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Press Release

Farmer group receives expert advice from FNU's College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Suva, Fiji. In an effort to gain more knowledge on modern farming techniques and receive free expert advice on best agricultural practices, 20 farmers from the Haihanisiga Farmers Club recently visited the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) Campus for a tour.

The group was hosted by the Dean of CAFF, Professor Paul Iji and his senior academic team. The farmers were briefed on the wide range of programmes offered by the College including some of the short courses which the members could undertake to upskill their knowledge in specific areas.

The Haihanisiga Farmers Club from Koronivia, toured the College livestock farms, the new Aquaponics unit as well as some of the newly constructed facilities including specialist laboratories.

Professor Iji said they were happy to host the farmer group as it strengthened its community engagement and also assisted farmers to learn new techniques that will assist in improving their agricultural outputs.

"We are glad to have interacted with this group of farmers as it builds our relationship with them. We are able to hear some of the challenges they face and provide them with expert advice. They can also see what we are doing here and pick up some of the good agricultural practices which they can apply on their farms and improve their production. So it's a win-win situation for all of us," said Professor Iji.

Professor Iji said they were looking at hosting more community level consultations in future. He briefed the group also on the future development plans to be undertaken by the College.

"The College is building, redeveloping facilities and curriculum to remain relevant to the needs of the industry and ensure that the students are taught in the best facilities," commented Dean CAFF.

Professor Iji also highlighted plans to develop new Postgraduate programmes and the introduction of Honours Bachelor programme in the near future.

"We are working towards redeveloping the Bachelor of Science and Animal Husbandry curriculum together with the possible creation of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension," Professor Iji added.

Team leader of Haihanisiga Farmers Club, Murray Isimeli expressed his appreciation to the College for the tour and knowledge sharing session.

According to Isimeli, many of the farmers present were former students of the Fiji College of Agriculture and were happy to re-connect with the now College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

"The group consists of 12 farming families, each working separately but coming together to assist one another from time to time. Most of our farms are integrated, combining crop production with animal rearing or rearing different types of animals on the same farm. Our farms are also variable in size, complexity and commercial orientation and this visit has been an informative session for us," said Isimeli.

"We have come to know about the programmes offered by the College that suits us farmers too and it is great to see the developments at this College which ensures are students are taught in the best of facilities."

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About the Fiji National University: The Fiji National University (FNU) was established through the merger of 7 government-owned tertiary institutions in Fiji, and commenced operations from 1 January 2010. The constituent institutions are found at over 40 different locations across Fiji, and collectively offer Certificates, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Degrees, Postgraduate qualifications and Skills Upgrading for those who are already in employment. Approximately 30,000 students pass through the University each year. Over the last six years of its operations, the University has registered major achievements with regard to new programme delivery, quality improvements and contribution to research and publications via its 5 Colleges: The College of Humanities & Education (CHE), the College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS), the College of Engineering, Science & Technology (CEST), the College of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (CAFF), the College of Business, Hospitality & Tourism Studies (CBHTS) and the National Training & Productivity Centre (NTPC).