

Fruit and Non-Starchy Vegetables in Solomon Islands



KEY MESSAGES

- In Solomon Islands there is an undersupply of fruit and non-starchy vegetables (FNSV): domestic production is insufficient to meet per capita requirements, and per capita national level supply through imports is negligible.
- There is a large difference between the source of acquisition by location; in rural areas FNSV are mostly acquired from home cultivation, while in urban areas FNSV are mostly purchased from fresh food markets.
- FNSV consumption is inequitably distributed across the population and those in urban areas and on lower incomes are especially vulnerable to insufficient consumption.
- There are several opportunities to increase FNSV consumption while supporting progress across multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Figure 1). These include:
 1. Strengthening environmentally sustainable agricultural practices that support increased production
 2. Supporting equitable livelihoods across FNSV supply chains
 3. Improving urban affordability.

CONTEXT

Solomon Islands is in the midst of the nutrition transition, and non-communicable disease and obesity rates are rapidly increasing. Consuming sufficient (five serves or 400g per person per day) FNSV is important for preventing diet related diseases, which are placing a significant burden on the Solomon Island health system. Yet FNSV consumption in Solomon Islands is currently insufficient.

Consuming FNSV has multiple benefits beyond human health: shifting global diets away from red meat and unhealthy processed foods and towards diets high in plant-based foods is a recognised opportunity to help reduce the negative environmental impacts associated with

food systems, including climate change, loss of biodiversity, use of freshwater, and interference with the global nitrogen and phosphorus cycles. The United Nations General Assembly declared 2021 the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables in recognition of the vital role that fruit and vegetables can play in achieving the SDGs.

We analysed multiple sources of food systems and policy data from Solomon Islands, drawing on a food systems approach and the SDG agenda, to (a) identify possible pathways for increasing FNSV consumption to improve human health outcomes, and (b) identify opportunities to advance progress across multiple SDGs.

Table 1. Key findings from survey analysis.

Food system component	Key findings	Data source
Individual consumption	More than half of households do not consume sufficient FNSV.	Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES)
	The following have significantly lower odds of acquiring the daily recommended amount FNSV (400g): People with household head aged 40 and above, people with seven or more household members, people who live in households that participate in fishing, households in urban areas, lower income households.	
	Diversity is low. Banana, papaya, watermelon and pineapple account for 75 percent of fruit consumed, while island cabbage and other cabbages make up 60 percent of non-starchy vegetables.	
Food environments	In rural areas, the majority of FNSV are acquired directly from cultivated (76%) and wild (12%) food environments.	Market survey
	In urban areas, majority of FNSV purchased from formal retail (40%, and central markets made up 37%) and informal retail (34%, and local markets supplied 31%).	
	Cash value (price) of 400g/person/day FNSV urban areas: SBD 2.48, rural areas: SBD 1.62.	
Food supply chains	Supply chains are generally short. The vast majority of produce sold by market vendors in Auki and Gizo originates from the province of sale. Produce sold at Honiara Central Market mostly originates from the same province (Guadalcanal).	FAOSTAT
	Solomon Islands is currently not producing enough FNSV for each person to consume the recommended 5 serves (400g) FNSV per day. Production of FNSV is increasing, but on a per capita basis it is declining.	
	Imported FNSV provide a negligible proportion of the 400g/person/day recommended for good health.	

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In Solomon Islands, local FNSV production needs to be increased sustainably to ensure that both the natural environment and the food system continue to support the nutrition security and livelihoods of future generations.
- Our policy analysis showed that Solomon Islands has in place policies that address many aspects of FNSV supply. Drawing on a food systems approach and the SDG agenda, our analysis identified multiple potential avenues to enhance existing policy efforts in Solomon Islands for FNSV to improve human health, and progress the SDGs (Figure 1).
- Our policy analysis showed explicit priorities for investment in local production and efforts to increase livelihood equity through targeting youth and women across the supply chain. There is a need to consider the resources required to continue to operationalise and scale up policy action in these avenues, as well as to improve multisectoral cooperation and coordination.
- Improving FNSV affordability is likely to increase consumption, in particular for urban populations, large households, and those on low incomes. Approaches to address price and affordability should extend across the whole food system - from production, harvest (or import) through to acquisition from the food environment, and supporting vulnerable households.

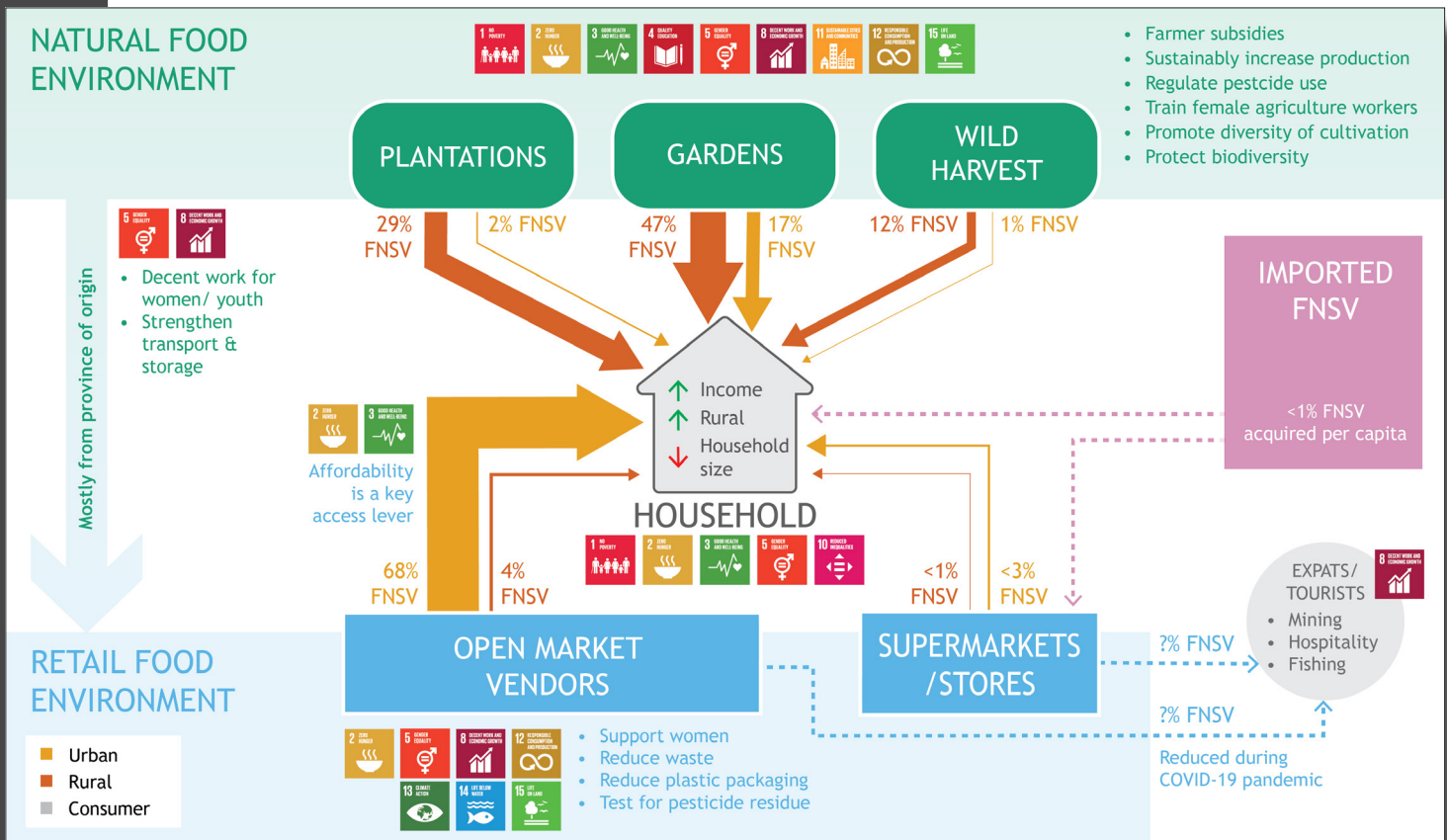


Figure 1. FNSV acquisition flow and key opportunities to progress the SDGs.

SOURCES

- Farrell, P.; Sharp, M.K.; Reeve, E.; Brewer, T.D.; Farmery, A.K.; Tutuo, J.; Bogard, J.R.; Kanamoli, S.; Thow, A.M. Fruit and Non-Starchy Vegetable Acquisition and Supply in Solomon Islands: Identifying Opportunities for Improved Food System Outcomes. Sustainability 2023, 15, 1742. doi.org/10.3390/su15021742

ABOUT

This series of briefs has been produced to provide timely updates of ongoing analyses of Pacific food systems. The briefs are not peer reviewed and are either interim products prior to publication or summaries of published work. The series is funded by the Australian Government through ACIAR projects FIS/2018/155 and FIS/2020/172. For further information contact Evelyn Wareham (evelynw@spc.int). Source details may be updated as publication status changes. Design and graphics by Eleanor McNeill. Version 2.

Citation: Farrell, P. et al. Fruit and Non-Starchy Vegetable in Solomon Islands (2023). Food Systems Brief No.18. Pacific Community.

SUPPORTED BY

