



Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 13 – August 6th 2013

Bula Vinaka!

Welcome to the 13th quarterly newsletter of the Nature's Way Cooperative Fiji Papaya Project (FPP). The objective of these newsletters is to provide up-to-date information on the project to farmers, exporters, and other interested stakeholders.

The FPP is an applied research project aimed at improving the competitiveness of our industry for the benefit of its members and the broader community.

Fiji Papaya Exports to Australia resume

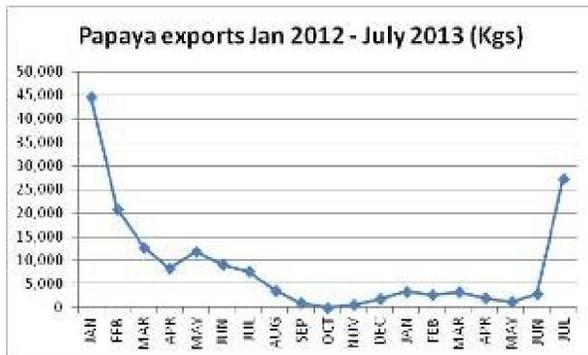
In July 2013, Fiji papaya exports resumed to Australia after over 15 months of being out of this market. In total, over 21 tonnes of Fiji papaya was sent to Australia in the month of July from two exporters.

Fiji papaya exports to Australia ceased after the January and March 2012 floods and fruit volumes have not been adequate to resume exports until recently. Over this period, market dynamics have been shifting in Australia and exporters are having to work hard to win back their share of the market place.



NWC Operations Manager, Shameem Khan inspects papaya bound for the Australian market.

A total of 27 tonnes of papaya were exported to both Australia and New Zealand in July 2013, which is still well below pre-flood levels (in January 2012, a total of 45 tonnes of papaya were exported to both Australia and New Zealand). Several exporters have not been able to resume exports due to fruit unavailability and lack of working capital.



NWC exporters benefit from post-disaster export stimulus scheme

NWC exporters are benefiting from a post-disaster export stimulus scheme provided through funding from NZ Aid and AusAID.

The export stimulus scheme which began on July 1st 2013 is designed to help exporters recover from the two floods and the one cyclone experienced in 2012. The scheme involves a 40¢ rebate on the NWC treatment charge. Only exporters who treated their produce at NWC between Jan 2011 and Dec 2012 are eligible for the export stimulus scheme. Each of the 15 eligible exporters are entitled to a treatment charge rebate up to 30 tonnes within a six month period beginning July 1st 2013 and ending January 1st 2014.

A total of 83,000 kgs received the rebate in July 2013 which equates to an approximate value of \$33,200.

Fruit quality assessments identify strengths and weaknesses for Fiji's export papaya

In the build up to a return to the Australian market, the Fiji Papaya Project has been working with exporters to assess fruit quality and provide post-harvest training. When exports resumed, the Fiji Papaya Project began taking 'library cartons', which represent a random sample of the packed consignment. These 'library cartons' are then held in Fiji and ripened while the rest of the consignment goes to the export market. The fruit from the 'library cartons' are assessed for uniformity, stage of ripeness, physical damage, disease incidence, flesh colour and brix (sweetness). In addition to being able to quantify strengths and weaknesses, the concept also allows the exporter to see what the customer is seeing.

Fruit quality from these assessments has generally been high with all fruit having good flesh colour and high brix which is characteristic of the 'Fiji Red' brand. Issues such as uniformity, stage of ripeness and physical damage have been identified and are quickly being addressed by exporters. Post-harvest disease incidence remains the major quality issue although it is expected that this will be reducing as the weather improves.



Kyle Stice reviews a fruit quality assessment with exporter reps from Uno Ltd. Uno is one of two exporters that have resumed papaya exports to the Australian market.

Hot water is a promising solution for reducing post-harvest disease on papaya

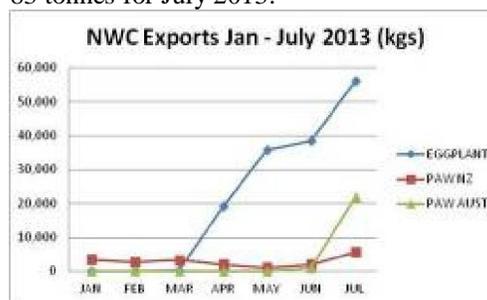
Post-harvest diseases, particularly anthracnose, continue to be a problem for the Fiji Papaya Industry. The Fiji Papaya Project has been exploring measures to help reduce disease incidence through post-harvest treatments. To date, a hot water dip (48°C for 20 minutes) has shown very promising results in reducing disease incidence and severity compared to control fruit. These trial results have also been confirmed by collaborative trials carried out in Australia with DAFF. Nature's Way Cooperative is now exploring how this hot water dip system may be applied commercially; a prototype unit has already been designed and costed.

Organic papaya farmers look into establishing a PGS scheme.

The Fiji Papaya Project and several organic papaya farmers participated in a SPC/POETcom (Secretariat of the Pacific Community/Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community) training on the development of an organic participatory guarantee system (PGS) for Fiji Papaya. The training was held in Nadi in June 2013.

NWC exports continue to rise

Papaya is not the only NWC crop to see an increase in exports, eggplant exports also rose to around 56 tonnes for the month of July taking total NWC exports to over 83 tonnes for July 2013.



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