

NEWS RELEASE



'Korovuto Village reaps the rewards from collaborative working'

29th of October, 2020

Tunalia Farm in Korovuto is a testament to the successes that a village can achieve through the right partnerships and effective collaboration between landowners and sugar industry bodies. The partnership helped Korovuto village produce some of Fiji's strongest yields of cane per hectare.

Tunalia farm sat idle for 25 years as challenges with machines and implement availability caused the landowners to lose interest in cane farming. Consisting of 31 hectares of flat land, albeit overgrown at the start, it was ideal for cane farming. So, in June 2018 Korovuto village and its landowning unit- Tokatoka Sautorotoro Trust, began consultations with Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) and iTaukei Land Trust Board (ITLTB). The Village saw potential to create a joint venture between Tokatoka Sautorotoro Trust (TST) and FSC. The joint venture leveraged the expertise of FSC, support from Sugar Research Institute Fiji and an eager landowning unit.

For two years the village worked with FSC and SRIF to prepare the land and commence farming again. With close consultation the land was prepared and the soil tilled 4 times before planting. The Cane Planting Grant 2019/2020 also assisted the landowning unit in the establishment of 15.3 hectares of plant cane, plus setting the farm up for easy access by gravel road, with culverts and with drainage.

The seed cane was delivered and certified by SRIF, and the village began growing on the land. The farm planted four different varieties of cane.

The success of the joint venture can be seen this season. The pre-crush estimate for the Tunalia farm for this season was 1600 tonnes, a projected yield of 104 tonnes of cane per hectare. Comparatively the national average is 45 to 50 tonnes per hectare and the development policy aims at yields of 75 tonnes per hectare. The farm is now well on-track to exceed the initial expectations.

Commenting on behalf of Tokatoka Sautorotoro Trust, Semi Kagi, the appointed representative said "Our village worked closely with FSC and SRIF as a single team and implemented advice to prepare our land, to plant, to care for the crop, and now to harvest. "

"When we work as a team we work together, that's what we have been doing, village life, tokatoka, everybody benefits. We had one goal- for 100 tonnes, but we achieved 167 tonnes- that's proof that working together is good."

Mr Kagi continued “Taking advice from SRIF and FSC really helped us. It’s actually unbelievable what has been done.”



The partnership was so successful that earlier in 2020 the farm was deregistered from the Joint Venture and returned solely to the land owning unit. That said, FSC and SRIF still provide ongoing guidance and support.

Graham Clark, Chief Executive Officer of Fiji Sugar Corporation commented on the success of the farm “the yields that we are seeing from Tunalia farm are truly impressive. We are proud to have been afforded the opportunity to work with the Tokatoka Sautorotoro Trust and to help create a great, sustainable farm and income for the surrounding communities. We hope that it inspires more villagers to benefit from these collaborative partnerships.”

The team at Tokatoka Sautorotoro Trust works through a traditional method called “solesolevaki” whereby the villagers work together to make sure the land is well tended and that all share responsibility and also benefit from its success.

The village truly is benefiting from the success of the farm. A new event centre is nearing completion of construction and is already being enjoyed by the workers and the villagers in Korovuto.

Looking to the future, Tokatoka Sautorotoro Trust are focussed on planting cane on the balance of the area and are also considering building dwellings to produce rental income.

--ENDS--

For more information, please contact:

Sereima Sokidrau | EA to FSC CEO | Email Sereima.Sokidrau@fsc.com.fj | Mobile: 999 0245



Image caption: Korovuto village works together to help make the farm a success.



Image caption: Abishek Chand from SRIF stands at the entrance of the new event centre.



Image caption: Semi Kagi, Village Spokesperson stands proudly in front of the 2020 crop at Tunalia Farm