



MINISTRY OF WATERWAYS

Press Release

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Media Release

Water Woes for 10 Western Farmers Ends

Sourcing water for their farms and the associated hassle that come with it will now be a thing of the past for ten selected farmers in the Western Division.

This comes after the distribution of irrigation kits to these ten farmers made possible through the Irrigation Support for Farm Development Programme under the Ministry of Waterways in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture this week.

While addressing these farmers, Minister for Agriculture Hon. Dr Mahendra Reddy hoped that this support provided by the Fijian Government would lead to more production even into the off-seasons and extended dry seasons.

"We're distributing these irrigation kits so that you, our farmers, can continue to produce during the off-season and during the dry seasons too so that you can continue to supply to the markets, local markets and tourism sector too who often highlight the lack of supply, especially during the off-season and that is from their point of view," said Hon. Reddy.

"The tourism sector has shared their side saying that during the in-season, there are no issues with vegetables in the market but the only issue is during the off-season so that's why we are giving you these irrigation kits to produce during the off-season and to provide a steady market to also reduce our hoteliers' import bill and promote local sourcing of vegetables for the tourist table," Minister Reddy said.

Hon. Reddy also elaborated on the numerous development programmes delivered to farmers to boost productivity at the farm level despite unfavourable conditions such as nursery support development, and hydroponics to name a few.

For former bus driver turned farmer Ravindra Prakash Chand of Vuna Back Road, Lautoka the irrigation kit was a huge help as he no longer needed to cart water from his nearest water source, which was a physically tasking exercise.

"I plant cucumber, bele, tomatoes, eggplants, cabbage and other vegetables that need a lot of water to grow properly and because I just started farming this year, I don't have that much farming equipment but now I have the irrigation kit and I am so thankful to receive the assistance and I am proud too because Government is helping the farmers and this is why I say I am happy because on my own I could not afford this kit," said Mr Chand.

Mr Navneet Ratnam of Vaivai, Lautoka has also praised the Government for the assistance provided to farmers like him.

"I am quite happy with what the Government is doing for the farmers, I will tell farmers to continue farming because there are a lot of programmes available to them, I consider myself fortunate to receive this kit because there are other farmers who are facing the same issues as me but I believe they too will be assisted," said Mr Ratnam.

"The river nearest my farm is more than 100 meters away and this kit will take away the burden of water carting for me, all I need to do is install the kit and pump water right to the farm," added Mr Ratnam.

Each irrigation kit consists of one Jetland 6.5 horsepower 2-inch water pump, 8 meter 2-inch suction hose and 200 meter 2-inch discharge hose and 100 meters 2-inch soaker hose (irrigation hose) and was worth approximately \$1,000.00 each.

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