

Growing Resilience: Strengthening the agro-processing sector in the Pacific Islands

A series of roundtables



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Co-hosted by Pacific Farmer Organisations (PFO) and COLEAD

Roundtable N°2

Wednesday 24 April 2024 – 9:00am - 10:30am (Fiji Time)

Tuesday 23 April 2024 – 9:00pm - 10:30pm (universal time - UTC)

Online ([Zoom](#))

Biodata of the speakers

Dr. Richard Beyer - Food Technologist



Dr. Richard Beyer is a food technologist who has authored over 15 commissioned reports on income generation and food security in the Pacific. He has recently completed a textbook on the preservation and processing of root crops, bananas, plantain, and breadfruit (commissioned by the FAO).

Richard was acting Permanent Secretary of Agriculture of the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture and initiated the re-development of the agriculture sector to focus more on the private sector. Prior to this, he was Advisor in Food Technology to the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Forests (1999-2001) and Director of the Institute of Applied Sciences at the University of the South Pacific where he introduced and promoted food research and development to the region (1996-1999).

Richard has a PhD in Carbohydrate Chemistry from the University of Otago, New Zealand. He was a faculty member at the university in the Food Science Department where he built up an extensive research programme on dairy product development.

Isolina Boto – Head of Networks and Alliances, COLEAD



Isolina Boto is the Head of Networks and Alliances at COLEAD, a non-profit Association of private sector operators in the agrifood sector active in the EU, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions. Isolina has more than 25 years of experience in agricultural development. She started her career with the European Commission and has also worked with various ACP embassies and NGOs in areas related to food security, rural development and trade. Before joining COLEAD, she was the Manager of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) Brussels Office (2004-2020) implementing policy initiatives related to the ACP-EU cooperation in the field of agricultural and rural development. She has led agribusiness projects in support of capacity development of SMEs, entrepreneurs and farmers organisations across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Jeremy Knops – Délégué Général, COLEAD



Jeremy Knops holds a master's degree in business engineering from the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM). Prior to joining COLEAD in 2009, he was involved in Guatemala with the daily operations of a farmers' cooperative exporting loquats to the EU and the US. He started to work for COLEAD as an expert in charge of matters related to private standards and certification for ACP producers and exporters of fruit and vegetables. Jeremy is an accredited coach for leadership and professional development. He was appointed as General Delegate of COLEAD in June 2019.

Emihner Johnson - Executive Director, Island Food Community of Pohnpei (IFCP) [Federated States of Micronesia]



Emihner is a dedicated leader at the helm of the Island Food Community of Pohnpei (IFCP), a local nonprofit organisation that promotes local island food to alleviate food related health problems in Micronesia since 2004. IFCP aims to increase self-reliance through traditional food production that provides the benefits of food security, sustainable development, improved health, economic benefits, cultural preservation, and human dignity, whilst at the same time protecting the environment through small-scale agroforestry. The organisation was awarded the Healthy Islands Recognition Best Practice by the World Health Organization in 2013.

As Executive Director, Emihner has been committed to fostering a healthier diet for Pohnpei using local foods that historically shielded islanders against nutritional challenges of disease.

Fr. Petero Matairatu - Principal Director, Tutu Rural Training Center [Fiji]



Father Petero Matairatu is Principal Director at Tutu Rural Training Centre (TRTC) and Board Director of Pacific Farmer Organisations (PFO).

Founded in 1969, TRTC provides trainings on food processing and value-adding techniques. The trainings are designed for a wide range of people, including young farmers, (single) parents, and villagers, with the objective of equipping them to create healthy and delicious products using local ingredients. TRTC also implements initiatives and projects on various topics that are integrated into their courses, such as agroforestry, soil health, establishing vegetable growing enterprises, introducing high-quality fruit trees, and hydro development.

Since its creation, more than 2,000 young people have completed the various trainings developed by TRTC. This successful impact and the need for rural youth to become involved in agriculture has led to replications of TRTC's model in other parts of Fiji and in the Pacific Islands.

Kyle Stice - Executive Director, Pacific Farmer Organisations

American born and a Fijian horticulturist, Kyle Stice is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Pacific Farmer Organisations (PFO), a regional farmer organisation network with membership in 13 Pacific Island nations and a direct reach of 98,000 farmers.



For the past 15 years, Kyle has led rural development and climate change adaptation programmes in the Pacific, working through farmer organizations, in partnership with multiple global development partners.



This event was organised by the Fit For Market Plus programme, implemented by COLEAD within the framework of Development cooperation between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), and the European Union (EU).

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the EU and the OACPS. Its contents are the sole responsibility of COLEAD and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU or the OACPS.