

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**12 September 2013 – For immediate release**

## **Vanuatu's First Organic Copra Meal Export**

Vanuatu producers have achieved another milestone with the first ever export of certified organic copra meal to Australia taking place in August.

Coconut Oil Production Santo Ltd (COPSL) sourced the organic copra from the South Santo SANMA Community Coconuts smallholder growers group and from the PRV plantations on Malekula.

Samuel Tiwok, Export Manager for COPSL says 'Wahoo we are the best Organic Copra meal Producer in the Pacific, "GO COPSL GO"'.

Organic copra meal is a much sought-after product in Australia, a valued feed supplement for organic beef farmers who are currently experiencing drought conditions and as a high-protein additive for organic poultry and pig feed rations.

Andrew Youngberry of organic animal feed company Country Heritage Feeds, Queensland Australia, says 'Procurement of the first of Vanuatu's organic copra meal has allowed a wider product offering to their client base particularly with USDA certified dry season supplements'.

Andrew has recently been in Vanuatu to visit COPSL's production facilities and meet with some of the coconut growers from South Santo. Andrew said that it was an incredible pleasure to meet with those involved in the project and his company has an ongoing commitment to exporting the certified organic copra meal and he fundamentally supports the agriculturally based community project.

World Vision (supported by the New Zealand Aid program) have been assisting the South Santo communities to achieve organic certification and coordinate collective selling as part of the SANMA Community Economic Development (SCED) project, which has the goal of increasing agriculture-based community income by 20% by 2016.

Mackenzie Vagaha, Project Coordinator for World Vision says 'The farmers of South Santo are inspired by their product being a valuable source of food for Australian cattle farmers. The future is bright for SANMA Community Coconuts value added export products'.

The shipment was facilitated by African Pacific who, as part of the Vanuatu Sustainable Agri-Business Initiative, have been working in partnership with all stakeholders to achieve organic certification, secure markets, and boost growers' livelihoods from one of the country's staple commodities.

Recently appointed board members of the Vanuatu Commodities Marketing Board (VCMB) met with representatives of the parties involved to discuss quality and pricing issues, and expressed their support for the work being done to directly connect producers with the customer.

The participants are grateful for the support of all stakeholders – government, NGO and private sector – in supporting farmer-focused initiatives to boost livelihoods of coconut producers in Vanuatu, and look forward to many more exports in coming months.

Growers interested in organic certification are encouraged to contact Norah Rihai at the Vanuatu Agriculture College on 537 4853 for information and support.

#### **PHOTOS:**



**Photo 1** - Vanuatu's first export of organic copra meal being unloaded from the container in Brisbane, Australia.



**Photo 2** – Andrew Youngberry of Australia's Country Heritage Feeds meets Elder Marc from the Namoru community in South Santo, with Emile Selmen and Jane Rutledge of World Vision Vanuatu.



**Photo 3** – Ian Wilson, First Political Advisor to the Prime Minister and Chairman of VCMB; Andreas Lombardozzi, African Pacific; Andrew Youngberry, Country Heritage Feeds; Bernie Glaser, Chairman of COPSL; Jeffrey Homal, COPSL; and Basil Hopkins, Advisor to the Minister of Trade and Vice Chairman of VCMB met in Santo to discuss organic copra meal exports.

#### **Media Contacts:**

##### Vanuatu

- Wayne Webb, COPSL: +678 7755121; [waynew@copsl.com.au](mailto:waynew@copsl.com.au)

## Australia

- Bernie Glaser, COPSL: +61 411 618 222; [bernieg@glaser.com.au](mailto:bernieg@glaser.com.au)
- Andreas Lombardozi: +61 412 611 877; [andreas@africanpacific.com](mailto:andreas@africanpacific.com)

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