

Organic farming grows - Fiji Times Online

Litia Vulaidausiga

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DESPITE initial reservations, more farmers are forging into organic farming through an EU-funded GROW program administered by the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development.

FRIEND director Sashi Kiran said most were suppliers of ingredients for herbal infusions and tea varieties retailed by them.

"When the concept was first introduced at a FRIEND farmer conference two years ago, most farmers in the Western Division said it was impossible with the increasing diseases in their crops. However, slowly the concept has taken root and around 30 farmers from three villages in Sigatoka have taken up organic farming," she said.

Ms Kiran said they also received positive feedbacks from hotels keen to purchase organic produce for their restaurants to cater to the demand of increasingly health-conscious global consumers.

"Initial training for these farmers was carried out by the Women in Business Development from Samoa, while the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community assisted with capacity-building for staff."