

# An overview of postharvest research, extension and education capacity in the Pacific with a focus on Western Samoa, Tonga and the Fiji islands

S.J.R. Underhill

Acta Horticulturae 1011: 425-432. 2013.

---

## Abstract

Historically there has been limited institutional postharvest research, education and training in the South Pacific. In Fiji, Western Samoa and Tonga, of the three universities, four government ministries and one regional agency, that currently possess horticulture research, extension or training capacity, few have any dedicated postharvest specialists. While private-sector postharvest extension services do exist they are often fragmented and commonly limited to specific export-focused supply chains. In the last decade, increasing concerns about regional food security and a greater emphasis towards expanding horticultural trade and exports have resulted in significant investment in new postharvest infrastructure in the region. Since 2008, postharvest research infrastructure has been established in Western Samoa and in Tonga, coupled with ongoing donor assistance of private-sector postharvest-export infrastructure in Fiji. Unfortunately there has been desultory attention towards concurrently improving postharvest skills and training. This is of particular concern as it undermines the ultimate effectiveness of this investment, creating questionable sustainability. This paper reviews the current postharvest horticulture research and education capacity in the Pacific highlighting the key challenges and opportunities.