



Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 14 – October 30th 2013

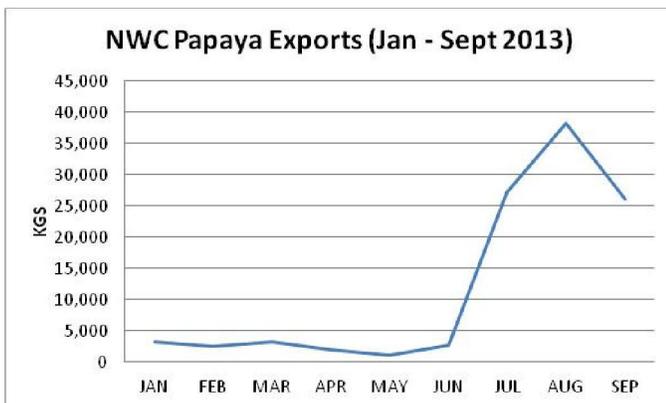
Bula Vinaka!

Welcome to the 14th 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 returning to normal

Fiji Papaya exports return to normal as farmers and exporters recover from the devastating effects of the two floods and one tropical cyclone in 2012 which brought exports to a complete stand still. In the first six months of 2013 only very small volumes of papaya were exported as most of the trees were badly affected by the cyclone. However, the period July to September has seen export volumes continue to rise with an average monthly volume of 30 tonnes over this period. These exports are distributed between the Australian and New Zealand markets with Australia having the greatest share.



Packers and graders at Nature's Way Cooperative have returned to their busy treatment days as volumes of papaya and eggplant continue to rise after the devastating floods and cyclone in 2013.

NWC export stimulus scheme – a real boost for exporters

The recovery process from the series of natural disasters in 2012 has been made a little easier for exporters as a result of the post-disaster export stimulus scheme that is being implemented by NWC through funding from NZ Aid and AusAID.

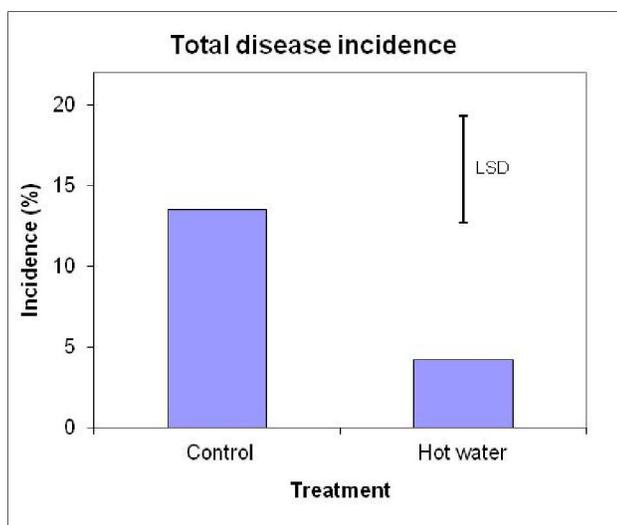
Since the beginning of the scheme on July 1st 2013, 11 of the 15 eligible exporters have benefitted from the treatment charge rebate. To date, a total of 203 tonnes has received a rebate amounting to over \$81,000 in savings.

Industry considers new hot water treatment for post-harvest disease control

After three years of research into post-harvest disease control measures for Fiji papaya, the industry now has a proposal to invest in a commercial hot water unit which has proven to provide a significant level of disease control. In a trial conducted in August 2013, comprising of over 180 kgs of test fruit, the hot water dip was able to reduce both disease incidence and severity to around 10%.

Exporters currently lose about 10% of potential income due to rot. This can be even greater in the wet season or in times of natural disasters. With the hot water treatment that is being proposed, this could be reduced to 1%. If the industry exports around 800 tonnes of papaya at an fob value of \$2.66/kg, the hot water treatment could reduce the unsalable fruit from 10% down to 1%. This would generate almost \$2 million in exporter earnings for the industry and the nation. It would enhance the quality of our product and thereby expand demand on our export markets. Analysis undertaken by an SPC economist indicates a high financial and economic rate of return from investing in the hot water treatment facility.

There are still several technical issues to be addressed before the treatment is available to exporters.



Results from hot water trials carried out in August 2013 confirm the efficacy of this treatment for the control of post-harvest diseases. The FPP is now working closely with NWC and other stakeholders to make this research a commercial reality.

Organic papaya production expands

Using the package of practices developed by the FPP for organic papaya production, two commercial farmers in the Nadi area have established over 3 acres of organic papaya. A further 20 farmers which are part of the Sabeto Organic Producers Association (SOPA) are in the process of establishing 20 acres of organic papaya. These organic papaya growers are being organised under an organic Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) which will provide a locally based “certification” for our organic papaya farmers.



Members of the Sabeto Organic Producers Association mix organic fertilisers before planting.



A 1.5 acre organic papaya block in Sabeto at the flowering stage.

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