



WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Policy Setting for Improved Linkages Between Agriculture, Trade and Tourism: Strengthening the Local Agrifood sector and Promoting Healthy Food in Agritourism

Organised by the Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce

**In collaboration with the Government of the Cook Islands and the Pacific Community,
CTA, PIPSO and SPTO**

Rarotonga, 25th & 26th September 2018, Cook Islands

The workshop on “Agritourism Policy Setting Policy” was held on 25th and 26th September 2018 at the Edgewater Hotel, in Rarotonga, Cook Islands. The two days’ workshop was organised by the Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce (CICC) and supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Tourism of Cook Islands, Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA), SPTO, PIPSO and SPC, with the objectives (i) to promote linkages between the agrifood and the tourism industry to increase sustainable local sourcing through agritourism policy in Cook Islands; (ii) to increase the understanding and awareness of the current deficiencies in the supply of produce along the value chain and to identify the actions needed, including specific projects to upscale; (iii) to design inter-sectoral and inclusive policies which promotes PPPs.

The workshop also learned about successful cases, share best practices in policy and agribusiness development in the agri-tourism supply chain and identify the support needed to move this agenda forward. The workshop featured presentations from the various stakeholders including those from the regional organisations like PIPSO, SPTO and SPC. Stakeholders shared presentations, views, experiences and recommendations (i) cross-sectoral policies needed to tap into the agriculture and tourism markets; (ii) successful local businesses which have innovated to meet demands in quality, consistency and product development; (iii) tourism sector expectations, and needs from farmers and agribusiness; (iv) and the role of chefs in sourcing locally and promoting local cuisine in hotel menus.

The workshop was attended by 37 participants for the two days, from Government senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITC), Bureau of Investment and Trade of Cook Islands (BITC), and members of the Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce, farmers, farmers’ organisations, importers, exporters, agribusinesses, chefs, tour operators, accommodation providers, HACCP expert, SPC, PIPSO and SPTO.

Opening Remarks

The Associate Minister for Agriculture, Honorable Patrick Arioka opened the workshop. First, he sincerely thanked the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA) for spearheading and funding this very important workshop, the first of its kind to be held in the country. He also thanked the Cook Is Chamber of Commerce for organising and inviting key stakeholders to the workshop and also the regional partners like PIPSO, SPC, SPTO and

technical experts. He hopes that this is only a start and that many more workshops will happen in future especially on linking farmers, growers to the markets. He highlighted that his Government is looking into revitalising the agriculture sector in the next 3 to 5 years especially with the issue of food security.

He outlined some of the biggest challenges concerning the agricultural sector like the availability of prime land on Rarotonga and the outer islands, housing market needs, food security and the high importation bill in view of the growth in the tourism market. This is heightened by damages caused by the wild pigs in the outer islands.

He stated that the Pa Enua Project is looking at addressing these challenges which will begin with the assessment of departments' needs, farmers and policies for growth in the outer islands. The government is happy to work with the Chamber of Commerce to identify key outcomes in this workshop which would highlight the key policies and priorities. He wished all the participants well for the workshop and looks forward to receiving the outcomes of the workshop.

Address from CTA Representative

Mereia Volavola briefly provided an overview of CTA and the work the organisation is currently undertaking in the Pacific. Following the signed partnership agreement between CTA and PIPSO at the 2014 SIDs conference in Samoa, a number of programmes have been implemented including two agribusiness conferences and six agritourism policy consultation workshops in six Pacific islands countries. Cook Islands is the seventh. After the workshop, she stated that a project proposal will be prepared based on the outcomes of the workshop which will be put forward to the ACP Secretariat for the intra ACP EU funding envelope. She added that more information will be provided in her presentation in the workshop.

Address by the President of the Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce

The President of the Chamber provided some brief remarks by welcoming the participants at the workshop and thanked Stephen Lyon for the organisation of the workshop. He stressed the importance of the workshop in view of the exponential growth experienced in the tourism sector. He stated that it's important that the Government, private sector and the key stakeholders in the community work together to ensure that the agriculture sector is able to provide fresh produce that are usually imported. He wished the participants well for the workshop.



Participants at the 1st Agritourism Policy Setting Workshop 25th – 26th September 2018, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

Session 1: Setting the scene: What do we know about opportunities to support linkages between agriculture, health and tourism?

Agritourism Development, Current Status and Opportunities for Cook Islands

William Wigmore of Cook Islands Ministry of Agriculture provided an overview of the country's agriculture sector. He stated that agribased activities is a relatively new concept and that his Ministry is looking into it. With regards to farming, most of the farmers operate on a part time basis (around 50%) while some work on their farms in the weekends. For full time farmers, they do not spend all their time in the farm and most do not have full time labourers. About only 10 to 15 farms have labourers.

Land availability is also a challenge for farmers. Some have borrowed land and there is no guarantee on how long they can utilise the land before the owner demands its return. This has an impact on production. A number of commodities like noni, vanilla and some other niche products are exported to New Zealand.

In Rarotonga, there are scattered pieces of land and for the farmers, farming these pieces of land are high cost. Climate change is also another aspect confronting the farmers especially with water supply. The Tevati Project in place is looking into utilising old pipe lines to support farmers with water.

On the outer islands, agriculture development includes pearl development have been supported. As there are not many activities in the islands, he highlighted a number of areas that needs to be looked into. This includes policies in the area of food development, labour, food security, climate change, pesticides, organic farming and food safety. At the same time it should be noted that young people are not interested in farming. There is a need to look into the certification of farmers and regulating the use of pesticides.

In moving forward, he suggested that it would be best to work with one or two crops, pilot work in one of the outer islands, capacity building for pearl farmers and training for farmers. This would enhance their understanding of market requirements, increase production and strengthen connection to the tourism sector.

Promoting Agritourism Development in ACP Small islands Developing States (SIDS)

Mereia Volavola presented on behalf of CTA, and outlined that agriculture and tourism are key economic sectors in most of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and promoting linkages between the two, leads to employment creation, higher incomes for value chain actors and revenues for Governments. Travel & Tourism are growing in most of SIDS and food tourism has a strong potential as part of the diversification of product offering and resilience building. Cuisine is important to the quality of the holiday experience and tourists seek more experiences based on local food and cultural heritage. Food consumption is integral to tourism and can have significant economic effects in the supply chain.

A number of challenges faced ACP small island developing states (SIDS) with regards to agritourism development. Amongst others, there is poor linkages between agriculture and the tourism sector resulting in high food import bill, limited use of local products and limited access by small producers and agribusiness to tourism markets and agribusiness opportunities. In most countries, there is no specific policy for agritourism development or the strengthening of the linkages between the two sectors. While most countries agriculture and tourism policies do mention about the linkages with other sectors, there is no mention of actions or which sectors would be linked to. The capacity (productive and business skills) of agriculture value chain actors to service the tourism and hospitality market needs strengthening and at regional level there is Insufficient regional linkages in agritourism and capacity building in policy.

A number of projects proposal has been developed in the Pacific to address these issues. These includes agribusiness conferences, national workshops on agritourism policy setting, chefs training, fundraising proposals and farmers value chain supply training. Arising from these workshops consultations across the Pacific island countries, some concrete recommendations that have been put forth includes the support design of agritourism policies

which promote cross-sectoral synergies and support agribusiness development, improve farmers and value chain actors' access to tourism markets through enabling policies and access to business opportunities, foster knowledge exchange and experience capitalisation across ACP SIDS and re-dynamize the online platform for use amongst agritourism actors (<http://chefs4dev.org/>).

She further highlighted the recent results of the IFC study in Fiji in July this year, where it was found that 52% of the imported food in the tourism industry were on fresh produce, which was an equivalent of FJD38.5m. Similar survey was undertaken in Vanuatu where it was found that \$1.5billion Vatu of food were imported by the tourism sector and 54% was for fresh produce an equivalent of more than \$880m Vatu. Similar trends can be found in other Pacific islands and this highlights the opportunities that exist in the agriculture sector to supply some foods that have been imported by the tourism industry.

Global Trends and Evolution for Agritourism and food tourism (CTA)

According to the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (OCTA), a non-profit organization that consults on Food and Beverage-themed tourism development worldwide, *"Food tourism is any tourism experience in which one learns about, appreciates, and/or consumes food and drink that reflects the local, regional or national cuisine, heritage and culture."*

The World Tourism Organisation estimates that 1 billion tourists travelled internationally in 2012 generating US\$1.2 trillion in exports, representing 6% of the world trade, constituting 8% of exports in lesser developed countries, making 9% of gross domestic product and creating 1 out of every 12 jobs. These figures only account for international travel and not domestic travel, demonstrate that tourism is certainly economically influential and can explain why destinations focus energy and resources on developing tourism products.

Several trends have been identified as causing greater interest in food tourism, including urbanisation of rural areas, a rise in disposable income and spending patterns, change in demographics and household change, an increase in multi-cultured consumers, the roles of celebrity chefs and media, the connection between well-being and food, the desire for new experiences and cultural capital, the science of food, the perception of food as oasis, and a rise in internet usage.

Agritourism Development in the Pacific (PIPSO)

Bou Mawi provided background information on PIPSO and the progress of the work on agritourism development that has been currently undertaken by PIPSO, CTA and other partners in the Pacific. The developments so far are as follows;

- CTA and PIPSO organized the first Pacific Agribusiness Forum, in July 2015 in Denarau, Fiji. At this conference, it was noted that Tourism and Agriculture policies were developed separately – so very little linkages between the two were made. There were calls made for regional organizations to establish tangible links with the Caribbean (successful links between agriculture and tourism) for learning purposes including trade visit by Pacific businesses. Issues such as capacity building of key stakeholders and product development support in the Pacific.
- One of the key recommendations of 1st Agribusiness Forum was the support to provide technical assistance to the private sector. A feasibility study was supported for Joes Farm Ltd to establish the feasibility of setting up collection centers on salads, fruits and vegetables in rural areas in Fiji. This study has been completed and already Joe's Farm Ltd has already started building collection centers around farmers clusters in Navosa, the interior of Fiji. The study was completed in 2016 and Joes Farm established clusters of farmers based on their numbers and ability to deliver. Around these farmers clusters are where collection centers are to be built.
- After the first agribusiness conference, the first agritourism policy setting workshop was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu May 2016. This led to the establishment of an Agritourism Taskforce and the development and finalization of the Vanuatu Agritourism Action Plan in March 2017.

- The 2nd Pacific Agribusiness Forum was held in Apia, Samoa from 29 August to 1 September 2016. At this conference, a number of initiatives were launched which included the 1st Pacific Women in Agribusiness workshop and launch of the women in agribusiness platform. Also, the CTA IFAD project was launched together with the Chefs Training Programme. The CTA IFAD Project is to cover Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tuvalu, Tonga, and Vanuatu focusing on promoting Nutritious Food Systems in the Pacific
- The 2nd Agritourism Policy Setting workshop was held in Apia, Samoa in December 2016, which led to the establishment of the Agritourism Taskforce and a proposal for agritourism support for intra ACP funding. This funding has been approved this year and is ready for implementation in early 2018.
- The first Pacific Week of Agriculture was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu in October this year and included a focused agritourism workshop to share lessons learned and take stock on progress made in serving tourism markets in selected countries.
- In 2017, agritourism workshops were held in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Fiji. Project proposals were prepared and submitted to CTA. In 2018, similar workshops have been conducted for Tonga and Tuvalu and will be also held in Cook Islands and Kiribati.
- PIPSO and HACCP Australia (Fiji) Ltd signed an MOU this year to work together to assist companies in the Pacific that wish to attain HACCP certification for their products that are to be sold domestically and internationally.
- PIPSO together with SPC and Tuvalu commerce and Employers Federation(FCEF) developed a Business Disaster Resilience Toolkit. This interactive toolkit outlines the devastating impact disaster causes on the region's private sector along with ways to reduce it and information on how to create long-term plans for business owners.
- PIPSO continue to provide Financial Management and Business Development Training for Small and Micro Enterprises. This presents an opportunity to work with agribusinesses to address their business development issues such as basic financial management and book keeping, pricing and marketing their products, including developing business plans and annual work plan.
- PIPSO, CTA and IFAD continues to implement their joint project on leveraging the development of local food crops and fisheries value chains for improved nutrition and sustainable food systems In the Pacific Islands. The goal is to strengthen capacity for strategies and programme development and to enable more access to nutritious and healthy foods.

From PIPSO's perspectives more can be done in the following areas; farm to table initiatives across the region, support services for technical and capacity building of Tourism and Agriculture sector; support capacity building of local chefs and hotels; support development of value added, quality and branded products, clustering and collection centers and certification (HACCP and Organic).

Tourism Opportunities for Development in Cook Islands

Chris Cocker the CEO of SPTO started his presentations by stating that the greatest assets of the Pacific are the lands, oceans, people and culture which is now coined as the Blue Pacific Identity. He stated that if these key assets are lost, there is no tourism in the Pacific. The Pacific competitive advantage is the diverse culture that differentiates it from the world.

He briefly outlined the work being undertaken by SPTO in the Pacific and further described the tourist travel trends in the world and the Pacific. He highlighted that the number of tourist arrivals in the world in 2017 was 1.3 billion and according to UNWTO, this will grow to 1.8 billion in 2030. In the Pacific in summary;

- Pacific air arrivals have grown from 1.8 mn (2013) to 2.1 mn (2017) and 2018 (f) 2.2mn

- Est an extra million are cruise visitors to the Pacific
- Approx. 0.17% destination share of Global arrivals
- 3.8% Av annual regional growth over last five years (2013-2017).
- 47.8% visitor traffic from Aust (27.2%) and NZ (20.6%) – Jan-June 2018
- 52.2% from Other Markets – Europe, USA, Japan, China, Other Asia, PICs and Other Countries – Jan-June 2018
- By purpose of visit: 1. Leisure dominates (Cook, Fiji, Van) 2. Business (PNG) and 3. VFR (Samoa & Tonga)

For the Pacific, about 37% of the market share for visitors travel is with Fiji, while the eight countries accounts for 52.4% and the small island countries about 9%.

With regards to the travel trends in Cook Islands, below is the summary;

- arrivals increasing significantly over the last 5 years (2013 -2017)
- tourist arrivals rose to 161,362 in 2017 from 121,115 in 2013, @ average growth of 29.9%
- peaked growth of 17.1% achieved in 2016.
- following the decline in 2014, tourist arrivals growth surged to 11% in 2015 and remained stable through to 2017
- key source markets over the past 5 years continue to be held by NZ (66.3%), Australia (17.4%), Europe (5.4%) and USA (4.4%)
- key drivers of growth over the past 5 years have been influenced by markets of NZ, Australia, USA, Europe, China and Japan
- 2018 forecasts a total of 166,423 arrivals (3.1% growth) based on 2017 base year
- 2019 forecasts a total of 173,859 arrivals (assuming arrival growth at 4.5%)

Chris conveyed that travellers values are changing with more looking for unique, authentic and culturally rich experiences. In that regard the Pacific is well placed to provide these unique offerings and focus on the needs of the enlightened traveller on the high end (quality rather than the numbers) to ensure the sustainability of the islands, people and culture.

With the growing trend on food tourism, food is an essential part for travellers and they are looking for new and unique experiences. Agritourism is also a growing market and where travellers get to experience farms and to see how various foods are grown, harvested and processed.

Food is important in tourism and is recorded as the 2nd largest expenditure for visitors visiting the Pacific Is. With TV shows on food on the rise, this has increased the awareness and appreciation of cuisine experiences. In this regard SPTO has been working across the Pacific by providing 3 regional and 5 in-country culinary training workshops to more than 170 chefs. This has built the networks and resulted in sharing of ideas and recipes. Culinary training manuals and DVDs have been produced.

Moving forward it is important that the culinary capacity building is consistently provided and to build a qualified pool of trainers that can train up-coming local chefs. At the same time it is important to develop agritourism policies and action plans. Regular dialogues and strategic partnerships are essential to pool resources and avoid duplication.

In summary, he outlined key priorities and opportunities to be pursued in the Pacific with the key partners as outlined below;

- Regional Programme – Pursue opportunities to mobilize resources. POETCOM, EDF11 Tourism focus to be on Food and Culture, Sustainable Tourism programme, Intra ACP EU
- Pacific Chefs Development Strategy- Improve chefs' innovation and strengthen links between chefs and farmers (*decision makers*)
- Quality & Diverse Pacific Brand (Product Differentiation/ Development)- Branding the Pacific as a Quality & Diverse Food Destination and the USPs of each Pacific destination- Food Cuisine (aligned to Culture)
- Sustainability monitoring programme (*SPTO, STI and PICs*)
- Health Tourism collaboration with WHO (*SPTO, WHO, NTOs, Min. Health*)
- Regional Synergies – Marketing Research, HRD, Planning, Cruise Shipping, Air Access, Product Development.

Agribusiness Development in Cook Islands

Teresa Manarangi-Trott from the Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce presented on an agribusiness project that was funded by FAO and implemented by the Chamber in 2015. This was the first project of its kind. The Chamber worked very closely with Ministry of Agriculture to support the programme and to ensure that they were innovative in their approach and implementation. Further to that, they included areas that were outside the agriculture sector. Total budget for the project was USD180k and there were six key budget areas which included a small grant facility, business mentoring and a Youth Enterprise Scheme (YES) for high schools. A key element in the project was that they focused on one crop, the orchard.

The results of the project were very successful. In 2015, there were 28,461 square metres in orchard and by the end of 2016, this increased significantly to 107,063 square meters. Over 100 business were mentored which included those in the tourism, retail, crafts, agriculture, restaurants and food outlets sector. The project supported developing businesses and of the 80 businesses supported, 25 were agribusinesses.

Moving forward to support a sustainable agribusiness industry, proper vision and hard work are required and to be supported with on-going technical support to farmers. In some cases, hand holding support is needed. Development partners is essential especially those from the private sector, banks, and government. Continuous training is so vital for farmers.

Session 2: Cook Islands Context: Opportunities for Agritourism Development

Overview of tourism development and opportunities for greater connection with the agriculture industry at policy level

Halatoa Fua of Cook Islands Tourism Corporation gave an overview on tourism development and opportunities for the agriculture industry. Tourist arrivals has been increasing and peaked in 2016 with an annual growth of 17%. Tourism direct economic impact on the Cook Is economy for 2016-2017 was \$334m. With regards to government revenue, actual revenues for 2017-2018 have already exceeded the budgeted amount which is a very positive sign for the country. All current indicators for Goals 1 and 2 on economic development, welfare, income equality have been met. However there are challenges currently faced by the tourism industry which includes labour, infrastructure, environment management and social impact.

On opportunities for the agriculture sector, food represents about 30% of tourist expenses. Total imports amounts to about \$182m of which \$45m is on food and live animals. Hence there is potential to source food grown locally to replace some imported items. There is also the export market and where total exports was \$17m in 2017. Noni exports was \$1m. BTIB has a funding scheme for business support, vanilla enterprise loans, agriculture development and sustainable exports.

He stated that agritourism is still developing in Cook Islands and there is enormous benefit for local procurement for produce supported by the Pa Enua agriculture development. The food and feasts festival of Takurua is enhancing the linkages between local farmers, local foods and tourists and this can be developed and supported further. However there remains some challenges on the supply and demand side. There is a need for consistency of supply of produce to meet tourism seasonality.

Moving forward grants and financing support is needed to support the opportunities, promote buy local produce and develop the country's unique cultural experiences with responsible tourism principles.

Sustainable Agriculture Development in the Cook Island

Stephen Hazelman of POETCOM from SPC presented on the principles of organic agriculture to sustain the agriculture industry. Organic agriculture is important because it sustains the health of the soils, ecosystem, and people. He expounded on the four key principles and added that a fifth principle has been included from the Pacific which recognises the value of culture and traditions in organic agriculture.

The numbers of farms being certified organic in the Pacific has increased from 56 in 2012 to 95 in 2016. In the same period, the numbers of organic certified growers has increased from 8,400 in 2012 to 19,578 in 2016. A number of standards has been developed which includes the Pacific Organic standard, Pacific Organic Tourism and Hospitality standard, Pacific Organic policy tool kit, Vanuatu and Fiji National Organic Policy.

He highlighted the various practices and developments that are happening around the Pacific. He sighted an example from Fiji where in Taveuni the soil fertility decreased significantly which affected taro production and export. This was caused by excessive use of pesticides and fertilizers. This has provided a very useful lesson to farmers that organic agriculture is the way to sustain soil fertility and production. POETCOM assist farmers and growers in organic certification. Products that are organic certified have premium price in international markets.

There are various international organic certified organisation like NASAA in Australia, bio gro in New Zealand and OMRI in the US. Organic fertilizers and pesticides are also available which can now be used by farmers.

He briefly discussed about the Natura Kuki Airani Project that is supported by IFAD. This has resulted in 10 Rarotongan farmers certified organic. This is a good development for Cook Islands and that more farmers are on the waiting list to be assessed and certified.

Developing the Tourism Market for Cook Islands – What is currently being done and future opportunities?

Metua Vaiimene of Cook Islands Tourism Corporation provided an update on the latest development happening in the country. Recently they launched Takurua project which is the food and feasts festival of Cook Island traditional food. This event was put together by a committee that comprises of key stakeholders and players in the tourism industry, local chefs and supported by donors and sponsors. The event enabled local chefs to work with international chefs to prepare international cuisines using local foods. After the launch of the Takurua, a number of outcomes resulted which included the establishment of Takurua Trust and brand, the publication of the Takura booklet and the establishment of the working groups on community projects. They have also identified areas where they need to improve on and to address challenges.

Moving forward, they will develop strategies to document the food heritage, promote linkages, use technology, install basic facilities, engage partners for activities and promote the food event in the Tourism Calendar of Cook Islands.

Session 3: Identification of priority Areas for Development for Agribusiness and Agritourism

Agribusiness key priority areas for support

Ewan Smith the owner of the Rarotonga Air and also a local grower presented on key areas for support for agri-entrepreneurship. He stated that there is \$6m market opportunity for fruit juices and smoothies in the country. There are pineapples, papaya, watermelon and coconuts.

He stated that farmers need about five types of assistances and support. First of all, farmers need to be educated as professional farmers. Farmers need training so that they can learn to plan properly, know the market requirements and obtain the right technical advice. In the outer islands, machineries have been provided but they are not used that much. There is lack of education in agriculture and there is limited expertise or trained people. There is a need for technical advice and the need to engage the private sector. There is a need for nurseries, proper incentives, develop pathways for farmers and contract farming. He even stated that there is a need to repurpose the Ministry of Agriculture leadership.

Second is land availability. There is limited land in Rarotonga and there is a need for a proper policy to be in place to look into this issue. Thirdly is access to proper machineries. A lot of machineries have been distributed over the years but these have not been put into good use.

Machineries can assist in labour supply. Fourthly is water supply. This is becoming a challenge for farmers. Proper water supply is essential for farming. Lastly farmers need constant technical advice to assist them. He added that private sector reps need to be included in the agriculture board.

Opportunities for support to build quality seafood supplies

Richard Story, the Marine Officer from Aitutaki talked about the management of fish resources on the island. He highlighted that there are grants to assist fisherman on gears and ice machineries to preserve the quality of fish. There is abundant supply of fish, crabs, lobsters and other sea food in Aitutaki.

There is a law in place to stop over fishing. At the same time, conflict arises with the islanders with regards to the implementation of the law. There are plans for fish farming however this would require proper planning.

Developing Agritourism Attractions, Tours and Handicrafts

Stan Wolfram the owner of the Te Ara Museum presented on the purpose of building the museum and the services they provide. They provide a holistic programme for children who wish to study arts, crafts and culture. The museum tours expose people to the culture and food of Cook Islands.

He shared his experience in organising a number of events in New Zealand which included the Pasifika Festival which is quite famous and is held annually. He believes that there is a market for tours, to show case the unique traditions and culture of the country.

After the presentations, participants were divided into three group to discuss the challenges and identify the key areas for intervention.

Wednesday 26th September, 2018

Session 5: Promoting Agritourism through Value Addition, Value Chains and Safety standards

The Associate Minister made presentation on MOA work and the review that they are undertaking to ensure that MOA meets its goals and addresses the challenge encountered in the industry. He welcomed the outcomes of the workshop to finalise the agriculture sector policy and the agriculture bill.

Building Sustainable Value Chain for Agritourism – What needs to be done?

Stephen Hazelman shared about the importance of building sustainable value chain supply. He made reference to the training guide that was developed by Andrew Macgregor and Kylie Stice and funded by CTA.

Value chain analysis identifies the actors, the contribution, the share, value added and the risks faced by each actor involved. Value chain analysis identify weaknesses and suggest actions to be taken. It's very important to work with the actors like the farmers, traders, consumers, policy makers and aid donors.

To develop the right kind of training and provision of technical advice, it is important to assess the actors in the value chain to obtain their feedback. With regards to agritourism, to strengthen the linkages between the agriculture sector and tourism, the supply chain needs to be thoroughly assessed to identify weaknesses and challenges. Once that is done, a programme can be developed to address those challenges and with regular monitoring.

Supporting Farmers and Farmers Organisations

The CEO of BTIB, Teariki Vakalalabure presented on the organisation and the work it currently undertakes to assist those in the agribusiness and the tourism sector.

Its core work areas include;

- identify ongoing support in marketing tourism related business-like crafts, foods, jewelry, health and wellbeing,
- instigate land & marine resource opportunities to increase export productivity.
- support events for small business enterprises in private, public partnerships

The organization also provides loans for the vanilla scheme, agriculture, exports and business development support. These loans support farmers and those in agribusiness especially for those in the outer islands.

Product Development (Value Additions), Market Access and Food Safety Standards/Certifications

Apiame Cegumalua the HACCP Australia Expert presented on value additions and importance of food safety in agritourism and the benefits and risks associated with it.

Api briefly presented on the important benefits of value additions. Most of the value additions that takes places is through preservation. Value additions reduce losses and make a better use of surplus. This is important, for example in Tonga 70% of Breadfruit is wasted. High percentage of fruits mangoes, ngali nuts, bananas, pineapples etc. are rotten and spoiled. Surplus supply of common crops can be transformed into flour, chips, frozen products for export. Fruits for juice and leather snacks can also be made. Value additions provide food security and opportunities for small producers to earn income as high added value products earn reasonable income. Product development is important in the value addition process and there are organisations and experts that can be contacted for assistance here in the Pacific like PIPSO, SPC and PT & I.

In developing agritourism sector and especially food tourism, food safety is very important. A number of risks can occur if food preparations are not handled properly and can result in food poisoning. This can result in damages to the restaurant or hotel reputation and clientele. It can also spoil the reputation of a country as a tourist destination. While Agritourism offers amazing opportunities, it also introduces new risks and legal obligations. To mitigate these risks, mitigation approaches must be identified and managed accordingly to provide a safe healthy environment.

Experiences from around the world show that food safety matters and public health and consumer confidence are essential. Therefore, it is important that management and food business owners must be aware of food safety regulations, Food Safety Act, HACCP Codex Standards, local Regulations, industry standard and other standards. Training on food safety standards for food industries, catering services, food outlets and hoteliers is needed to protect the agritourism sector. With agritourism, travelers now want to know where their food is sourced from, how they are planted, harvested and processed.

Currently HACCP Australia has set up a company in Fiji which is now serving the Pacific. They have signed an MOU with PIPSO and are working on certification companies in the Pacific. The total number of companies HACCP certified so far in the Pacific is 54, which includes 28 companies from Fiji, 7 from PNG, 8 from Samoa, 4 from Solomon Is, 9 from Tonga. They are still working with many other companies for HACCP Certification.

Value adding through product development

Robert Wyllie, the founder of Rito products presented their journey on developing their coconut based beauty product. The company produces coconut and tamanu oils. Seventy (70) percent of the products are for the overseas tourist market, 30% for the local market for tourists and 5% for locals. The company also offers tours to visitors to operation site to view how the products are produced. Over the years they have to change the design of the products to make it suitable for the markets.

Chefs for Development: the link between agriculture & cuisine

Sourcing Local Food by the Chefs – Challenges and Opportunities

After providing a brief background on her businesses and experience, Chef Rangi Mitaera presented on the challenges faced by chefs when sourcing local food. She stated at the outset that chefs want consistency, quality, difference, diversification and to do business with business people. She outlined the numerous challenges chefs faced in Cook Islands;

- Lack of understanding from suppliers for our needs
- Lack of urgency
- Business acumen
- Inconsistent supplies
- Understanding local produce and the many uses
- Local food knowledge including nutritional knowledge
- Sourcing the quantities
- Niche market local produce
- Quality produce
- Understand what our visitors want to experience, mindset changes
- The opportunities in Agritourism and local produce
- Cultural knowledge
- Unique experiences

At the same time, there are opportunities which the chefs can make use which include;

- Atiu's "pig problem into a profit" – using wild boar and inviting visitors to a game of hunting
- Goats in Mangaia – goat meat provides diversity
- Aquaculture; Tirapia, Eels, Pearl Meat, various shellfish
- Hot houses, cold houses
- Talk to our Pacific Is neighbours to source industry skill
- Excess crops turned into marketable product like
- Diverse climate with diverse food
- One stop shop – important for chef to go to this one shop rather than running around the island.

Moving forward as chefs they would like to develop partnership with key stakeholders, create a one stop for local produce, develop data on supplies and introduce quality control standards.

Value Chains and Supply

Jason from Cook Is Trading Company (CITC) outlined the difficulty in sourcing local food and the inconsistency in supply. His company is the largest trading company in Cook Islands and most of the goods that are sold in their stores are imported. The imported items include fresh produce that cannot be supplied by the local farmers on a consistent basis.

In order to promote and encourage the use of local food, farmers need to be educated on the needs of the market. They should also understand that trading companies like CITC cannot buy produce from farmers that just turn up to the store to sell their produce. There needs to be farming and harvesting schedules done and a coordination to be undertaken with buyers and farmers.

Training and Developing Chefs to Use Local Produce

A representative from Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute presented on the work currently being undertaken in the school. The school trains teenagers from 15 to 16 year olds. They obtain their supplies locally. However they do encounter challenges on inconsistency of supplies and not knowing what farmers supply. She stated that there needs to be a coordinating body to coordinate the supplies produced by the farmers. There should be a one-stop shop for all local produce.

Also with regards to local food, information on the nutritional components needs to be developed. Furthermore support is to be provided for the education and awareness for young people on traditional foods.

Key Outcomes of the Workshop and Policy Recommendation.

The outcomes of the workshop are in four key areas as outlined below and the details are in the table in Annex 1;

1. Institutional Strengthening

To strengthen the linkages between agriculture and tourism, a number of action on different fronts would need to be undertaken. This includes the review of the agriculture Bill, agriculture sector policy and action plans, review of the education curriculum, review of the technical advisory services and business development in the Ministry of Agriculture, capacity building of the Chamber of Commerce, apprenticeship and to develop of traditional knowledge of local food. At the same time, to support the collation and storage of information on agritourism, a knowledge management platform is to be developed.

2. Policy Review

A number of policies needs to be reviewed in the following areas;

- Land use policy
- Shipping and transport
- Labour
- Agritourism Policy
- Incentives for agriculture development
- Insurance products for agriculture
- Scholarships for agribusiness

Policies to be developed needs to be in sync with the developments taking place and address the opportunities to be taken advantage of. Furthermore, the Chamber, farmers organization and the government need to strengthen their partnerships with regional organisational and with NZ and Australian organisations that would support agritourism development in the country.

In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture is to include private sector representatives in the Advisory Board and support the participation of youth and women in agriculture.

The policies reviews to be coordinated by an Agritourism Taskforce in the Chamber of Commerce

3. Agribusiness Development

To improve the product offering and quality of the food produced by farmers and growers, a number of development support is required in the following areas;

- Value Chain analysis, value addition
- Mentoring, business incubator
- Grants for business acceleration and concessional loans for new business development
- Food safety, Biosecurity for export, Labelling and packaging
- Nursery support, Cool houses, Fencing, Water systems, Aquaculture systems
- Food production facilities

This work is to be coordinated by an Agritourism taskforce and implemented by the Chamber of Commerce.

4. Market Development and Promotion

To strengthen the linkages of farmers and the tourism industry, the workshop agreed to the action plan outlined in AE OCI which clearly outlined practical steps in addressing challenges conveyed at the workshop. The AE OCI action plan is outlined in Annex 2. The Chamber will work closely with the Cook Is Tourism Corporation, MOA and BTIB to implement the action plan in AE OCI.

Furthermore, chefs' development and formation of a chefs' organization, the promotion of Takurua food festival, organic certification, food safety certification, B2B meetings of farmers

and buyers, developing contract templates and promotion of the use of local food during the World Food Day celebration are all part of the required development work.

Annex 1

Outcomes Matrix from Agritourism Workshop

Institutional Strengthening	Policy	Agribusiness development	Market development	Partners
Review of MoA Act Review of BTIB for effective business development Assistance with development of core services <i>Technical Research Business services and training</i> Ministry of Education – to deliver agriculture courses as curriculum Capacity building of the Chamber of Commerce Apprenticeships Traditional knowledge Knowledge platform development	Land use review for better access Shipping and transport Labour policy Incentives for agriculture development Insurance product for agriculture Scholarships for agribusiness Partnerships with NZ / Aust / Pacific Regional agricultural organisations Access to water for agriculture MoA include an advisory board Empowerment of youth and women in agriculture	Value Chain analysis Mentoring Incubator Grants for business acceleration Concessional loans for new business development Value adding support Food safety Biosecurity for export Labelling Asset support <i>Nursery support Cool houses Fencing Water systems Aquaculture systems</i> Food production facilities Reduce post harvest losses	AEOCI Chefs training and awareness of local products Food festival Agri-sales APP Certifications ECO, ORGANIC, BIO etc... Media to promote agriculture as a career Develop contracting template for growers and buyers Media to promote agriculture as a career Takurua festival linkages World Food Day	<i>National</i> Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Marine Resources Business Trade and Investment Board Tourism Corporation Outer Islands Governments Natura Kuki Airani Rarotonga Organic Growers Association Various other Growers Associations <i>et al</i> <i>Regional</i> CTA SPC PIPSO IFAD ACP-EU SPTO NZ AUS

Annex 2

	AGRIPRENEURSHIP EXCHANGE OF the COOK ISLANDS (AE-OCI)	Annual or bi-annual 2-day event
Pre	Pre AE-OCI	Visit to farms Famil - Buyers
Day 1	AE-OCI - Secretariat MOA CIT Chamber of Commerce Crown Law BTIB	Exchange - 20 minute slots Finale event <i>Duties;</i> Promotion & marketing collateral Media toolkit Contracting - draft available to buyers & sellers Land availability - draft contract by Crown Law re revolving land Pool of qualified advisors under mentoring programme, including financial management - Chamber of Commerce BTIB Revolving Fund and other seed funding (addressing resource issues i.e. machinery, labour, water, etc) Insurance development Data & research

Day 1	Opening forum	<p>Opening forum - trends, challenges & progress report on key learnings</p> <p>Future developments - Minister to influence strategic planning for MOA to incorporate entrepreneurs</p> <p>Guest speaker - technical advisor</p>
Day 2	AE-OCI - Buyers Profile	<p>List of Food Buyers Hotels, Restaurants, Cafes, Caterers and other products</p> <p>List of Service Providers - freighters, shipping, airline</p> <p>List of relevant Govt departments - MOA, BTIB, CITTI</p> <p>Size of business</p> <p>Data on food purchase - import vs direct from farmers</p> <p>Food safety standards & accredited affiliations - expectations</p> <p>Demand schedule in volumes - fresh produce, meat, etc</p>
Day 2	AE-OCI - Sellers Profile	<p>List of farmers and growers' association</p> <p>Size of operation ie. Labour, turnover, etc</p> <p>Supply of foods Plan</p> <p>Supply schedule in volumes - fresh produce, meat, etc</p> <p>Contracting and rates</p> <p>Food safety standards & accredited affiliations - certification</p> <p>Over supply</p> <p>Contingency planning and insurance</p>
Post	Post AE-OCI	<p>Follow up process on performance and meeting commitments - MOA</p> <p>Repurposing of MOA</p>