

Span



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Agriculture scholars of Samoa: Looking up to a bright future

The University of the South Pacific (USP) granted scholarship assistance to 20 Agriculture students aspiring to be full-time scholars of the Government of Samoa (GOS) in a ceremony held at USP Alafua Campus on the 7th of March 2014. The CEO of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr. Afioga Fonoia Sealiitu Sesega The agreement is for USP to pay for the first 4 courses, completion of which will guarantee them full scholarship for the rest of their Bachelor of Agriculture degree pursuit.

The declining trend of Samoan students taking up Agriculture studies from 2005 with numbers dropping off as low as less than 10 in 2010 prompted USP to take far-reaching measures. Vice Chancellor Prof. Rajesh Chandra encouraged the Government of Samoa to provide scholarships in this field. Unknown to many, GOS is already offering 20 scholarships then but a prerequisite is to pass the first 4 courses with no financial assistance yet.

USP saw a window of opportunity to assist aspiring students by covering the tuition fees for the required 4 courses. This partnership between USP and GOS was sealed in 2012.

The inaugural offering of this award in 2013 resulted in 10 students (1st semester) and 7 students (2nd semester) becoming beneficiaries. Out of these, 8 students were granted full scholarships by GOS.

This year, 2014, saw a tremendous reception to the scholarship programme with 29 applications received. The Selection Committee has to sweat out in choosing the 20 successful applicants given the excellent academic backgrounds. It was well worth it as the selected students have shown great interest in their studies.

From the whole Alafua Campus family, welcome aboard future Agriculture scientists!



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USP Research Committee gave thumbs up to SAFT research proposals

Five research proposals of the School of Agriculture and Food Technology (SAFT) received nods from the USP Research Committee in a meeting held on the 18th March 2014. The proposals were prepared by four Master of Agriculture students (Ami Sharma, Walter Faamatuaina, Peniana Matan Patrick, Eunice Kalsuak) and teaching staff (Dr. Siaka Diarra, Senior Lecturer in Animal Science and Dr. Rashmi Kant, Lecturer in Entomology).

The student research proposals were carefully screened in-house at SAFT by teaching staff and students during seminar presentations held two weeks prior to the meeting. The research topics include impacts of land-use intensification on related soil chemical indices and productivity of taro in Taveuni, Fiji, nutrient uptake studies of selected taro varieties in Samoa, effectiveness and efficiency of agriculture extension and training programs in Vanuatu, and contribution of smallholder and large farms to the growth in area, production and export of five perennial crops in Vanuatu.

Dr. Diarra and Dr. Kant are looking into the reproductive and feeding strategies of Giant African snail as well as the potential of its meat to replace fish meal in laying hens diets in Samoa.

These researches are expected to deliver outputs which can be used to build up the agricultural knowledge base of the South Pacific as well as the research capabilities of agricultural practitioners.



Research management skills of SAFT students boosted

Third year students of SAFT underwent scrutinising sessions with experts as they present their research proposals for their Research Management Skills course. Most of the students came in well-prepared and were made to assume that they are facing technical critics for research funding. They were taught presentation and writing skills apart from all aspects of research project planning to implementation.

The students will be assessed on their ability to conduct research with academic rigours in preparation for their future careers as agricultural scientists. The experts who are also supervising the students imparted their time-tested skills to enhance the employability skills of the students.

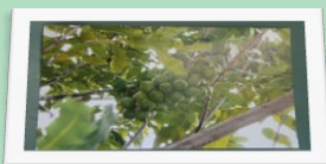


Macadamia grower hopes to make it big in his agribusiness venture in Samoa



“I hope Samoans would start exploring the potential of high value crops such as macadamia”, are Mr. Tuulima Laiti’s visionary words as he invited us in his nursery. Tuulima decided to set up a seedling nursery of fruit trees after retiring from his job as horticulturalist at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for over 20 years. This is where he got the interest in venturing into the fruit growing business.

His macadamia project started 4 years ago with support from renowned macadamia enthusiast Mr. Ian McConachie. Ian, who holds a food science and business administration degree, manages an estimated 6,000 macadamia tree orchard, a plant nursery and his own designed seven macadamia processing plants. He is a well sought after consultant in Australia and globally who assisted in propelling the macadamia industry in Australia, Malawi, Costa Rica, Ecuador and India. Ian gladly gave a seminar on Macadamia Production to staff and students of USP Alafua Campus on the 12th February 2014.



Tuulima is the first farmer in Samoa to start the macadamia nursery. The quarantine permits which took four years to process have been finally obtained in 2013 with post-quarantine processing undertaken at Nu'u Station. This prompted him to go full blast on this venture. He has already sold about 700 seedlings to the Women in Business Development, Inc. which were distributed to organic farmers and is currently selling more to interested farmers.

He has already identified 50 acres of land to start a commercial farm of which he will utilise for seedling production and plantation production. He hopes to see the seedlings bear fruits after 5 to 6 years and the grafted ones after 3 to 4 years.

He is certain that in 5 years time, he will already have fruiting plants in his orchard and is highly optimistic on the future of this agribusiness venture despite the big challenge of getting farmers to be interested in stepping up from subsistence farming to high value crop farming. He believes that macadamia market (fresh and processed) has huge potential in foreign trade apart from increased local rural income.



“We have enough supply of seedlings since we are continuously grafting and propagating at our Nu'u nursery to produce new and improved planting materials”, he proudly claimed. Depending on the age of the seedlings, they sell between WST20 to 40. Tuulima will be more than happy to hear interests through his mobile number +685 7785303 or email tuulimalaiti@gmail.com.

The @gricultural revolution

A video animation showing how ICTs are driving a new agricultural revolution in Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean, has been launched at the ICT4Ag conference being held in Kigali, Rwanda between 4-8 November 2013. The animation reveals that the eDairy mobile app in Sri Lanka has helped increase milk production by 30 per cent, while average transactions in Kenyan tea buying centres have been cut three minutes to 22 seconds using mobile apps. In the Philippines, rice growers are able to text agricultural questions 24/7 to experts. In Namibia and Malaysia, radio-frequency identification (RDIF) tags track cattle helping to meet international standards and control disease. In the last decade, ICT has grown 20 per cent per year in Kenya alone with mobile banking now serving isolated herders, fishers and farmers started, and around half of the population use mPesa. More innovations in ICTs were discussed at the [ICT4Ag conference](#) held in November 2013 in Rwanda. (EIN News)

Editor's Viewpoint

Current technological advances can help ease climate change impacts in the Pacific

The recent climatic disasters (cyclones, floods and tsunamis) which hit the Pacific Islands in the last decade created an immense impact on most residents whose livelihood are mostly based on subsistence farming. Most of them were caught by surprise and impacts lingered for several months, even years.

For Pacific countries whose economy are very much based on agriculture, the issues on food security, climatic change impacts and rural income generation, will continuously set the tone for economic development. Governments are left with no option but to put these as a priority agenda. Action plans deal with technical and financial assistance for proper crop and livestock management, provision of infrastructure facilities, further research on crop and livestock improvements and climate change resilience, enterprise and commercial development, sustainable farming practices, to name a few.

In the meantime, people globally despite remoteness have been linked around the world through the power of telecommunication. A variety of gadgets have become part of everyday lives. Only a minority does away with telecommunication gadgets which provide a comfort zone to many. Linking farmers to weather data to forewarn them of impending abnormal weather conditions could be a plausible solution to address

climate change impacts. This is now widely used in African countries whose economy are based on subsistence farming as well.

Recently, aWhere, Inc. announces agreement with Esoko to put weather data into the hands of African farmers. Thousands of small-scale farmers in Ghana will receive daily text messages reporting localized weather information. According to Dr. John Corbett, aWhere CEO, "The importance of localized weather information for farmers cannot be understated. We're very excited to see our weather data put to good use and getting into the hands of those who need it most."

Weather data with 8-day forecast will be translated into relevant and accessible weather updates for farmers which will be delivered via text messages or text-based symbols for illiterate farmers. Farmers will receive information on precipitation, temperature, wind speed, humidity, and growing degree days. With access to daily, highly localized weather information, farmers can make informed decisions and reduce their vulnerability in the face of weather variability.

We find this move very innovative and far-reaching. We take our hats off to governments in the Pacific who have already ventured into this and urge that other Pacific Island countries will follow suit.

Pacific exporters' pilot survey launched

A comprehensive pilot survey of Pacific Island exporters to provide a greater understanding of the diversity of industry in the region as well as opportunities and challenges particularly with regard to international trade is to be launched soon.

In this first of its kind survey, **Pacific Islands Trade & Invest (PT&I)** and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will invite participation directly from exporters of goods and services (such as tourism businesses) to air their views on a range of matters concerning their businesses.

Upon completion of the survey, the findings would be discussed at various regional forums and with national Governments to address some of the challenges faced by export businesses in the Pacific region.

Designed in a simple format, the survey would take no longer than 10 minutes to complete and the executive summary of the outcomes report will be available to all participants and circulated widely.

Participation in the survey is completely voluntary and all your responses will be kept confidential. Survey participants will be entered into a prize draw for a chance to win an Apple iPad (16GB with Wi-Fi and Cellular) valued at A\$598.

Details of the survey will be emailed soon to exporters around the Pacific Islands region. (*Pacific Persicope*)

Taro exports double for March

The number of taro containers exported for the past month has more than doubled. That's according to an official at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fa'avaeolenu'u Tamoe Tautu.

"Compared to last February, there were only two containers of taro that was sent overseas. Last month the outcome was really good," he said. "There were four and a half containers for March."

But the good news means the Ministry needs to ensure the quality of the exported taro is the best. That's why the Ministry is continuing to limit the varieties of taro being exported due to risks. "There are only two varieties of taro that the Ministry has approved for exporting to overseas markets and we are still working on others." "The two varieties of taro that are good to export are called Samoa 01 and Samoa 02."

There are over 300 farmers from all over Samoa registered to export taro. Farmers get \$38 tala for 20 kilos, averaging at twelve to sixteen taros. "The process takes a lot of time and what is very important is the shelf life of the taro," said Fa'avae. "That is whether the taro can still be used after two to three weeks and the ministry is urging other farmers to bring in their taro so that we can investigate whether they are giving the right varieties."

Although all varieties of taro are cleared for export, according to a New Zealand official earlier this year, Fa'avae said that only some are proven to last the distance. "The ministry was investigating and working on different varieties of taro and found out that most taro can only be used in Samoa because they couldn't meet the required shelf life and how long will stay until used for the overseas market."

Fa'avae said there is also a need to avoid mixing different varieties. "One taro of a different variety can destroy the whole container if the ministry doesn't assess each shipment properly," he said. "It is a must for the ministry to take a really good look at the condition and variety of each taro to meet what our overseas market is looking for." (*Ilia L. Likou, Samoa Observer*)

Brazil's coffee price hike good news for Pacific growers

Pacific coffee growers are predicted to benefit from a steep rise in prices driven by the drought affecting the world's biggest coffee producer, Brazil. Since the start of this year, the price of arabica beans has risen by more than 75 per cent.

In Papua New Guinea it is estimated that more than three million people depend directly on coffee for their cash income, according to David Freyne from the World Bank's PNG Productive Partnership in Agriculture project. This figure includes growers, traders, processors and exporters.

However the price of coffee is prone to market fluctuation and previous downturns have seen farmers pulling out their crops.

Mr Freyne said that due to the price change in 2013 "people around Goroka and Mount Hagen were cutting out their coffee and planting food crops because the price of coffee was so low.

"Now they have chopped that out and the price of coffee has sort of almost doubled and they won't have the coffee."

In 2011, a kilo of coffee could fetch over 7 kina (approx. \$2.90) which decreased to 3 kina (\$1.25) in 2013. Currently the price is nearly 5 kina (\$2).

"Coffee is a magnificent crop insofar as if you harvest it properly, you process it properly and you dry it to low moisture content - 11 or 12 per cent - you can store it for 12 months if you have a dry storage," said Mr Freyne. (*David Freyne from the World Bank speaks to Isabelle Genoux*)



News Bits

Floods affect prices in Fiji

The price of vegetables and root crops has increased after the recent floods in the Central and Eastern divisions in Fiji. And this continues to be a challenge for market vendors and consumers in the Capital City.

Suva Women Market Vendors Association vice-president Asenaca Salusalu said this had been an issue from the past years and it continued to increase. "Ni oti na ualuvu sa qai oti ga qo na i sau ni i voli e tu sara ga i cake. (After the flood, the cost of vegetables has increased)."

She said they had resorted to other avenues to keep their business rolling. "We have to pay for our tables whether it's empty or full. We need to sell other things to get more money."

She said most middlemen were from the flood-affected areas. "Kevaka ga e ra sega ni lako mai, keimami sana vaqara tale e so me keimami veivoli kei ira. (If the middlemen don't come, we have to find another one so we can buy from them)." (*Fiji Times, 12 March 2014*)

Fiji agriculture receives hand tractors to boost crop production

The donation of 10 hand tractors to the Ministry of Agriculture by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia will assist in enhancing Fiji's food security and boost crop production. The hand tractors, valued at around \$6000 each, were officially handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture's permanent secretary Mr Ropate Ligairi by the Indonesian Advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture, Mukti Sardjono. This presentation took place at the Koronivia Research Station in March 2014.

Mr Ligairi, while thanking the Indonesian Government for all the support it has provided to Fiji's agriculture sector, said the assistance will go a long way in the development of the Fijian national economy. "Over the years, we have witnessed direct assistance from Indonesia in the areas of rice production, product development and small farm machinery," Mr Ligairi said.

The Government of Indonesia had also assisted Fiji through the engagement of a consultant last year who works at the Koronivia Research Station in the area of product development. "This has enlightened us on opportunities that can be tapped to enhance the utilisation of additional commodities to generate income for our rural farmers or communities. Agriculture in Fiji is a promising industry given the rich water resources, fertile soil and high precipitation that Fiji receives. Some of the major difficulties faced by Fiji in excelling with agriculture industry include seed variety problem with lower yields and quality, plant disease, insect pest, small or large scale modernised farm, lack of technical experts and lack of mechanisation," the permanent secretary highlighted.

Mr Ligairi added that there is a need to strengthen science and technology to improve the productivity of Fijian farmers. "The assistance of the 10 hand tractors given to Fiji will assist farmers here to boost their productivity, develop their skills in farming and reduce their operating cost."

Mr Sardjono said the assistance will enhance cooperation and contribute positively to agricultural development for both Fiji and Indonesia. "Since 2003, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia has been assisting Fiji in the field of agriculture through the provision of technical assistance such as agricultural experts dispatch to Fiji, apprenticeship Fijian farmers in Indonesia and grant of agricultural machinery," Mr Sardjono said.

he diesel engine operated hand tractors are equipped with attachments and can be used for cultivation on dry as well as boggy land. (*The Fijian Government*)



News Bits

Vegetable production, postharvest handling and marketing in Fiji

Anna Fink, SPC

The development of high-value crops for domestic consumption and export is seen as a priority for economic development and improved livelihoods in many Pacific island countries. The Fiji Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) identified fruits and vegetables as among the six "priority concerns" for export promotion and import substitution. The government has identified cabbages, lettuce, tomatoes, capsicums, carrots, onions, potatoes, and peas as target crops for greater production. Hotels, supermarkets and restaurants are seen as key domestic markets.

In response, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) launched two projects in 2012 to support sustainable intensification of high-value vegetable production in Fiji. MAFF, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), University of Queensland (UQ), University of Sunshine Coast and AVRDC - The World Vegetable Center (AVRDC) are partners in the projects.

Understanding current practices and perceptions of vegetable farmers in production, postharvest handling and marketing enables the project team to design interventions to address constraints to expanding vegetable production and trade. Thus, one of the first activities of the two projects was to conduct a survey in project target areas to collect the information. The findings presented in this situational analysis are based on that survey.

The project target areas include the Sigatoka valley, Cane Coastal Area, and Koronivia of Viti Levu. The Sigatoka valley is the main vegetable production area in Fiji. It is estimated that around 80% of the total vegetable production occurs in the valley. The Cane Coastal Area and Koronivia were selected due to the presence of markets and communities willing to join the project participatory guarantee system activity. These are the areas where the projects will conduct most of their activities.

Please visit the following link to download the 'Vegetable production, postharvest handling and marketing in Fiji' publication:

http://www.spc.int/lrd/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=288&Itemid=130

News Bits

Landcare experience to be spread further in Tonga

Last year we told you of the first Landcare group in Tonga - the village of Popua—which is beset by poor land and exposure to storm surges and flooding due to its low lying spot near the capital Nukualofa. Following a successful food garden and conservation project funded by Rotary Australia, Popua opted to take on the Landcare mantle.

Now the NZ government has come forward, in partnership with Rotary Australia and Rotary NZ to scale up the Popua experience to three other villages. The project will run over three years and use total funds of about \$NZ 400 000. It will include conservation practices and food production gardens.

ALI members Bob Edgar and Horrie Poussard are continuing their links with Tonga under this new expanded project and will be on site in mid-2014 to assist with the initial activities needed. In addition, they will “workshop” a review and future plans with Popua villagers.

For further information contact Bob Edgar at redgar@netspace.net.au. (Australian Landcare International Newsletter)

Minister of Agriculture of Cook islands met with growers of Atiu

The Hon Kiriau Turepu met with 24 Atiu growers and five Southern Group island Mayors for update on the progress of the \$1.5 million Chinese project on agriculture materials and equipment, i.e. shade houses, machineries, organic fertilizers, limited stock feed, etc.

The Minister also informed the Atiu growers on his preference on the distribution including the number of shade houses that will be provided to the Council to manage for each Island.

The Minister also emphasised the pre-requisite requirement - i.e. Puru and chip mulch. (Ministry of Agriculture, Cook Islands)



7 Months without Catching Oriental Fruit Fly in all Methyl Eugenol (ME) Steiner Traps on Rarotonga

Seven months has passed without oriental fruit flies in the ME Steiner traps in Rarotonga. As reported in February 2014, the traps are now checked every 2 weeks instead of weekly.

Monitoring of these traps in Rarotonga will continue until zero catches in Aitutaki has been consistent for at least three months. The restrictions of the movement of risk products (fruits and selected vegetables like tomato, egg plant, etc.) from Aitutaki will continue to be enforced.



Mr Junior Torotoro (Senior Research & Extension Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture) will continue to work closely with the Fruit Fly Team until Aitutaki is cleared of this pest. (Ministry of

Agriculture, Cook Islands)

One Male Oriental Fruit Fly caught

After having zero catches for six weeks in a row, one male oriental fruit fly was caught in Aitutaki during the 3rd week of January as reported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Cook Islands. This was discovered during the regular trap checking undertaken by the research and extension staff.

This was a shock to the Fruit Fly Team in Aitutaki but they reckon this is quite normal in this kind of biological work. Rarotonga had similar results last year, after having zero catches for 3 weeks in a row and then there were 2 males caught during the 4th week.

A follow up Protein Bait Spray was carried out immediately in the suspected area sites in Vaipae. Weekly monitoring of all the ME Steiner traps will continue to sustain zero catches. (Ministry of Agriculture, Cook Islands)



United Nations calls for pro-family farming policies

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and FAO Director-General Graziano da Silva ask international community for commitments during International Year of Family Farming.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva today appealed to governments to boost support to the world's small-scale family farmers in order to win the fight against hunger. Ban said the International Year of Family Farming being celebrated in 2014 called "for commitments" in a message relayed by Graziano da Silva to the Global Forum and Expo on Family Farming in Budapest.

"Governments can empower family farmers, especially women and youth, by creating policies conducive to equitable and sustainable rural development," Ban said. "This includes better infrastructure to reduce the amount of food lost after harvest when small-scale producers are unable to store, process and transport their goods."

The UN Secretary-General also encouraged public and private lenders to provide vital financial services such as credit and insurance. Ban warned that small-scale family farmers are particularly vulnerable to climate change events such as extreme weather, droughts and floods.

Pro-family farming policies

In his address to the forum, Graziano da Silva echoed the UN Secretary-General in urging governments to adopt explicitly pro-family farming policies. He underlined that family farmers, fisher folk, forest-dependent people, pastoralists and traditional and indigenous communities are key for food security in most countries but at the same time are among the world's most vulnerable populations.



Family farms account for over 90 percent of all farm holdings in a recent study of 93 countries.

A recent study of 93 countries shows that family farms account for over 90 percent of all farm holdings, he told the forum. Family farmers also manage most of the world's farm land, including 63 percent in Europe, he said. "Apart from producing a high proportion of the food we eat, family farmers are by far the biggest source of employment in the world," the Director-General stressed, adding that they are also the guardians of the world's agro-biodiversity and natural resources.

Land grab threats

Graziano da Silva underlined the importance of protecting family farmers from rising threats to their traditional access to land posed by insecurity and land grabbing. The Committee on World Food Security's approved Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure as well as its Principles on Responsible Agricultural Investments currently being negotiated are of great importance to keep these threats in check, he said.

"Large private sector investments in agriculture exist and will continue, whether we like it or not," he explained. "So it is paramount that there is a common understanding on how to invest in ways that are sustainable and protect the rights of family farmers and poor communities."

Special ambassadors

Secretary General of the Asian Farmers Association Esther Penunia, President of the southern area of the artisanal section of the National Federation of Fisheries of Mauritania Mohammed Ould Saleck, and President of the European Farmers Association Gerd Sonnleitner were formally appointed as FAO Special Ambassadors on Family Farming at today's forum. They join the other special ambassadors already nominated for the Year: Ibrahima Coulibaly, President of the National Coordination of Peasant Organizations of Mali, and Mirna Cunningham, former Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. (FAO, March 2014)

What's On Campus

New USP-Australia partnership sealed

A renewed agreement was sealed between the government of Australia and management of USP on the 20th March 2014 was announced by USP's Vice-Chancellor and President Prof. Rajesh Chandra. The partnership which covers the period from 2014 to the middle of 2017 provides greater confidence to funding the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The total value of the partnership is AUD49 million which equates to 75% increase in annual support from the last agreement and 600% increase previous to the last agreement. This manifests the faith and confidence that USP through its leadership, governance, staff and students can deliver Australia's vision of a better South Pacific.

It should be noted that the remarkable performance of USP as per the Pacific Plan Review Report, citing USP as the most successful example of regional organization, contributed to the confidence accorded by the regional partners to the university.

Prof. Chandra thanked his working team led by the Director of Development, Marketing, Communication and Alumni and his Senior Management Team for directing the process to a positive outcome. He also expressed deep appreciation to the Australian Government particularly Minister/Counsellor, Mr. John Davidson and his hardworking team in Suva for this achievement and assured them that USP will work smartly, cohesively and with strong commitment to deliver the expected outcomes for its member countries.

STAR review timely for upcoming SAFT curriculum review

Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Scott of the University of Western Sydney accompanied by Dr. Sereana Kubuabola of USP conducted a review of how the Strategic Total Academic Review (STAR) is working for SAFT and the Alafua campus. The STAR envisions that the students' learning outcomes translates from USP's mission reflected in institutional and programme outcomes as determined by the course coordinators. The overall objective of STAR is to ensure that the students initially entering university with limited knowledge will have graduate attributes and institutional and programme outcomes expected of them measured from assessment of their performances in their courses.

Professor Scott consulted with staff (teaching and administrative) and students to ascertain how STAR impacted the

campus' graduate performance. A review of the performance against benchmark, best aspects and areas of improvement gave the USP Alafua's constituents the

general perspective on their current performance. Professor Scott is expected to provide a review report to assist campus administration and teaching staff in providing better learning outcomes.



SAFT students belted out debating skills

Four teams from among the best of the 2nd and 3rd year level students of the School of Agriculture and Food Technology (SAFT) came prepared and confident as they defend their arguments in the debates sponsored by the school. The preliminary debates (semi-final and final) are intended to choose the best debating team to compete in the Inter-school Debate sponsored by the Faculty of Business and Economics.



The team composed of all Fijian students, Marica Talemailagi, Elisabeta Waqa, Alena Muaniwaqa and Sireli Masi emerged the winner after a 3-series debate with semi-final rounds held on the 26 and 27 March 2014 and the final round on the 2nd of April 2014. All the teams provided sterling performances.

The judges expressed difficulty in choosing the winners as each debater provided very convincing arguments. One of the judges who was present on all 3 debates, Dr. Rachael Dempsey, a Climate Change expert, even suggested that the campus and the student body should consider forming a Debating Club. She sees a lot of potential among the students in this respect and believes that the students' debating skills should further be honed.

The SAFT family congratulates all the winners and participants on these debates. It is a good opportunity to learn from outside the square of the courses and allow a bit of diversion from the usual academic life.



SAFT lecturers became students in a skills development workshop

The teaching staff of SAFT benefitted from a refresher course ably delivered by a Learning Support expert from USP Laucala, Ms. Roshila Singh on the 8th March 2014. The workshop highlighted ways to teach more effectively which either improves or affirms current practices of each staff.

The staff were initially reluctant to attend the session but later found the treatment of the subject matter beneficial for their teaching methods and style. The action planning exercise affirmed the willingness to develop their skills further.

It was quite a sight to see lecturers on the other side of the fence listening intently and understanding what the resource person says and doing what is required in the workshops. The one thing which stood out is the keenness to level up their teaching skills for quality learning as mandated in the USP Strategic Plan.





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AND ECONOMICS

School of Agriculture
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CALL FOR PAPERS



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE
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Journal of South Pacific Agriculture



The Journal of the South Pacific Agriculture (JOSPA) is a peer reviewed Agricultural journal which publishes once a year to the agriculture sector in the tropics. It has highly qualified editors and a transparent peer review system which normally takes about 6 to 8 weeks from submission of manuscript to the decision with reviewers' comments .

We are inviting contributions from around the globe for research articles, review papers, general papers and short communications which are of relevance to agriculture in the tropics for JOSPA's Volume 17 issue.

Please send manuscripts as email attachment through the contact details below. **Deadline for submission will be 30 June 2014.** Guide for authors will be provided upon request. Refer to section on **Submission of Manuscripts** for additional information required on submission.

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