

Capsicum variety trial day held

By MOFFAT MAMU

A trial day to find a best suitable variety of capsicum or commonly known as sweet paper was successful staged yesterday.

The field day was staged at the ministry of agriculture and livestock (MAL) demonstration farm at Henderson, East Honiara with the display of eleven (11) varieties of capsicum.

The trial allowed agricultural experts, buyers, farmers, seed suppliers and hoteliers to evaluate and grade the varieties of capsicum.

Most of the varieties were sourced from Taiwan and were put on trial at the Henderson airport under the watchful eyes of agricultural officers for over four months.

Yesterday, most of the capsicums were collected, brought together and evaluated.

The evaluation was done by tasting the capsicum varieties and observing of the size, yield and colour.

The 11 varieties were displayed on a table to allow for tasting followed by a field visit to see the actual plant, fruit size and how good each variety can yield.

The project aims to strengthen integrated crop management research in the Pacific Islands in support of sustainable intensification of high-value crop production in the country.

It wants to find a best suitable capsicum variety that can grow well in the country.

The research project was undertaken in partnership between the ministry of agriculture and AVRDC (Asian Vegetable Research Development Center).

AVRDC is a world vegetable center, founded as the Asian Vegetable Research Center, with the global headquarter in Taiwan and is the world leading

research and development center for vegetable.

The project is funded by the Australian Center of International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).

Tikai Pitakia from AVRDC explained that MAL is responsible for agriculture research and development in the country.

And as such AVRDC is collaborating with them (MAL) to conduct field trials, he said.

For over four months the pilot project kicked off with the planting of these 11 varieties of capsicum.

Helen Tsatsai acting director of research at MAL said the development of high-value crops for domestic consumption and export is seen as a priority for economic development and improved livelihoods in many Pacific island countries.

She said similar researches were conducted in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga to find the best variety of crop that can grow well in this tropical crop.

MAL acting permanent secretary Jim Saelea speaking at the occasion acknowledged research project.

"The ministry and partners are very happy to be able to demonstrate the ability of officers and colleagues to run varietal trials on vegetables and other crops and to be able to show to the public and farmers especially the technologies available to them that can be accessed to their livelihoods opportunities."

He said the level of research has progressed to this stage where observational screening has to be statistically done in-order to give little room for error, so that whatever recommendations provided to farmers would give anticipated results.

A number of farmers and officials who turned up for the event spoke highly of



Acting permanent secretary of ministry of agriculture and livestock Jim Saelea, left, with two officers from Taiwan technical farm during the evaluation yesterday.

the pilot project because of the success the project had achieved so far.

Speaking at the end of the field day a farmer and supporter of the project George Ri'ifalu said it was an exciting undertaking to carry out such a pilot project.

He said its important that the seeds are made available to the farmers as soon as possible.

Mr Pitakia also explained that following the evaluation the recommended capsicum would be put to local farmers around the country for further trial.

He said a solution to ensure seeds are made available to farmers would be

sorted out later.

At the end of the trail day yesterday, the dark green coloured capsicums were dubbed some of the best varieties.

A hotel rep who also participated in the evaluation yesterday also supported the suggestion because of its sweet and crunchy taste.

Currently Island Enterprise is selling one of the best varieties. Two officers from the company also participated in the evaluation yesterday.

Some of the varieties that were displayed yesterday are big in size with a diameter of around 3 inches in width.



Sipae Anistolo, left, instructing all those who took part in the evaluation on the field.



Evaluating of the capsicum is also being done by tasting the fruits.



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Submissions should take the form of sketches, mockups, prototypes and/or sample materials. Design submissions should be addressed to: Carpenters' Miss South Pacific 2014 Committee via email to stella.lucas@sivb.com.sb or in person to Stella Lucas at Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau, Point Cruz, Honiara, before 11 October 2013.

