



Tuesday, June 25 2024

PRESS RELEASE

FSC Introduces Advanced Farming Technology

Lautoka, Fiji. The Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited (FSC), in collaboration with the Ministry of Sugar Industry, has introduced a revolutionary agricultural technology designed to empower sugarcane farmers. This innovative initiative features power-harrowing and fully automated laser levelling, set to transform farming operations and provide advanced technology to farmers.

The newly introduced technology, suitable for 40-60 HP and 60-80 HP tractors, was showcased through comprehensive demonstrations from May 20th to June 5th, reaching over 500 farmers across various sectors. These demonstrations highlighted the significant benefits of the implements, paving the way for a new era of agricultural efficiency and productivity.

Chief Executive Officer Bhan Pratap Singh stated, "FSC is committed to advancing agricultural practices through developing a robust service provider network. The success of the Tractor Service Provider (TSP) development program, launched in April 2023, is evident, with 139 providers registered across three mills (Lautoka, Rarawai, and Labasa) as of May 31st, 2024. This demonstrates FSC's dedication to supporting farmers in enhancing their operations."

Addressing the persistent issue of poor land levelling causing water stagnation and drainage problems, FSC is collaborating with the government on infield and main drain augmentation projects. Proper land tillage and levelling, achieved through power harrowing and laser levelling, are essential for adequate drainage, preventing waterlogging, enhancing crop growth, and reducing soil erosion.

Mohammed Janif, a farmer from Saweni, Lautoka, praised the introduction of laser levelling technology. He explained that uneven land had resulted in significant water stagnation and drainage challenges.

"With this advanced technology, these issues can now be efficiently resolved, greatly improving land management and productivity," he emphasised.

The new technology offers numerous benefits, including enhanced nutrient use efficiency, reduced weed growth, and potential crop yield increases of 20-30%. It ensures uniform crop maturity, leading to higher sugar content. Levelling and deep planting streamline mechanical

harvests, minimising crop damage and enabling multiple ratoon crops without significant yield reduction.

Prem Chand, a farmer from Nawaicoba, Nadi, shared his positive experience with the new technology, saying, "I encourage other farmers to try this harrow for land preparation. I've been ploughing with my tractor, but the hard land makes it difficult. With the harrowing machine, land preparation has become so easy."

FSC will provide services through its own tractors at a cost to enable more farmers to benefit from this technology. Additionally, free demonstrations will be conducted on 25 to 30 plots in each mill to validate and promote the technology. FSC strongly encourages farmers to contact their sector offices to engage tractor service providers and take advantage of this innovative solution. Farmer participation is essential to the success of this initiative.

Looking ahead, FSC plans to introduce a sugarcane planter and fertiliser applicator, providing a complete mechanisation package that will further enhance planting and ratooning efficiency and improve crop yields. This proven technology, effective across various crops, promises to maximise yields and promote sustainable agricultural development in Fiji.

Bhan Pratap Singh
Chief Executive Officer

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