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| **Bibliography** | Fong-Lomavatu, M.; Ravuiwasa, K.; Sar, L.; Geno, R.; Ndrewou, A.; Atu, L.; Matapaza, R.; Furlong, M.J.; Jackson, G.; Smith, C. (2023) Plant health clinics in the Pacific region and the role of regional universities, In: New Zealand Journal of Crop and Horticultural Science (Special issue), 1-16, URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/01140671.2023.2278789 |
| **Abstract / Content summary** | Plant protection is increasingly problematic in a climate-challenged world where the need for food security is increasingly urgent. Plant Health Clinics (PHCs) are an effective way of improving the capability of extension services to assist farmers to manage plant problems, by delivering personalised advice. They are also recognised as an important element in the building of the region’s plant health system, with links to biosecurity and research. Based on a medical model, the advice is provided by extension officers trained as ‘plant health doctors’, at a clinic accessible to farmers. Indications are that in the Pacific, farmers are very supportive of the PHC approach. In this paper, we consider the background and need for PHCs and the training of plant health doctors. We then discuss the important role of three of the region’s universities – Fiji National University (FNU), Solomon Islands National University (SINU), and the University of Goroka (UoG) in PNG which now provide PHC
education to students of agriculture and beyond to sustain the programme once donor funding ceases. Overall, the experience of including PHCs offers authentic learning for students, as well as opening a wide range of research opportunities to investigate and support the programme.
Keywords: Pacific; plant health clinics; pests; diseases; training; universities; farmers
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