CHEFS FOR DEVELOPMENT

THE ROLE OF CHEFS IN LINKING AGRICULTURE TO TOURISM IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

By Robert Oliver and Dr Tracy Berno



LEFT TO RIGHT

Dora Rossi | Lydia Sini To'omalatai | Jesse Lee
Kalara Vusoniwailala | Shailesh Naidu | Rainal Sahai

CTA
Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation



FOREWORD

Agriculture and tourism are two sectors that offer significant opportunities for inclusive economic growth and employment in Pacific Island countries. However, achieving the potential of agritourism as a source of income, resilience and sustainable development requires improved linkages between tourism and agriculture and engaging all relevant stakeholders in the development process.

Agriculture is still the main source of livelihood for most countries in the region, but its contribution to island economies has generally declined over the last decade. In contrast, the tourism sector has grown and become the life blood for several small island economies. But it relies almost entirely on imported foods to serve tourists.

In getting the most out of agritourism, policy-makers face a dual challenge – first, to ensure that tourism growth is sustainable, and, second, to guarantee that the benefits resulting from increased visitor numbers are retained in the country and benefit poor rural communities. To achieve this, they will have to upgrade smallholder farmers' supply chains to be able to serve large hotels and resorts, stimulate demand for local, high-quality, healthy products and encourage chefs to use them to create exciting, new, attractive recipes.

The chefs profiled in this book are championing the effort of making local cuisine part of the tourism experience, building demand for local foods and training the next generation of local chefs. Working closely with farmers, they are transforming value chains to meet the high standards required by the hotel industry and in doing so are raising the incomes and improving the livelihoods of farmers.

CTA is pleased to be associated with this book, which tells the exciting stories of chefs from Samoa and Fiji and demonstrates what these talented and visionary professionals have been able to achieve through the 'Chefs for Development' initiative.

Together with the successful cases highlighted in this book, CTA supports a range of activities in agritourism, such as the development of the agritourism strategy in Vanuatu, the annual Pacific agribusiness forum and the Chefs for Development platform, which brings together experiences and successes from small island states in the Caribbean, Pacific and Africa.

Michael Hailu
Director
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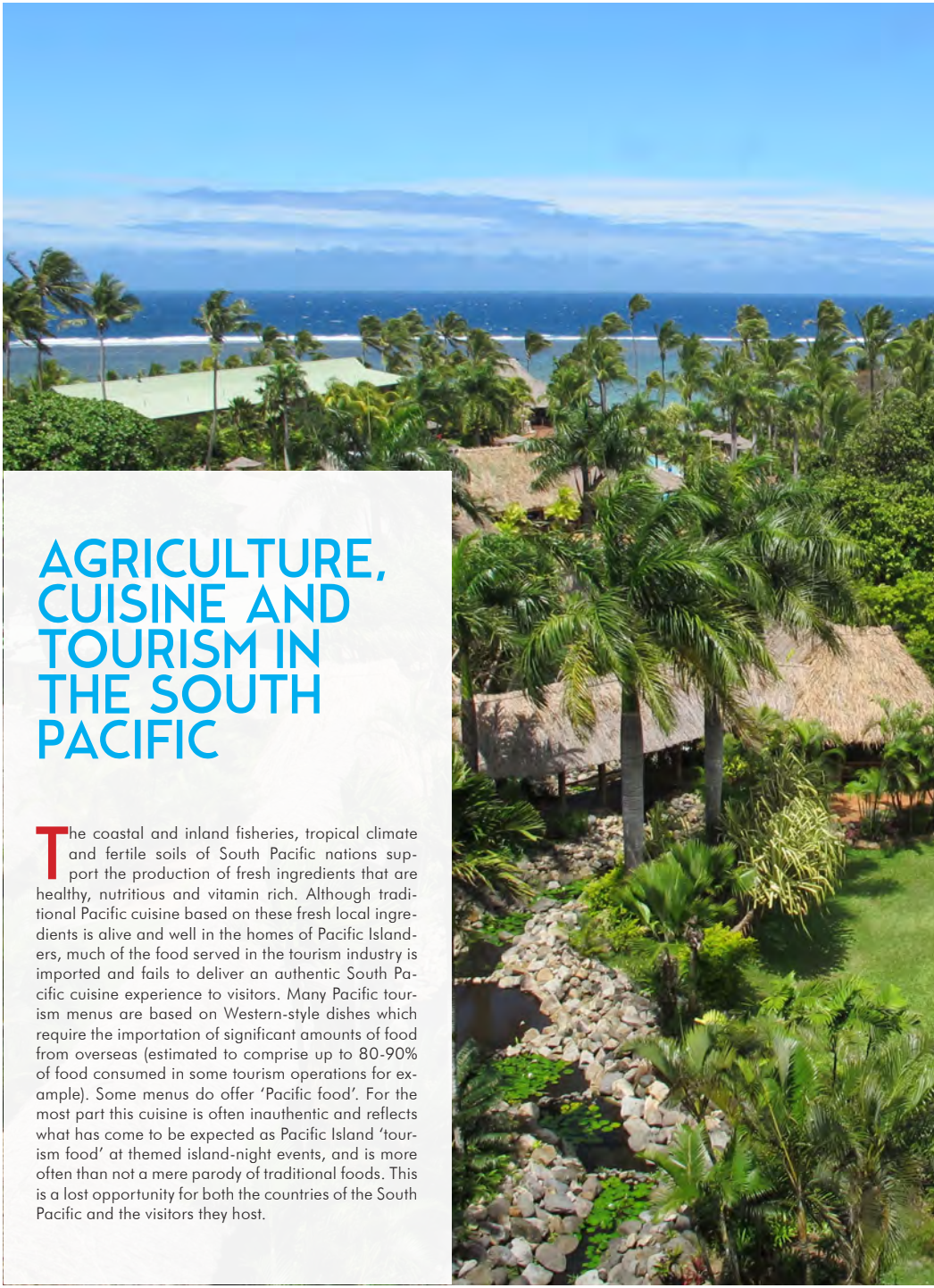
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AGRICULTURE, CUISINE AND TOURISM IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

The coastal and inland fisheries, tropical climate and fertile soils of South Pacific nations support the production of fresh ingredients that are healthy, nutritious and vitamin rich. Although traditional Pacific cuisine based on these fresh local ingredients is alive and well in the homes of Pacific Islanders, much of the food served in the tourism industry is imported and fails to deliver an authentic South Pacific cuisine experience to visitors. Many Pacific tourism menus are based on Western-style dishes which require the importation of significant amounts of food from overseas (estimated to comprise up to 80-90% of food consumed in some tourism operations for example). Some menus do offer 'Pacific food'. For the most part this cuisine is often inauthentic and reflects what has come to be expected as Pacific Island 'tourism food' at themed island-night events, and is more often than not a mere parody of traditional foods. This is a lost opportunity for both the countries of the South Pacific and the visitors they host.



THE ROLE OF CHEFS IN LINKING AGRICULTURE TO TOURISM

Food, cuisine and food traditions are among the most foundational elements of culture. As the Prime Minister of Samoa reflected, "Food is the gateway into all cultures. For Samoa, our [traditional] food expresses our intimate relationship with the land, the sea and our ancestors". Significantly, chefs can play an important role in creating demand for and reinforcing the importance of local cuisine as a cultural tourism product. For a growing number of tourists, food is an integral part of their travel experience. Reflecting the sentiments of the Samoan Prime Minister, many tourists believe that experiencing a destination's food is essential to understanding its culture. In the South Pacific local chefs are leading the way in linking local agricultural production, Pacific cuisine and the tourism industry. The following seven case studies highlight the success of some of these Pacific culinary gatekeepers. The case studies represent two Pacific island nations: Samoa and Fiji, and feature chefs who are working with local agricultural providers to bring fresh, local Pacific cuisine to the table for tourists. The case studies are presented in turn as follows:

- A brief description of the chef and/or business
- A description of chef-led agriculture – tourism linkages
- Opportunities and challenges

The overall outcomes and lessons learned are presented in composite at the end.

THE CHEFS OF SAMOA



DORA ROSSI

Chef and owner of Paddles Restaurant and Milani Café
Family-owned businesses, specialising in Samoan-Italian cuisine (reflecting the cultural background of the family)

> "I love food and I love Samoa. The Pacific way is sharing food. We love food and we always share what we have. Food is everything, it's more than a plate of food."

Paddles Restaurant, situated on the waterfront in downtown Apia (the capital city of Samoa), was opened in 2006. They offer an international menu, but with a focus on Samoan and Italian cuisines. Paddles is popular all year around, with the busiest time of the year being during the dry season – April to October. Paddles employs five front-of-house staff and five kitchen staff, all of whom are locals. Only dinner is served at Paddles. The restaurant seats 60 and on a busy night, can turn around at least two to three times that number. Breakfasts and lunches are available at the Rossi family's other establishment Milani Café, which was opened in 2013. Milani employs three kitchen staff and two front-of-house, again, all locals.

The clientele of both restaurants comprises a mix of tourists and locals. Paddles and Milani market primarily through word-of-mouth, however Trip Advisor is also a significant source of information for prospective customers, with Paddles having won 'Best Samoan Restaurant' on Trip Advisor every year for the past five years. In addition to word-of-mouth, they also advertise in destination guides in Samoa. Dora Rossi (and her restaurant Paddles) has also been featured in Mea'ai Samoa: Recipes and Stories from the Heart



of Polynesia. She also featured in the TVNZ South Pacific food and travel television series Real Pasifik. These opportunities were instrumental in helping her to promote Samoan cuisine. "Since being a part of the last book (Mea'ai Samoa), it's been great. People recognise me and often want a picture with me and the book which is amazing. The book has put Samoa on the map. I've had people come up to me and pat me on the back and thanking me for what I'm doing for Samoa. Samoa has been known in the past for bad food and bad service but the book has been nothing but positive for Samoa (Dora Rossi).

Dora has been a pioneer of the new wave of Samoan cuisine. Both restaurants are proudly Samoan and provide a Samoan food experience for their customers, "They don't come here to eat lamb shanks, they come here to eat coconuts and fish" (Dora Rossi). Dora sources most of her fruit and vegetable supplies from a local NGO Women in Business Development (WIBDI). WIBDI focuses on strengthening village economies in Samoa in ways that honour indigenous tradition, use traditional and modern technology, and promote fair trade. They have a particular emphasis on working with farmers to produce organic agricultural products. WIBDI was instrumental in supporting a 'Farm-to-Table' programme in Samoa with which Dora has been involved since its inception. Both restaurants buy organic produce from WIBDI every week, averaging four deliveries per week. Dora estimates that she purchases 60% of her product from WIBDI. The main product purchased is coconuts, which are used to make coconut cream for oka. Oka is a traditional Samoan dish of raw fish marinated in citrus juice and coconut cream. Oka is one of the most popular entrees at Dora's restaurants. Dora also purchases local green coconuts, which are the drinking coconuts. Her brother Giovanni uses them to make a local cocktail 'Niu Passion', which is popular with tourists. They also serve Koko Samoa (a locally grown and produced cocoa) smoothies at both businesses. One of the most popular desserts at Paddles Restaurant is 'Misi Luki Pudding', made from locally grown and dried organic bananas. Dora and her staff often talk to the customers about where they get their produce from. "All the produce we order is fresh and organic and we have no problem incorporating it into our menu" (Dora Rossi). Sustainability is also an important part of the Paddles and Milani experiences, "What I've been trying to do is create sustainable food. Sustainable tourism is very important to me. So ideally, we'd like to attract the tourists who will spend money and support the local farmers and local businesses" (Dora Rossi).

Although Dora has established a consistent and reliable supply-chain for produce for the restaurants, it was not without its challenges, "There were a few issues with getting the order on time but they've improved over the years". Transportation of produce from the farms to the restaurants can be difficult and is often inconsistent. Farms are spread geographically across the two main islands and farmers who do not have their own vehicle often have to rely on public transportation to get their products to market. Seasonality is another issue, with Dora indicating that they design their menus accordingly. Dora sees her relationship



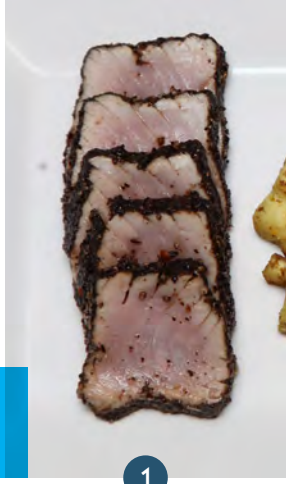




with WIBDI and their suppliers as symbiotic – when the suppliers consistently deliver quality local products, Dora is able to promote them; when she promotes the local products on her menu, she can provide a quality experience for her guests. "It makes me honoured to use their produce and transform it into something that people from overseas love. We have endless compliments from customers about the amazing food" (Dora Rossi). Dora believes that communication is a key factor in sustaining a local supply chain and that it is essential that farmers understand and appreciate what type of produce is required by chefs. She also believes that chefs need additional training to understand how to best utilize local products on their menus.

Dora has observed that only a small number of chefs in Samoa are engaging with the 'Farm-to-Table' model and she believes that there needs to be more awareness of it through actively promoting the use of local products to hotels and restaurants, and through opportunities such as food festivals and farmers' markets. She is hoping that the newly formed Samoa Chefs Association can be a vehicle for this. Dora also sees an important role for education and training for local chefs and the importance of Samoan-to-Samoan support, "The local chefs and owners of these local establishments need to get on board and support, educate and encourage Samoan locals to eat healthier." The fact that chefs and kitchen staff are familiar with the local ingredients is seen by Dora as a plus. Staff feel comfortable working with the familiar ingredients and can be encouraged to use them in new and innovative ways. Dora encourages her staff to be creative and experiment with new ways of using the familiar.

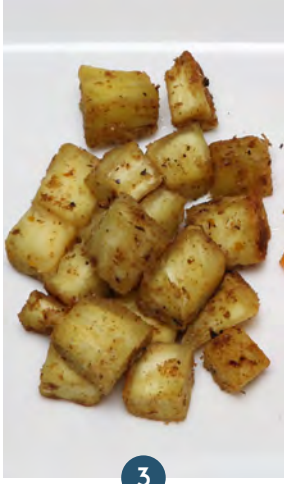
For Dora, working with local Samoan products to create a uniquely Samoan culinary experience has been a profound and personally rewarding experience, "You have to have passion in what you do. I love food and I love Samoa. The Pacific way is sharing food. We love food and we always share what we have. Food is everything, it's more than a plate of food." Dora has also seen how Samoans themselves have become proud about their culinary heritage, "That's what drives me to create really nice dishes with the local produce. I feel like I have a job now to continue, promote and change the views of Samoan cuisine."



1



2



3

Koko Pepper Tuna – Mango Salsa – Curried Breadfruit Cress

Cocoa is synonymous with Samoan cuisine and every Samoan grew up with the comforting aroma of freshly brewed local cocoa (koko samoa) brewing in their home. In this recipe, Dora usues koko as an innovative seasoning for fresh local tuna. Dora cooks the tuna in Samoa's uniquely smokey virgin organic coconut oil, made in the villages.

Watercress, Known as Kapisi Vai, is also popular in Samoa and grows abundantly in streams.

1 Tuna

Ingredients

- Fresh tuna fillet
- Samoan organic coconut oil
- ¼ cup freshly cracked pepper
- 1 Tbsp. grated Koko Samoa
- Salt

Method

1. Mix cracked pepper, salt and the grated Koko Samoa and set aside.
2. Cut tuna into a long log with even facades, coat with coconut oil and roll into pepper mix until evenly coated.
3. Sear tuna in a hot pan with a drizzle of coconut oil being mindful to turn it whilst cooking until all sides are evenly seared.
4. Allow to rest then with a sharp knife cut slices and drizzle with a little more coconut oil before serving.
5. Top with Mango salsa and serve with breadfruit wedges

2 Mango Salsa

Ingredients

- 1 mango –peeled-seeded and diced
- ¼ cup thinly dice red capsicum
- 2 tbsp. chopped spring onion
- 2 tbsp. chopped fresh coriander
- 1 chilli thinly chopped seeds removed
- 1 tbsp. lime juice

Method

1. Mix all ingredients in a bowl, cover and allow to rest ½ hour before serving.

3 Breadfruit



4

Ingredients

- Medium size breadfruit
- Samoan organic coconut oil
- Good quality curry powder
- Salt & pepper

Method

1. Remove the skin from the breadfruit with a sharp knife, cut it in quarters and place it in a pot of cold water then bring to the boil, cooking it for about 30 minutes or until an inserted skewer will release with ease. Drain and set aside to cool.
2. Cut the breadfruit into an even dice and season with salt and pepper, coat with coconut oil and curry powder, tossing to coat every individual dice.
3. Bake in the oven on a tray for about 30 minutes on medium heat or until golden.
4. Serve immediately.

4 Cress

Fresh watercress with a little drizzle of coconut oil and a squeeze of lime juice, salt & pepper to taste.





LYDIA SINI TO'OMALATAI

Owner/operator of Litia Sini Beach Resort, Lalomanu, Upolu, Samoa

> "There's a lot of products available on the island but it's a lack of knowledge of how to put them together or make use of them on the menu."

Litia Sini Beach Resort offers resort-style beach fales (Samoan open hut). The resort was started by Lydia's parents in the 1990s, with Lydia taking over in 2005. The resort comprises 14 double fales, two family fales, a beach bar and a restaurant. The resort's capacity is a maximum of 50 guests. Litia Sini employs 18 staff, seven of whom are in the kitchen. Food is considered one of the key features of the resort. In 2009 the Lalomanu coast where the Litia Sini resort is located) was devastated by a tsunami, which killed 143 people, including many tourists. The resort was reduced to nothing more that the concrete platform on which it was built, and several members of Lydia's family lost their lives. Despite the devastating loss, the resort was rebuilt and fully operational within a year of the tsunami. Fundamental changes to the resort's operations, including cuisine, were implemented as part of the re-build.

Lydia had always wanted always wanted to use local food at the resort. She recognised that tourists to Samoa wanted to try local cuisine, and many arrived in the country with high expectations of what they should be able get in the islands. As a guest at Litia Sini Resort suggested, "When travelling, the more authentic or more linked in you are to a country, the better the experience. It adds to the whole flavour of the place. Experiencing the local food has been a key part of my travel experience, just like learning part of the language. Part of culture is food and language. It gives you a sense of the people and how it's prepared. I don't want to travel and eat the same food I can eat at home" (Dave, New Zealand guest at Litia Sini Resort). As Lydia observed, many of these tourists had been to other Pacific islands and experienced other local food. She recognised this as an opportunity for the Samoan Tourism Authority to promote Samoa and what it has to offer.





Despite this desire to highlight local foods as part of the Litia Sini Resort experience, Lydia is not a cook and was unsure how she could integrate more local ingredients into the resort's menus, "There's a lot of products available on the island but it's a lack of knowledge of how to put them together or make use of them on the menu" (Lydia To'omalatai). Lydia (and Litia Sini resort) had been featured in Me'a Kai: The Food and Flavour of the South Pacific and Mea'ai Samoa: Recipes and Stories from the Heart of Polynesia. An episode of the TVNZ series Real Pasifik presented by Chef Robert Oliver was filmed at the resort. As part of the filming, Chef Oliver provided staff training. He also suggested to the staff to use local ingredients like o'o (the endosperm of a mature coconut) and raw pawpaw (papaya) in dishes such as salad and coleslaw.

The suggestion of using more local ingredients in innovative ways was not all that was required however. The staff's knowledge was restricted to how food was cooked in the village and they lacked the skills and ability to adapt these dishes and ingredients to the tourism context. Chef Oliver provided a week of training for the staff as part of the Real Pasifik television episode that was filmed in Samoa and this enhanced their understanding of how to use local products, and built their skills and confidence in doing so. Along with the increase in local dishes on the menu at Litia Sini resort, has come an increase in the purchasing of local products. The resort deals with one farm in Poutasi (a village on the south east coast of Upolu) and a few other local producers. Poutasi garden is a well developed and managed local farm and with the support from the hotel industry, they have maintained their local products for Litia Sini Beach Resort.

The famers at Poutasi garden keep the resort "in the loop" twice a week about the availability of products, thus allowing the restaurant to plan accordingly. Lydia sees this as a "win-win" situation for the resort and the local producers. The local supply chain however is not without its challenges. Due to an inconsistency of supply locally, the resort has started to grow some of their own such as cucumbers, herbs and greens (such as bok choy).

With their new-found confidence, the staff have developed good relationships with the customers. Staff are excited and happy to present Samoan cuisine and enjoy explaining what is in the dish, "People travel from afar to come here to eat and for them to eat what they can have at home isn't a 100% experience of our cuisine so being able to put together little bits and pieces is something that the kitchen staff never thought they could do. Aside from just pouring coconut cream onto something and that's usually what they cook at home. Being able to use other methods and ideas makes them very happy and they are proud to use and sell our local products" (Lydia To'omalatai). Lydia also reported that ever since they changed the menu and added more local Samoan cuisine they have had people come to the resort to specifically request local dishes, "It's been an eye opener for us and other restaurants down the coast that are making use of the local produce. Our guests are amazed and happy that we sell the local cuisine. This is what they come to Samoa for. Not just to enjoy the beach and the people but the food. Being able to have the Samoan cuisine is something that's fascinating to them. The palagis [tourists] come and say they would like to try a local dish. We've had a lot of people say they've seen us on TV and they've seen our pork marinated in Samoan koko, which is something our local people, even

Samoans overseas didn't think was possible. We're very happy to offer that. We noticed we are receiving a lot of people from the other resorts to come and try our coconut crusted fish. It's not just coconut crusted but it's cooked in coconut oil. You can smell the smell coming out of the kitchen, it's the smell of Samoa. It's not just the taste, it's the smell (Lydia To'omalatai).

Coconut Crusted Asiasi cooked in Samoan Coconut Oil with Esi and O'o Salad

Asiasi- or mahimahi- is line caught right offshore from Litia Sini. This dish uses 4 forms of coconut- fresh grated coconut to crust the fish, fresh coconut cream to marinate the fish and dress the salad, coconut oil to cook the fish, and diced o'o, or sprouting coconut heart, as the basis for the salad.

Ingredients:

- 1 kg Asiasi filet- deboned and scaled
- 1 cup coconut cream- fresh made of course
- Fresh grated coconut
- Coconut oil
- Salt and pepper

Method:

1. Cut the asiasi into portion sizes
2. Rinse in water and then put in a bowl with the coconut cream and eason with salt and pepper
3. One by one, remove the fish from the bowl and coat with the fresh coconut, pressing the coconut on on with your hands
4. Let sit in the fridge for 1/2 hour before cooking
5. Heat some coconut oil in a pan and cook the fish, turning from time to time. Cooks in 5 minutes or so
6. Serve with esi and o'o salad- see below

Esi and O'o Salad

1. Choose a green esi (pawpaw) with a few orange streaks- stll very firm but starting to ripen.
2. Remove the skin and seeds form the esi and grate into shreds
3. Add the juice of 2 limes, a few mint leaves, and 2 diced o'o
4. Dress with a little coconut cream, season with a little salt and pepper











JESSE LEE

Chef and owner of Palusami Restaurant and Bar on the waterfront in Apia, Samoa.

> "We want our local people to know that the little garden patch next to their house is good enough to be served at our restaurant."

"Palusami is a traditional dish. It makes Samoan food Samoan. It is taro leaves, coconut milk and the flavour of smoke from the umu (earth oven) (Jesse Lee). Palusami the restaurant is located in central Apia, the capitol and main city in Samoa. They promote local produce and Samoan made products in their food. Working with eight to ten local suppliers, all meat, fish and vegetables used in the restaurant are purchased directly from local farmers, villages and families. Palusami's menu is inspired by traditional Samoan food, but "infused" with international flavours, "Samoan cuisine has a place in the culinary world. Enjoy this organic experience at Palusami Restaurant and Bar" (www.palusami.biz). Palusami open five nights a week and serves lunch and dinner. The restaurant is small and employs three staff in the litchen and two for front-of-house.

Jesse Lee, the chef and owner of Palusami, was born in Samoa but moved to New Zealand when he was nine years old. his journey in the kitchen began with making toana'i (Sunday feast) at the age of 10 or 11. Jesse trained as a chef in New Zealand and worked in several top Auckland establishments before deciding to return home to Samoa, "I consider Samoa home and it's a place I love. I wanted to come home to do something for my people which is why our menu is very local based. Every meal has a local influence" (Jesse Lee). Frustrated that local establishments in Samoa were reluctant to embrace local ingredients and dishes, Jesse decided to open Palusami.

Palusami supports a farm-to-table approach, "We want our local people to know that the little garden patch next to their house is good enough to be served at our restaurant. Palusami's intentions are to show the locals that our pork, our chicken and our beef is good enough for a restaurant menu. Not only is it good enough, it's healthier for us because it is organic" (Ronna Lee Hadfield, Jesse's sister). All the meat and vegetables on Palusami's menu, are locally sourced and fruit and vegetables come from the local markets or are sourced them from certain families or through the WIBDI organic baskets, "If I'm not ordering from WIBDI, I like to buy from our local market because I like to give back to them as well. The point of our restaurant is to help the local economy" (Jesse Lee). "We are all linked in the supply chain and we know our success creates a domino chain of happy families or in this case, our suppliers. We are essentially contributing to sustainable livelihoods of the people of Samoa" (Ronna Lee Hadfield).

Jesse has observed that local cuisine has been significantly impacted by westernised cuisine. It is his goal to revive traditional Samoan cuisine. He also believes that one of the reasons why local operators are only recently embracing Samoan cuisine at restaurants is because chefs and business owners have been under the impression that tourists in Samoa only want to eat what they are familiar with back home, which is

not the case. He has also observed that local people are more surprised by Palusami's menu than the tourists because their familiar Samoan foods are being presented in contemporary, innovative (but Samoan) ways. As his sister Ronna said, "Often people think of Samoan restaurants to be smorgasbord or buffet style. You get a plate and you just pile on the food. However, when people come to Palusami, they experience similar food but at a sit-down restaurant. Our people see that the Samoan food we serve can be presented beautifully, like any other restaurant in the world. People are always amazed by it." Jesse is also conscious of providing a Samoan cultural experience for guests. The Samoan way is for everyone to cook together and then come together to eat. Those who cook the food are acknowledged. This is replicated in the restaurant with Jesse coming out of the kitchen to meet and talk with the restaurant's patrons.

In the short time that it has been open, Palusami has garnered an excellent reputation for its cuisine, use of local ingredients and approach to community engagement. There have however, been challenges along the way. Consistency of supply has been problematic at times. Jesse has addressed this by not indicating specific cuts of meat for example (indicating "local pork" as opposed to "local pork fillet") and emphasising the local and organic nature of the ingredients. Jesse has also worked with local producers to expand their offering, for example, teaching his meat supplier how to cure hams and make bacon. Jesse's commitment to training and capacity building extends to the staff at the restaurant as well. The cooks in the restaurant are not culinary chefs and Jesse has trained them himself, "Our staff are amazing. We want our staff to feel like this is more than just a job. We make them feel as if they have ownership in this business as well" (Jesse Lee). Jesse has also developed direct supply relationships with local producers such as a village garden project in Poutasi Village which sees the villagers deliver produce to the restaurant, and families that grow tomatoes and others who can provide coconuts. In support of these local supply relationships, Jesse likes to advise his guests that by dining at Palusami, they are participating in the local food chain and supporting a network of local businesses and families. Indeed, every menu at Palusami includes the following statement: "Palusami Restaurant promotes the use of local produce and Samoan made products. All meat, fruit and vegetables are organic. Purchased directly from local farmers, fisheries and village families. Our goal is to give back to the farmers and our country through import substitution as well as promoting the farm-to-table movement." Addtionally, Palusami encourages their guests to use the hashtags #supportlocalbusiness #buylocalmade #buysamoanmade when they post on Facebook, "We're so worried about competing globally but what we need to realise is that we need to take care of our local market" (Ronna Lee Hadfield).

Jesse has aspirational goals for Samoan cuisine and local products, hoping that within the next 10 years, local food will be the norm. He sees this being achieved through encouraging local economic growth by sourcing local families to raise free range livestock and encouraging local farmers to grow the products required for the industry, "Our vaisu (fish cooked in coconut cream) that we serve at Palusami has noodle in it. The noodle is made out of taro. The laksa I make is made out of the turmeric that grows here. The Samoa that I want to see in 10 years will be serving fish'n'chips – made with local fish and taro fries. These are the alternatives I want to see the whole of Samoa implementing in 10 years" (Jesse Lee).



Palusami Dip

Not only is Palusami the name of Jesse's Apia restaurant, it is also Samoa's signature dish. Made with taro leaves and fresh coconut cream, this is Jesse's interpretation as a savory dip

Ingredients:

- Ingredients
- 1cup water
- Ten luau leafs
- 1\2 onion
- 1cup fresh squeeze coconut cream

Method:

1. In a pot slice taro leaves and add water simmer until leaves are cooked than strained out the left over water
2. In pan.on a medium heat sweat onions out add coconut milk simmer for five minutes..
3. Add to the taro leaf..use hand blend to blend..season to preference salt and pepper
4. Coconut milk simmer for 1 minute
5. Serve with crusty bread or roasted breadfruit wedges

THE ORGANIC FARMERS OF SAMOA

FAUMUINA TAFUNA'I

Media and Communications for Women In Business Development Inc. (WIBDI),Samoa

> "Every organic story from each of these farms have shown to be positive for our families and more and more farmers have shown interest in wanting to join the organic movement and wanting to gain better understanding of better growing, better trading and better living"

WIBDI is a development NGO that focuses on organic agriculture. WIBDI's purpose is to find income streams for farmers, domestically and internationally through linking them with markets and filling gaps in the value chain. The organisation helps farmers achieve organic certification, acts as a conduit for sourcing markets for products, facilitates farm-to-table partnerships in Samoa and supplies the local market through organic produce baskets.

WIBDI works with and visits around 1000 family farms in Samoa each year. Within that group, approximately 600 of them have been certified organic by the National Association of Sustainable Agriculture in Australia. 1000 organic farms in Samoa is a large percentage of the farmers, which puts the scope and scale of WIBDI's work in context. WIBDI's work with farmers is highly prescribed and structured because of the compliance involved with getting and maintaining organic certification. Along with Samoa's reputation as a pristine environment with rich cultural value the organic certification adds significant value to Samoan produce providing opportunities for farmers to benefit from trade within a wide range of discerning markets that would not be accessible without organic certification. WIBDI's farmers' products fill a niche for high-end, socially conscious, environmentally friendly products such as organic virgin coconut oil, dried bananas and coffee. "Every organic story from each of these farms have shown to be positive for our families and more and more farmers have shown interest in wanting to join the organic movement and wanting to gain better understanding of better growing, better trading and better living" (Faumuina Tafuna'i).

Over time, WIBDI's focus has moved from primarily organic compliance to a focus on the farm to restaurant supply chain. WIBDI's farm-to-table programme links small holder farmers to restaurants and hotels. The initial idea came from a programme in the Caribbean spearheaded by Pacific chef Robert Oliver. WIBDI drew upon Chef Oliver's model and 'Samoan-ised' it. This involved understanding the different challenges in Samoa compared to what was experienced in the Caribbean. For Samoa, challenges included logistics (getting product to market), as well as understanding the grading system necessary for consistent quality and quantity required by industry. WIBDI featured in the cookbooks Me'a Kai: The Food and Flavours of the South Pacific and Mea'ai Samoa: Recipes and Stories from the Heart of Polynesia, as well as the TVNZ television series Real Pasifik. This mixed media exposure was seen as an integral component for the success of the farm-to-table programme. Faumuina credits the books and TV show with helping to create a renaissance of Samoan cuisine. Faumuina believes that a "taste of Samoa" is a great concept for the country's tourism brand, with even the Prime Minister challenging local chefs to embrace their local cuisine, "It's one thing to have the produce but if menus don't include that produce, then we can't actually get it into the restaurants. The cuisine is definitely an important piece of the story" (Faumuina Tafuna'i). Television in particular has proved to be a powerful and persuasive medium in building the esteem around Samoan food and the chefs who are producing it for the tourism industry, "We've seen Samoan food on TV before, but to have it shown and recorded with such high values [in Real Pasifik] and to place ourselves next to Italian and French cuisine and to discover that not just our food but our people are unique. That was the great celebration of the show" (Faumuina Tafuna'i).

Faumuina reports that the farm-to-table programme has progressed well. The programme started with eight hotels and 20 farmers and has now grown to an estimated 21 hotels and 63 farmers. Faumuina believes that the farm-to-table programme has given the organic programme structure. The farm-to-table programme has also provided the opportunity for WIBDI to make incremental steps towards becoming a more commercially-oriented organisation. This has not come without pressures though. The critique from the tourism industry can be fast and harsh. This re-

sponsibility to 'front up' to industry when things go wrong has resulted in the implementation of robust systems, and education and capacity building for farmers about the commercial realities of supplying the tourism industry. Through their work, WIBDI have noticed a renewed enthusiasm among chefs who are trying to "spice up" the local menu in a Samoan way. WIBDI believes that the more chefs engage with local products and local cuisine the more benefits there will be, especially for the tourists as they get a better experience of Samoa. Some of the examples of these successful farm-to-table partnerships include:

Ioane from the village of Malie, Upolu fulfils orders of koko Samoa (Samoan cocoa) blocks by the hundreds for the local hotels. The popularity of his koko Samoa reinforces for Samoans the value of locally grown, traditional food products. The consistent revenue stream from the sale of koko Samoa means that Ioane can now budget and be more responsive to family needs and community obligations. Other families have also benefitted through responding to the needs of the tourism industry by growing new crops to supply particular hotels. For example, one of WIBDI's woman farmers, Ana from the village of Faleasi'u, earns up to $200 tala a week from growing the crops required by industry. WIBDI has also been able to suggest different traditional plants like lau pele (a leafy green) to the chefs who have embraced the opportunity to try different crops.

Dora Rossi and her brother Giovanni order a wide variety of crops weekly. They have been instrumental in giving WIBDI formative feedback. This feedback has proved to be a valuable source of information for WIBDI because the Rossis are owner/operators. The Rossis have also engaged beyond the farm-to-table programme with WIBDI and have offered advice and ideas about future opportunities for the organisation.

Litia Sini is quite a distance from the main town of Apia, where WIBDI is based. Despite the distance, they consistently pick up virgin coconut oil. Litia Sini's cuisine has changed to include recipes based on the Mea'ai Samoa cookbook. The use of the cookbook as a manual has introduced an international standard of food at the resort that is proving to be popular with tourists.

Jesse Lee from Palusami grew up in Samoa and has embraced local cuisine, but with his own 'spin'. Although his restaurant is small and relatively new, he is willing to experiment and responds positively when WIBDI includes "surprise ingredients" in his order.

Faumuina sees that the work of WIBDI extends beyond that of just working with famers, "Organic foods offer a holistic benefit for wellbeing, the environment, the farmers and the consumers. Everybody involved benefits from the health perspective and also an understanding of how we connect with our planet and how we need to look after it (Faumuina Tafuna'i). The focus on organics empowers farmers to become a stewards for their land, not only for themselves and the land, but also for future generations. WIBDI's work with the farmers embraces and reaffirms traditional agricultural practices - Samoa was traditionally organic. Through the work of WIBDI, the nation is gradually returning to its agricultural roots, "We already have five certified organic villages in Samoa. Those villages have never used chemicals and it's not because we came in and preached about chemicals. They knew that it was not something they wanted on their lands. More recently we are seeing political support for this. Within the next 10 years the vision is to encourage the whole nation to go organic" (Faumuina Tafuna'i).

WIBDI is positive about the future for farm-to-table opportunities in Samoa. The organisation is moving into the third phase of the farm-to-table programme. With UNDP funding, WIBDI will be focussing on bringing more farmers on board, increasing delivery days and improving transport systems (for example, a refrigerated truck for pick-ups, which will allow farmers to stay on their farms rather than travelling into town). WIBDI is also exploring technical solutions such as mobile phone apps, for example a Farm Bank app through which farmers can check their bank balance and their year-to-date earnings. WIBDI believes that the farm-to-table programme can become a model for other Pacific nations.

WIBDI undertakes regular evaluations of the farm-to-table programme. Every week, staff do an assessment of how many crops were ordered, by which restaurants, what problems were encountered and how were they dealt with. This continual feedback has contributed to WIBDI's ability to grow the programme and make improvements. To scale the programme up however, additional development funding or investment is required. The seed funding they received two years ago is finished. WIBDI is very conscious that they are accountable to their farmers; now that the commitment has been made to the farm-to-table supply chain, it must be fulfilled, otherwise farmers, chefs and customers will lose confidence.

THE CHEFS OF FIJI



KALARA VUSONIWAILALA

Owner of Mango Café a restaurant and catering company situated in the suburb of Nasese in Suva, Fiji

> "It's gotten me to know my food and to have faith in our own culture and our own produce. Before it wasn't flash enough for me. Now, as we are doing it, the faith in our own culture is growing. It's a revolution that is going right through Fiji and the Pacific."

The 150 seat Mango Café has been in operation since 2007. The café is open weekdays for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and open for breakfast and lunch on weekends. Twice a week Mango Café offers a lovo (traditional Fijian feast) buffet. The café employs 22 full-time staff, 9 of whom are in the kitchen. They also employ seven casual staff.

Mango Café did not always offer local Fijian cuisine. For the first two years of operation, the café focussed on Western-influenced cuisine and lacked a clear point of difference in the Suva marketplace. Around that time, several other similar restaurants opened up and café Mango's owner, Kalara, realised that there was an over-supply of establishments that focussed on Western café-style dishes.

Prior to re-branding the café, Kalara undertook an informal survey of restaurant patrons asking customers what they wanted. She also looked at other restaurants, and analysed their menus and price range. As a result, she identified a gap in the market for a restaurant that specialised in local cuisine, "We realigned ourselves to this key slogan, 'Flavours of Fiji'. Local food in terms of Fijian and Indo-Fijian food with some Western favourites. Local cuisine is the main offer and star of our menu. They come here because they want fresh food and they know that's what we serve" (Kalara Vusoniwailala). As a result of making the switch to a Fiji inspired cuisine, the increase in use of local products has been significant (Kalara estimates that

her use increased by 500% over the past five years). Seventy percent of the food on offer at Mango Café is now from local suppliers. With their previously Western-oriented menu 80% of their food was imported. In the past, Kalara would use three cartons of frozen French fries a week and a carton of pasta in about the same amount of time. Now it takes up to four months to go through a carton of these imported products. Use of local produce such as rourou (taro leaves used for their popular dish of rourou soup) has increased from one bunch a day to up to three dozen bunches a day.

Despite the popularity of her their Fijian-focused food, there are challenges in sustaining a local supply chain. Purchasing is a challenge. Initially, Kalara purchased her products from a middleman. However, this was only suitable if the consumption was small. She now buys in bulk direct from four to five farmers and from the local Suva Market using a "one per product" approach – one product per supplier. Kalara believes that the supply line needs to continue to grow to ensure its sustainability, "Unless the demand is increased there is no need for the supply to increase. While this food revolution is continuing and developing, we need that to happen faster so the farmers can see [the opportunities]. Innovative farmers need to be supported and subsidised to grow rourou and other indigenous crops." (Kalara Vusoniwailala). On appositive note, Kalara has found that with the increase in local products her profit margins have increased. Less meat is needed for the local menu and the predominant percentage on a plate is now vegetable heavy, which is cheaper than buying meat (even locally grown meat).

As Kalara developed the Flavours of Fiji at Mango Café, she found a need to focus on staff training, which now occurs once every two weeks. This training is grounded in local cultural values, "It's all about the personality and the genuine sincere warmth. It extends to the food. You help each other the same as you do in the village but I've had to structure it" (Kalara Vusoniwailala). As a result, the staff better understand the values behind the Flavours of Fiji brand and have gained confidence in their ability to share it with customers. When asked about whether she was proud of the Fijian cuisine on offer, Aunty B., one of the chefs at Mango Café replied, "Yes because my name is there on the soup, Aunty B's rourou. I'm proud of that. Everyone, when they look at the menu they say, Aunty B? Wow! That's me! And sometimes they always come and say, "I want to see the lady that made it" so they say, Aunty B, someone wants to see you. They says Thank you, your rourou is nice or the daal soup, Aunty B's daal soup. I'm proud" (Aunty B.).

Aunty B is typical of many Fijian women- she is a terrific natural cook. When asked about her training, she replies "I'm just a housewife and I love cooking from my heart. I've got a clean heart. When you cook you have to be happy and if the heart is clean that's what makes for nice food. When you are angry or down and you touch the food the taste is not there. This is Fijian food. When the girls grow up they know it, taught by our grandfathers grandmothers".

When asked about the transition from a more Western cuisine to a decicefly local one, Aunty B says "The change is good. I learned the English food but the Fijian food is just automatic. Easy, the Fijian food is easy. The staff is mostly Fijian so it's easy. They understand it. The English food, the Western food, only I know it. The taste is different. Never mind who cooked it. Here it's real Fijian food like lovo, ota, that's all from the village."

Kalara sees what she is doing as a contribution to a food revolution that needs to continue to grow and gain more momentum, "It's gotten me to know my food and to have faith in our own culture and our own produce. Before it wasn't flash enough for me. Now, as we are doing it, the faith in our own culture is growing. It's a revolution that is going right through Fiji and the Pacific. The food revolution has been led by the creative people going back to fresh produce and simple cuisine. That has influenced the thinking and production of the chefs and consumers" (Kalara Vusoniwailala).



Aunty B's Rourou Soup

Rourou- or taro leaves- are the "green of the Pacific" Almost always cooked with lolo (coconut cream) they break up easily when cooked and become creamy- ideal for soup as Aunty B has discovered.

Ingredients

- 3 bunches rourou (taro leaves)
- 2 onions
- 2 tablespoon minced local ginger
- 6 coconuts made into coconut cream
- salt and pepper

Method

1. Remove the stems from rhe rourou leaves
2. Cook the rourou leaves in boiling water for at least 30 minutes
3. Drain, keeping some of the water, mash a bit and add some of the water back
4. Add the onion, ginger salt pepper and coconut and blend well.
5. Serve with fried casava or boiled taro



FOUNDATION FOR RURAL INTEGRATED ENTERPRISES & DEVELOPMENT (FRIEND) FIJI

FRIEND Fiji (www.friendfiji.com) is a grassroots NGO based in Lautoka, the main city on the west coast of Fiji's largest island, Viti Levu. FRIEND was started by Sashi Kiran as a means to facilitate community development in Fiji's rural and under-serviced regions. Registered as a charitable organization in 2001, FRIEND Fiji has grown over the years to include 60 dedicated staff and two offices in the west and north of Viti Levu. As part of its broad range of community development activities, FRIEND Fiji has a focus on sustainable livelihoods through income generation. A significant part of this is the FRIEND Fiji Style® brand – a range of locally sourced and produced food products utilizing mainly organic ingredients. These chutneys, jams and spices are prepared by women using traditional recipes that in turn provide markets for rural farmers for their crops.

FRIEND works with groups of farmers to produce crops in large volume. In total, FRIEND works with close to 500 local suppliers. As part of their extension activities farmers are trained in management, harvesting and post-harvest handling. Farmers are encouraged to work with crops for which they have existing knowledge and those which can contribute to import substitution (for example pulses, cereals, herbal teas and root crops). FRIENDS provides a variety of support mechanisms to address farmers' needs such as seed distribution and assistance in setting up nurseries and irrigation etc. These are based on the specific needs of the groups of farmers. FRIENDS also advocates and supports the establishment of fruit orchards for longer term economic returns. More than 50 farmers have adopted organic farming under the Participatory Guarantee System as FRIEND promotes healthier and sustainable farming. Communities are also provided training on drying fruits and root crops for home consumption and sale of surplus produce for income. In some instances, FRIENDS also helps to facilitate linkages between farmers and markets for their products. Approved communities and suppliers are also able to sell to FRIEND.

Some of the agricultural products are value-added through processing for feed, cereals and processed goods packaged and sold under the Friend's Fiji Style® brand name. At quality controlled production centers, trained and skilled workers process and prepare the goods for the market. These raw materials are collected at the FRIEND food processing facilities in Lautoka and Labasa and turned into Friend's Fiji Style® jams, pickles, chutneys, herbal teas, spices, gluten-free flours, desiccated coconut and dried fruits. The range of FRIEND Fiji Style® products are popular with both locals and tourists, and they are on offer at many resorts, restaurants, shops and duty-free retailers.



SHAILESH NAIDU

Executive Chef at the Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort, Fiji and President of the Fiji Chefs' Association

> "We're supporting our local farmers and it helps us to maintain our costs. We have never had complaints or demands for non-local food. We have at least 5-6 varieties of local fruit and I have never come across a guest who has requested an apple"

The Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort is one of the largest resorts in Fiji. Opened in 2001, this 252 room resort caters primarily for families, weddings and honeymooners. During the Antipodean school holidays (their busiest times), the resort caters for up to 800 guests at a time, including up to 200 children. There are six restaurants on site and approximately 85% of the guests eat in-house. The resort hosts a large commercial production kitchen in which 120 staff are employed. Shailesh started as a sous chef at the resort in 2001, becoming the Executive Chef in 2007. He is the first Fijian Executive Chef in Fiji.

The Outrigger has been at the fore of the local food movement for close to 15 years. All fruit for the breakfast buffet is local, jams are made in-house, local starches (kumala and taro) are used instead of imported potatoes and different varietals of locally grown spinach are offered on the menus, "Promoting and utilising the local cuisine is a win-win situation. We're supporting our local farmers and it helps us to maintain our costs. We have never had complaints or demands for non-local food. We have at least 5-6 varieties of local fruit and I have never come across a guest who has requested an apple" (Shailesh Naidu).

The demand for the locally grown products is met through both direct supply through a few farmers (approximately 5) as well as through middle men who deal with farmers. Not only does the resort support and utilise local farmers and produce, they also nurture local employees who quite often come into the industry with no experience. Up to 80% of the staff at the Outrigger had never worked in a kitchen before and have been trained on site. Shailesh has also facilitated a range of culinary workshops to enhance the linkages between Fiji's producers and the tourism industry and to educate growers in the concept of "farm to table". Training is grounded in local culture, "In our kitchen, and in many Pacific kitchens, we have no hierarchy. We all help each other. We bring the village in to the kitchen. I want to encourage them and boost their confidence. It's like developing pride (Shailesh Naidu). This approach extends to local suppliers as well, "We have a supplier who used to be extremely quiet. He was a humble farmer who didn't say much. However, working with us, he learnt confidence which resulted in him being able to go to other local hotels and present his products. He has gained more of a business education from dealing with us" (Shalesh Naidu). Supply chains for local seafood however have not been as successful, with Shailesh expressing concerns that they are not enough local suppliers or fishermen to keep up with demand.

The Outrigger, and Shailesh's support of the local community extends beyond the local supply chain to projects from which the local community benfits. As head of the Fiji Chefs' Association, Shailesh is a role model for all chefs in Fiji. Despite the Association receiving no external funding, members, under Shailesh's leadership, engage voluntarily in a range of professional and community-oriented activities. Recent initiatives he has initiated include a hospital kitchen clean-up in which Shailesh and his team strip-cleaned the kitchen and serviced the equipment, cooked for the patients and catered for the special needs school. Shailesh also led a local high school master chef competition that involved 12 schools and five categories. This was implemented to encourage school children to get in the kitchen and have fun cooking. The students were expected to use local ingredients for a locally inspired dish. Similarly, Shailesh's involvement with the Fiji Chefs' Association was motivated by his desire to give back to his community and to inspire the next generation of local chefs. For Shailesh, cooking is not just about putting meals on the tables of the Outrigger, it's about focussing on "Our Restaurants, Our Home and Our Markets" for the good of the community and country.





Fiji's deep sea snapper mud crabs

Fish wrapped & poached in banana leaf w_ ginger, coriander, crab meat braised in coconut 'miti' sauce w_ caramelized onions & kumala

Sea snapper (4 pax)

Ingredients

- Snapper- 160g x 4
- Lemon juice- 1 tsp
- Ginger -10g
- Coriander- 8 sprigs
- Salt & pepper - to taste
- Banana leaf -4 piece (to wrap)

Method

1. Marinate snapper w_ salt, pepper & lemon juice
2. Finely slice the ginger into julienne
3. Wrap snapper in banana leaf w_ coriander sprigs and ginger
4. Slow poach snapper till moistly cooked

Mud crabs in coconut miti

Ingredients

- Mud crab meat- 160g
- Tomatoes (fine diced) -10g
- Onions (fine diced)-10g
- Spring onion (chopped) -5g
- Garlic- 1tsp
- Coconut cream- 80ml
- Olive oil- 5ml
- seasoning

Method

1. Sauté onions, garlic in olive oil and add crab meat
2. Add coconut cream and simmer for few minutes
3. To finish add tomatoes, spring onions and adjust the seasoning

Caramelized onions & kumala

Ingredients

- Kumala- 1 whole(appox 200g)
- Onions -10g
- Butter -20g
- Salt & pepper to taste

Method

1. Boil the kumala and cut into rings
2. Sauté onions in butter add kumala and adjust the seasoning

To Serve

- Place the cooked kumala on the plate, add the crab and top with the banana leaf snapper package



RAINAL SAHAI

Rainal Sahai is the Executive Chef for four properties in Fiji - three in the Yasawa Islands (an island group approximately 3 - 5 hours by boat from the main island of Viti Levu) and one property on the main island Viti Levu. The properties comprise:

> "Training for staff includes going through the menus with servers so they have and understanding of where the food comes from" and the stories linking it to the community,

1. Paradise Cove Resort (upmarket, family oriented, FD$900-$1,200 per night for accommodation) – peak occupancy 110 gusts;
2. Blue Lagoon Beach Resort (target backpackers FD$35 per night to high end FD$1,100 for family view) peak occupancy 110 gusts;
3. Octopus Resort (target backpackers FD$35 per night to high end FD$1,100 for family view) peak occupancy 110 guests; and,
4. Oasis Palms Hotel – a transit hotel located near the main gateway airport in Nadi with a peak occupancy of 100 guests.

There is a total of six restaurants across the four properties and Rainal oversees 20-25 kitchen staff per property (a total of 100 staff). Although there are designated storemen and purchasing officers, all food purchase orders must be approved by Rainal or one of his head chefs.

Since he initially started with the resorts, Rainal opted to focus on local cuisine. This was not a choice based on necessity with the resorts being located on the outer islands. Rather, it was Rainal's vision to utilise local produce and infuse it with modern cooking techniques. This vision is reflected in menus that highlight local produce in a high-end cuisine which differs from that at other properties on the mainland, "Our properties emphasise and sell local cuisine. I want to be different. I don't want to copy chefs from the mainland. I also think our guests from overseas eat what they eat at home every day. They didn't spend thousands of dollars to come to Fiji to eat what they eat at home. They come here to experience Fiji" (Rainal Sahai). Rainal has taken inspiration from Chef Robert Oliver, co-Author (with Tracy Berno) of 2010 Gourmand World Cookbook winner, Me'a Kai; the Food and Flavours of the South Pacific. He credits Chef Oliver and the book as being "key ingredients" in the success of two of his signature dinners. Rainal is also a fan of the TVNZ Real Pasifik programme, which he and his chefs watched while sitting around the grog (kava) bowl. He credits the show as having had a catalysing effect on food in the South Pacific.

The local nature of the menus is an important part of the brand of the resorts and the restaurants that Rainal oversees. Training for staff includes going through the menus with servers so they have an understanding of where the food comes from and the





stories linking it to the community, "They don't have to memorise everything but enough for them to explain to the guests what a food item is. When we have a fish special they say this is the fish of the day, it came from our village and was caught at this time and they can point out to the lagoon where the fish was caught" (Rainal Sahai).

With six restaurants to provide for, a reliable supply chain is essential. Some products are imported, such as carrots, potatoes and onions, as well as top quality beef. Rainal has the budget to import whatever else he wants however he chooses to allocate that part of the budget for transportation so he can travel to the mainland to find farmers that can grow just for the properties, thus creating his own supply networks, "We try and buy from the village but they grow on a small scale. We need at least 20KGs of English cabbage per day but they can't supply that much. We try to find farmers that can just grow for us and cut out the middle man because they are too expensive" (Rainal Sahai). Rainal also makes use of growers in the outer islands, but along with this comes many challenges. As a result the supply relationship with the villages is casual - bad weather, drought and other factors that cannot be predicted or controlled have led to informal arrangements. Rainal advises the farmers as to what is needed so they can start planting and asks that they let him know if they can't supply so he can source elsewhere. Rainal also spends time with the local farmers to monitor their agricultural practices and point out ways to improve their crops, "I have to tell the villages when I want something and how much and they tell me what they can supply. We have given a quota to the village – because they are so remote and are surrounded by the sea so the air and land are salty and they can only grow so much. We try to help them grow more of what can grow and buy from them so we can get fresh produce and they get some income" (Rainal Sahai). Rainal also spoke of the recent drought in Fiji and the effect that this was having on the availability and cost of local products. To address this, he has introduced inherent flexibility with none of the menus for the restaurants being fixed and descriptors left unspecific (for example "greens" as opposed to "beans"). These local supply chains have contributed to economic development for the local villages, "The living conditions in the villages have improved. Everyone has a mobile phone now. I see the villagers going to the mainland on their fibre boats to do shopping for the family. Their clothing style has improved, things for the house, generators, better fishing equipment because they have constant income now" (Rainal Sahai).

Sustainability and caring for the environment also underpins Rainal's approach to food. While building relationships with the neighbouring island villagers he educates them at the same time about resource management, specifically not to over-fish the local endangered, "Not only does Chef Rainal care about the quality of our products, but the integrity of their sourcing as well. He and the resort continue to do everything they can to make sure everything the resort buys is produced with respect for the environment, the growers and their communities" (http://www.paradisecoveresortfiji.com/dine/executive-chef.htm).

"Sustainable sourcing means having a relationship with the people who supply us with our products, built on integrity and trust regarding the environment, social values, product quality, and information sharing — a relationship that can become an honest and long-lasting partnership. We create an ethical, and mutually beneficial business association that also allows for improving the local community's social conditions and environment — while providing the highest quality products" (http://www.paradisecoveresortfiji.com/dine/executive-chef.htm).



Potato Gnocchi, Local Roasted Tomato Eggplant, Basil

Ingredients

- 3 pounds local kumala- Fijian sweet potatoes
- 2 cups Friends Fiji root vegetable flour
- 1 egg, extra large
- 1 pinch salt
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 1kg tomatoes, washed, seasoned and roasted for 30 minutes
- Handful fresh basil leaves, torn
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 eggplants, washed
- 2 to 3 garlic cloves, roasted for 30 minutes
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan, plus extra for serving
- Handful fresh basil leaves, torn

Directions

1. Bake the whole potatoes until they are soft (about 45 minutes). While still warm, peel and pass through vegetable mill onto clean pasta board.
2. Set 6 quarts of water to boil in a large spaghetti pot. Set up ice bath with 6 cups ice and 6 cups water near boiling water.
3. Make well in center of potatoes and sprinkle all over with flour, using all the flour. Place egg and salt in center of well and using a fork, stir into flour and potatoes, just like making normal pasta. Once egg is mixed in, bring dough together, kneading gently until a ball is formed. Knead gently another 4 minutes until ball is dry to touch.
4. Roll baseball-sized ball of dough into 3/4-inch diameter dowels and cut dowels into 1-inch long pieces. Flick pieces off of fork or concave side of cheese grater until dowel is finished. Drop these pieces into boiling water and cook until they float (about 1 minute). Meanwhile, continue with remaining dough, forming dowels, cutting into 1-inch pieces and flicking off of fork. As gnocchi float to top of boiling water, remove them to ice bath. Continue until all have been cooled off. Let sit several minutes in bath and drain from ice and water. Toss with 1/2 cup canola oil and store covered in refrigerator up to 48 hours until ready to serve.
5. To make the tomato sauce: Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and roasted garlic and cook, stirring, for 7 to 10 minutes until the vegetables are soft but not browned. Add the roasted tomatoes, crushing them in your hand to break them up. Add the basil and season with salt and pepper. Cook until the sauce is reduced and thickened, about 10 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.

Cut the eggplants crosswise into 1/2-inch-thick rounds and put them in a large bowl. Add the garlic, salt, and pepper, and drizzle generously with olive oil. Toss to coat, drizzling in more oil if you needed. Arrange the slices in a single layer on a baking sheet and roast 20 minutes until eggplants are very tender.

While the eggplants are roasting, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil for the gnocchi. About 5 minutes before the eggplants are done, drop the gnocchi into the boiling water and cook until al dente, 6 to 8 minutes. Drain. Bring the tomato sauce to a simmer and pour it into a large pasta bowl. Add the drained gnocchi and stir to coat with the sauce. Fold in the eggplants and the cherry tomatoes. Add the cheese and basil, and another drizzle of oil, and toss gently. Serve immediately and pass extra cheese at the table.

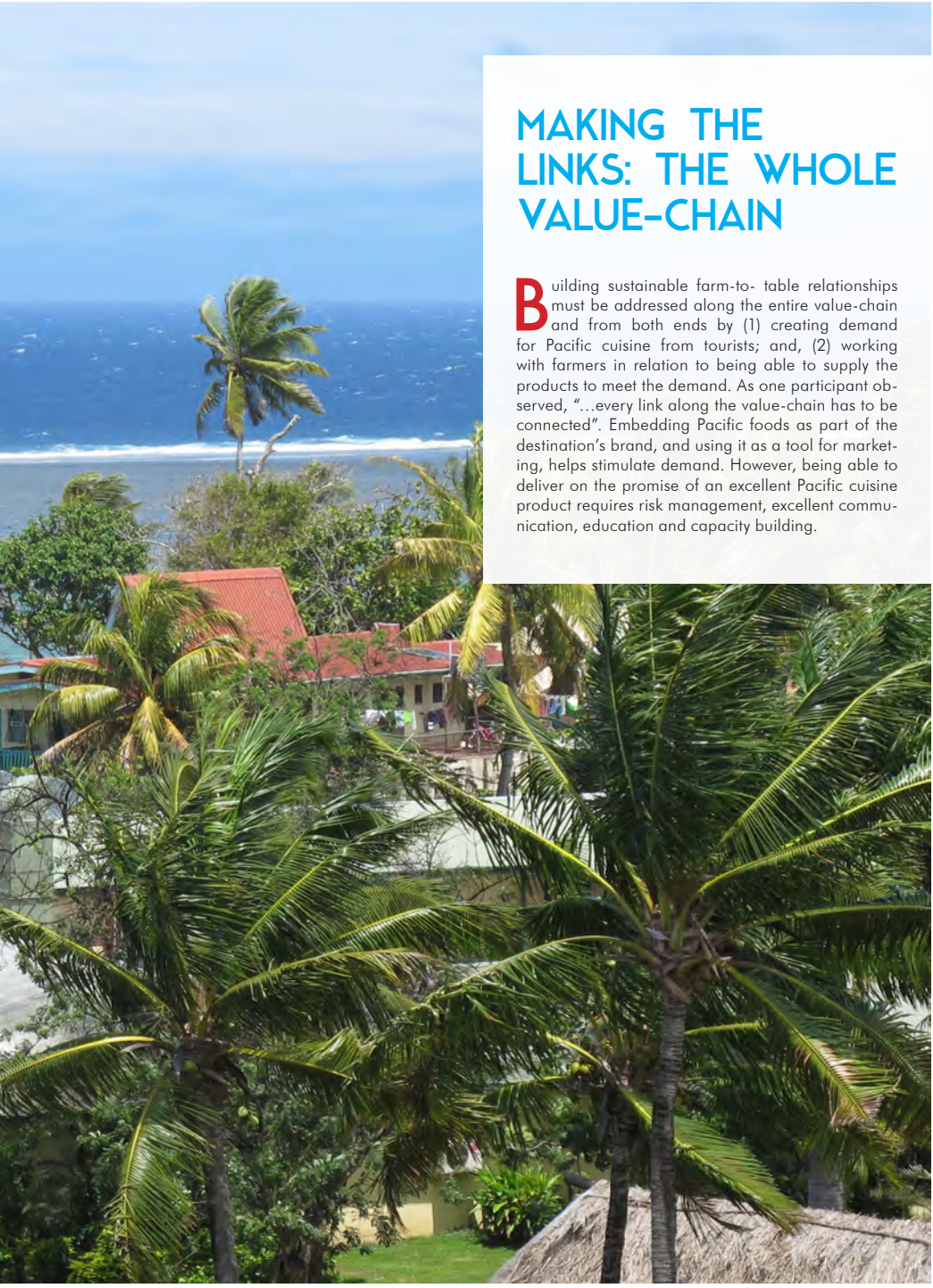
THE ROLE OF CHEFS IN LINKING AGRICULTURE TO TOURISM: LESSONS AND BEST PRACTICE

The nations of the South Pacific offer a tropical island idyll. However, some of the very attributes that make them popular tourism destinations pose considerable challenges for those working within the industry. One of these areas is food. Climate, growing conditions, distance, poor infrastructure, lack of training and complex supply chains mean that it is often easier to provide an international menu that relies on imported products – so much so that some resorts' menus comprise up to 90% imported goods.

It is somewhat obvious, but it is relevant to say that all tourists eat. This places local chefs in a powerful position as gatekeepers, leaders and influencers in relation to what is offered on the menu. This in turn can have significant positive benefits for local communities and economies. As Chef Robert Oliver has pointed out, "the menus are the business plan of the nation". This report has highlighted the successes and challenges of eight Pacific "food heroes", who through their efforts are changing menus in the Pacific, creating (and sustaining) local supply chains that benefit their communities and instilling pride in Pacific cuisines as part of their intangible heritage. Drawing on the case studies presented, there are lessons to be learnt:

For far too long, food as not been considered an essential element of the Pacific visitor experience. Indeed, Pacific cuisine has been all but absent from tourism in the region. This is a lost opportunity for both Pacific countries and the tourists who visit. Pacific cuisine is not just something that appears on a plate, it is a component of the destination's brand, and as such, if developed, can be an important tool for marketing a location and differentiating it from similar destinations. The importance of local cuisine to the tourist experience has been increasing and is evidenced through the growth in food tourism. Tourists' responses to the initiatives presented in the case studies have been overwhelmingly positive. This should serve as a motivation for others to incorporate Pacific cuisine into their culinary offerings.





MAKING THE LINKS: THE WHOLE VALUE-CHAIN

Building sustainable farm-to- table relationships must be addressed along the entire value-chain and from both ends by (1) creating demand for Pacific cuisine from tourists; and, (2) working with farmers in relation to being able to supply the products to meet the demand. As one participant observed, "…every link along the value-chain has to be connected". Embedding Pacific foods as part of the destination's brand, and using it as a tool for marketing, helps stimulate demand. However, being able to deliver on the promise of an excellent Pacific cuisine product requires risk management, excellent communication, education and capacity building.

MANAGING RISK

Much of the risk associated with farm-to- table linkages rests with the chefs, restauranteurs and hoteliers. For hospitality providers under-supply, inconsistent supply or poor quality products means that menu commitments cannot be met, potentially leading to dissatisfaction amongst customers. As one participant suggested, "No consistency of supply result(s) in chefs turning to overseas produce which IS consistent".

WIBDI has been a successful player in facilitating farm-to- table linkages through acting as a "broker" between farmers and hospitality providers. As the broker, WIBDI bears the majority of risk in the relationship. This has necessitated a strategic approach to the mitigation and management of risk along the value-chain. Key means of managing risk include:

Monitoring and evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation sheet is maintained to make sure that all producer/supplier issues are noted and addressed. The sheet is updated weekly and checked by the Organics Progamme Manager and serious issues are elevated to the management team. The team seeks feedback to make the project run better. This has resulted in improvements such as a change of delivery days and a change in ordering days. Customers are now asking for an increase of delivery days, which will increase farmer income too.

Managing quality and quantity of supply

Farmers are provided with on-site and on-farm training. They are also provided with seeds or seedlings as they are available from WIBDI's nursery. Regarding timely delivery, which is often an issue with farmers sometimes due to lack of public transport, farmers who do not call regarding late delivery are given three chances before they are stood down for a period. The same policy carries over to consistent poor quality produce. Due to the farm-to-table programme being a guarantee system (one in which WIBDI creates a list of available produce based on farmer information and when produce is ordered, it is guaranteed to be delivered), which was set up to ensure market buy-in, the farm-to-table staff have back-up farmers. The WIBDI nursery can also be used for (limited) extra supplies, but this can add a lot of pressure to the team



on delivery day. Farmers have been upskilled and are now able to understand the grading process and the need for restaurants to have consistent quality. As a result, WIBDI has noted fewer instances of rejected produce.

Payment to farmers

WIBDI manages the payments to farmers separate to restaurants and hotels paying their bills. This has ensured seamless payments to the farmers. WIBDI has its own microfinance scheme, which allows farmers to set up bank accounts at WIBDI and also to be able to loan up to 60% of the value of their savings. Many farmers now ask for their payments to go directly into their savings account.

ICT

WIBDI has migrated its email ordering system to Mail Chimp to make it more professional and also to track the emails better using Mail Chimp analytics. The project is also being promoted through WIBDI's social media channels of Facebook and Twitter. WIBDI is also investigating several mobile apps to assist with farmers with keeping track of their income from WIBDI. This is with the aim of increasing farmers' business literacy and farm/budget management.

Transport and distribution

Although the WIBDI supply and logistics model is currently coping with demand, to be able to scale up necessitates a larger distribution network. Increased distribution capacities require significant investment in infrastructure and supply systems including sorting and storage facilities, refrigerated trucks and HAACP systems. This needs to be predicated on a commercial business model built on investment as opposed to funding.

CRITICAL MASS

As discussed in one case study, a Pacific "food revolution' is required to support the farm-to-table approach. Demand is in part created by tourists who want to try Pacific cuisine, but it is sustained through the operators who take on the challenge of fulfilling this promise. Enough demand must be created and serviced to make it worth the while of both chefs and suppliers to engage with and sustain these relationships. The more chefs and restauranteurs who offer a local food experience, the more demand will be created. It becomes a "virtuous cycle" of supply and demand that benefits both tourists and the local community. It is only when this critical mass is achieved that challenges in the supply chain will be realised and improvements to consistency and quality of products, transport, infrastructure, land management etc. will be achieved and sustained.

This however, also poses challenges. Several participants expressed concern that with increasing uptake of local products in the tourism sector comes the risk that demand could outstrip supply. As one participant suggested, "The risk is really around growing your business around these local supply chains…we might face a period of serious lack of supply." This goes beyond just the ability to meet increasing market demands and involves capacity building as well as suggested by one participant who said "Farmers are looked upon with low priority and middlemen make the most money…the [current] generation do not want to become farmers as everyone sees it as non-profitable and hard work. The tourism sector has exponentially expanded while farming has not."



EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Education, capacity building and the development of resources must include a broad range of stakeholders – from the farmers who grow the products through to the chefs that prepare them and the staff that serve them. Education and training needs to be delivered in a culturally appropriate manner that addresses not just the skills required, but also instils cultural confidence and pride in offering Pacific cuisine to guests. Staff (from farmers through to servers) should be confident in their ability to "tell the story" of their food and where it comes from, thus also enhancing the experience for the guests. This engages both staff and guests with the intangible heritage of cuisine, allowing for the co-creation of a culturally unique and meaningful experience. An important component of this is support for the chefs' associations in the South Pacific. These organisations make a significant contribution to education and capacity building, but suffer from a lack of funding.





SUSTAINABILITY

The case studies presented in this document are ones which are currently enjoying levels of success. In order to sustain these initiatives and support future endeavours key institutional and policy actions are necessary.

All the participants emphasised the need for training and education for both chefs and growers. The public and NGO sectors have potential roles to play in supporting rural extension and outreach for farmers. Ministries of agriculture in particular can focus extension activities on understanding and meeting the needs of the tourism sector and understanding basic business models and finance. Micro-finance for farmers to invest in meeting market needs, and grower contracts that guarantee farmers' incomes (and provide straightforward payment terms for hospitality providers) can also support the sustainability of farm-to- table value-chain initiatives. Grower contracts need to be appropriate to the cultural context and in the small communities in the Pacific this means acknowledging and nurture the interpersonal relationship component.

Quality of supply is an area that was highlighted in many of the case studies. Improvements are required in the range of produce grown, pre- and post-harvest handling and consistent standards. Local certification (such as internationally recognised organic certification or a local "qualmark" certification) is one means to address quality. Certification also creates a stronger brand and point of difference in the marketplace.

Farmer education is in itself not enough to support a robust local supply chain however. Improvements need to be made to transport systems and infrastructure, and communication networks. These areas include both public and private sector investment. The use of "brokers" or "middle men" may be one means of achieving these improvements, as seen in the case study of WIBDI. The use of brokers may also help address the issue of critical mass and ability to fulfil market demands. Farmers' cooperatives may also be an approach that can help overcome some of the market's concerns about quantity and consistency of supply. Brokers however, come at a cost and in some cases (for example, when an NGO acts as a broker), adequate funding to support their role is required until such time that a project/supply-chain becomes self-funding. The allocation of public sector funding to support these initiatives is in part a policy issue.

Education for chefs is also an important component and regional institutions (public and private sector) can play a role in this by incorporating local products and cuisines in their curricula. This can be further reinforced through regional food festivals and local cuisine culinary competitions. The national tourism authorities are well positioned to support such initiatives. With additional funding, the local chefs' associations could also make a significant contribution in these areas.

Import substitution may have a role to play in increasing demand for locally produced crops, but there are challenges with such policies in small economies such as those in the Pacific. It is also essential that in implementing such policies that local supply can in fact meet demand. An alternative may be to incentivise through policy infrastructure (through targeted subsidies for example), the inclusion of more local products into the local market (rather than total substitution).

The case studies included in this document have also highlighted the unique role that media can play in supporting Pacific cuisine and farm-to- table linkages. Previous research on agriculture – tourism linkages in the Pacific identified interest and willingness amongst stakeholders to support a Pacific cuisine in tourism. However, there was a significant gap in bringing the two ends of the value-chain together to meet this need. Media is a means of bridging this gap. Many of the chefs interviewed for these case studies identified the power of both print media (cookbooks) and television in inspiring their interest in developing Pacific cuisine. The books and television opportunities acted as tools for development and contributed to capacity building through providing a context for education and training. Additionally, the reach of media means that they are powerful tools for branding and marketing as well. Finally, by highlighting the cuisine and cultures of the Pacific in a positive way, media can also contribute to building confidence and pride in showcasing local cuisine in tourism. This all contributes to enhancing demand, which in turn contributes to the sustainability of local supply chains.

CONCLUSION

As discussed in the introduction to these case studies, food, cuisine and food traditions are among the most foundational elements of culture. Chefs are in a unique position to take leadership of using cuisine as a powerful tool for development. The "food heroes" of the South Pacific highlighted in the case studies have started a local food revolution through which they are changing the way that people think about South Pacific cuisine. In doing so, they are building cultural, social and economic capital in their island nations.

"Sometimes opportunities need to be created rather than waiting for them to come. And for a region like the Pacific, which has often been described with the sentence;"If there is a place in the world that is a mystery – it's the Pacific", it may just be better to create windows of opportunity rather than wait for a chance that may take the 'big' world years to drop by. Who would have thought that Chefs, the gladiators of la cuisine, would one day be the cutting edge strategy upon which the hopes of trade would hang?" (http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/buildingresilience/blog/chefs-development-innovative-approach-promote-agritourism-0#sthash.kR9Y3LtK.dpuf)





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