

ENHANCING BARGAINING POWER AND COMPETITIVENESS OF FIJIAN FARMERS: ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

For agriculture, good governance is important to formulate conducive policy environment and effective implementation of policy agendas. Under the globalized scenario there is an issue of enabling farmers to get better returns from their produce by making use of right kind of policies, arrangements, approaches and technologies which contribute to higher productivity, lower unit costs of production, and strengthen their competitiveness and bargaining power. In the past, the Government of Fiji has taken some major steps by establishing the National Marketing Authority, commodity mills & stabilization fund, and promoting cooperative marketing. It has also subsidised the farm inputs and services. There are improvements in market infrastructure and barriers to imports and exports are also lower. Despite these measures and good intentions the agricultural sector in Fiji suffers from problems of market failure, poor governance problems and weak agricultural institutions. Fijian farmers are becoming market oriented and the country has comparative advantage in the production of many tropical fruits, root crops and off season vegetables. Through better governance, policy framework and interrelated structural reforms the performance of the agricultural sector can be improved. Needed actions for the same are: improving farmers access to technology and information, removing distortions against agriculture, and facilitating market access by forging backward & forward linkages and addressing to supply chain management.

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