



**Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup> 2024**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FSC Pays Growers under Manual Harvesting Support Program**

**Lautoka, Fiji.** The Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited (FSC) is pleased to announce the successful disbursement of payments to 8,336 growers in the manual cane harvesting program for the 2023 season. Each grower has been paid \$1 per tonne for all manually harvested cane, demonstrating a significant stride towards supporting growers amidst prevailing labour challenges in the industry.

The manual harvest program, introduced as part of the 2023/2024 budget, aimed to alleviate the financial burden on growers who engage in manual harvesting.

The total payment of 1.03M dollars is the first instance of this type of grant assistance being provided to the growers in the Sugar Industry. This initiative has been sought to mitigate the rising costs of manual labour in the cane harvesting process.

We acknowledge the efforts of the Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs & Sugar Industry, Hon Charan Jeath Singh, in securing the grant from the Government.

The CEO highlighted the critical need for such support, stating, "Sugarcane growers have encountered mounting difficulties securing manual labour for harvesting in recent years. The heightened demand for harvesting rates from the limited labour pool has aggravated financial burdens on growers, who also incur additional expenses for labour provisions such as food, accommodation, and utilities."

While acknowledging the mechanisation of cane harvesting on flat land, the CEO emphasized the continued reliance on manual harvesting for cane grown on slopes and hilly terrain due to the unavailability of suitable mechanical harvesters in Fiji.

The table illustrates the breakdown of payments made to growers:

Location	Number of Growers Paid
Lautoka	1,924
Rarawai	2,833
Labasa	2,621
Penang	958
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,336</b>

The payments mark a significant step in FSC's and the Government's efforts to support growers and sustain the sugar industry's vital role in Fiji's economy. The Corporation remains dedicated to implementing initiatives that enhance growers' livelihoods and promote the sector's long-term sustainability.

Bhan Pratap Singh  
Chief Executive Officer

**Ends**