

MEDIA RELEASE

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GROWER FIELD DAYS GETTING INCREASINGLY POPULAR

Grower Field Days are practical knowledge sharing sessions that involves discussion exchanges between the trainer, usually an established grower and an audience, usually a group of growers. Through grower field days, the training farmer imparts some farming techniques and skills that he or she has applied successfully in their farms.

The traditional role of field days and tours has been to introduce growers and agricultural professionals to new technologies and techniques so that the audience could see how these technologies or techniques could be practically used and applied.

Grower field days have been found to be beneficial around the world in showing growers and agricultural professionals yield management and monitoring systems, techniques for soil sampling and a host of other farming processes.

Recently in Drumasi sector, in Tavua, FSC hosted a Grower Field Day in the farm of Mr Mohammed Mustak, a large cane producer. The topic discussed at this Field Day was **Weed Control on Plant Cane – Use of Pre Emergence**. Essentially this is preventing the growth of weeds on a sugar cane farm, when you are about to plant your cane stage, at the very beginning.

Right: FSC CEO Graham Clark addressing growers as he opens the Drumasi Grower Field Day in Tavua



The Grower Field Day initiative is funded by the European Union and facilitated by the SPC and coordinated by the Fiji Sugar Corporation.

A total of fifty six growers attended this Field Day at Drumasi, which was officially opened by FSC CEO Graham Clark.



In 2017, Mr Mustak produced 393 tons of cane and is looking increase that to 450 tons this season.

Left: Mr Mohammed Mustak explaining his successful Weed Control techniques to the growers in attendance.

At the Drumasi Field Day, Mr Mustak shared his vast experience and knowledge on weed control and the importance of applying pre-emergence weedicide during the cane planting season.

From his own experience, he advised growers in attendance that two to three days after laying out the sugar cane seeds in the farm, one must apply the weedicides atop the seeds. The choice of weedicide to be used can be either *diuron* or *velphar*. However he emphasized that timing is crucial. If applied at the right time, weed growth will be zero or minimal, thus allowing the sugar cane seeds to germinate without any hindrance from weeds.



Sharing knowledge through a practical and hands-on demonstration enhances the educational process. Things like field demonstrations, guided sampling activities and combine harvesting demonstrations are valuable for any grower.

A total of thirty Grower Field Days will be completed this calendar year, almost one per sugar cane sector in both Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.

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