

ENHANCING FRUIT PRODUCTION USING SMART AGRICULTURE IN FIJI

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Horticulture sector, which includes cultivation of fruits and vegetables contribute 1% to the national GDP and remains one of the fastest growing segments within the agriculture sector in Fiji. Like many other countries, Fiji can benefit significantly from the development and implementation of smart agriculture practices for fruit cultivation. It's tropical climate and fertile soil makes Fiji very ideal for production of diverse fruit cultivars. Implementation of smart agriculture technologies can enhance productivity, reduce resources use and promote sustainable farming practices.

Organized fruit cultivation is relatively new to Fiji and therefore great opportunities exist for the development of a fruit industry in the country. This can be further enhanced through the use of smart agriculture technologies. The focus in the past on organized planting of fruits had been limited only to cultivation of pineapples and papaya. The Government of Fiji recently has developed policies to support the establishment of orchards to enhance the production of other tropical fruits such as guava, dragon fruits, avocado, citrus and breadfruit. Organized planting of fruits in orchards with the implementation of proper management practices has resulted in an increase in production and availability of a diverse range of fruits within the various marketing outlets.

Utilization of new crops and better performing varieties with improved husbandry practices have great potential in increasing diversity and generating income for farmers. This paper will therefore discuss the introduction of new crops in the farming systems and its impact on the livelihoods of Fijian farmers.

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