

Family teams ASEM/2014/095

- December and January - Periods of annual leave for UC and PNG partners
- Barbara Pamphilon continued to work on confirmation of partners and commencement of activities for the Islands hub with Bougainville Women's Federation in Buka and Department of Agriculture and Livestock in Kavieng New Island. Despite the slow holiday period and communication difficulties experienced with phone and email problems these partnerships are progressing well.
- Katja Mikhailovich, Pauline Gwairisa, Jeromy Kavi and Sanna Harri have worked to progress the baseline survey with advice from Jessica Hall aiming to deploy in field during late February early March.
- Data analysis commenced on the survey data from the final highlands sites around Goroka and Jiwaka.
- The Jiwaka VCE graduation was postponed until February/ March 2017 as the Integrated Agriculture Training Program (UNRE) modules on Sustainable Livelihoods, Record and Book keeping will be offered to VCEs in February 2017

Canarium FST/2014/099

- Helen and Theo recently travelled to ENB to meet with the IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) team to discuss ways to work together and to develop a project proposal that will co-fund a commercial canarium nut factory. The project is expected to start in the second half of 2017.
- The NARI Canarium factory is running well. Production doubled in 2016 and the factory processed 25 tonnes of nut-in-pulp.
- The new drying system is nearly up and running in the NARI factory, a new cracker is about to arrive as is an oven that will double the nut roasting capacity in the factory.
- Kim Jones is travelling to ENB next week to commission the new cracker and help to finish the new drying system.

Bougainville cocoa HORT/2014/094

Upcoming or recent activities

- A group of cocoa stakeholders will be visiting the Mars Cocoa Academy in Sulawesi for two weeks from 30 January. The Academy is one of two major field research facilities run by Mars Chocolate, and also runs training courses for cocoa farmers and technicians from around the world. The Academy includes the WOW! block testing the limits of cocoa productivity under intense cultivation. The delegation includes the Minister of Agriculture's First Secretary, the Secretary of the ABG-DPI, the PNG and Bougainville project managers, Research and Training Hub managers, four farmers who are potential high-quality bean exporters, and three CCI and UNRE staff involved in the project. Three of the farmers will continue on a cocoa marketing mission, with bean samples, to Singapore and Malaysia.
- David Guest has been invited to participate in a meeting with donor agencies involved in the Bougainville cocoa industry on 27 February, hosted by the AHC in Port Moresby. The meeting aims to develop plans to coordinate field activities to achieve maximum impacts.
- The survey team continues to move across south Bougainville, and has now collected more than 1,000 responses to our livelihoods and health questionnaire, using the CommCare tool.
- Grant Vinning and Andrew Sale continue to present market training activities, with the assistance of a SRA to investigate constraints to direct exports, including transport logistics and market demand. Interest generated at the Chocolate Festival continues to mount, with further visits planned by at least one of our judges, Barry Kitchen, to develop improved links with Australian markets.
- Pilot low-cost solar cocoa driers have been constructed in Buka using plastic recycled from cereal grain storage sausage bags. These will be evaluated alongside traditional driers.

Lessons learnt

- Organising the training visit to Sulawesi has presented enormous and unexpected challenges. Most of the trainees had never travelled outside Bougainville, and did not have birth certificates or

passports, let alone appropriate experience or clothing. It required herculean efforts by the project team, from the ACIAR team in Port Moresby, and from Mars Chocolate in Sulawesi to get the trainees on the plane. Even then, Air Niugini offloaded our Buka team causing them to miss the flights to Indonesia...then continued to mess up their ongoing travel into February, so more on that in next month's update. As I write, the team is flying from Singapore to Makassar. It is never too early to start organising any overseas tours.

PNG cocoa HORT/2014/096

- During early January, Trevor visited the PNG Cocoa Coconut Institute, Tavilo, and the University of Natural Resources and Environment, Vudal, to discuss plans for 2017 and help prepare invoices for Payment 3. Trevor also worked with Kenny Francis on development and testing of the solar driers at Tavilo and Tokiala and sourced cocoa moisture meters from an Australian supplier for use in further testing. Trevor worked with Peter Bapiwei to develop the quarantine facilities and procedures for transporting CCI clones to Karimui in Simbu Province for testing alongside local selections made from the hybrid seedlings first planted there. The cheap budding knife Trevor has developed from a hacksaw blade is being tested in the CCI nursery.
- Josie Saul-Maora has been reinstated at CCI as head of plant pathology and so we have to recruit an Assistant Coordinator to help Aitul Weoh in Madang. Josie will continue to work with the project as an advisor on women in agriculture as well as advising on plant protection as originally planned.
- Phil and George Curry (Curtin University) had a phone discussion about liaison with his post-graduate student, Alois, who is working in Muguer-Subigin Village in Dagua LLG in East Sepik, where we have a Cocoa Model Farmer-Trainer (Francis Kuel).
- In New Ireland, Kula and his team have overseen the clearing, lining, shade tree establishment and field planting of all 20 budwood gardens. All 20 Cocoa Model Farmer Trainers have begun clearing their one hectare demonstration block and chupons have been induced ready for budding on other blocks to demonstrate rehabilitation of existing trees. Some of the 24 farmers working with each CMFT have completed lining and shade establishment on their own blocks. Discussions with the Governor's office about possible expansion of the program have continued.

Sweetpotato HORT/2014/097

Plans for February

- Full scale survey of commercial kaukau value chains in EHP, Jiwaka and WHP in February, using the CommCare system developed and field tested last year.
- A socio-economic review of kaukau production and marketing has commenced using available documents. ANUE team members plan will liaise with FPDA to gather up to the minute data and 'ground truth' the previously documented material.
- Trips to PNG by Australian team members are planned for February 28 – March 5 for training and value chain survey activities, and in the week leading up to the TADEP annual meeting for community participatory workshops.
- SP team members will attend a planning meeting of the 'sweetpotato pest and diseases' project led by Charles Sturt University in Lae, March 1-2.