



# FAAILOA



*"....enhancing partnerships to develop and sustain agriculture and fisheries...."*

December 2021

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## Letui Sasina Talomua Festival Aims to Inspire Youth



The village of Letui, Savaii wrapped up this year with a vibrant celebration of the Talomua Festival on Wednesday 29 th December, aimed at encouraging youth to take up agricultural

## Keynote Address by Minister, Hon Laauliolemalietoa on the Launching of the Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility Project

**10 December 2021, Lava Hotel, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm**

Susuga Roseti Imo, Taitai o le sauniga,  
Honourable Associate Minister,  
Her Excellency Emily Luck, Australian High Commissioner,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corp,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to give the keynote address during the launch of [Samoa's component of](#) the Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility Project.

Samoa's economy, like other Pacific Island Countries, has been devastated because of the impacts of COVID-19. The tourism industry, which is a significant revenue earner and employment generator for Samoa, has been severely affected and the impact has been felt by many of the micro, small and medium enterprises linked to the tourism industry. Thousands of people working directly and indirectly for the Tourism industry have lost their jobs.

The pandemic's impacts has disrupted local and global supply chains, suspended international travel and reduced demand for exports. These disruptions has negatively affected agriculture, food and nutrition security in a variety of ways such as:

- *exports by air freight are now facing massive marketing constraints since they often relied on passenger flights;*
- *direct sales to travellers and tourists commonly used to market locally produced products have been lost;*
- *the supply of food into Samoa has fluctuated due to the irregular shipments;*
- *cost of shipping in goods has also increased;*
- *cost of agriculture seeds, tools and equipment has increased and therefore affecting agriculture production and productivity.*

The Government of Samoa have recognized the importance of agriculture as the backbone of an inclusive economy, and as a means of enhancing the economic resilience of its citizens. The pandemic has increased awareness of the important role that domestic food systems play in providing resilience to shocks, self-sufficiency, and insurance against food insecurity.

This mutual concern for a rapid recovery from the pandemic's

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## MAF and SROS officers complete Israeli Agriculture Innovation Training



Ten senior level officers from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) and Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa (SROS) have completed two training programs aimed at improving delivery of agriculture extension services and introducing new Irrigation and Fertigation Technology to boost farmers' production and productivity.

The trainings were organised and coordinated by MASHAV Agriculture Training Center (MATC) and Israeli Pacific Food Security Alliance (IPFSA) through Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAT)

ACEO Crops Division, Tanu Toomata said the program was comprised of two components; the first stage (delivered between 25 January to 28 August 2021) focused on building capacity of agriculture extension officers and relevant staff from SROS.

Emphasis was directed to strengthening links between the extension officers and the farmers by developing diagnostic abilities to help MAF officers identify challenges and issues affecting farmers and apply the necessary technical assistance.

"The first component of the training allowed us to re-look at the roles and responsibilities of our agriculture extension officers, explore different approaches and solutions to the challenges they are facing so we can improve their service delivery to our farmers" said Mr Toomata "This part of the program was very beneficial and it's been very helpful to refresh our knowledge on the tools and methods available to improve our services."

The second component was based on the establishment of island vegetable demonstration plots to "mirror" a similar Israeli demonstration and training plot which serves as a platform for learning and cooperation. It consisted of 10 weekly meetings between 18 October - 20 December 2021, based on Irrigation and Fertigation for Vegetable Production.

This phase of the program elaborated on the nature of the different crops and dealt in depth with the calculations, measurements and analysis of water and fertilization needed by the different crops through different growth stages. According to Principal Development Officer Liu Pueata Tanielu and SROS officer, Tua-

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effects provides an opportunity for the Samoan Government and its development partners to work together to strengthen the resilience of domestic food systems for long term sustainability. This regional initiative through the PIRAS is timely as our focus in the region shifts from insulating ourselves from the pandemic towards economic recovery and resilience building.

I wish to acknowledge the steadfast support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Government of Australia for partnering with our Government in this initiative. This PIRAS project comes at a crucial time to complement Government's efforts in creating new and sustaining existing livelihoods for those severely impacted by the effects of the pandemic.

In any crisis, it is usually the vulnerable sections of our community who are affected. For this reason, the PIRAS project will target women and youth farmers in rural areas in Samoa. PIRAS complements our Government's economic recovery initiatives by targeting those communities who are seen as the most vulnerable.

With the technical support of our Non-Government Organisations, Farmers Associations and our Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa as well as other agencies of our Government, PIRAS will support rural farmers through:

- ◇ *Providing farmers with seedlings and planting materials for crops, livestock and fisheries;*
- ◇ *Provide tools, farming equipment and training to improve farm productivity;*
- ◇ *Providing food processing technologies and training to support post-harvest handling, food preservation and value adding;*
- ◇ *Establishing nurseries and demonstration plots;*
- ◇ *Provide training to farmers in crop and animal husbandry practices; and,*
- ◇ *Encouraging and expanding the use of mobile applications amongst farmers as medium for sharing market related information as well as creating awareness on issues and events.*

I am pleased to note that data capture and knowledge sharing is also at the core of

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## UPDATES

### Local beekeepers to benefit from new project to develop the apiculture industry in Samoa

SGP The GEF Small Grants Programme



[Newly Formed Samoa Apiculture Organisation](#)

Local beekeepers, or honey farmers, will soon get the chance to take their operations to the next level, under the new Apiculture Strategic Project.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) has secured new funding of US \$50,000 to implement this project in recognition of apiculture, or honey farming, as a catalyst for sustainable development in small islands developing states or SIDS.

SGP will work with local honey farmers in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) for this project. The Ministry said there are currently about 41 active beekeepers in Samoa, both private and commercial.

“Based on recent data, there is a market value of \$1.1 million Tala in beekeeping, catering to the local market. The global natural honey market size was valued at \$2.26 billion US dollars in 2018. In saying this, there is potential

that upon perfecting and focusing on beekeeping, we can be in a position to export our honey products to overseas markets, although our current honey production cannot satisfy our own consumer demand,” said Tilafono David Hunter, Chief Executive Officer of MAF.

A workshop was held for interested beekeepers on how they can access this fund under the new project.

For many years, the beekeeping industry was managed by a small group.

The Apiculture Strategic Project is an international one involving six countries from the Caribbean – Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Samoa – the only country from the Pacific.

The multi-country project aims to establish a sustainable apiculture industry in Saint Lucia and identify and develop clear pathways towards the development of the same in the other countries including Samoa.

“Beekeeping is a vital component of agriculture and environmental protection. While bees were introduced to Samoa some 100 years ago, the industry went from thriving, to barely surviving. We need to create a community of beekeeping which goes beyond just industry needs and focuses on education, mentoring, and community-based initiatives. We need beekeeping clubs, beekeepers’ associations, and supporting academic institutions to sustain the knowledge in country. Currently, only 33% of beekeepers are women, that number can increase dramatically if the knowledge and training is made available to everyone, from urban enthusiasts to rural committees,” said Shelley Burich of Vaoala Vanilla, who is also a beekeeper.

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### **MAF and SROS officers complete Israeli Agriculture Innovation Training**

Iupetu Togafau, their training will provide valuable knowledge for all farmers.

“Looking at the importance of irrigation systems and fertilizer use for vegetable production has really helped me with the technical aspect of selecting the appropriate irrigation technology,” said Mr Tanielu “There’s a lot of irrigation systems available but the recommendation by this program is to utilise the drip method which not only improves crop production but is also the best method for the efficient use of water resources that I have seen so far for our climatic conditions here in Samoa.”

Ms Togafau added, “Irrigation is an important practice that can significantly increase the survival rate of vegetables, especially when soil moisture is marginal and the evapotranspiration rate is higher, most definitely like here in Samoa during its dry season. This is when water retention rate of the soil gets worse in which the vegetables are observed to become wilted.”

With the increasing use of tunnel house technology in Samoa, Advisory Officer, Ioelu Iosefa, says vegetable growers will benefit greatly from adopting the new technology from Israel’s Agriculture Agency.

“A lot of people these days are now using tunnel houses and utilising tube irrigation systems however this new technology from Israel is very different. I learnt how to calculate how much water to use in each stage of vegetative growth which is a far more efficient and sustainable way of using water compared to our current practice of leaving the irrigation system on all night.”

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PIRAS. This will be driven by Regional Coordination Unit based out of IFAD's Office in Fiji whose primary role shall be to engage in partnerships that ensure utilization-driven data is collected and fed into the country-level activities, and that these activities in turn generate quality data on outreach and targeting as well as verified progress data.

Finally, the cornerstone of this initiative is developing and sustaining strong partnerships at various levels – partnership at the community level where peer learning will be encouraged; partnership at the enterprise level between rural farmers and the private sector; partnership at the agency coordination level between government and non-government actors, including the private sector, and partnership at the strategic level between government and development partners.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us, it is only through harnessing our efforts collectively as one, do we have a greater chance of mitigating the negative impact from the pandemic, recover the losses we have borne over the past 2 years, whilst building more resilient systems that provide more sustainable livelihoods for our peoples in the future.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to officially launch the Pacific Islands Rural and Agricultural Stimulus Facility in Samoa and we look forward to the support of all stakeholders and partners present here today in its successful implementation.



production and development for their livelihoods.

The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Laauliolemalietoa along with his Associate Minister and executive management team attended the day's festivities. The event started off with a lively and colourful parade of youth and children proudly showcasing decorative floats, representing families competing for prizes at the Talomua.

In his speech, Hon. Laauliolemalietoa congratulated the Letui community for successfully hosting their first Talomua. He stated that the festival is an opportunity to encourage youth to actively participate in showcasing the village's agricultural production and development. He also emphasized the importance of planting more crops to safeguard Samoa's food and nutrition security and re-iterated the government's commitment to strengthening grassroots communities with a direct assistance approach.

The Talomua Festival featured a Growers Market where Letui farmers showcased their best crops and livestock to the Judges' panel, and as part of their role in supporting the village-led agriculture event, the Ministry delivered tools, seedlings and farming equipment including financial assistance to go towards prizes for the winning farmers. "Letui village put a lot of effort into making their Talomua event a success and it was especially good to see the youth were excited to participate," said Tilafono "the Talomua because not only is it vital to our food security and nutrition but excess quality produce can

Letui's agricultural event is the fourth Talomua festival held this month as part of the Ministry's move to implement the new changes, transitioning from the centralised annual agriculture show to a series of events driven by the communities.

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