

INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE:

World Food Day 2020	1
Pesticides Importers Consultation	2
Remember Menemene	2
Palmerston & Nassau Visit	3
Staff Training	4
Agriculture Inputs have arrived	4
School Garden program for St. Joseph	5
Cook Islands Games 2020	6
Tiare Week 2020	7
Ministry receives Public Service Excellence Award for FY 2019-2020	8

Ministry of Agriculture



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WORLD FOOD DAY 2020

Organised and hosted by the Ministry, the Cook Islands celebrated World Food Day (WFD) at Constitution Park in Avarua on Wednesday 21 October 2020.

The Constitution Park was a hive of activity with an array of displays, presentations and demonstrations by various agencies on the topic of food as well as a great selection of fresh vegetables, fruits, other produce, cooked food and plants and trees on sale by multiple vendors.

WFD is led by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), with headquarters in Rome. The theme for this year's WFD is 'Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together. Our Actions are our future'. Translated in Maori—'E tanu, kia pa'ia e kia vai 'uātu rai. Ko tatou katoa I te rave'anga nō te tuātau ki mua'.

The theme plays a timely and dominant role in the country's overall food security with the current COVID-19 crisis. This event not only showcased the produce from various farmers but also strengthened the collaboration and relationship of the Ministry with relevant domestic, regional and international stakeholders.

Senior Biosecurity Officer Piriariki Maa took the lead in organising this year's event. We thank our partners who participated on the day and Cook Islands Tourism for their support and funds for our prizes to the schools.

Overall, this year's World Food Day was a fantastic event!!



PESTICIDE IMPORTERS CONSULTATION

On 22nd October, the Ministry conducted a consultation meeting with importers of pesticides into the country. Representatives on Rarotonga and Aitutaki were invited to take part and provide feedback on proposed changes that will be implemented by the Pesticides Board in the up-coming months.

With the resumption of the Pesticides Board, the Ministry is now in process to enforce the registration of all pesticides that is imported into the Cook Islands. Discussion about fees for those that import pesticides including providing a quota on the amount of pesticides that can be imported into the country formed part of the discussion items.

Fortunately, the participants saw value in what the Pesticides Board is proposing and have agreed to the proposals tabled.



REMEMBER MENEMENE...

Menemene or Suriname Cherry is one of the most neglected berries in the Cook Islands. Originally from India, these berries are now found in many countries around the world.



Menemene trees are readily available on the island, however, very few people tend to eat them.

Lack of awareness of the qualities of the berry may be a contributing factor. Some menemene have a sour or acidic taste.

Suriname cherries are very rich in antioxidants that prevent skin diseases and inflammation.

Vitamins A, B2, C, Calcium and Magnesium are the other nutritional benefits that can be derived from eating menemene.

So try it again and maybe reminisce those times when these berries were the favourites during your early childhood!

PALMERSTON & NASSAU VISIT

With the assistance of the Adaptation Funded Pa Enea for Resilient Livelihoods (PEARL) project, 4 Ministry staff (Edwin, Puna, Moetu and Patu) were able to visit Palmerston, Nassau and Suwarrow between 07-27 October, on Taio Shipping MV Grinna.

In Palmerston, the team completed the hydroponics plant, sowed seedlings for the nursery, conducted training on pollination and tree management. They also installed the signage for Biosecurity.



In Nassau, they carried out a scoping exercise on the islands taro plantation, carried out soil testing and marcotting of a lime tree.

A short detour to Suwarrow provided the team the opportunity to install the Biosecurity signage.

We thank the respective Island Councils, the EO and the schools and community for the support of these PEARL projects. We are thankful the team carried out their activities and returned home safe and sound.

STAFF TRAINING

This quarter kicked off with an impressive training session for the staff.

The session started with an awareness on Cyber Crime in the Cook Islands that entailed cyber bullying, fraud and theft of funds from bank accounts.

The training was conducted by the Corporate Services Director Sanjinita who had recently completed a paper on Cyber Crime with USP.



Maja then provided an update on the organic pesticides available in the Cook Islands and Aketairi closed the session with an update on the school programme currently done by Advisory Division.

AGRICULTURE INPUTS HAVE ARRIVED!

With the festive season quickly approaching, the Ministry opted to bring in the farming supplies early and avoid the situation of being out of stock for fertilizers and chemicals.



The inputs include fertilisers, chemicals, potting mix and other essential items for farmers.

The Ministry remains committed to supporting our farmers and growers in the community.

SCHOOL GARDEN PROGRAM FOR ST. JOSEPH

As part of the Ministry's school garden program managed by Aketairi and Tereapii, and in partnership with Te Korero o te Orau, the Ministry established gardens at the St Joseph Primary school in Parekura. This involved scoping the appropriate area to set the garden and building the structure for the garden beds.

We thank Te Korero o te Orau for their funding support of this program and the staff of the Ministry for completing this project (seen here are Edwin, Piriariki and Tino).



COOK ISLANDS GAMES 2020

The Cook Islands Sports and National Olympic Committee (CISNOC) held a Cook Islands Games – a sports competition involving all islands of the Cook Islands over a two week period.

Our athletes from within the Ministry—Ngatoko Ngatoko (Bowling-Mitiaro), Greta Rumeru, Tamarua Teroi (Netball-Palmerston), Puna Kamoe (Athletics—Palmerston), Iriea Tangapiri (Coconut Husking—Mitiaro), Tearoa Iorangi (Table Tennis—Mangaia), Tavake Karika (Rugby—Mitiaro) and Tereapii Tumutoa (Rugby—Palmerston) participated in the Games either as an athlete or as an official.

After two weeks competition, **our only elite athlete**, Iriea Tangapiri, won a bronze medal for coconut husking! The Ministry congratulates Iriea for her medal and applauds our other athletes for their participation in the Games.

“It’s not about winning or losing, but your participation and how you played the game that matters the most”.

Go Mauke!!



TIARE WEEK 2020

The judging of the Government properties for Tiare Week took place on 24 November 2020 and as the norm, the Ministry again took part in this competition. The Main theme was *Te Ki, e te Manea o Te Moana – the Abundance and beauty of the Ocean*.

On the day, Tino carried out a Turou, the staff wore their new pareu uniform and sang their newly composed song led by Mari and the judges were led through the "areumu" by the Coordinator, Ngatoko. Greta portrayed "Ina and the shark", while Puna was "Moana on the vaka".

To round off, the judges were served with a variety of seafood by Piri, Moetu and Takili.

Overall, it was a great team effort! Meitaki maata to all staff for helping out with the decorations, cooking and the clean-up.

On announcement of the prizes, the Ministry managed a consolation, but in the eyes of the Head of Ministry, we are winners!!

Tei mua tatou!



MINISTRY RECEIVES PUBLIC SECTOR EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR FY 2019-2020



Kia Orana tatou,

At long last, we have received the acknowledgement from the Office of the Public Service Commission about our performance rating!

Our rating for our performance review for the 2019/2020 Reporting Year is 5A (96.5%/100).

The overall performance across the 14 Public Service Agencies this reporting year has been positive where three Agencies had a 5 rating, six had a 4 rating and five had a 3 rating.

I am happy to report that we were one of the three in the 5 rating!!

Again, I accept this award on your behalf, my staff within the Ministry of Agriculture. Your hard work, support and assistance has allowed us to step up from a 4A rating in 2018-2019 to a 5A rating.

For the two years I have been with you, I am overwhelmed by the support received and so we must continue to work together and provide quality services while we again, strive for excellence!

I gratefully acknowledge the Directors and staff and I also want to acknowledge our Minister for Agriculture, Hon. Vainetutai Rose Toki-Brown and her CEO Bob Williams, for their support of our work.

Although quite delayed, I consider this announcement a fitting end to this year!

I take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued service and commitment to serving our farmers, our growers and the people of the Cook Islands.

Kia Rangatira!!

Mrs Temarama Anguna-Kamana
Secretary of Agriculture