



Top Chefs showcase Pacific flavours at Regional Agribusiness Forum in Apia, Samoa

[28/08/2016] Pacific cuisine is to feature as part of the forthcoming [2nd Pacific Agribusiness Forum](#), taking place from August 29 to September 1 in Apia, Samoa. A special Chefs Training Programme on “[Pacific Contemporary Island Cuisine](#)” will see renowned regional chefs Robert Oliver and Colin Chung provide training on innovative uses of Pacific ingredients and advocate in favour of greater consumption of local products.

At the helm of this two-day event, which will run from August 29 to 30, is Chris Cocker, CEO of the South Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO). He brings with him over 20 years of experience and expertise in Pacific trade, investment, and global tourism marketing and promotion. As such, the Chefs Training Programme presents an important step in scaling up the SPTO’s ambitions to establish the region as a prime gastronomic destination.

“Seeing the potential of the Pacific cuisine as a niche tourism product, SPTO had conducted a series of regional culinary trainings last year and this year as pilot projects” explains Chris. “The success of these workshops, as attested to by hotels and local chefs, and the delicious meals produced from local ingredients called for more than just a re-visit.” He went on add “We are pleased to be part of the 2nd Pacific Agribusiness Forum which will address value chains from farm to table and we are excited about establishing the region as a prime gastronomic destination, in this regard”.

Two of the Pacific’s best known celebrity chefs, Robert Oliver and Colin Chung, will be sharing their veritable knowledge and skills on the innovative preparation of Pacific ingredients with a team of local chefs. An inspirational menu will showcase a range of the region’s most delicious products and demonstrate the capacity for Pacific foods to not only delight the senses, but also teach important lessons on quality, provenance and preparation. The Programme will culminate with a dinner under the theme of “Chefs for Development: Contemporary Island Cuisines” where participants in the Agribusiness Forum will be served meals prepared by the chefs based on organic ingredients supplied by local agribusinesses.

According to Chris Cocker, tourism and agribusiness are natural partners. “Agribusiness is an important sector for the tourism industry. Combining tourism and agribusiness helps to create a sustainable business model while also building stronger communities. This win-win merger and stronger links between the agriculture and tourism sectors, will bring healthier products to families, create thousands of jobs, and inject millions of tourism dollars into farming communities.” In concluding, he emphasised that this would not be a short-term endeavour. “I am keen to see the future of agribusiness in the Pacific, particularly with regards to the tourism industry”.

The development of agribusiness in the Pacific depends on local products being able to enter into new markets and expand their growth in existing ones. The regional tourism market presents a particularly lucrative opportunity for Pacific agribusinesses due to the high visitor numbers enjoyed by the islands and the spending power of tourists. Additionally, achieving sustainability in the tourism and agriculture sectors depends on the promotion of local sourcing, in order both to decrease the reliance on imported goods, and also to stimulate local production and protect the unique heritage of the traditional Pacific food culture.

Food and gastronomy play a major role in the tourism experience, and can significantly enhance the gains derived from stronger linkages between the agricultural and tourism sectors. As a result, chefs as champions and ambassadors of local foods and cuisine are also receiving greater recognition from policymakers and the development community. It is in this context that CTA, PIPSO, IICA, SPC, SPTO in collaboration with various partners, are developing a platform on Chefs for Development, which will enable deeper engagement between value chain actors and chefs in support of greater contribution of local agribusiness products to local cuisine.

The Pacific Agribusiness Forum and related initiatives have been developed as a partnership between CTA, SPTO, PIPSO (Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation), IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) and other partners such as SPC (Pacific Community)/PAPP (The Pacific Agriculture Policy Project) and intra-ACP and APP Caribbean, Pacific Cooperation Foundation (PCF), Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Samoa Tourism Association.

Chef Robert Oliver: <http://robertoliveronline.com/>

Chef Colin Chung: www.colinskitchen.co.nz

Find out more

- Visit the event page for the Chefs Training Programme on “[Pacific Contemporary Island Cuisine](#)”
- Further information about the 2nd Pacific Agribusiness Forum can be found on the [Brussels Briefings website](#)
- Learn about the [South Pacific Tourism Organization \(SPTO\)](#)
- Read the interview with Robert Oliver on *Spore* “[Cooking local, stimulating business](#)”
- Learn more about the 1st Pacific Agribusiness Forum on the [Brussels Briefing website](#) and on the [CTA website](#)
- Learn about the [evidence base for the agriculture–nutrition nexus](#)
- Learn about [setting policy for the agrifood business](#)
- Discover the [Chefs for Development](#) initiative

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