



PARDI FACT SHEET

Boosting the value of South Pacific vegetables

Pacific Agribusiness Research for Development Initiative

'Developing an integrated participatory guarantee system in the Pacific Islands in support of the sustainable production of high-value vegetable crops' is a three-year PARDI initiative to improve high-value vegetable production in the South Pacific, with initial emphasis on Fiji and Solomon Islands.

Ultimately, the project will develop and implement a series of pilot-level integrated participatory guarantee systems (PGS), including the implementation of targeted improvements to vegetable seed supplies and appropriate post-harvest quality systems.

Strength in numbers — the participatory-based supply chain approach

The establishment of PGS will give local growers the ability to pool their efforts and resources to adopt sophisticated and sustainable approaches to vegetable production. Collaboration will allow industry participants to work towards significantly enhanced market positioning and ultimately increased profits that are shared by all participants.

The traditional structure behind Fiji and Solomon Islands vegetable production is for smallholders to grow and sell a range of vegetables at local markets and roadside stalls. Due to the informal structure, many smallholders are not equipped to grow and sell to valuable markets. Ultimately, high-value domestic markets like resorts, hotel chains and restaurants rely on imported vegetables to meet an increasing need for high-quality vegetables.

Despite opportunities for significant vegetable sales in the region, South Pacific Island vegetable industries have remained static in terms of their growth or in some instances (especially in the case of areas affected by

natural disasters), have weakened in terms of their capacity to grow and trade produce.

This University of the Sunshine Coast-led PARDI project is focused on empowering South Pacific Island vegetable industries to benefit from vegetable production and sales opportunities so they can endeavour to meet the ever-increasing demands for high-value vegetables across the South Pacific Islands (and potentially further afield).

PARDI vegetable research is part of broader multi-project initiatives funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and led by Dr Mike Furlong, from The University of Queensland to improve high-value vegetable production across the South Pacific Islands. PARDI work is focused on brassica, tomatoes, capsicum and eggplant.

Goals and activities

The ultimate goal of PARDI vegetable research is to develop a pilot PGS for high-value vegetable crops in Fiji and Solomon Islands.

PARDI vegetable research includes the following activities.

- Investigate a range of market opportunities to understand and document vegetable market needs in Fiji and Solomon Islands and translate these to opportunities for local high-value vegetable crops. This research will investigate opportunities in the major service industries including hotels and resorts, restaurants, major retailers, hospitals and other potential clients.
- Develop and implement a series of pilot PG systems that target domestic markets so as to improve coordination and collaboration of vegetable growers in Fiji (Sigatoka Valley) and Solomon Islands (Guadalcanal province).



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- Strengthen the critical supply chain inputs, such as national seed supply networks, to enhance long-term PGS adoption and vegetable industry success.

Future profile

By 2015, PARDI predicts that South Pacific Island vegetable networks will have a number of tools at their disposal to establish and benefit from sustainable larger-scale vegetable production.

Industry initiatives likely to be in place include:

- a constant and high-quality supply of vegetable seeds
- established local expertise in the development and support of PGS systems
- coordinated grower networks
- vegetable growing and post-harvest quality systems including production and handling information and market-driven quality standards.

For further information

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About PARDI

PARDI: 'Pacific Agribusiness Research for Development Initiative' commenced in February 2010. The project is coordinated by The University of Queensland and funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).

PARDI seeks to create sustainable livelihood development outcomes for the South Pacific forestry, fisheries and crop-based sectors. PARDI scientists undertake supply-chain and market-driven research to identify constraints that impede local economic development. Their research involves working towards tangible solutions such as new skills for locals, new technologies and product options.

PARDI is a partnership involving The University of Queensland under the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation (QAAFI), The University of the South Pacific, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, The University of Adelaide, James Cook University, University of the Sunshine Coast, the Queensland Government's Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) and Southern Cross University.