



**Pacific Horticultural &
Agricultural Market Access
Plus Program**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Fiji steps up efforts against African Swine Fever

Fiji is boosting its animal health and response capacity towards African Swine Fever (ASF) through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed today.

The MoU between the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) and the Australia and New Zealand funded Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus (PHAMA Plus) Program aims to strengthen Fiji's preparedness against any possible incursion of ASF into the country.

ASF is a highly transmittable viral disease that affects domestic and wild pigs. It does not affect humans and there are no treatments or vaccines. While Fiji is currently free of the disease, ASF is now present in Papua New Guinea, and poses a significant social, economic and cultural threat to the region, particularly to the approximately 30,000 households in Fiji that raise pigs for their livelihoods.

In signing the MoU, BAF Acting Chief Executive Officer Mr Surend Pratap said they were scaling up efforts and taking necessary precautionary measures to ensure the country was protected from the pig killing exotic disease.

"Pigs have a significant economic, nutritional and cultural value in Pacific Island Countries (PICs), hence, the impacts of an ASF incursion and spread would be severe," Mr Pratap said.

"Biosecurity officers play a critical role in ensuring such diseases do not enter our shores, however, we cannot achieve full success alone and we need the support of all relevant stakeholders, importers as well as the travellers in avoiding the movement of the deadly virus across regional or national borders. BAF is closely working with the Ministry of Agriculture on this project to provide training and facilitate outreach activities targeting pig farmers".

"We're pleased to continue working with PHAMA Plus through this MoU to better deliver services in protecting our borders from biosecurity threats, as well as strengthening market access facilitation functions," Mr Pratap added.

In 2019, BAF took swift action by banning the personal importation of pork and pork related products from Australia and New Zealand due to the limited traceability of the disease with personal consignments and the increased global transmission of ASF.

The MoU covers technical inputs and support in terms of BAF's physical and human resources to be better equipped for any potential response to ASF and other biosecurity threats.

PHAMA Plus National Export Market Systems Facilitator (Fiji) Mr Navitalai Tuivuniwai said a key aspect of the MoU was advocacy and public awareness.

"It's important to ensure that everyone is aware of ASF and knows how to manage pigs to minimise transmission, all of us can help to limit the spread of this disease," Mr Tuivuniwai said.



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“We’ll be working with BAF to deliver inclusive training and awareness raising activities and materials targeting commercial pig producers, subsistence farmers, BAF and Ministry of Agriculture officers in all the divisions.”

In addition to working in Fiji, PHAMA Plus continues to support the Government of PNG to manage the ASF outbreak and with the Pacific Community (SPC) to strengthen animal health capacity in the region. This includes having technical specialists available, awareness raising and distribution of diagnostic kits to test pig health in the field.

Farmers and pig owners particularly need to be on the lookout and report any unusual symptoms or deaths of pigs to their nearest BAF office or notify the team via info@baf.com.fj or Animal Health Surveillance Number 5997.

**For more information, please contact PHAMA Plus National Export Market Systems Facilitator (Fiji) Mr Navitalai Tuivuniwai or visit www.phamaplus.com.au*