



HON. VATIMI T.T.K. RAYALU
Minister for Agriculture and Waterways
Ministerial Response to Parliamentary Questions
Tuesday 21st May 2024

Question 64/2024: Can the Minister inform Parliament on how many Agricultural farm access roads have been completed in this financial year and what the future plans of the Ministry are in this regard?

The Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways constructs farm roads to access farm land to boost production in the agriculture sector. The Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways has upgraded 141 existing farm roads with a total length of 242.7 km and constructed 4 new roads with a total length of 5.7 km in this financial year.

The program for farm access roads supports the Ministry of Agriculture's Strategic Development Plan of diversifying production and improving market opportunities for farmers.

The farm access roads program focused on achieving the following objectives:

- Establishing and expanding commercial ventures with adequate resources and support;
- Developing efficient and effective strategies for the entire supply chain, from production to marketing;
- Promotion of key commodities;
- Development of rural areas through an integrated approach; and
- Alleviating poverty, improving livelihood, and enhancing food and nutrition security.

Impact

For the first time, the Ministry deployed machinery to the Lau islands for the construction of new farm access roads and land preparation, with careful consideration on its sustainability towards the environment.

In the Lau Group, two hundred and forty eight (248) agricultural households have benefited from the completion of four new farm access roads and the upgrading of 4 existing farm access roads, which have a total length of 24.7kms. The roads now provide accessibility to prime

farmland allowing farmers to expand the size of their farms and facilitate the easy sending of produce after harvesting to the markets.

The total number of agriculture households that benefited from this program around Fiji is 3080 as presented in Annex 1.

A highlight from Cicia on the expected impact of the new farm access road on crop production is:

- Copra production - to increase by 45%;
- Yam production - to increase by 70%;
- Cassava production - to increase by 56%; and
- Assorted vegetables - to increase by 80%.

The Ministry is working in collaboration with other government ministries and village representatives on the further provision of farm access roads;

Future Plans

- ✓ The Ministry will work in collaboration with Government Ministries such as:
- ✓ ITLTB on new agriculture leases on the provision of farm road assistance;
- ✓ Ministry of Public Works on roads and drainage construction and maintenance;
- ✓ Ministry of Rural, Maritime Development and National Disaster Management on rural development through the Rural Outer Island Programme (ROI);
- ✓ Sugar Industry, on the construction and upgrading of existing farm roads;
- ✓ Ministry of Climate Change and Environment on Environment Impact Assessment;
- ✓ Ministry of Fisheries and Forests on the reforestation and conservation of indigenous tree species as well as on food and fruit tree species;
- ✓ The Ministry will continue to assist farmers to construct new and upgrade existing farm roads;
- ✓ The Ministry is streamlining internal processes and procedures to ensure financial and procurement requirements are met in a timely manner.

In conclusion, infrastructure development plays a critical role in advancing the Ministry's collective objectives to grow the agriculture sector. The Program is aligned to the Ministry's mission of creating an enabling environment that accelerates economic opportunities for food and nutrition security for all Fijians.

Kindly find below in Annex 1, the breakdown of farm access roads upgraded and constructed for this financial year.

Annex 1:

FARM ACCESS ROADS PROGRAM 2023-2024				
No.	Province	Number of Farm Roads	Length (km)	Beneficiaries
1	Serua/Namosi	7	12.6	66
2	Rewa	4	5.1	49
3	Naitasiri	18	26.2	190
4	Tailevu	39	50.2	403
5	Ba	14	10.5	111
6	Ra	17	31.5	252
7	NN	14	42.5	347
8	Macuata	2	4	280
9	Cakaudrove	6	11	409
10	Bua	2	3.5	235
11	Kadavu	6	10.6	172
12	Lomaiviti	8	16	318
13	Lau	8	24.7	248
	TOTAL	145	248.4	3080