NARI Nius

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29 YEARS of Dedicated Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development

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Welcome to the 2nd edition of NARI Nius for 2026. If you have any comments or contributions please drop us a line at: ***naripng@nari.gov.pg*** *for an e-copy.*

Staff walk to mark International Women's Day

Female staff accompanied by male colleagues, and some family members woke up as early as 5 am on March 08 to begin a 1.6 kilometre walk and clean-a-thon as part of celebrating International Women's Day.

They were attired in purple shirts with this year's theme, "Give to Gain" to raise funds to help Bubia Health Clinic which provides health services to staff and nearby communities.

Deputy Director General Dr Peter Gendua who joined the walk expressed that this is the first time NARI celebrated IWD and thanked the organising committee in making the event possible.

" I would like to thank mainly our female staff, Lae Security Services, Lae Traffic Police and the organising committee who initiated this event. This is the first time NARI is celebrating International Women's Day," expressed Dr Gendua.



Starting point of the 1.6 kilometres of road at 14 Mile.



IWD participants attired in purple.

Organising Team Leader and Technical Editor Ms Margaret Sepi sincerely thanked male officers and spouses who had joined in celebrating IWD.

Mrs Noreen Ovah says she is privileged to be part of the IWD celebrations and acknowledged that what we give will always benefit us in return.

This initiative was supported by Zara Holdings, Papindo Group of Companies Limited and Pelgens to mark this is IWD, a first for NARI.

The 1.6 kilometre stretch of the road walk involved cleaning along and awareness messages on IWD and ended the program with a sausage sizzle fundraising, volleyball game and a live band music. Funds raised during the IWD will be organised and presented at a later date to the Bubia Health Clinic to procure much needed medicine.

Happy 30th Anniversary to ICDF



The senior management and staff of NARI would like to congratulate the International Cooperation for Development Fund, on your 30th Anniversary through your work and other meaningful contribution in Papua New Guinea. ICDF of the Taiwan Technical Mission has been a long term technical partner to NARI.
About 7 staff of NARI have been recipients of scholarships and are currently part of the institute's continued growth and development in the agriculture sector.

Project looks at improving taro resilience and tolerance to leaf blight



A one year project supported by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and led by NARI, will focus in building resilience towards climate change and enhancing biodiversity of taro.
NARI and the PNG University of Technology (UoT) as project partner, will be using two sets of taro collection from the Centre for Pacific Crops and NARI Taro (NT) varieties; NT 06, 02, Numkoweh and Ox & Palm. The taro collection will undergo a series of laboratory screening and radiation to improve taro varieties' tolerance to low soil moisture conditions and leaf blight resistance.
The project is led by a team of researchers from the Momase Regional Centre, Morobe and Highlands Regional Centre in Aiyura, Eastern Highlands, under the leadership of Dr Caleb Breria. The "Using Nuclear Technologies for Development of a Sustainable Taro Production Systems" project is supported by IAEA for a period of one year and implemented by NARI and PNG UoT.

Call for transformation in agricultural research

Director General Dr Nelson Simbiken challenged staff, stakeholders and the surrounding community of the Islands Regional Centre, in East New Britain to transform and reform the way agriculture research is conducted.

Dr Simbiken aired this message during the dedication service for public servants saying there is a greater need for collaboration with stakeholders, to forge new partnerships, describing it as a reset at 50.

According to Dr Simbiken, IRC, Kerevat must recognize its foundational ground of agriculture research in Papua New Guinea formally known back then as "***Lowlands Agricultural Experimental Station (L.A.E.S)",*** which served as the birthplace for major cash crops such as *cocoa*, *coconut*, *oil palm* and *rubber*. Staff must take care of its resources and assets on station, convert them into revenue-generating opportunities, and advance emerging tree-crops and food garden produce such as kava, taro, and dragon fruit by diversifying export potential commodities for farming communities in the NGI region.

Dr Simbiken applauded the Japanese International Corporation Agency-Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Project (JICA-SHEP) which remains open to support and transform farming practices at the village level. He challenged scientists to develop national feedstock programs for cattle and to facilitate training in artificial insemination for livestock researchers and technical officers.

Dr Simbiken's participation at IRC's dedication service underscores a greater need to recognise efforts by staff who contributed towards the establishment of the station as an iconic landmark in agricultural research and reaffirms IRC's role as host for the 2028 Agricultural Innovations Show to commemorate 100 years of agricultural research in PNG.

"There is a need to strengthen research, development efforts and technology innovations by driving meaningful transformation in agricultural practices, particularly at the subsistence level," expressed Dr Simbiken.

The current push for transformation and reformation in how NARI conducts its work aligns perfectly with the **National Agriculture Sector Plan (NASP) 2024-2033**, which focuses on transformation, revitalization and reformation.

The NASP includes the key idea of transitioning subsistence farmers into agricultural entrepreneurs and agri-business operators.



Dr Simbiken



Staff of the IRC



IRC staff and Dr Simbiken (centre).



Dedication service.

Sweetpotato farmer visits home of late Robert Geno





Late Robert Geno not only left behind a legacy but something meaningful with farmers who had worked with him on research in sweetpotato in Eastern Highlands.

One such farmer is Aku Kulo, a sweetpotato farmer from Meteyiufa village of Minamalo local level government area of Goroka District, Eastern Highlands. Mr Kulo was involved in a sweetpotato project in using disease-free sweetpotato planting materials and use of pheromone traps supported by the Australian Centre for Agricultural Research.(ACIAR). Pheromone traps are designed to trap male sweetpotato weevils to control weevil population.

Mr Kulo was deeply saddened to hear of Robert's passing and visited the family home at Gaire village in Rigo district with a stockfeed size bag of sweetpotato, cash contribution and some soft drinks. The family of late Mr Geno were grateful for Mr Kulo's generous gesture. Mr Kulo expressed gratitude to the work of late Mr Geno who had left very meaningful contribution in the lives of farmers he had worked with.

Documenting traits on village chickens is important



Village chickens in Papua New Guinea are drawing a lot of interest from researchers in not only their resilience but a need to better understand their genetic and physical traits through a characterisation process.

Experts say that characterisation is a critical step toward improving local chicken populations. This process involves documenting traits such as body size, plumage colour, growth patterns, and reproductive performance, which can help identify productive lines for breeding programs.

Village chickens are well adapted to the local environment requiring very minimal input and survive through scavenging to feed. They have a natural hardiness and brooding ability which makes them important for food security and income generation.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, Animal Genetic Resources (AnGR) must be properly identified and evaluated to ensure their sustainable use and conservation. Without proper characterisation, valuable traits such as disease tolerance, climate adaptability, and feed efficiency risk being overlooked or lost.

In PNG, very limited work has been carried out on village chickens, while earlier studies focused mainly on observable characteristics and nutrition in selected regions. NARI's Livestock Program at the Momase Regional Centre in Lae is undertaking the characterisation of village chicken as part of a broader initiative to document and improve native poultry resources.

Establishing a comprehensive baseline data across different agro-ecological zones (land areas) will help to capture the diversity of village chicken population. Strengthening characterisation efforts is expected to support the development of targeted breeding and improvement programs, while also safeguarding local AnGR for future utilisation. As interest for village chickens grow, they may prove to be not only a symbol of resilience, but also a key to unlocking sustainable poultry development in the country.



The Plant Genetic Resources and support staff held two days of meeting to assess, evaluate and plan for the remaining life of the 'Breadfruit, More Than Just Food' Project. Most of the social data has been collected while the team plans the remaining activities under the project is delivered in a timely manner. Officers engaged under the project from Laloki, Kerevat, Bubia and NARI Head Office converged to make preparations to roll out the remaining activities under the breadfruit project.



NARI has a mandated role of maintaining and conserving a diverse collection of genetic resources for food and agriculture. Among the collection of food crops, yams are kept as part of its field collection at the Southern Regional Centre in Laloki, Central and Momase Regional Centre in Lae. The field collection of crops consist of yams, banana, lowland sweetpotato, taro, aibika, breadfruit, cassava, and pulses which are edible legume plants.

Laboratory Services offered by NARI

The Professor John Kola Chemistry Laboratory offers a wide range of analytical and diagnostic testing services. We are a national chemical testing laboratory and have been operating for over 30 years.

Our laboratory is accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 which is a general requirement set by the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) and International Electrotechnical Commision (IEC) for the competence in testing laboratories.

It certifies a laboratory as an Accredited Chemical Testing Laboratory under the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 Guidelines.

Prof John Kola Chemistry can perform chemical testing and all methods used are recommended by American Public Health Association (water), Australasia Soil and Plant Analysis Council (soil and plant), Association of Official Analytical Chemist (food and natural products).

Prof John Kola Chemistry Laboratory Kilakila

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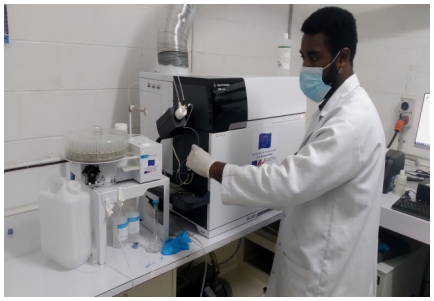


Aquatek Analyser for measuring Ammonium in water

What we test for in the laboratory in pictures



Quality Control Chemist, carrying out food testing on the Fat extraction equipment



Test to determine mineral elements such as Calcium, Magnesium, Potassium, etc and mainly used for water and environmental samples.



A high throughput & inexpensive analytical technique used to primarily test for major elements such as Calcium, Magnesium etc in food, beverage, water, plant and soils.



Extraction technique to extract from crushed, dried or ground samples with the aid of heating & refluxing to determine fats in dried nuts, grains, etc



Unit used to determine nitrogen (crude protein) content in soil, plants, food and natural products.



This is a purification system which eliminates bacteria using ultra violet radiation and provides chemical reactive water for the laboratory's daily use.

guesthouse

WESTERN PACIFIC



MOROBE

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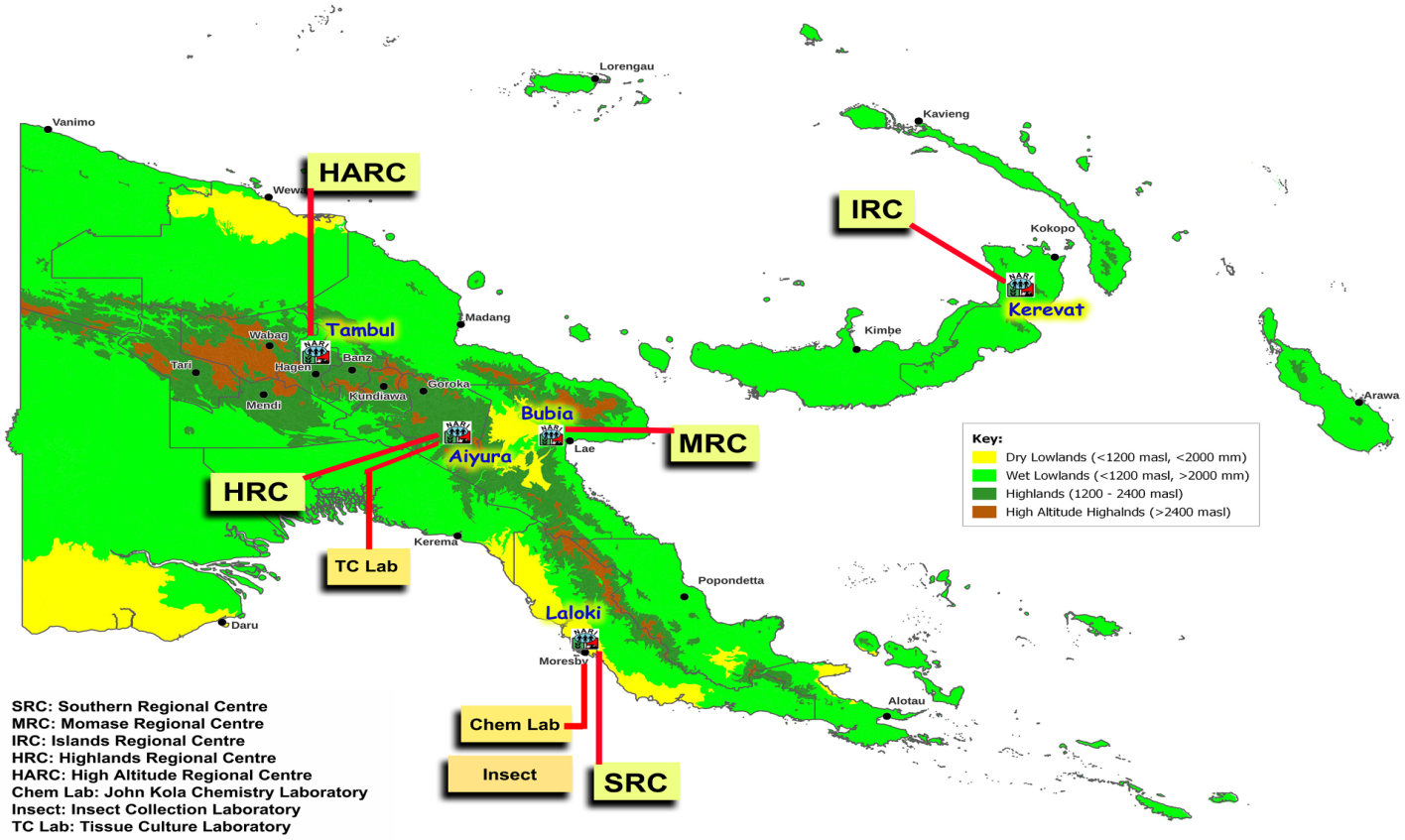
HILL TOP

EASTERN HIGHLANDS

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The National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) was established by an Act of National Parliament of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in July 1996 as a public funded, statutory research organisation, to conduct and foster applied and adaptive research into:

i) any branch of biological, physical and natural sciences related to agriculture;

ii) cultural and socioeconomic aspects of the agricultural sector, especially of the smallholder agriculture; and

iii) matters relating to rural development. and of relevance to Papua New Guinea.