

Obituary: Fiji's most successful pioneer tilapia farmer



Mr Abdul Sadiq Sr sampling tilapia in his pond to determine growth and feeding rates. (image: Avinash Singh, SPC)

Every day, early in the morning, Abdul Sadiq used to walk around his ponds watching his fish swim up to his familiar shadow. To the great sadness of all the people who had the chance to cross his path, Mr Sadiq passed away on 4 December 2018 after being sick for several months.

Mr Sadiq was one of the main pioneers of successful commercial tilapia farming in Fiji. He was a kind and generous farmer who first ventured into tilapia farming in 1991. He built the first two ponds on his farm with the support of his family and technical guidance from the Fiji's Ministry of Fisheries. Using the income generated by his fish farm, Mr Sadiq was able to replace his corrugated-iron shack with a four-bedroom concrete house on the hillside overlooking his fishponds on Baulevu Road, Tailevu. This large and impressive home became well known among the Fiji fish farming community as 'The house that tilapia built'.

Later, Mr Sadiq expanded his farm with the addition of two more ponds in 1998 and another pond after he retired in 2005, again with support from the Ministry of Fisheries. Mr Sadiq also diversified into ornamental fish production,

including goldfish, koi carps, platies and gourami, along with livestock such as ducks, chickens and goat to supplement his income.

Mr Sadiq primarily sold his fish alive at the Nausori market, and was a familiar smiling face well known for the high quality of his products. He was also a founding member of the Tailevu Tilapia Farmers Cluster Group. He was always keen to share ideas he had developed and knowledge he had acquired about fish farming, and he eagerly coached new farmers with his methods for successful farming and marketing of tilapia fish.

His son and family continue the fish farming business, and aim to build on the legacy and successes of Mr Sadiq.