

# Ministry of Agriculture



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QUARTER I

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## PRISCO19 RESPONSE PACKAGE

In partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC) and the European Union, the Ministry was able to provide another agriculture sector response package to the farming communities.

The Pacific Regional Integrated Food and Security Initiative to COVID19 project (PRISCO19), is a 12-month rapid response initiative that addresses immediate food and nutrition security impacts as a result of COVID19 through strengthened crop and livestock production systems and short-term value chains.

The Ministry launched its agriculture response package on the 01 March 2021 and will run until 30 JUNE 2021.



Ready-to-plant seedlings of the following crops—beans (dwarf & snake), bittermelon, capsicum, chinese cabbage, cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, okra, snowpeas, sweet corn, tomato and tsoi sum (chinese green) are made available to full and part-time commercial farmers.

Small quantities of seedlings of beans, chinese cabbage, eggplant, okra and Chinese cabbage is available for home gardeners and families to grow around their home.



All seedlings provided are free of charge.

In addition to the free seedlings, the Ministry is making available 1.5 Litres of Plasma foliar fertilizer to each full and part-time commercial farmer. The free bottle of Plasma will only be made available once the farmer returns the empty seedling trays.

The Ministry's Advisory division will continue to provide technical crop management information and advice to home gardeners and commercial farmers.

## “INTRODUCTION TO AGRICULTURE” AVARUA SCHOOL EXPO

Themed “Introduction to Agriculture”, the Expo was an opportunity to demonstrate the practicalities of agriculture to the students: from Garden work (preparation of planting area, sowing seeds, planting, spacing, watering etc) to soil health (worm farm, soil structure, composting, green manure, organic fertilizer) to harvesting and sale. The Ministry was joined by Te Ipukarea Society, Te Korero o te Orau and Te Marae Ora.

This expo was also aligned with supporting Avarua Schools theme of “Planting for Health and Wealth”.

Promotion of the various careers in Agriculture (Entomologist, Biosecurity, Crop and nursery technicians, Laboratory Scientists, Researchers, Veterinarian, Planners, Policy developers etc) was also done. *There is more to Agriculture than working in the sun and soil!* As the Ministry promotes agriculture in the schools, it is important to highlight that there are rewarding careers in this field and that science, mathematics, English, biology all play a part in agriculture.

To continue the Ministry’s commitment, the Advisory team will conduct regular visits to provide management and maintenance advice and support of the school gardens, engage with relevant partners to support the theory and practical education of students in the field of agriculture and nutrition and maintain regular reporting of the school garden program within the Ministry.



We extend our appreciation to our supporting partners Te Ipukarea Society, Te Korero o te Orau and Te Marae Ora, and most importantly to the Principal, teachers and students of Avarua School for allowing the Ministry to conduct the expo within their school dome.



## “SOLE TRADERS” AWARENESS MEETING

The Ministry had been inundated with queries received from our farmers pertaining to the “Sole Trader” grant package released by MFEM. Accordingly, the Ministry called a meeting with the farmers on 28 January 2021 to provide awareness and have the farmers raise their concerns. MFEM and the Chamber of Commerce representatives were invited to the meeting.

We had a good turnout of farmers and interested individuals, over 50 attendees were present for this meeting. Following the presentation by MFEM and the Chamber of Commerce, the Ministry took the opportunity to promote the importance of data collection with the farmers.

The farmers were also requested to collaborate and work together during this COVID-19 situation to ensure we maintain food security for our people.



## A FRUIT FIT FOR GODS AND GODDESSES

Have you eaten pomegranate or drank its juice?

Pomegranate is a fruit that originates from the Middle East—Greece. In ancient times, this fruit was only eaten by Gods and Goddesses and was regarded as a powerful symbol of eternality, fertility and immortality.



This fruit is rarely available in the Cook Islands, with only few trees present on Rarotonga and Aitutaki.

This juicy, red seeded fruit is believed to reduce acne, improve digestion, boost immunity, improve bone quality, heal cuts and aid in growing healthy hair!



## INTRODUCTION TO AGRICULTURE—MINISTRY VISITS

The Ministry of Agriculture in partnership with Te Korero O Te Ōrau, have established a school garden program with 10 schools on Rarotonga.

To start, the Advisory division invited schools- Apii Arorangi, Apii Rutaki, Apii Nikao, Apii Te Uki Ou, Apii St Joseph, Titikaveka College, Apii Takitumu and Apii Immanuela Akatemia to visit the Ministry from 8 February to 25 February.

The purpose for this program was to make students aware of the different roles within the agriculture sector (Entomologist, Biosecurity, Crop and nursery technicians, Laboratory Scientists, Researchers, Veterinarian, Planners, Policy developers) and to provide schools with information and guidance on sustainable planting practices, plant protection and healthy eating habits to promote 'Healthy Living' within the school.

This approach was also taken to express the Ministry's practical aspects in agriculture to inspire students to plant their own food and further, to promote 2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables.

This initiative has resulted in the re-development and reviving of agriculture within the schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Korero O te Ōrau, Te Ipukarea Society and Ministry of Health.





## BLESSING OF MACHINERY TO ASSIST ATIU & MAUKE AGRICULTURE

On Tuesday April 6th 2021, The Minister of Agriculture, Honourable Vainetutai Rose Toki-Brown and the Secretary of Agriculture, Mrs Temarama Anguna-Kamana attended to the blessing and presentation of an excavator and water cartage truck to the Mauke and Atiu Agriculture department.

As background, in June 2018, a diplomatic level agreement was mutually agreed and signed between the Governments of Japan and the Cook Islands. Through this agreement the government of Japan confirmed a provision of a grant through its public sector economic and



social development programme, for the purchase of products and/or services for the implementation of programmes to enhance public sector agencies functions. Priority items were identified through the use of the capital plan and in collaboration with public sector ministries, the Ministry of Agriculture was identified as a grant recipient.



This provided the opportunity for the Ministry to seek support for an excavator and water cartage truck for both Mauke and Atiu Agriculture.

Delays were experienced with the delivery of the machinery (COVID-19, no barge) to the islands resulting in the delay of the presentation and use of the equipment. The Secretary Mrs. Anguna-Kamana would like to express her gratitude to the Mayor and Council members, the Executive Officer and the people of Atiu and Mauke for their patience.

## CINNAMON—DALCHINI

"Cinnamon or Dalchini" is a spice that originates from India. I am pretty sure you have eaten the desserts and pastries flavored with cinnamon. It's nice isn't it?



This spice is usually used in Asian cuisine and in the preparation of desserts and pastries because of its aroma and taste.

In 2005, the Ministry brought in a few trees to the Cook Islands. To date, only a few cinnamon trees remain on Rarotonga.

The bark of the tree is the spice itself—dried, either broken into smaller sticks or grinded into powder form for use. It is believed that if the spice is consumed for prolonged periods, it will aid weight loss, control cholesterol and blood pressure.



## MOA CHRISTMAS PARTY 2020

The Ministry's Xmas party for 2020 indulged in something a little different for the staff. Organized by the Corporate Services Division, Tavake and team, Friday 11 December, the day started with 5 hole golf, table tennis, darts and beach volleyball. Light refreshments were provided to sustain the staff during the day.

The games finished by 4pm and staff went home to refresh, look beautiful and return to the offices for a catered scrumptious local feast. As part of the function, prizes were also awarded to those most deserving: Mari Syme—best dressed, Greta Rumera—longest drive women, Teariki Turua & Lawrence Makara—longest drive men and the Purple Cookie Monster team won the overall sports award.

It was well worth an "end of year" wrap up for all staff and their spouses/partners!

Thank you to Tavake for organizing our sports day, Ngatoko for the catering and all staff for your attendance and company!! Tei mua tatou!



Mari & Lawrence ready to rumble!!



Ed & Lawrence's team looking for the golf ball"



Puna, Temarama & Sanjinita "looking prettiful"



## TEREORA COLLEGE BUSINESS STUDIES PRESENTATION

The Head of Ministry, Mrs. Temarama Anguna-Kamana carried out a presentation to Level 1 and Level 2 Business Studies students of Tereora College on Recruitment and Motivation respectively. This was done on Tuesday 23 March 2021 in the College seminar room.



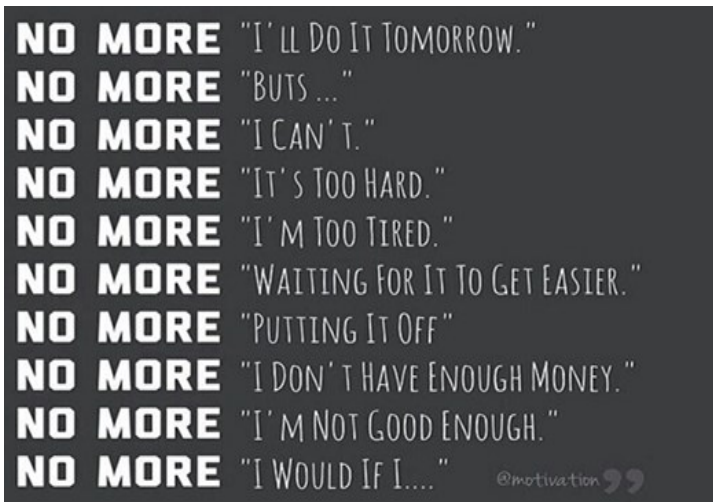
Level 1 Business Studies students of Tereora College

The Secretary advocated the Ministry's commitment to an equal employment opportunities environment where diversity is sought and valued, recruitment of people from the widest pool using a fair and equitable selection process and removal of all barriers within the organization that may cause or perpetuate inequality or opportunity.

The next presentation was conducted for Level 2 students on Motivation.

**MOTIVATION is a reason or reasons for doing something, the desire to do something; enthusiasm. "The thing about motivation is that no one can truly push you to get something done except you. While you can be encouraged, supported or inspired, it takes personal effort to get things done."**

Employee motivation is key to an organization's success. It's the level of commitment, drive and energy that a worker brings to the role every-day. Without it, we would have staff who call in sick every week, come to work late, leave early, and we don't meet our targets set – Demotivation!



Level 2 Business Studies students of Tereora College



## MITIARO EXCAVATOR BLESSING AND TRAINING

In the final week of January 2021, the Ministry staff visited the island of Mitiaro under the PEARL project to carry out a variety of activities — meet the Island Council about the projects being conducted on the island; provide fruit tree management training (marcotting and pruning of citrus trees, pest management, proper irrigation and planting methods); and to undertake the blessing and presentation of the Excavator to the Mitiaro Agriculture department.

The presentation for the excavator to the Agriculture Department was done by the Director of Biosecurity Ngatoko Ngatoko in place of the Secretary who was unable to attend. The excavator is to assist strengthen and revitalize agriculture on Mitiaro.

Ngatoko was joined by Takili Tairi, Edwin Apera and Puna Kamoe.

