

Nadi tilapia cluster aquaculture equipment handover

Efforts are currently underway to boost tilapia production in the Western Division of Fiji Islands. The Fiji Ministry of Fisheries (MoF) and the Pacific Community (SPC) joined forces to assist a cluster of tilapia fish farmers in the Nadi district. Seven farmers from Nadi and two from Lautoka have come together to work as a group to take their fish farming activity up to a commercial level.

Four main constraints that were identified by the farmers have been slowing down their progress. The first is shortage of availability of tilapia fingerlings for pond stocking. The second is that fingerlings, when available, are often delivered as a mixture of different shapes and sizes. The third is that there is no local supplier of specialised aquaculture equipment for operation of hapa-net based breeding systems at the farm level, or for monthly pond sampling and final harvest of fish. The Fourth and final is a shortage of water to fill and maintain ponds, which is a constraint in some cases.

In the framework of the New Zealand government funded Sustainable Pacific Aquaculture project that is being implemented through SPC, the SPC Aquaculture Section worked with MoF and the farmers to prioritise actions and develop collaborative plans for the farmers in the Nadi cluster. The project has sourced specialised aquaculture equipment to assist with hapa-based tilapia fry production systems to be operated by selected farmers for distribution of fingerlings to the whole group of farmers. This includes breeding and

nursing hapa that will enable production and supply of tilapia fingerlings at uniform sizes to farmers at a consistent cost. Equipment that is to be shared by the farmers in the cluster include weighing scales, cast nets and harvest nets for assisting in the sampling and harvesting of their fish stock.

Based on the production survey that was conducted last year to benchmark the current performance of the nine farmers, only 1 tonne of fish was produced between them. With the assistance provided through the NZ funded project, it is projected that this will increase to 5 tonnes of table size tilapia worth FJD 50,000 by the end of 2018.

For more information:

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Tim Pickering, SPC Inland Aquaculture Adviser, hands over tilapia farming equipment to the farmers on behalf of SPC and Fiji Ministry of Fisheries in a ceremony conducted on 28 April 2018, during the Nadi Tilapia Cluster meeting hosted by the Azad Ali Farm in the hills behind Nadi, Fiji (image: SPC).