



Agriculture in the News

26 – 29 June, 2012

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International dialogue points to bio-economy as an option for tackling challenges in Agriculture by, IICA Connection June 2012, no.13
<http://www.iica.int/Eng/prensa/IICAConexion/IICAConexion2/2012/N13/secundaria4.aspx>

The new paradigm in bioeconomy brings together scientific knowledge, natural resources and processes in an effort to strengthen agriculture. Several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are meeting in Brazil to discuss this topic.

For more on Article see page 4

Agriculture in the News is a newsletter which provides a compilation of selected news articles on issues affecting agriculture in the Caribbean region. Articles from Newspapers, Online News Service Agencies, Newsletters and Press Releases are featured.

For copies of documents cited, visit the web address or source of the information provided.



CARDI *Improving Lives Through Agricultural Research*

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About CARDI

Our Vision

To be the centre of excellence in the Caribbean for the provision and application of research and development in agriculture and rural enhancement.

Our Mission

To contribute to the sustainable economic well being of Caribbean people by the generation and transfer of appropriate technology through research and development within the agricultural value chain.

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Livestock

FAO and OIE unveil global strategy for control of foot and mouth disease by FAO, 27 June, 2012,
<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/150417/icode/>

Full Article

FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) are joining forces to combat foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) on a global scale, laying out a detailed strategy today to bring the devastating livestock disease under control.

The two organizations underlined, however, that only solid commitments from global partners will make the strategy possible, as they opened an international meeting in Bangkok supported by the Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

Chairing the opening session of the FAO/OIE global conference in Bangkok today, Thai deputy prime minister Chumpol Silpa-archa, said: "Thailand is working for the further accomplishment of FMD freedom by 2015 in an eastern region pilot zone of the country as well as at ASEAN regional level by 2020."

FAO is emphasizing the need for collective action to better control FMD where it is a high burden to millions of farmers, pastoralists and commercial operators.

"Recent FMD outbreaks around the globe demonstrate that animal diseases have no boundaries, can have a devastating impact and require a global response," said Hiroyuki Konuma, the FAO regional representative for Asia and the Pacific.

Foot-and-mouth disease is not a direct threat to human health. However, lost trade opportunities for affected countries are a global economic burden and a hindrance on human development.

Most importantly, for the poorest farmers who often depend on just a few animals, foot-and-mouth disease means hunger and economic ruin when it strikes and cuts off people's only source of income and protein.

More than 100 countries are attending the FAO/OIE meeting in Bangkok.

Global Strategy

"One main objective of the Global Strategy is to allow FMD control worldwide through the strengthening of veterinary services responsible for animal disease control," explained Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General.

"Positive effects of the strategy will extend far beyond the control of FMD because it represents an opportunity to initiate long-term actions which will enhance veterinary services' capacity to fight other high-impact diseases of livestock. At the regional level the South-East Asia and China FMD campaign (SEACFMD) programme managed by OIE/Bangkok is considered as a very efficient model," he added.

"The successful eradication of rinderpest, a joint effort by scientists, governments, donors, veterinarians and farmers, clearly shows that we can reduce and even eliminate the threat of major diseases," Juan Lubroth, FAO's chief veterinary officer.

"We could apply lessons learned and appropriate approaches when it comes to foot-and-mouth disease: better surveillance, coordination and control to reduce FMD outbreaks and finally eliminate the virus, to safeguard food security, animal health and human health," he said.

The Global Strategy combines two tools developed by FAO and the OIE. The OIE tool, called the Performance of Veterinary Services Pathway (PVS), evaluates national veterinary services with the aim of bringing them into compliance with OIE quality standards. Reliable veterinary services ensure the quality and safety of livestock production. In turn, strong veterinary systems protect the safety of food sources, trade and animal health, and as such, are a global public good.

FAO developed the Progressive Control Pathway for Foot-and-Mouth Disease, the PCP-FMD, which guides countries through a series of incremental steps to better manage FMD risks, beginning with active surveillance to establish what types of FMD virus strains are circulating in the country and neighbouring areas.

The process moves countries continuously towards improved levels of FMD control and thus an eventual opening to trade and international markets. A key pillar of the PCP-FMD involves coordinating efforts with countries in the same region in order to control the disease systematically across porous national boundaries.

The aim of the FMD Global Strategy is to decrease the impact of FMD worldwide by reducing the number of disease outbreaks in infected countries until they ultimately attain FMD-free status, as well as by maintaining the official FMD-free status of countries that are already free.

With many countries in the earliest stages of FMD control, the PCP-FMD benchmarks progress with the aim of eventually applying to the OIE for official recognition of their national control programmes and of their FMD-free status, with or without vaccination.

The FMD Global Strategy has been prepared by FAO and OIE under the umbrella of their Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs), in consultation with selected experts, countries and donors, as well as with regional and international organizations. Particular emphasis is put on regions of the world where the disease is endemic, including most of sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

The strategy contributes considerably to poverty reduction by increasing trade opportunities and contributing to and protecting the daily incomes of the 1 billion poor farmers worldwide who depend on livestock.

Losses in the billions

While FMD is seldom fatal, the disease can cause high mortality in newborn and young animals, weight loss, reduced milk yields and lower fertility. The global annual cost of FMD in terms of production losses and the need for prevention by vaccination has been estimated to be approximately \$5 billion.

In a severe event in 2001 in the United Kingdom, the direct and indirect impacts are estimated to have cost as much as \$30 billion.

Earlier outbreaks had similar tolls: in the Chinese province of Taiwan in 1997, a major epidemic cost the economy \$15 billion, while Italy in 1993 suffered economic damages of \$130 million.

Disaster Risk Management

UWI unveils Caribbean Disaster Risk Atlas by Denise Dennis, Jamaica Observer, 27 June 2012

http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/environment/UWI-unveils-Caribbean-Disaster-Risk-Atlas_11804849

Full Article

THE University of the West Indies' (UWI's) Institute for Sustainable Development on Monday unveiled the Caribbean Disaster Risk Atlas, intended to enhance the region's ability to cope with natural events, such as earthquakes and floods.

The atlas, officially launched at the Mona Visitors' Lodge in Kingston, is to enable analysis to guard against losses in Jamaica, as elsewhere in the region, and is to be used in the development of comprehensive risk management strategies.

The US\$510,000 initiative is funded through the World Bank and is being managed by the Seismic Research Unit at UWI's St Augustine campus in Trinidad and the Mona GeoInformatics Institute.

The atlas, which currently contains spatial data on risk from floods and earthquakes in Jamaica, Barbados and Grenada -- the islands where it was piloted -- is to be made available to technical experts as well as general users.

A workshop and symposium on the atlas is to be held today and tomorrow at the Sunset Jamaica Grande in Ocho Rios.

The initiative, according to chairman of the Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC) Conrad Douglas, is a step in the right direction.

"While scientific data has documented the linkages between sustainable development, ecosystem degradation and climate change-related disasters, they are, unfortunately, still not yet well-acknowledged by policymakers. As a consequence, these linkages are not fully reflected in disaster management and risk reduction plans," he said.

The current deficit in the enforcement of science-based policies, Douglas argued, must be corrected.

"We are all aware that disaster risk is driven by factors, such as poverty, urbanisation, poor land-use planning and ecosystem degradation, which are all developmental challenges. Environmentally polluting economic activities, for instance, [the] destruction of sea grass, coral reefs [and] forests cause irreversible ecosystems damage, destroy livelihoods, and thus increase the vulnerability of communities to all types of disasters," he said.

"It is only through the guidance of accurate scientific knowledge that we will be able to plan properly, reduce our exposure to risks, ensure sufficient adaptation, and provide a healthy Jamaica for our people," the CCAC chair added.

Biotechnology

International dialogue points to bio-economy as an option for tackling challenges in Agriculture by IICA, IICA Connection June 2012, no.13

<http://www.iica.int/Eng/prensa/IICAConexion/IICAConexion2/2012/N13/secundaria4.aspx>

Full Article

The new paradigm in bioeconomy brings together scientific knowledge, natural resources and processes in an effort to strengthen agriculture. Several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are meeting in Brazil to discuss this topic.

The first International Seminar on Bio-economy in Latin America, organized by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the International Center for Cooperation on Agricultural Research for Development (CIRAD) and the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) will be held from June 18 to 20 in Brasilia, within the framework of the project Towards a Latin America and Caribbean Bio-Economy in Partnership with Europe (ALCUE-KBBE), which is being financed by the European Union.

During his opening remarks, Guy Henry, Coordinator of ALCUE-KBBE, thanked IICA for the opportunity of bringing this important topic to the discussion table and pointed out that the objectives of the encounter were to “analyze the comparative advantages that Latin America and the Caribbean have with respect to this issue and to discuss the challenges and opportunities that this new concept offers”.

Manuel Otero, IICA Representative in Brazil, who was also present at the head table at the opening ceremony, indicated that IICA “is committed to discussion and application of the concept of bio-economy”, and reiterated “the capacity of the Institute to take this issue to its member countries within the hemisphere”.

The opening ceremony was attended by around 50 persons, among them authorities from all the countries of the region, academics, researchers and rural producers. A delegation from IICA Headquarters, and another from the IICA Office in Uruguay, participated in the discussions.

For Pedro Rocha, Director of Biotechnology and Biosecurity at IICA, the seminar was “a good opportunity to bring together opposing topics that generate discussion”. Rocha commented in an interview that the new bio-economy “enables adaptation of agriculture to climate change, in order to create clean production mechanisms and policies”.

Rocha also mentioned IICA’s efforts to have bio-economy considered as a tool for tackling the challenge of producing food in sufficient quantities and of better quality. “IICA is working along these lines, providing conceptualization support, treating bio-economy as the way to move beyond transgenic foods and sending a message to the entire hemisphere. More particularly, the Institute is helping decision-makers, to whom it is providing information that they can use to design good practices”.

During this morning’s discussions, the current state of bio-economy in the Americas, the Caribbean and Europe were discussed, with the aim of using them as a point of departure to devise a future scenario. The novelty of the new bio-economy is to make more intensive use of scientific knowledge in the transformation of natural resources and in the processes of production of inputs and provision of services. For EMBRAPA specialist, Elisio Contini, “Brazil has the potential to leverage new business with significant value added”. Carlos Santana, also of EMBRAPA, used 2007 data (the most recent available on the topic), to show the potential that Brazil

possesses today in the area of bio-economy, since it was that country that made the greatest investment in biotechnology research in that year.

Discussions continue until Friday of next week. Three working groups will be created to define a series of actions among the countries.

Participation in the seminar is free of cost. Interested persons can register at the Irineu Cabral Auditorium at EMBRAPA Headquarters in Brasilia.

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Agro-Energy

In Antigua and Barbuda, bio-digestors will lead to energy savings by IICA, IICA Connection June 2012, no.13
<http://www.iica.int/Eng/prensa/IICAConexion/IICAConexion2/2012/N13/secundaria5.aspx>

Full Article

IICA is providing technical support to a project aimed at increasing the incomes of small-scale producers.

On this island nation, the use of biodigestors to produce natural gas is being promoted as an inexpensive and innovative solution to the problem of the rising cost of energy produced from non-renewable resources.

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and the Environment of Antigua and Barbuda, is implementing a pilot project in which small-scale producers receive training in the installation of biodigestors.

The system is both low cost and easy to use. A biodigestor consists of a hole in the ground which is lined with plastic and filled with a mixture of dung and water. The hole is sealed and the dung allowed to decompose for at least 50 days. The decomposing material produces methane gas, and the waste left at the end of the process can be used as fertilizer.

This is the first time such a project has been implemented on this island, located in a region where energy shortages are commonplace. In this case, the biodigestor was installed on Titan Farm, in Liberta Village.

The manager of the farm, Marvin Joseph, told the press that the project would have many benefits for the producers. For example, he said, they will save money because the gas produced in the biodigestor can be used in gas stoves, electric generators, and certain modes of transport.

The initiative began with a visit to the island by the IICA Representative in the Eastern Caribbean States, Una May Gordon. For his part, the IICA Representative in the Dominican Republic, Manuel Sanchez, also made a visit to advise the Ministry on matters related to agriculture.

The technical training the producers are receiving is being provided by Maximiliano Ortega, Technology and Innovation Specialist. According to Ortega, the goal is to spread this technology to other parts of the island, with IICA continuing to provide technical support and working with the Ministry.

For more information, contact: maximiliano.ortega@iica.int; una.may.gordon@iica.int

Agricultural Development

Sustainable Agriculture and the role of local food production groups by Susan McMillan, Valerie Gwinner and Nathan Russell, CGIAR Consortium, 26 June 2012 <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/sustainable-agriculture-and-the-role-of-local-food-production-groups/>

Full Article

In our [RIO+20 Call-to-action](#), CGIAR **called for a strengthening and support of local food production groups, livestock herders and smallholder farmers** by investing in agricultural research, strengthening land and water rights, increasing access to markets, finance and insurance, and enhancing local capacity, especially with regard to the use of local agricultural biodiversity.

We talked to three people about their work with smallholder farmers and herders: Ruben Echeverria (Director General, International Center for Tropical Agriculture – [CIAT](#)), Steve Staal (acting Deputy Director General Research, International Livestock Research Institute – [ILRI](#)) and Roberto Quiroz (Project Leader, International Potato Center- [CIP](#)).

“Local food production groups”, that is quite a mouthful...

Ruben Echeverria: These groups consist in large part of smallholder producers. Three out of every four of the world’s approximately 1.2 billion poor people live in rural areas, and either form part of such groups or depend on their food production for sustenance and a livelihood.

Steve Staal: Local food production groups are very diverse. Just in the dairy sub-sector, for example, you find village milk collectives, dairy cooperatives, milk hawker groups and certification schemes, fresh cheese and butter manufacturers, contract farmers and women’s groups. The kind of production group can vary by region and production system. In Africa for example, they span from village sheep fattening groups in the Nigeria and Ethiopia, to transhumant livestock herders in the West African Sahel, to dairy producers and sellers and semi-nomadic milk pastoralists in East Africa, to goat and beef producers in southern Africa. In Asia, where poultry and pig producers have their own specialized groups, livestock fodder growers, transporters and sellers as well as manure sellers are becoming increasingly common and important as land resources get scarcer. And then there are all the specialized agents supplying inputs needed for livestock farming...

Local production groups often combine livestock and farming...

Steve Staal: The vast majority of the world’s small-scale food producers mix crop growing with livestock raising. That’s because the integration of these two systems is beneficial to both in many ways, with livestock manure fertilizing croplands, for example, and crops residues after harvest feeding ruminant livestock. The [CGIAR Systemwide Livestock Program](#) was instituted to work at the interface of crop and livestock production, further refining their integration for increased efficiencies.

Ruben Echeverria: One of the CGIAR's most important contributions to improving mixed crop-livestock systems has consisted of introducing a wide array of tropical forages (grass and leguminous species). In addition to helping intensify meat and milk production, these species offer multiple environmental benefits - such as recuperation of degraded lands and improved soil fertility- which enhance the productivity of crops and the system as a whole. In addition, tropical forages show tremendous potential for mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration and reduced nitrous oxide emissions.

How do you connect your agriculture research with these local food production groups?

Steve Staal: Largely through NGOs, private companies, government agencies, local networks and other intermediaries. And by paying close attention to the self-forming groups of food producers and sellers themselves... Are we responsible for bridging that gap? Yes, although we do this more often indirectly rather than directly. In the past, scientists and scientific institutions working for agricultural development have typically not been held accountable for bridging this gap. All too often they have managed to build their reputations within their scientific communities, largely through scientific publications, rather than through the demonstrable applicability of their research, or the benefits it has provided to their main clients, the world's poor. But that is changing now.

Ruben Echeverria: The CGIAR is most definitely responsible for finding more effective ways to link research with development, and this in itself is a suitable subject for social science research. Ensuring that research is applied requires stronger partnerships. Public-private partnerships show promise for faster development and wider diffusion of novel products, such as drought-tolerant transgenic maize, hybrid *Brachiaria* grasses, and golden -high vitamin A- rice. Another exciting prospect is that of strengthening and expanding our "learning alliances" with major international NGOs, which have immense reach in rural communities across the developing world.

Someone once said: "No farmer will grow food he can't sell". Giving farmers market access must be crucial?

Steve Staal: Oh yes, a good example is a ten-year Smallholder Dairy Project conducted by ILRI, the Kenya Ministry of Agriculture and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute. Working with NGOs and government policymakers from the start, this project managed to change mindsets about what was perceived to be unsafe about the 'raw' -unpasteurized- milk being sold informally everywhere. Due to this project, national -and now regional- dairy policies that were hurting the region's millions of small-scale dairy producers and milk hawkers were removed, with new with certification schemes set up for them, which have greatly increased their market access and their incomes without endangering public health.

Ruben Echeverria: In Central America, CGIAR researchers, working in partnership with several international development NGOs, jointly applied through local partners a participatory methodology for strengthening farmers' market links. As a result, 33,000 rural families developed sustainable agro-enterprises that bring a wide variety of tropical products to market. Now, Catholic Relief Services is applying the same methodology with local partners in various African and Asian countries.

What are some of the key target areas, or key points of interventions to strengthen local food production groups?

Steve Staal: Well, I would stress supporting small-scale dairy men and women, pastoral herders, backyard pig and poultry keepers, and mixed crop-and-livestock farmers of all kinds in the developing world. Livestock markets are booming in developing countries: we have a tremendous opportunity to help hundreds of millions of poor people move out of poverty by meeting the rising demand for milk, eggs and meat. And we also have an opportunity right now, which we must seize for the good of people and the planet, to help these people increase the efficiency and safety of their livestock systems, so that those systems are increasingly green and healthy as well as profitable.

Ruben Echeverria: While the CGIAR is perhaps best known for its work on crops, we have to keep in mind that soil fertility is a key factor on which the productivity of all crops and cropping systems depends. In sub-Saharan Africa, an approach we refer to as integrated soil fertility management has demonstrated the ability to boost maize, sorghum, and cassava yields by more than 100 percent.

Roberto Quiroz: Indeed, soil is most important, and not just to grow crops. Soil contains more carbon than the Earth's plants and atmosphere combined. When undisturbed, carbon retained in the soil enhances soil quality and productivity, but when land is cultivated carbon is released into the atmosphere in the form of greenhouse gases.

Not many people realize that agriculture contributes close to 15 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions globally. CIP and Embrapa's research into soil carbon levels in Peru has shown that wet grasslands and peat lands in the highlands have the highest concentration of carbon stocks – between 200 and 300 tonnes per hectare. These stocks are also at highest risk of being released into the atmosphere as farmers are increasingly moving their crops into these higher areas to avoid issues related to climate change found at lower altitude, such as drought, pests, and diseases.

To combat this problem, CIP is working with farmers in the Andes region to develop a number of potato varieties with drought-, pest-, and heat-resistant characteristics that can be grown in the existing lower-lying areas, leaving the vulnerable highland areas unaffected.

In developing countries, smallholder farms provide up to 80 per cent of the food, with women making up about 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force and accounting for an estimated two-thirds of the world's 600 million poor livestock keepers.

Faced with environmental degradation, climate change, scarcity of land and water, loss of agricultural biodiversity and ecosystem services, and a world population that is continuing to climb, CGIAR believes that agriculture and natural resource management should be central to development and environmental agendas.

CGIAR is a global partnership that unites organizations engaged in research for a food secure future. CGIAR research is dedicated to reducing rural poverty, improving human health and nutrition, and ensuring more sustainable management of natural resources. It is carried out by the 15 centers who are members of the CGIAR Consortium in close collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations, academia and the private sector.

National Budgets - Agriculture

BARBADOS

The 2012 Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals presented to the House of Assembly of Barbados by the Hon. Christopher Peter Sinckler M.P. Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Tuesday, June 26, 2012

http://www.gisbarbados.gov.bb/index.php?categoryid=13&p2_articleid=8556

http://www.gisbarbados.gov.bb/index.php?categoryid=33&p13_sectionid=1&p13_fileid=965

Excerpt

pp.61- 63 Agriculture:

For many years, Agriculture has performed the role of reducing poverty and eradicating hunger within many civilizations. For us within this developing country, Agriculture has been recognized as being a key developmental tool for stimulating economic growth both directly and indirectly in the country and indeed throughout the region. The ongoing Global Financial Crisis has affected the food prices locally. The food crisis of 2008 would have taken us all by surprise and its continued affect has persisted until this day. Recognizing the significance of these occurrences the agricultural sector of Barbados has shifted its emphasis to ensure that food sovereignty is maintained whereby we have the ability to feed ourselves as a nation as well as the visitors to the island. To facilitate the growth and development of the Agricultural Sector, the Government of Barbados on assuming office in January 2008 provided the Sector with a package of incentives aimed at counteracting the constraints being faced within the Sector. This effort has borne fruit resulting in positive growth in the Agricultural Sector in 2009. Given the impact the global economic downturn is having on this Country's Balance of Payments position, consideration must be given to the reduction of the country's food import bill which rose to as high as \$678.5 Million in 2008. The Agricultural Sector has been proven to contribute and continues to contribute towards the reduction of the Food Bill on the level of the householder which is of paramount importance in times of unemployment and underemployment. There is therefore the need to ensure that the provisions of incentives are upgraded as the country seeks to respond to the needs of a modernized Agricultural Sector. The following proposals are therefore aimed at achieving this objective by promoting the development of this Sector on a Sustainable growth path:

1. Over the next five years Agro businesses will have access to \$20 million in financing from the proposed "**Hotel Refurbishment, Energy Efficiency and Food Production Fund**". Further details on this will follow later on.
2. Increase in the rebate for returning idle lands into production. It is proposed that the current rebate for returning idle lands into production to be increased from \$500 per hectare to \$1, 000 per hectare;
3. We will allocate \$3.0 Million to facilitate the re-establishment of the Tractor Cultivation Scheme to be managed by the BADMC;
4. Increase of rebates by 100% to farmers who utilize the Services under this Scheme as proposed below;

SERVICE	EXISTING RATE \$ per hectare	PROPOSED RATE \$ per hectare
Ploughing	100	200
Farrowing	80	160
Harrowing	120	240
Rotorvating	100	200
Subsoiling	100	200

5. A rebate of \$500 for each gilt that is raised to breeding stage. 1000 gilts will be drawn from the programme to increase pig production. This will cost Government an additional 500,000.
6. A rebate of 50% up to a maximum of \$4,000 per animal imported to for the purpose of improving livestock quality.

pp.78-79 Hotel Refurbishment, Energy Efficiency and Food Production Fund

Full Article

The agriculture sector led by the Minister of Agriculture, Dr David Estwick has fervently campaigned for more investment to transform the sector.

Yesterday's, 2012 budgetary proposals should have left Estwick in his current role and the sector feeling more confident about its mission to reposition the economy.

Christopher Sinckler, The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs outlined, "The ongoing Global Financial Crisis has affected the food prices locally. Given the impact the global economic downturn is having on this country's Balance of Payments position, consideration must be given to the reduction of the country's food import bill which rose to as high as \$678.5 Million in 2008."

The Agricultural sector can contribute to the reduction of the Food Bill on the level of the householder which is very important in times of unemployment.

"There is therefore the need to ensure that the provisions of incentives are upgraded as the country seeks to respond to the needs of a modernised Agricultural sector."

The following proposals are some of the provisions highlighted by the minister:

–Over the next five years Agro businesses will have access to \$20 million in financing from the proposed Hotel Refurbish-ment, Energy Efficiency and Food Production Fund.

–Increase in the rebate for returning idle lands into production. It is proposed that the current rebate for returning idle lands into production to be increased from \$500 per hectare to \$1, 000 per hectare; and the budget "will allocate \$3.0 Million to facilitate the re-establishment of the Tractor Cultivation Scheme to be managed by the BADMC."

–Increase of rebates by 100% to farmers who utilise specified services.

–A rebate of \$500 for each gilt that is raised to breeding stage. One thousand gilts will be drawn from the programme to increase pig production. This will cost Government an additional \$500 000.

–A rebate of 50% up to a maximum of \$4 000 per animal imported for the purpose of improving livestock quality.

Sinckler added, "The Factoring programme has been in place for more than a year now and while it has worked relatively well it has encountered some bureaucratic challenges that have at times frustrated the people it was designed to assist."

"The Programme has been lacking in momentum simply because most of the requests have been coming from individuals, micro and small businesses who are owed less than ten thousand (\$10 000), the required minimum to be factored. These entities would have to accumulate a debt of ten thousand (\$10 000) before they can benefit from the programme and this may not be possible since it depends on the frequency of procurement of goods and or services from their particular establishment."

It is therefore proposed that the existing requirement that allows for a minimum of ten thousand (\$10 000) to be factored to be reduced to a minimum of five thousand (\$5 000); the list of financial institutions acting as intermediaries to provide financing under the factoring programme be expanded to include Credit Unions which

have indicated an interest to participate in the Programme.

He pointed out, “Fund Access has been one of the veritable success stories coming out of the recession with a flood of requests for support from scores of young small business people eager to provide employment for themselves and others through investments in various business enterprises. In an effort to assist the Fund in coping with this excess demand for its services I propose to top up the current allocation provided in the Estimates of Expenditure to the tune of \$600 000 more.”

“This should help the Fund to deal with a growing list of expectant and budding young entrepreneurs. As a companion to investment in our young people, I equally propose to inject an additional \$400 000 into the Micro Enterprise Grant Scheme to also assist the Ministry to deal with the flood of very solid requests that has come in since the initiation of this programme two years ago.”

JAMAICA

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: Positioning Agriculture to New Heights: Modernization, Value Added and New Industries: budget debate 2012-2013, contributed by the Honourable Roger Clarke, MP, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Wednesday May 30, 2012

http://www.moa.gov.jm/Publications/files/the_Hon._Ministers_2012_Budget_Presentation.pdf

Excerpt

pp.1 Mr. Speaker I am happy to report that the **agricultural sector grew in 2011 by 10.6 percent, and significantly the sector’s contribution to GDP grew from 5.8 to 6.6 percent.**

pp.6 Livestock- Small Ruminants:

Mr. Speaker, production in the livestock sector has been flat over the last decade. We recognize that a significant portion of our protein is derived from this sub-sector. A closer analysis of livestock production shows increased poultry production, cyclical production in pork and a decline in beef, small ruminants and dairy. Happily, we are almost self sufficient in poultry meat, eggs and nearing self sufficiency in pork. Beef, dairy and small ruminants present tremendous opportunity in terms of import substitution. Institutional consumption is being targeted as the major strategy to stimulate increased production. Once this increased demand is stimulated, then the resources of the cess on dairy products will be used to provide loans to improve pastures, acquire stocks and for retooling. At the same time, we will intensify our research in indigenous alternative feeds.

The Ministry through the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) project is injecting U.S\$2.5 million into the small ruminants sector to improve breeding, provide training, develop the value chain and expansion of herd through rapid multiplication techniques. Only 15 percent of our current consumption is being satisfied by local production. We are confident that the quality of our goat and mutton meat is such that any increased production will be absorbed locally, given our taste preference.

pp.7-10 Promoting New Industries

Box 1 - Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries Strategic Growth Areas shows 2011 production; target; impact for following commodities: onions, Irish potatoes, yams, honey, sheep meat, hot pepper, ginger, turmeric, pineapple

pp.11-12 Research and Development

Mr. Speaker, research and development continues to be the driver of innovation and advances in productivity in the sector. Research must therefore provide the solutions to problems encountered along the value chain.....

..... Mr. Speaker we continue through our Breeding Improvement Programme, to find solutions to some of the challenges that have impacted our productivity. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that this year; we will be releasing a disease tolerant variety of **yellow scotch bonnet pepper** and work is advanced on a new variety of **red scotch bonnet pepper** conducive for processing.....

...Mr. Speaker in support of the burgeoning **greenhouse sector**, we are conducting research on a number of crops grown under greenhouse production to establish production methodologies, as well as to test crops that are not grown in greenhouse in Jamaica. Our R & D programme is also significantly supporting the rapid multiplication of clean planting material of ginger through tissue culture.....

Information and Communications

2012 African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) Media Competition on value chains.

Deadline 10 August 2012

Visit website: <http://makingtheconnection.cta.int/awards>

The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) in collaboration with its national, regional and international partners is delighted to announce the launch of the 2012 African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) Media Competition on value chains.

Open to all media and communication professionals from the ACP, the competition aims to encourage journalists and media specialists to investigate the challenges and opportunities for involving smallholder farmers in value chains, showcase success stories and best practices that can be replicated and raise awareness on the important role of value chains in agricultural and rural development..

The competition is being held in conjunction with the International Conference on value chains development, which will take place from 6 – 9 November 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The top six finalists will be supported to attend the conference and provide media coverage. The top three winners will be announced during the event. Submissions are invited to discuss one or more of the following themes:

- Trends on value chain development
- Value chain innovations
- Enabling environments
- Sustainability and scaling up, and
- Capacity development

Interested candidates are invited to send in one original print or audio-visual piece in English or French to makingtheconnection@cta.int, copying Mikenga@cta.int by 10 August 2012.

Upcoming Events

July 2012

CARDI Public Consultation on “Climate Change, water availability for agriculture in a drier climate”

Presenter: Dr Michael Taylor

Date: 10 July 2012

Venue: City View Hotel, St. Johns, Antigua and Barbuda

Time: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Contact: call: 788 6988; email: cardi@candw.ag

October 2012

Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development 2012: Second Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD II)

Date: 29 October – 1 November 2012.

Venue: Punta del Este, Uruguay

Website: <http://www.egfar.org/gcard-2012>