

Mamas' in Agriculture



Puroku Patia

Puroku, affectionately known as Pu or Mama Pu is a farmer residing in Nikao with her family. Her husband, a former policeman, is a cultivator and by observing him, she started to develop her interest in farming.

For Puroku, selling their produce is her main responsibility, whereas her children and grandchildren are the ones involved in the actual planting and assisting her husband on the farm.

She sells tomatoes, beans, capsicum, corn, cucumber, pawpaw and pak choy. The main challenge that they face is the changing weather patterns, where prolonged heavy rain or dry spells cause damage to their crops.

Purotu is thrilled to see that her grandchildren are showing interest in planting and are involved in helping out in the plantation. Her message to the youth - “get your hands dirty! Consume healthy fruits and vegetables directly from the farm to ensure that your family members are healthy”.



Twin Matara Ingaua

Meet Twin Ingaua of Nikao, married with 2 children and a full time farmer.

With two house mortgages to pay, she started planting to supplement their family income and eventually managed to pay off the loans.

At first, she started off small by planting watermelon and tomatoes only, then later extended this to growing lettuce, cucumber, pak choi, capsicum and pawpaw.

The only challenge she faces is getting water to her plantation area. Since their farm is located inland, getting a regular water supply to their plantation has been difficult.

Twin's message to the youth - “get into agriculture to increase your income”.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone and so young people should be more involved in planting for their livelihoods now.

She says “working on the land will give you great satisfaction”.



Teina Tarere

Teina hails from Rutaki. Her passion in agriculture began from her childhood days when she used to play in the taro patch.

Upon her return from New Zealand twenty years ago, she started to focus more on planting and later decided to do this full-time.

Teina specializes in planting root crops - Tarua, Taro and Maniota. She grows a small portion of pak choi and other vegetables for her own home consumption.

Teina is also very passionate about selling her produce and is a regular vendor at the Punanganui market on Saturdays and Rutaki road side stall on Fridays. Teina aims to expand her crop variety however, she faces difficulty in hiring a tractor.

Teina aspires to keep traditional knowledge alive so her message to youth is “Stay with your parents and learn the traditional techniques of cultivating the land”.



Mata Ngaoire-Mokoroa

Mata lives in Matavera with her family and as a returning Cook Islander from many years living in Australia, has a passion for planting.

Mata works on the plantation with her husband and having their plantation close to their home is a bonus. Access to water and machinery has been an advantage.

Most of her seedlings are sowed at home. At times she seeks technical advice, procures fertilizers and other seedling from the Ministry. Her main crops are tomatoes, capsicum, pak choi, cabbages, eggplant, ground lettuce and rukau.

Selling at Punanganui market, getting a chance to meet and mingle with other people and women vendors is the other side of planting that she enjoys

Mata is saddened that youth of today are not taking any interest in planting.

Her advice to youth - “Engage more in agriculture because the benefits you derive are great” .