K7m to develop coffee

Farmers co-ops get 20,000 seedlings

THE Government has spent K7 million to help coffee development in the country, Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Tommy Tomoeicell says.

Tomoeicell said that on Friday, when opening the Mauro village coffee nursery project in Sinasina-Yongomurag district, Chimbu.

The project, which boasts about 100,000 coffee seedlings, was funded by the Government through the Coffee Industry Corporation for K60,000. Tomoeicell said the main objective of the Government’s intervention programme was to systematically replace aging coffee tree stock and encourage planting of new ones.

According to Coffee Industry Corporation, the objective of the nursery development was to achieve the Government’s medium-term development plan of exporting six million bags of coffee by 2030.

“Under the Government funding, a total of 77 nurseries were established in 2012,” a statement from the corporation said.

“From these nurseries, a total of 2,084 million seedlings were distributed,” it said.

“In order for the country to produce six million bags of coffee by 2030, it needed to raise and distribute between 324 million and 21 billion seedlings,” Tomoeicell said the country controlled only one per cent of the world’s coffee market. He said Brazil controlled 34 per cent of the market while Vietnam had 14 per cent and Colombia and Indonesia controlled seven per cent.

“I want you to know that PNG competes with more than 80 countries in the world to produce coffee,” Tomoeicell said.

“We will not win the race if we don’t produce quality coffee,” he urged coffee farmers to be consistent in planting coffee.

Floods causing food shortage

CONSTANT rain over the last few weeks has destroyed food crops and vegetables in Central, leaving people acutely short of food, a spokesman said.

Kaimi Inore, a spokesman for Goroka village in Kariku-Hiri district, said people were starving in his village as rain and flooding destroyed village gardens and made fishing difficult.

He said food crops and vegetables above ground were flattened or washed away and root crops roted due to too much water.

Inore said Goroka villagers, who depended mainly on their gardens and the sea for food, were suffering as there was a shortage of food. “We cannot go fishing in the sea because they are covered under water,” he said.

“We had to use cassava before maturity because it was covered in water and they decay in the mud after a couple of weeks,” Inore said.

He said the Central Provincial government had supplied 10 bags of rice to 14 wards in the Nine West local government last week, but that was not enough due to a large population.

Inore said Goroka was significantly affected by the conditions and needed more food supplies.

Barramundi project making progress

INCREASING wild stocks of barramundi in their natural habitat is the prime focus for the aquaculture hatchery project in Daru this year.

Formerly known as the Western Province Sustainable Aquaculture Project under the umbrella of the Papua New Guinea Sustainable Development Programme Ltd, it is now being managed by the Ok Tedi Development Foundation and making solid progress.

A large number of barramundi fingerlings have been spawned and are currently in production.

Dara hatchery supervisor and technical officer Ethan Addo and postdoctoral supervisor Jason Tigaru, with the assistance of 10 staff members, began 2015 with a successful spawning programme on Jan 7.

As estimated 35,000 fingerlings, ranging from 20mm to 60mm are ready for sale and distribution for other re-stocking or farming purposes.

Addo said once a grading fingering reached 50mm, it would be ready for release into its natural habitat to feed off natural food sources.

“This is the biggest crop of fingerlings since the project began under the PNG Sustainable Development Programme Ltd,” Addo said.

“We are very happy that the chief executive officer of Ok Tedi Foundation Ian Maddison and Ok Tedi Foundation have stepped in to support us achieve this,” he added.

“With sales confirmed, we are already planning for another spawning next month,” Addo said.

About 10,000 fingerlings from the current crop have been distributed to the National Fisheries Authority and will be flown to Port Moresby to stock the Sirimauna Dam.