

Thursday August 15, 2013

## FNU Signs MOU with Joes Farm

**The Fiji National University and Joes Farm will venture into a mushroom farm project soon.**

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed at FNU's College of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Koronivia yesterday, aimed at encouraging and promoting academic-industry cooperation and exchange between the two institutions.

The MOU also entails joint research and development in agriculture, aquaponics and hydroponics.

FNU and Joes Farm will also co-operate on issues related to their work with international and regional organizations.

Managing Director Joes Farm, Michael Joe said research work on the mushroom farm project will start in two weeks.

"We will need to research and conduct experiments before anything is finalized on the project," he said.

Market research conducted by Joes Farm shows that 2000 kilograms of mushroom are consumed per week in Fiji.

Mr Joe said the MOU commits both parties to work more closely towards the common goal of self-production and self-sufficiency, thus reducing imports of fresh produce.

"Each side will pursue many significant activities, such as the promotion of education in aquaponic and hydroponic farming, and the promotion of study opportunities, assistance to support study and education opportunities and working together with our staff at our farms here in Suva and highlands."

Mr Joe said the introduction of new technology into Fiji since 1992 by the company had resulted in many developments.

"We have built greenhouses, hydroponic farms for the private sector and other government funded organization, which has become a viable venture if proper procedure and guidance are strictly followed."

"We have seen many changes over the last 30 years with the increase in the importation of fresh produce and the number of hotels being built for arriving visitors, which means there's a greater demand for fresh produce in their daily meals."

He said joint research and developments in modern technology will no doubt increase the interest and capability of those students who wish to pursue a career in this area.

FNU Vice Chancellor Dr Ganesh Chand said the MOU would see College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry students undertaking practical attachments with Joes Farm.

Dr Chand said the MOU signifies the importance FNU places on University-industry reaction. He said it also reflects the significance of agriculture at FNU, with around a thousand students at CAFF.

Dean College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Professor Paras Nath said Joes Farm has an uncompromising standard of quality in the local and international food industry and has a diversified operation.

“They show that agriculture is not just growing the products, but to be successful, other processes such as large scale production, mechanization, packaging distribution, market research, product differentiation, automation and innovation all work together to make a thriving business based on the land economy.”

For more information please contact Communications Office on 3393110.