

Developing horticultural quality management systems in Fiji

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Acta Horticulturae 989: 225-229. 2013.

Abstract

In the Pacific, horticulture quality management systems (QMS) are commonly driven by donor-funded interventions seeking poverty alleviation and food security derived outcomes. While the complexity of applying QMS to small-holder enterprises is well reported, the Pacific is particularly challenging due to the general supply chain dysfunction, cultural and social-based resistors that collectively erode entrepreneurship and commercial incentives, and a strong donor-dependence culture. Stakeholders, normally small-holder farmers and community-based enterprises tend to be asset limited, lack critical skills and knowledge, and operate in the absence of critical supply chain inputs. As a consequence, in spite of significant effort and resources having been applied to the development of Pacific QMS, there are few success stories. This disparity does not reflect a lack of market demand, in fact local tourism-based businesses actively seek QMS derived product, especially in the context of food quality and safety. Moreover, wider export trade is increasingly dependent on QMS to access and maintain market share. Workers in the field have increasingly accepted that early stakeholder engagement and empowerment are fundamental to successful QMS adoption. However, even with broad application of active participatory-based and market-driven approaches, Pacific QMS-based gains remain fragile and transient. This paper reviews two current enterprises in Fiji (Nature's Way Cooperative Limited and Joe's Farm Produce), with specific reference to their QMS adoption.