

AGRITeCH GRANT TO BOOST LOCAL MORINGA SUPPLEMENT PRODUCTION

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) is pleased to announce it has awarded a SMART AgriTech Scheme to Island Solutions & Trading Limited (trading as Moringa Cook Islands) to support production of powdered moringa for sale as a locally produced health supplement. The moringa plant is well researched internationally and widely known for its health benefits. It contains a variety of proteins and vitamins and minerals and has very little to no known side effects.

The AgriTech grant will enable Moringa Cook Islands to build a temperature controlled drying house and purchase equipment to process moringa into powdered supplement for sale both locally and internationally. Moringa Cook Islands has already planted nearly 2000 moringa trees on Rarotonga and Aitutaki and aim to increase this to 10,000 trees by March 2021. Moringa Cook Islands has invested in additional land to make this possible.

Moringa Cook Islands has been refining their production process over the last few years with the hopes of providing a quality product for their customers. However, without the proper equipment the process has been laborious and lengthy, limiting the quantities they can produce.

Moringa Cook Islands' owner Cleo Marsters says: "We are very thankful recipients of SMART AgriTech Fund, the grant has given us the opportunity to expand and grow the moringa industry in the Cook

Islands. With this grant, we will be able to get the much needed equipment to be able to produce higher quality powdered moringa in much larger quantities to sell locally as well as internationally, initially beginning with New Zealand who are already buyers of our moringa. Since selling to the public last year March, we have been unable to produce enough to meet local demand, let alone the New Zealand market. We already sell small quantities to families in New Zealand and are aware of strong demand for this product in Asia and the Americas."

Moringa Cook Islands will have enough trees ready to harvest over the next six months to quickly ramp up production when the new commercial grade equipment arrives. In future they see opportunity to work with local farmers and families considering agriculture to ensure there is sufficient moringa to meet demand.

MFEM encourages people wanting to apply for an AgriTech Grant to firstly read

through the criteria carefully, then discuss their project with Ministry of Agriculture to ensure their project meets all the technical and legislative requirements. The Private Sector Task Force staff are available to assist applicants wanting to apply for the grant. Applicants seeking advice and feedback to ensure their application is in line with the SMART AgriTech Policy before it is submitted, should contact MFEM.

