urchins in Australia, with current potential export earnings of over AUD\$750,000. Increases in this figure will depend on supplies and production process improvements. PHAMA is partnering with an exporter, government fisheries staff and USP to conduct research into how to harvest and process sea urchins so the chilled flesh (or roe) can be exported to Australia (and potentially other markets) on a timely basis and according to food safety requirements. Hundreds of men and women harvesters along the Viti Levu southern coast stand to benefit if this export pathway proves successful.

➤ **Quarantine export operations** – A range of support is being provided to government and commercial stakeholders in Fiji to improve their capacity to develop and implement export protocols required by trading partners. To date, this has involved training courses, assistance from international experts, operational backing for local government extension staff, and purchase and maintenance of quarantine equipment. This support is provided through a flexible arrangement with specific needs identified over time through the MAWG.

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