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Consumer Council of Fiji



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22 December 2023

PRESS RELEASE

### **Consumer Council of Fiji Unveils Disturbing Findings in Festive Season Market Surveillance**

The recent findings from the Consumer Council of Fiji's festive season market surveillance resonate with the concerns raised by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Manoa Kamikamica. Earlier this week, the Minister expressed disappointment and issued a warning to supermarket stakeholders against selling inferior products during the festive season for the sake of profits.

The Council's surveillance reaffirms the need for such warnings, as it continues to discover troubling issues previously highlighted by the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission. Instances of misleading prices causing confusion among consumers persist, along with missing shelf prices that prevent informed purchasing decisions. Advertisements lacking validity dates further contribute to a lack of transparency.

Ms. Seema Shandil, Chief Executive Officer of the Consumer Council of Fiji, expressed deep concern over the discovered trends. "We have also discovered a disturbing trend of selling meat in unacceptable conditions has also been identified, particularly during this period of high demand. Some supermarkets appear to be retailing fat instead of quality meat products. Many supermarkets were found to have extremely unhygienic conditions, including wet floors and foul odours. Such environments pose health risks to both consumers and staff."

Additionally, the Council has uncovered supermarkets selling potatoes, onions, and meat in an unacceptable state, some of which are rotten or of low quality. The sale of meat in undesirable conditions, including instances where fat is passed off as quality meat, has been identified. Unhygienic conditions within supermarkets, such as wet floors and foul odors, pose health risks to both consumers and staff.

Deputy Prime Minister Kamikamica's disappointment is echoed by the Consumer Council of Fiji, emphasizing the urgency for corrective measures. The Minister's warning serves as a reminder that selling spoiled goods unfit for human consumption is inexcusable. Strict actions will be taken against offending retailers.

While the Consumer Council of Fiji is rigorously working to resolve these issues in collaboration with other enforcement bodies, the Council expects that supermarkets will do the right thing over the long weekend shopping frenzy and provide consumers value for their money.

Ms. Shandil emphasized the importance of immediate corrective measures. "It is imperative that supermarkets take swift action to rectify these issues and ensure the safety and satisfaction



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of consumers. Consumers should not have to compromise on the quality and safety of products during the festive season or any other time."

The ongoing joint efforts of the Consumer Council of Fiji and other enforcement bodies aim to address these issues promptly. As highlighted by the Minister, the joint inspection campaign is crucial in preventing such cases and ensuring the health and safety of citizens. Consumers are urged to report any concerns through the National Consumer Helpline, email ([complaints@consumersfiji.org](mailto:complaints@consumersfiji.org)), or the Consumer Council of Fiji mobile app.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shandil".

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**Ms Seema Shandil**

**Chief Executive Officer**