

Support package for growers and home gardeners



The Ministry will provide certain seedlings – free of charge



Free Tractor use to cultivate suitable plots of land – up to ½ an acre



A quantity of seeds have been set aside for home gardeners



Ministry is offering fertilisers and organic, low-toxic pesticides



Ministry to provide additional growing advice

In order to help provide food security for the people of the Cook Islands in these ‘unprecedented times’, the Ministry of Agriculture is introducing a support package for growers and home gardeners to provide a supply of fresh produce for the country over the next three to six months.

Under the package the Ministry will provide certain seedlings – free of charge – to commercial and semi-commercial growers and to home gardeners too; not just in Rarotonga but also to the Pa Enua.

Some of the support will also extend to tractor use to cultivate suitable plots of land – up to half an acre. Agriculture staff will inspect the plots for their suitability, and will monitor the plantings. The assistance in the package will extend from now through until the end of June.

Commercial farmers and home gardeners are also being offered a tractor service, and growing advice as part of the Ministry of Agriculture’s COVID-19 emergency response package.

The package is being rolled out across the country to sustain the agriculture sector and address the food security needs of the Cook Islands as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread around the world.

As part of the package, the Ministry of Agriculture will procure the necessary supplies to produce seedlings for distribution to growers in Rarotonga and the Pa Enua, free of charge.

The ultimate aim is to provide seedlings to commercial farmers so sufficient produce can be harvested over the next 3 to 6 months and continue to supply the local market.



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Seedlings will also be provided to households for home gardens, helping members of the public contribute to the nation’s food security. The Ministry’s package is scheduled to run until June 30, 2020.

Seedlings are available to active full and part-time commercial farmers. Each farmer is eligible for up to three trays of three types of crops, free of charge. Seedlings available include beans (dwarf and snake), Chinese cabbage, cucumber, choy sum (Chinese green), eggplant, and sweet corn. Seedlings of other crops outside of the response package may be available at an additional price. Interested farmers should contact nursery staff.

Commercial growers are also being offered a free tractor service to assist with land preparation. Service of up to 3 hours will be provided to each farmer for the cultivation of an area of no more than ½ acre in size. Available activities include slashing, discing, ploughing, hilling and sub-soiling (ripping). To make a request for the tractor service, please

contact the Ministry directly.

A small quantity of seeds have been set aside for home gardeners, which can be picked up from staff at the Ministry of Agriculture’s Crop Research Division. Seedlings of up to three punnets of three crops are also available.

All growers are also being offered fertilisers (solid and foliar) and organic, low-toxic pesticides to assist with crop pests and soil nutrition management. Quantities provided will be dependent on the requirement for each crop type.

To assist the elderly and those in need, the Ministry is offering three trays of seedlings of three crops to each of Rarotonga’s Puna, available upon request.

As part of its package, the Ministry will also monitor seedlings provided. Ministry staff will record the seedlings and quantities provided to each farmer, their contact details, and the specific area (village) where planting will take place. The Ministry will also be working in partnership with the Business, Trade, and Investment Board (BTIB) and Te Tango Enua, to conduct follow-up visits for home gardens to monitor progress of planting and provide additional growing advice.

For more information, please contact the Ministry at 28 711 or by email to temarama.anguna@cookislands.gov.ck or william.wigmore@cookislands.gov.ck.