



Project Location:
Nadi, Fiji

Project Start Date:
1 October 2008

Funding Source:
Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) -40%
Nature's Way -60%

Total grant funding approved:
A\$263,321

Updated December 2012

Nature's Way - Quarantine Treatment, Fiji

ABOUT NATURE'S WAY COOPERATIVE

Nature's Way Cooperative is a quarantine heat treatment facility located close to the international airport in Nadi, Fiji. Nature's Way's shareholders are growers and exporters and the business does not export in its own right. Nature's Way is a crucial link in the export supply chain and a facilitator of technical assistance to growers and exporters from their own resources and through other agencies.

THE PROJECT AND HOW IT WORKED

ECF support for Nature's Way enabled the increase the heat treatment capacity to handle peak loads; improved handling and grading; an outreach program to farmers to improve supply chains' and quality certification of the operation.

The project received ECF support primarily because of its potential to increase the size and reach of the Fiji fruit industry by providing confidence to existing and new exporters and eliminating export bottlenecks.

Anticipated benefits of project included:

- Increased and diversified exports of fruits and relevant vegetables in existing and new areas.
- Increased direct employment in Nature's Way and in exporters' operations, including a relatively high proportion of women.
- Improved supply chains through the provision of technical support, improved varieties and transport crates.

THE RESULTS

- Increased capacity to 3,500 tonnes per year achieved by the new heat treatment chamber, improved handling and grading equipment. Nature's Way estimates that productivity has improved by 30-40%.

- Throughput in 2011 was a record 1,300+ tonnes but this declined to 634 tonnes in 2012 as Nature's Way's throughput suffered from floods that severely reduced output. Despite this, business is profitable and future commercial viability appears assured.
- Nature's Way's Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) accreditation has been finalized.
- Nature's Way has doubled employment and increased female employees from one to five.
- The number of shareholders has also increased and now includes for the first time women shareholders and Nature's Way also has a female board member.
- An estimated 50 additional small farmers and a similar number of new employees in exporters' operations are benefitting from export growth.
- Smaller farmers who will supply directly to existing and new exporters are being provided with seedlings and technical support both increasing and diversifying their incomes.
- Trial of sea freight of fruit to New Zealand has been successfully completed. Sea freight provides a competitive export advantage for the industry only made possible with the expanded Nature's Way facilities.
- New exporters are entering the Fiji fruit growing industry. These new exporters report that Nature's Way's facilities and capabilities were important factors in their decision to invest.

HOW THE ECF FUNDS WERE USED

The ECF grant funded the new heat chamber and some of the costs involved in the improved handling capacity and efficiency of the existing operation. Nature's Way funded the operational costs and the balance of the new equipment and facilities.