

Lemon Grass Fiji Cha - PoetCom

Fiji's first tea, the Fiji Cha lemon grass tea bearing the Organic Pasifika mark that guarantees a product is organic is now selling across the country.

Fiji Cha lemon grass tea, one in a range of herbal teas is produced by the Foundation of Rural and Integrated Enterprises Development Fiji (FRIEND Fiji) working with communities on the two main islands Vanua Levu and Viti Levu.

Organic certification of the lemon grass growing areas and production processes at FRIEND was possible following the setup and implementation of a Participatory Guarantee System.

Farmers from Suweni, Raranibulubulu on Vanua Levu and Western Viti Levu are part of the FRIEND PGS mechanism and certify themselves through peer review.

Peer review exercise at the lemon grass fields



The Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community POETCom oversees the process of certification.

Founder of FRIEND Fiji Sashi Kiran says organic certification has enabled the development of a product and opened up income opportunities for farmers in these communities.

FRIEND Fiji founder Sashi Kiran with a lemon grass farmer

The herbal tea was produced with assistance from the European Union funded Increasing Agriculture Commodities and Trade programme of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

“The whole thing about organic is not only putting a product out there that’s healthy and it’s not got chemicals but it’s also trying to get sustainable agriculture back, trying to look at how nature works in agriculture for health and sustainability.

“So it feeds into a larger programme of socio-economic health.

“We are happy because this year is International Year of Soils so the launch of this organic product is quite apt.”

European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica launched the organically certified lemon grass tea for sales in June.

“Clearly the European Union is making a significant impact on the ground when it partners with the right organisation.

“Despite very adverse weather conditions, FRIEND remained on track and was not only successful but surpassed the target by supporting some 2000 people.

“The EU is an important actor in promoting sustainable agriculture in the international development agenda.

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