



# Agriculture in the News

30 June – 9 July, 2012

## Issues Affecting Caribbean Agriculture

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### CARDI to hold consultation on Climate Change by Caribarena Antigua, 7 July 2012

The Executive Director of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) is inviting members of the public to a Consultation on Tuesday, July 10 from 10 am to 1 pm at City View Hotel Conference Room in St John's.

The theme of the meeting is "Climate Change, Water Availability for Agriculture in a Drier Climate?" and an address on this topic will be given by Dr Michael Taylor of the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.

For more information see page 3, Climate Change

*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

*Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)*  
P.O. Bag 212, Frederick Hardy Building,  
University of the West Indies,  
St. Augustine Campus,  
St Augustine  
Trinidad and Tobago W.I.

**Tel:** 1-868- 645-1205-7  
**Fax:** 1-868-645-1208  
**Email:** [infocentre@cardi.org](mailto:infocentre@cardi.org)  
**Website:** [www.cardi.org](http://www.cardi.org)

## 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.

[www.cardi.org](http://www.cardi.org)

## Livestock

**UN Food Safety body sets limits on veterinary growth promoting drug** by FAO, 6 July 2012

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/150953/icode/>

### Full Article

The **Codex Alimentarius Commission**, the United Nations food standards body, has agreed on a set of residue limits for the veterinary drug *ractopamine* in animal tissues. *Ractopamine* is a growth promoter, it also keeps pigs lean.

Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted maximum residue limits for the amount of the drug allowed in the tissues of pigs and cattle. The decision was made after a rigorous process of scientific assessment to ascertain that the proposed levels of residues have no impact on human health. This assessment was carried out by the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives, a group of independent experts convened by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) that provides scientific support to Codex. The Codex Alimentarius Commission reached a decision through a vote, carried out in accordance with the Commission's rules and procedures. The limits were approved with 69 votes for, 67 against, and seven abstentions.

The *ractopamine* limits set by the Commission are 10 micrograms per kilogram of pig or cattle muscle, 40 micrograms per kilogram in liver and 90 micrograms per kilogram of the animals' kidneys.

### Codex

The Codex Alimentarius Commission, a joint programme of FAO and WHO, sets international food safety and quality standards to promote safer and more nutritious food for consumers worldwide and ensure fair practices in food trade. Codex standards serve in many cases as a basis for national legislation, and provide the food safety benchmarks for international food trade. The 49-year-old Codex Alimentarius Commission, which concludes tomorrow (July 7), is attended by 600 delegates representing Member States, the European Union as well as a large number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

**New effort to harmonize measurement of livestock's environmental impacts** by FAO, 4 July 2012

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/150555/icode/>

### Full Article

A new FAO-led partnership is looking to improve how the environmental impacts of the livestock industry are measured and assessed, a necessary first step in improving the sustainability of this important food production sector.

Livestock-raising and the consumption of animal products make a crucial contribution to the economic and nutritional well-being of millions of people around the world - particularly in developing countries.

Yet, as the global consumption of meat, dairy products and eggs continues to rise, increasing attention is being paid to the livestock sector's environmental performance - such as the efficiency with which it uses scarce natural resources, its impact on water resources, and how it contributes to climate change.

At the recent Rio+20 sustainable development conference, governments agreed on the necessity of making agricultural production more sustainable, and stressed in particular the need to shift to more sustainable livestock production systems.

Currently, many different methods are being used to measure and assess the environmental impacts of animal raising, making it difficult to compare results and set priorities for the continuous improvement of environmental performance along supply chains.

"We must establish a shared understanding of how to assess the environmental performance of the livestock sector," said Pierre Gerber, a Senior FAO livestock policy officer. "The goal is to improve that performance, and create more sustainable forms of production that will continue to provide food and income. To do that, we need reliable quantitative information on key environmental parameters along livestock supply chains, as an evidence base from which to drive improvements."

### **Collaborative effort**

FAO and governmental, private-sector, and nongovernmental partners will work together on a number of fronts to strengthen the science of environmental benchmarking of livestock supply chains.

Activities planned for the initial three-year phase of the project include:

Establishing science-based methods and guidelines on how to quantify livestock's carbon footprint, covering various types of livestock operations and rearing systems;

Creating a database of greenhouse gas emission factors generated for the production of different kinds of animal feed - feed production and use offer significant opportunities for reducing livestock emissions.

Developing a methodology for measuring other important environmental pressures, such as water consumption and nutrient losses.

Initiating a communications campaign to promote use of the partnership's methodologies and findings.

Among the founding members of the partnership are: the governments of France, Ireland, the Netherlands and New Zealand, The European Feed Manufacturers' Federation (FEFAC), the European Vegetable Oil and Proteinmeal Industry (FEDIOL), the International Dairy Federation, (IDF) the International Meat Secretariat (IMS), the International Egg Commission (IEC) the International Poultry Council (IPC), the International Federation for Animal Health (IFAH), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

That core membership is expected to expand over the coming months.

The partnership Secretariat is based at FAO.

## **The imperative of sustainability**

FAO estimates that demand for livestock products will continue to intensify over the decades to come. Meat consumption is projected to rise nearly 73 percent by 2050; dairy consumption will grow 58 percent over current levels.

"This continued growth in demand will be occurring within the context of increasing competition for finite and sometimes dwindling natural resources, additional challenges posed by climate change, and the imperative of making food production much more sustainable," said Henning Steinfeld, Chief of FAO's Livestock Information, Sector Analysis and Policy Branch. "We need to safeguard this important food sector, and improving the efficiency of its use of natural resources and bettering its performance in terms of sustainability is key."

## **Climate Change**

**CARDI to hold consultation on Climate Change** by Caribarena Antigua, 7 July 2012

<http://www.caribarena.com/antigua/environment/environment/101004-cardi-to-hold-consultation-on-climate-change.html>

### **Full Article**

The Executive Director of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) is inviting members of the public to a Consultation on Tuesday, July 10 from 10 am to 1 pm at City View Hotel Conference Room in St John's.

The theme of the meeting is "Climate Change, Water Availability for Agriculture in a Drier Climate?" and an address on this topic will be given by Dr Michael Taylor of the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.

"It has now been agreed by most members of the scientific community that we are living in a time of climate change and that global temperatures are rising. As temperatures continue to rise, perhaps by as much as 4°C by the end of the 21st Century, there will probably be some severe effects on rainfall patterns," a release said.

"Although nobody can be sure, most computer models predict that the Caribbean will have less rainfall, even as the number of hurricanes and other severe storms increase. This means that we can look forward to more intense dry seasons and long droughts.

These conditions may not be favourable to our agriculture in Antigua and Barbuda. Our dry climate is already a major constraint to agriculture and the threat of even drier conditions is not good news. This is at a time when we are suffering from rising prices of our imported food and the need to increase the amount of food grown locally.

"What is likely to happen to our agriculture? One thing is certain: we must continue to reverse the decline in agriculture which has occurred over the past decades. In the last two years this trend has been reversed and it is

imperative that we do not slip back.

What about our tourists: should we leave our hotels to rely on imported food at ever increasing prices? Dr Taylor is well known in the Caribbean as an expert on water management. Dr. Taylor will explain what you can expect in the future and give a few insights to help mitigate the threats.”

Even those who do not have any space to plant will learn something about our future climate, the release stated, and there will be opportunities for all present to ask questions and to make their own contributions to the consultation.

Read more: <http://www.caribarena.com/antigua/environment/environment/101004-cardi-to-hold-consultation-on-climate-change.html#ixzz209LwDjtr>

**Guyana calls for Regional Unity on Climate Change** by Peter Richards, Guardian Media, 5 July 2012

<http://www.guardian.co.tt/news/2012-07-05/guyana-calls-regional-unity-climate-change>

#### **Full Article**

**CASTRIES, St Lucia**—Guyana has called on the Caribbean to continue to leverage “our extreme exposure to climate change” as it seeks to forge and advocate a common position on the matter. President Donald Ramotar, addressing the ceremonial opening of the 33rd Caribbean Community (Caricom) summit yesterday said that of all the vulnerabilities facing the region, none poses a more direct threat to the region’s existence than climate change.

He said that the summit, which is being attended by all of the 15 member countries, except the leaders of The Bahamas, Belize, and Montserrat, was being held immediately after the United Nations conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Brazil.

He said that the international negotiations on climate change matters were “going much too slow while emissions are on an acceptably high trajectory and finance for adaptation and mitigation woefully inadequate. “We recognise that the Durban meeting established an adaptation mechanism, a technology mechanism and a green climate fund. But it is essential that agreement is reached by this year on the new and additional sources of financing for the fund and that a REDD plus window be established to reduce deforestation and incentivise forest conservation and sustainable forest management.”

He said that while the region supports a process to achieve a long-term global agreement through the Durban Platform, “we must uphold the principle of historical responsibility of some parties and the concomitant principle of common but differentiated responsibilities between developed and developing countries.”

He said that in much the same manner, the region exists in an international economic environment that is increasingly unpredictable and unhelpful to the circumstances of small states. Ramotar said as Europe struggle to find solutions to its economic and financial crisis, it is imperative for the region to discuss its own economic situation, lamenting the fact that several years after a new framework had been agreed upon, “we are back in St Lucia where the regional economy is still a main item on the agenda.

“We should not as a region, have to react to situations, but ensure that preventative measures are put in place. We must as a region be more earnest in our efforts to define a development agenda that is responsive to the evolving global circumstances we face and the domestic realities of our smallness and our vulnerabilities,” he added.

## Food Security

**Agri Ministry moves to cut imports, boost local production** by The Gleaner, 7 July 2012 <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20120707/western/western2.html>

### Full Article

Contrary to a demand by the European Union (EU) for the reduction of customs duties on imported goods from that region, state minister in the ministry of agriculture and fisheries, Ian Hayles, is calling for an immediate cutback in the volume of produce imported into Jamaica.

"In the Ministry of Agriculture, we are doing everything in our powers to cut imports in this country. If we are going to survive any at all, we will have to," Hayles said.

Alexander Walford, policy officer in charge of Caribbean-EU trade relations, suggested recently that Jamaica's failure to honour an agreement signed in 2008 under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) could tarnish the country's reputation.

But Hayles, who was giving the keynote address at the recent annual general meeting of the All-Island Banana Growers' Association (AIBGA) at the Springfield All-Age School in St James, called on the farmers to adopt to new technology in order to fill the gap resulting from a reduction in Jamaica's food import bill.

### DUTIES NOT CUT

Under the pact, Jamaica and 14 other Caribbean countries had agreed to start the reduction of customs duties by January 2011, but only six Caribbean countries have so far complied.

"Whatever differences we have with Europe, we have always found a way to resolve them," a more cautious Hayles said after his presentation. "It is more a policy decision, and that is one that must be made by the Cabinet."

The EU representative said the agreement made provision for arbitration and the settling of disputes, and recourse through which those provisions may be sought if the situation remains the same.

**Tax on imported food will benefit farmers – Hon. Roger Clarke** by Jamaica Information Services, 30 June 2012 <http://www.jis.gov.jm/news/list/31091>

### Full Article

Agriculture and Fisheries Minister, Hon. Roger Clarke, says the government's new tax package targeting imported food items will benefit the Jamaican farmer and the local agricultural sector.

He made the comments against the background of Government's decision to apply additional stamp duties on imported meats, fish, ham and bacon instead of taxing animal feeds, fresh fruits, vegetables, tubers, fish and meat as was proposed in the original package announced by Finance Minister, Dr. Peter Phillips, earlier this month.

"What we are doing is putting the duty on imported food stuff into this country, so that our farmers benefit instead of fattening farmers from abroad. Those of us who are tied to this foreign taste will understand that you have to pay for it," he stated.

The Minister was speaking at Wednesday's (June 26) launch of the Denbigh Agri-Industrial Show 2012 held on the lawns of the ACE Supercentre in White Marl, St. Catherine.

The Agriculture Minister informed that just last year, the country imported US\$930 million worth of food, up from US\$800 million in 2010.

"The trajectory seems like we are heading to the billion," he said, lamenting that "the more we talk about 'Eat what we grow and grow what we eat' is the more the importation is going up."

He said the government "is determined that we are going to make a dent in that importation" and "level the playing field so that our farmers can grow and progress and agriculture can become something that our farmers are proud of."

He said the Ministry will be working closely with local farmers, as well as the Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS), the 4-H Clubs and all other stakeholders, to ensure that the objectives are realised.

"Our aim is not just to plant to feed ourselves, but to also export overseas and therefore, we will have to expand our export agriculture and we're working at that in a very significant way," he stated.

A major part of this thrust is to revitalise the local coffee and cocoa industries as well as increase the production of ginger, turmeric, Irish potato, onion, among other products.

"We have decided that we are going to grow those products as much as we can in Jamaica to make sure that we don't have to import all of that stuff. Jamaica produces probably the best cocoa in the world but we have been declining, and so we have to step it up because we must export as much of that as we can," Minister Clarke stated.

"Our intention is to also see how far we can go on the value chain. We have to get into agro-processing, we have to get to a higher level so that our farmers can get the maximum out of what we are producing," he added.

The Denbigh Agri-Industrial Show, which is in its 60<sup>th</sup> year, will be held from Saturday, August 4, to Monday, August 6 at the Denbigh showground in May Pen, Clarendon, under the theme: 'Grow What We Eat, Eat What We Grow. Denbigh at 60: Celebrating Achievements in Agriculture'.

## Agricultural Development

**Haiti President Martelly at Caribbean Summit Supports More Reform in External Relations** by The Office of the President, 5 July 2012 <http://defend.ht/politics/articles/presidential/3170-haiti-president-martelly-at-caribbean-summit-supports-more-reform-in-external-relations>

### Full Article

GROS ISLET, Saint Lucia (defend.ht/P) - At the 33rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean Community, President Michel Martelly stressed that the success of the region is dependent on the development of each country. Martelly said in Haiti, the development of agriculture must be assisted by its neighbors in region.

Wednesday, July 4, 2012: The President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Michel Joseph Martelly, participated, Wednesday, July 4, 2012, in the 33rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean, which runs until July 6, 2012, at Sandals Grande St. Lucian Spa and Resort, in Gros Islet (Saint Lucia).

Arriving in St. Lucia in the late afternoon of July 3, accompanied by the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Wilson Laleau, Counselors, Mr. Gregory Mayard Paul, Ms. Andress Apollon, Damian M. Merlo, and Mr. Benjamin Peterson Noel, the Haitian Head of State will speak on the development in Haiti, foreign policy coordination in the Caribbean Community and the various challenges in the further development of the region.

This high-level meeting of Caribbean leaders also aims to create opportunities that can be exploited for the benefit of the Caribbean Community, taking into account the geopolitical and economic context. It applies, among others, the regional integration movement, creating a single currency, common to all countries of the Caribbean and will review all the currencies of each zone countries, the reform During the CARICOM Secretariat, based in Guyana and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ).

At the opening of the Conference, the Secretary General of CARICOM, Mr. Irwin Larocque, has stressed that one of the aspects to consider in this question is to facilitate the convertibility of the currencies of countries in the region, to allow the citizen who has to move to another country in the Caribbean may easily convert their currency into that of the host country.

President of the Conference, also Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, the Honourable Dr. Kenny Anthony, who will, during the month of July, the chairman of this group of fifteen (15) countries, has, meanwhile, welcomed the presence of the Haitian Head of State, HE Mr. Michel Joseph Martelly, for his many efforts to escape the stigma of the Haiti earthquake of January 12, 2010.

"Ste Lucie se lakay ou. Nou sonje doulè tranble manntè 12 janvye a. Nou ap kore w. CARICOM ap kore w." He has said in Saint-Lucian Creole.

Hon. Anthony said that the earthquake in Haiti has helped Caribbean countries to redouble their efforts against natural calamities to which the region is experiencing. "We have a common future," he said, noting also that CARICOM, while working to strengthen relations with Africa, through the ACP and the European Union (EU), should not have to influence on the lives of locals.

The President of the Republic, HE Mr. Michel Joseph Martelly, believes, for his part, the success of CARICOM will necessarily impact on the development of each country that constitutes it. And, in regard to Haiti, it has to be played

on the development of agriculture. Indeed, Haiti is one of the countries of the area to have the most arable land and represents 52% of the population of CARICOM.

"Global Politics of the Caribbean regions, should consider the grievances of each country. It should also develop partnerships at the training, the free movement of citizens in the area of democratization linguistic debates, sharing of cultures," said the Head of State who also wants to engage debates around the opening of the Caribbean market for Haitian products.

For zone leaders, success is possible, but with conditions. "We must develop and make more efficient our diplomatic missions, boost the challenge level of security, work towards the establishment of agricultural development programs," stated the President of the Republic of Guyana, Mr. Donald Ramotar, who wants the responsibility of the leaders of the Caribbean in the implementation of viable foreign policy, promotion of building a more efficient cooperation, development of cultural values,...

For others, you'll be fine. President of the Republic of Suriname, HE Desiré Delano Bouterse, who also mentioned the impact of the work of CARICOM and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), including youth development, the reform process will benefit the area.

The Prime Minister of Jamaica, Hon Portia Simpson Miller, meanwhile, sees in CARICOM, the opportunity that all member countries to have better health care policy, justice, creation jobs, university education, promotion of children's rights ... "We must come together on what is wrong and celebrate all that's fine," she said.

The 33rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean, which follows previous meetings around the Single Market (CSME), organized with the Council of Finance and Planning (COFAP) and the prime ministers of Subcommittees of the CSME, allows the President of the Republic of Haiti, to attract the attention of neighboring communities to the benefits of foreign investment in Haiti.

#### **Caribbean Leaders decide on CSME, foreign Policy** by CaribSeek News, 9 July 2012

<http://news.caribseek.com/index.php/caribbean/saint-kitts-and-nevis-news/item/18510-caribbean-leaders-decide-on-csme-foreign-policy>

#### **Excerpt:**

"BASSETERRE, St. Kitts (CUOPM) – Caribbean leaders have received an update from the Secretary-General regarding the organisational reforms put in place or proposed for the CARICOM Secretariat with a view to enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness and following on the decisions taken at the Inter-Sessional Meeting.

According to the communiqué issued at the just concluded 33rd Conference of Caribbean Heads of Government in St. Lucia, the leaders requested the Secretary-General to continue with the reform process and underscored the importance of a comprehensive communications strategy as an integral part of the reform, with a view to taking the Community to the people..."

“They identified various sectors of the economy, including tourism, agriculture and construction, as economic sectors that offered prospects for early resuscitation of economic growth and reiterated their conviction that regional integration has all the possibilities for supporting competitive production and production integration and that particular attention needed to be given to Caribbean convergence in our development strategy. They agreed on the need to develop a Caribbean Investment Programme to support the efforts at stabilization and growth as well as competitive production,” said the communiqué...”

## **Agriculture and Technology**

**Farmers urged to come up with technical innovations** by The Barbados Advocate, 3 July 2012

<http://www.barbadosadvocate.com/newsitem.asp?more=local&NewsID=25673>

### **Full Article**

Embracing renewable energy practices and creating technical innovations is the way forward for the farming industry.

Acting Chief Agricultural Officer Ralph Farnum has urged farmers not to sit around waiting for the Ministry of Agriculture or farming organisations to come up with innovations and solutions but to create these themselves.

“You can be your best researchers so try things and see how they work and from that you move forward. Do not wait on anybody and this would bode well for not only the pig industry, but the agricultural industry on the whole,” he stressed.

Lauding the numbers gathered in the conference room of the Divi Southwinds Beach Resort yesterday for the Environmental Management and Biogas on Pig Farms in Barbados Workshop, he said that this aptly indicated that interest in the sector was still there.

“We want to have all the knowledge possible so that when we move forward we can do so efficiently, produce good quality material and the processes are of highest quality,” he said, adding that this would not be possible without putting in initiatives to ensure the industry’s survival.

“It cannot survive unless our farmers, the people who provide the food are given the necessary opportunities or skills to make this happen in order for us to expand and progress,” Farnum remarked.

Pointing out that the industry has several challenges in terms of moving forward, he gave kudos to the Barbados Agricultural Society for hosting the workshop, calling it timely especially since the industry was feeling the heavy burden of high production costs.

He stated that there were also challenges being presented due to housing developments being placed within traditional farming areas.

“In the final analysis, we need to have agricultural sector positioned in such a way that at least we can provide for

our people. We must ensure that farmers on our home base are well prepared and well structured,” Farnum added. (JMB)

## **Biodiversity**

**Biodiversity without borders** by Patrici Grogg, Inter Press Service News Agency, 9 July 2012

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/07/biodiversity-without-borders/>

### **Full Article**

The protection and conservation of biodiversity figure among the most daunting challenges posed by climate change in the Caribbean islands, home to a wealth of endemic species of flora and fauna.

The Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC), an initiative spearheaded by the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Haiti, with the support of international cooperation agencies, offers an opportunity for joint projects that will benefit biodiversity not only within their own borders, but in the Caribbean region as a whole.

In an interview with IPS, Ernesto Reyna, minister for environment and natural resources in the Dominican Republic, described the CBC initiative as a strategic alliance of essential importance for small island nations threatened by climatic variations, such as an increase in average temperatures and rising sea levels.

Increasingly severe storms, droughts and floods are also predicted for the region, posing a serious threat not only to the populations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic but also to their flora and fauna, which include numerous threatened and endangered species.

“Given the experience of Cuba, the difficult situation in Haiti and the interest shown by the Dominican Republic, we could say that this partnership among the three sister nations is a prime example of what can be done to promote the conservation of natural resources,” he said.

Reyna says that Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Guadeloupe and Martinique have expressed interest in participating in the process as observers and guests, and could eventually join in as full partners in the biological corridor, which serves as a sort of umbrella initiative for “practical action” projects.

The initiative provides a framework of cooperation for protecting natural resources and stemming the loss of biodiversity in the Caribbean region through environmental remediation and development of alternative livelihoods.

The CBC stretches roughly 1,600 km in length through the three current member-countries. In the Dominican Republic, it encompasses the Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo Biosphere Reserve and the Cordillera Central mountain range, up to the border with Haiti.

The Haitian portion includes the Massif de la Selle mountain range, Lake Azuei, Forêt des Pins, La Visite and the mountains of the Massif du Nord (the Haitian name for the range known as the Cordillera Central in the Dominican Republic). Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, and the Dominican Republic share Hispaniola island, divided by a 382.8 km-long border.

The CBC also encompasses a large area of eastern Cuba, including the Sierra Maestra mountain range, Baracoa, Nipe and Sagua. Cuban academic and researcher Nicasio Viña is the current director of the initiative established by the three countries in 2007.

While connecting the landscapes, ecosystems, habitats and cultures of the three Caribbean nations, the corridor also grants special status to more than 60 protected areas which can facilitate investment for development, poverty reduction and the restoration of natural areas heavily impacted by human activity.

According to United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) figures, in the Caribbean islands there are 23.5 endemic plant species per 100 sq km, which is 3.4 and 12 times greater, respectively, than the density found in the Atlantic Forest of Brazil, the tropical Andes, and Mesoamerica, a region encompassing southern Mexico and northern Central America.

The promoters of the CBC stress that efforts to protect and conserve this biological wealth must include poverty alleviation for the people who live in these areas in order to reduce pressure on biological resources. For Reyna, one of the biggest challenges lies in restoring the trust of local communities.

For this reason, he believes in ensuring community participation in project activities as well as the involvement of local government structures, such as watershed administrations, so that plans are not shelved.

The European Union provides funding for the initiative which is also supported by UNEP.

Although it has been in existence for several years, the CBC has been “relaunched”, according to Reyna. “It is a forward-looking project that is now reaching out to the other countries of the region, and I think the time has come for it to fully take off,” he said.

Among the projects already underway as part of the initiative is the Plant Propagation Centre in Dosmond, near Ouanaminthe, in northeastern Haiti. The centre includes a greenhouse with room for 600,000 plants, a germinator, a warehouse, an office and a multipurpose space.

Environmental problems facing Haiti include deforestation – its forest cover has been reduced to less than two percent of its total land area – and soil degradation. The border area between Haiti and the Dominican Republic is exposed to extreme weather events that exacerbate the area’s communities.

A bilateral agreement supported by Norway through the United Nations Development Programme, in force since last year, is aimed at increasing forest cover and improving the living conditions of communities on both sides of the border.

In the Dominican Republic, “an ambitious reforestation plan has resulted in an increase in forest cover from 12 percent in 1967 to 39.7 percent today,” said Reyna.

But the abrupt rise in recent years of the water level of Lake Enriquillo, on the Haitian border, has created new environmental challenges and caused the loss of large areas of farmland.

Residents of the area told IPS that there are now species living in Lake Enriquillo that had never been seen there before, including crabs and fish like ‘shad’ and ‘guabina’. “Here we have always fished for ‘tilapia’ and ‘biajaca’, which are freshwater fish,” commented José Trinidad, a farmer from the border village of Jimaní.

## National Budget – Agriculture

### BELIZE

**Budget presentation for Fiscal Year 2012/1013: “Exercising Discipline while preserving growth”** present by Honourable Dean Barrow, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development Belmopan, Friday 29 June 2012 <http://www.belize.gov.bz/public/Attachment/262911553071.pdf>

Excerpts

pp. 4-8

#### Introduction

“I start, then, by emphasizing two points. The first is that the Belize economy is exports-driven. We depend largely on inflows from abroad to generate jobs, incomes and Government revenue; and our overall level of economic performance in any given year is very much dependent on the size of those inflows. The main sources of those inflows are:

1. our exports of goods and services (petroleum, agricultural and marine products, sugar, and tourism) ...” (For more information see pp. 4)

pp. 7

“Going forward, we are in the process of putting arrangements in place for the export of live cattle to Mexico on a completely legal basis. And further down the road, we propose to restructure the Belize Marketing and Development Corporation (BMDC) into an agency that will work together with the Ministry of Agriculture and with private sector stakeholders to organize, aggregate, and export agricultural production from Belize. The hope is to convert BMDC into a successful, private-sector-steered entity, providing a guaranteed export marketing outlet for farm production.

We do recognize, however, that there are limits to the extent of employment and incomes that we will be able to secure from goods production in Belize and its agriculture sector. Accordingly, we propose to look at ways to expand the supply of services, and in particular services to tourism.”

pp. 11

#### Economic prospects for 2012

“Transportation should be growing in tandem with activity in agriculture and tourism, ...”

pp. 26

### **Estimates of Capital Expenditure 2012/2013**

“Also in the Capital II are provisions for Health Facilities, Basic Needs Programs executed by the Social Investment Fund, and counterpart resources for various European Union Programs in the Agriculture Sector. Furthermore, we have protected the budget lines for the Food Pantry Program (2.7 million) and for RESTORE Belize (2.2 million).”

pp. 41

### **Public Utilities**

“Added to this, I am determined, will be a more aggressive investment approach by the SSB where millions, earning a pittance at the commercial banks, should now be available for more diversified investment activities. These are funds that, with the proper prudential safeguards in place, can stimulate private sector expansion particularly in agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and infrastructure improvements.”