



## *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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## Sweet potato

**Orange sweet potato makes the case that Biofortification works** by HarvestPlus, 8 August

2012 <http://www.harvestplus.org/content/orange-sweet-potato-makes-case-biofortification-works>

### Full Article

*Washington D.C., August 8, 2012:* A study published today in the Journal of Nutrition provides conclusive evidence that orange sweet potato (OSP) provided significant amounts of vitamin A to malnourished Ugandan children and women and that a modest improvement in vitamin A levels in the body was measurable in some cases. Vitamin A deficiency (VAD) is a major public health concern in poorer countries and accounts for more than 600,000 deaths a year among children under five years of age. In Africa, VAD prevalence is estimated at 42% among children under five.

Uganda is among the African countries reported to be at high risk, with 28% of children and 23% of women estimated to be vitamin A deficient. VAD can impair immunity and cause eye damage that can lead to blindness and even death. Annually, up to 500,000 preschool children go blind from VAD, and about two-thirds will die within months of going blind.

Biofortification is the process of breeding new varieties of food crops that contain higher amounts of nutrients to improve nutrition and public health. Agricultural approaches, such as biofortification, are now being looked upon to fill the nutritional gap for vitamin A and other nutrients.

Traditionally, white or yellow sweet potato varieties are grown and eaten in Africa, but these provide little, or no, vitamin A. OSP was conventionally bred, not just to provide more vitamin A but also to be high yielding and drought tolerant. From 2007–2009, HarvestPlus and its partners disseminated new OSP varieties to more than 10,000 farming households in Uganda for whom sweet potato is a key staple food. The project provided OSP vines for farmers to grow, as well as extension services and nutritional information so that farmers could incorporate OSP into their cropping systems. Since sweet potato is available for about 10 months a year, it can be a rich and steady source of vitamin A.

The project resulted in 61% of households adopting the vitamin A-rich OSP to grow on their farms. They were also willing to substitute more than one-third of their traditional white and yellow sweet potato consumption with OSP. This level of substitution was enough to push large numbers of children and women over the threshold, ensuring that their daily requirements for vitamin A were met.

Vitamin A intake increased by two-thirds for older children and nearly doubled for younger children and women by project end. For children 6–35 months, who are especially vulnerable, OSP contributed more than 50% of their total vitamin A intake.

The high prevalence of inadequate vitamin A intake among a subset of children 12–35 months who were no longer breastfeeding fell from nearly 50% to only 12% as a result of the project. This is a very positive finding as young children who have recently stopped breastfeeding are at higher risk of VAD. This is because breast milk has been their primary source of vitamin A and their vitamin A needs continue to be high.

Researchers were also able to measure a small positive impact of eating OSP on the amount of vitamin A in the blood among children 5–7 years that had lower levels of vitamin A at the start of the project. At project end, researchers also found that women who got more vitamin A from OSP had a lower likelihood of having marginal VAD. (VAD was unexpectedly low among the women sampled in this study, thus making it harder to detect changes.)

“Overall, these results add to the growing evidence base that OSP provides large amounts of vitamin A in the diet,” says Dr. Christine Hotz, former HarvestPlus Nutrition Head who led the nutrition study. “We were also able to show a modest increase in vitamin A blood levels among children, despite this being challenging to measure given the changing nutritional landscape over two years under real-world conditions.”

This project was undertaken concurrently in Mozambique where results showed even higher levels of adoption—and consumption—of OSP by vulnerable households.

“We now have evidence from two very different countries and contexts that show that farming households are willing to adopt OSP, incorporate it in their diets, and get the vitamin A that they need,” says senior IFPRI economist, Dr. Daniel Gilligan.

HarvestPlus is now scaling-up OSP to reach another 225,000 households by 2016. The International Potato Center (CIP) plans to scale-up OSP to reach more than 600,000 households in 10 countries by 2015, including 120,000 households in Mozambique.

### **About the Project**

From 2007-2009, HarvestPlus and its partners disseminated orange sweet potato—to see if VAD could be reduced—to more than 24,000 households in Mozambique and Uganda. HarvestPlus leads a global effort to breed and disseminate micronutrient-rich staple food crops to reduce hidden hunger in malnourished populations. It is part of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH). It is coordinated by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

### **Journal Article**

[Introduction of  \$\beta\$ -Carotene-Rich Orange Sweet Potato in Rural Uganda Results in Increased Vitamin A Intakes among Children and Women and Improved Vitamin A Status among Children.](#) *Journal of Nutrition*.

### **Partners in Uganda**

Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and Regional Potato and Sweetpotato Improvement Network in Eastern and Central Africa (PRAPACE), Farming for Food and Development Eastern Uganda (FADEP-EU), International Food Policy Research Institute, International Potato Center (CIP), Makerere University, National Agricultural Research Organization, Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, Uganda Bureau of Statistics, Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). Thanks go to the district and provincial officials in Uganda (Bukedea, Kamuli, Mukono) and to the many people of Uganda who participated in the project and the research study.

### **Donors**

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provided a direct grant that made this research possible. Additional HarvestPlus core funding was also used to support this work, which included support from (in alphabetical order): Denmark (DANIDA), Sweden (SIDA), the Syngenta Foundation, the United Kingdom (DFID), the United States (USAID), and the World Bank.

*HarvestPlus leads a global effort to breed and disseminate nutrient-rich staple food crops to reduce hidden hunger globally. It is part of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH). It is coordinated by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).*

## **Cassava**

**Does Cassava hold the secret to Climate Change Adaptation?** by Lorianna De Giorgio

Toronto Star, 4 August 2012

<http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/1236219--does-cassava-hold-the-secret-to-climate-change-adaption>

### **Full Article**

Cassava, a starchy root, has fed some of the poorest nations for centuries. Hundreds of millions of people in Africa depend on it, as do hundreds of millions more in Asia and Latin America. According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, cassava accounts for a third of Africans' total caloric intake. It may soon become even more important: New research suggests it is ideally suited to withstand drought and climate change.

#### *'Rambo' of food*

Andy Jarvis of the Colombia-based non-profit [International Center for Tropical Agriculture](#), says cassava could be the answer to climate change adaptation in Africa, because cassava is “often the food crop that continues to provide food in periods of the year when other food sources are not available.”

Its other selling point? It's incredibly resistant to adversity, he says.

Cassava has been deemed the “Rambo of food crops” by Jarvis and other scientists because cassava isn’t hurt by climate change.

“It is really tough. It originated in some very hot and dry regions in Latin America, and over the years the plant has adapted to droughts and hot spells by just shutting down when the going gets tough,” Jarvis says.

“It is almost like the tropical equivalent of hibernation. If the plant feels drought, or feels too hot, it just stops all activity and waits till the climate gets suitable again.”

#### *Happy in the heat*

Jarvis and a team studied what the impacts climate change would have on cassava and six other African food crops (including maize, sorghum, banana and beans) based on forecasts by 2030.

In their study published in the journal [Tropical Plant Biology](#), they found cassava survived projected temperature rises of 2 C in Africa by 2030. The other crops were negatively impacted by climate change.

“Anything that the climate throws at it, it seems to deal with. Very few other crops have these levels of resistance to climate constraints, and none of them are as widely cultivated as cassava,” Jarvis says.

This means cassava can be a substitution crop in areas where other crops such as maize and sorghum are suffering. “It can also be grown in areas where there is significant climate risk as a plan B for a farmer,” continues Jarvis. “If all other crops fail because of an expected heat wave or within-season drought period, then at least (the farmer) can rely on the cassava crop producing food for the family.”

#### *More money?*

Jarvis says that because of its benefits, cassava production should be funded and expanded.

Nigeria announced in late July it has plans to import 18 cassava production plants along with 100 rice mills from China, according to Nigeria’s Guardian News.

The UN set up the Global Cassava Development Strategy 12 years ago to guarantee its future. Despite its arduousness, cassava can be afflicted by pests and diseases.

“Viruses threaten its usefulness to farmers in many parts of Africa, but the solutions can be found if appropriate funding is made available,” Jarvis says.

Jarvis argues that food shortages don’t just affect poor countries, but rather food security affects the world as a whole.

“We should be worried about the provision of food in the long term to sustain growing human populations. But solutions exist, and at least in this study we have identified cassava as a key crop for the future.”

**All you need to know about Cassava...but were too afraid to ask** by Neil Palmer, CIAT News, 2 August 2012

[http://www.ciatnews.cgiar.org/en/2012/08/02/all-you-need-to-know-about-cassava-but-were-too-afraid-to-ask/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+CiatBlog\\_en+%28CIAT+Blog%29](http://www.ciatnews.cgiar.org/en/2012/08/02/all-you-need-to-know-about-cassava-but-were-too-afraid-to-ask/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+CiatBlog_en+%28CIAT+Blog%29)

#### **Full Article**

##### ***Handbook passes the baton of cassava knowledge to a new generation of researchers***

That’s right: everything you need to know about cassava, in a single book. But that should in no way belittle this 800-page tome.

*The Cassava Handbook* is an in-depth, exhaustive – but by no means exhausting – compendium of nearly four decades of CIAT research into one of the world’s most important – yet criminally unsung – food and industrial crops grown by smallholders.

It’s also **free to read online**.

Regular readers of the CIAT blog **will be well aware** that cassava feeds hundreds of millions of people in Africa every day. Millions of smallholders in Asia also produce it for the starch industry, and for millions more in Latin America, it’s a key food staple.

It's also the "**Rambo root**" – capable of surviving the tough climatic conditions that other crops are unable to tolerate. It might also be on the brink breaking into the mainstream of crop research, with increasing interest from major donors.

Funded by *The Nippon Foundation* – a vital, long-term supporter of CIAT cassava research in Southeast Asia – *The Cassava Handbook* is the result of a two-year-long labour of love by former CIAT cassava scientist and CIAT emeritus Reinhardt Howeler, who dedicated his career to improving smallholder cassava production in the region.

"It's an attempt to review and summarize the nearly 40 years of cassava research, and to bring together this information in one publication that can serve as a reference manual for those charged with current and future research on cassava," said Howeler.

"As cassava is now becoming a very important, and mostly industrial, crop in Asia, there are many new opportunities, but also a host of new problems and challenges. These include the appearance in Asia of new cassava diseases and pests; the decreasing availability and increasing cost of rural labor, resulting in the need for partial or complete mechanization of cassava production; the rapidly increasing demand for cassava roots for production of food, feed and fuel, and the unavailability in many countries of new land for any expansion of cassava area, thus requiring a rapid increase in cassava yields to increase supplies.

"This requires a renewed focus on cassava research for the development of new higher-yielding varieties and more sustainable production practices."

PDF available at [http://ciat-library.ciat.cgiar.org/Articulos\\_ciat/biblioteca/The%20Cassava%20Handbook%202011.pdf](http://ciat-library.ciat.cgiar.org/Articulos_ciat/biblioteca/The%20Cassava%20Handbook%202011.pdf)

## Coconuts - Lethal Yellowing Disease

**Management of Lethal Yellowing Disease and Bud Rot in Palms.** The Official Government Website of Antigua and Barbuda, 9 August, 2012 [http://www.ab.gov.ag/article\\_details.php?id=3381&category=38](http://www.ab.gov.ag/article_details.php?id=3381&category=38)

### Full Article

Sampling of yellowing palm trees across the island has confirmed the presence of the dreaded lethal yellowing (LY) disease of palms on Antigua. The fungal disease Bud Rot has also been found. Both of these diseases generally result in the death of affected palm trees. The Plant Protection Unit in collaboration with several government agencies and other partners recognizes the impact this disease could have on a number of sectors and hereby advises the following.

1. All palms affected by budrot must be destroyed and adjacent plants treated to help prevent the spread of this disease. Typical budrot symptoms include the collapse and death of the spear (youngest) leaf of the plant.
2. All palm trees in stages 2 and 3 of the lethal yellowing disease must be destroyed. Palms with stage 1 LY infection typically shed their nuts prematurely, mainly from one side of the tree in the early stages followed by a general nut shedding. Stage 2 LY infection causes the newly opened inflorescences ("flowers") of the plant to become brown-black while stage 3 symptoms include the yellowing and subsequent browning and shedding of the leaves of the plant.
3. All plants that are cut down must be taken to a designated area identified by the Plant Protection Unit.
4. Palms with stage 1 and early stage 2 LY infection that meet criteria set out by Plant Protection may be eligible for treatment with the restricted antibiotic pesticide, oxytetracycline hydrochloride (OTC), under strict conditions. The cost of this treatment must be met by the person for whom such treatment has been approved. The Central Marketing Corporation is the sole agency in Antigua and Barbuda permitted by the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board to import and sell this product. OTC will be sold only to certified applicators who can produce valid documentation to confirm this and only upon presentation to the CMC of valid, original documentation provided by the Plant Protection Unit.
5. The ban on the importation of palm plants remains in place. Until further notice, no import permits will be issued for importation of palm plants.

6. Palm plants from Antigua are absolutely prohibited entry into Barbuda.
7. The Plant Protection Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture continues to pursue the acquisition of LY disease-resistant planting material to form part of the replanting effort to replace trees lost to the lethal yellowing disease.

The programme for eradication of the lethal yellowing disease from Antigua is greatly dependent on strict compliance with the stated regulations by members of the general public for its success. The Plant Protection Unit encourages continued compliance with the stated eradication strategy in order to reduce the impact of this disease on our beloved tropical haven.

## Livestock

**Ministry looking to export genetic material from cattle** by Jamaica Information Service, 31 July 2012

<http://www.jis.gov.jm/news/list/31443>

### Full Article

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is looking to tap into the export earning potential of the local cattle industry, specifically its genetic material.

This is in response to demand for genetic stock from Jamaica's four indigenous cattle breeds – the Red and Black Polls, Brahman, and Hope – by several countries, seeking to enhance the quality of their stocks.

The Jamaica Red and Black Poll, and Brahman are reared for beef production, and the Hope, for dairy outputs.

The Ministry's Chief Technical Director, Dr. Marc Panton, tells JIS News that "expressions of interest" in the local breeds have been received from a number of countries, which have climatic conditions similar to Jamaica. These, he informs, include Australia and New Zealand, while pointing to the possibility of other potential markets in African and Middle Eastern countries.

Their interest in Jamaica's cattle breeds, he says, is based on the animals' adaptability to and tolerability of the tropical climate.

"The cattle (that) we have here are specifically bred to tolerate high heat and still produce at very competitive levels. Therefore, it has advantages to any country that (experiences) those (climatic conditions)," he informs.

Dr. Panton says based on the demand, there is scope for the creation of an overseas market for genetic material, which could generate significant foreign exchange earnings for Jamaica, while adding that this is "a direction in which we are pushing".

Several cattle stakeholders concur that Jamaica could earn significantly, from this area of the industry.

"We have the capabilities at (the Ministry of Agriculture's research station) at Bodles (St. Catherine where) we have an artificial insemination centre. We have the ability, therefore, to supply the world," he assures.

The Chief Technical Director notes that the Ministry has long been involved in extensive research aimed at developing, enhancing and improving the genetics of the local cattle stock. He explains that the main priority has been to develop cattle that are more adaptive to the hot tropical climate, and more disease resistant, while enhancing output, whether for beef or dairy.

He acknowledges the pioneering work of scientists such as late geneticist,

Dr. Thomas P. Lecky, whose research contributed to the development of Jamaica's four indigenous breeds. He, however, cites the need for continuous and ongoing research to further enhance the genetic properties of the animals, against the background of the demands.

“Research never ends, and it’s something that we have to continue. The Jamaica Hope is a fantastic animal but it can be improved (through research and development)...it’s something that we have to keep doing,” the Chief Technical Director underscores.

Dr. Panton notes that significant work has gone into advancing development of other livestock, such as poultry, pigs, and small ruminants like sheep and goats. In terms of outputs, he points out that the pig sub-sector has been a “big success”, while adding that “we have done very well in poultry”. He, however, concedes that more work is needed for larger livestock, primarily cattle.

He says, efforts to this end have been and are being facilitated through the Ministry’s collaboration with the island’s four cattle breeders’ societies to, among other things, expand the registry of the animals, in order to keep track of their lineage, through cattle appraisal exercises, and other activities.

Cattle appraisals, Dr. Panton explains, entails perusal of the physique of cattle that are progenies from a specific line and judging their form, including legs, shoulders, and ranking them accordingly. This exercise, he informs, is conducted at least once per year by each breeders’ society.

"When there is that level of record, you are able to, over time, pick the best traits from each line, and be able to further develop the breed," he explains.

Dr. Panton says that as part of efforts to further advance the local livestock sector, particularly cattle, portfolio Minister, Hon. Roger Clarke, has been meeting with the various stakeholders.

He informs that, already, he has met with pig, sheep, goat and cattle stakeholders in a bid to determine “how we can put in place the necessary systems, mechanisms and policies to drive the (livestock) sector forward”.

"We (want to ensure) that, in promoting these animals, (we are) promoting high quality genetics internationally," Dr. Panton underscores.

In his address at the 59<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting of the Jamaica Red Poll Cattle Breeders’ Society, held recently at West Indies Alumina Company’s (WINDALCO) farm in Grove Place, Manchester, Minister Clarke committed to working with stakeholders to advance the sub-sector.

"I want us to meet and I want us to put the strategies in place, because...I believe we have the expertise to move this industry forward," he stated.

**Livestock owner receives assistant from the Department of Environment** by Government of Montserrat, 2 August 2012  
<http://www.gov.ms/?p=6898>

### **Full Article**

BRADES, Montserrat – Local livestock owner Anderson Kirnon has received resources and access to expertise to enable him to construct a model farm at Gerald’s from the Department of the Environment.

The departments of Environment and Agriculture are collaborating with Mr. Kirnon to establish the model farm which would increase the productivity of his current livestock unit and promote semi-intensive livestock farming practices, according to Director of Environment Gerard Gray.

The farm was made possible through a grant from the UK Overseas Territories Environment Programme under a project entitled: Conserving the Centre Hills in Montserrat through the effective control of feral livestock populations. The Project is designed to: (i) build local capacity to effectively manage feral and loose livestock populations, (ii) reduce these populations to a level where they do not significantly impact the biodiversity of the Centre Hills and (iii) ensure that domesticated livestock do not contribute to the feral animal population.

Construction is progressing on a pen that will be compartmentalized into six areas. There will be three small isolation or lambing areas, two medium sized weaning or communal areas and one large holding area. The holding capacity of the pen

will be approximately 20 sheep. Adjacent to the pen is a fenced paddock which will provide fodder and exercise for the animals.

Promotion of this semi-intensive farming enterprise will take place by way of demonstration sessions for other farmers and interested persons. It is hoped that these demonstrations would lead others to adopt the technology, thereby resulting in increased production and improved quality of meat, while reducing the need for culling feral and loose livestock.

Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Selvyn Maloney explains that this system is extremely advantageous for keeping good quality livestock. He states that it gives the farmer the opportunity to inspect his livestock on a daily basis, allowing him to quickly pick up on any anomalies in herd health, administer treatment in a timely manner, keep better records and devise an effective breeding system.

Mr. Kirnon stated that the project will enable him to improve the way his animals are being kept, as well as improve the breed. He would now be able to convert precious land space normally used for rough grazing into fodder banks. The farmer expressed his appreciation to the departments of Environment and Agriculture for giving him the opportunity to develop the model farm.

Meanwhile, Director of Environment, Gerard Gray affirmed that the system improves the management and control of livestock, utilizes less land than traditional practices and reduces the likelihood of animals roaming. It also decreases the negative impact on the environment, particularly biodiversity of national and global importance and improves road safety, as the animals will no longer be on the streets.

## Climate Change

**New automatic weather station installed at Leonora** by National Communications Network Inc. Radio and Television for Guyana, 7 August 2012 <http://ncnguyana.com/ncngy/index.php/local/local-news/social-issues/4147-new-automatic-weather-station-installed-at-leonora>

### Full Article

The Ministry of Agriculture has launched in region three one of ten automatic weather stations, (AWS) constructed to support the country's effort against climate change.

The network of system is part of a collaborative venture between the government and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC).

The systems were procured at the cost of 30 thousand us dollars with the support of funding received from Greece and, the European Union (EU.)

Agriculture Minister, Dr. Leslie Ramsammy said the installation will allow for the boosting of the competence of the hydro-metrological office in Guyana.

Executive director of CCCCC, Dr. Kenrick Leslie said that the centre's investment in building the capacity of the Caribbean countries in these areas is money well spent.

According to science advisor, Ulric Trotz, the AWS Network Stations will be operated by remote thereby, reducing the need to have personnel permanently sited in the remote areas.

He also said that the network of stations will allow for the monitoring of critical hydro-meteorological information such as hydro-meteorological parameters.

## Biotechnology

**Tissue culture lab handed over** by Kenville Horne, The Vincentian, <http://thevincentianonline.com/tissue-culture-lab-handed-over-p392-1.htm>

### Full Article

Government of St.Vincent and the Grenadines on Tuesday 19th received the keys to the upgraded Plant and Tissue Culture Laboratory at Orange Hill, during an official handing over ceremony at the site in Orange Hill.

The Laboratory was constructed and equipped at a cost of US\$500,000 with assistance from the European Union (EU), Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), Caribbean Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (GOSVG).

It will focus on the production and distribution of high quality planting materials of root and tuber crops, through the establishment of appropriate propagation facilities, and facilitate the increase of fresh and value-added products.

Dr. Gregory Robin, CARDI Local representative, in his brief remarks outlined some important undertakings by his organization: the Tissue Culture Laboratory at Orange Hill; service of the extension facility and erected facilities at Perseverance; building five small Agri-processing plants at various locations around the country. The undertakings cost over EC\$1 million.

### *Why SVG*

Executive Director of CARDI, Dr. Arlington Chesney, made a personal appeal to Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves to appeal to leaders of the Caribbean to invest 10% of their countries GDP in agricultural development.

With the extreme price volatility of food within the last two or three years, food has now become a trade commodity, just like silver or gold, Chesney said.

Chesney explained that CARDI chose St.Vincent because they recognize the country had a viable and promising roots and tuber industry, that could replace the imported starches, and because the government of SVG had the vision to work with the Taiwanese to establish a tissue culture facility.

He emphasized that any tissue culture facility was critical to the future development of the new agriculture in the region.

Minister of Agriculture, Saboto Caesar, noted that the agricultural sector in SVG is evolving. He thanked the government and people of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and all the other institutions present for introducing and joining agriculture and technology in SVG.

### *Enhancing resilience and production*

Caesar viewed the laboratory and US\$500,00 to be used over a two year period for the development of agriculture, as an indication that today we are enhancing our resilience and ability to control the elements and variables that impact our country's agricultural output.

Feature speaker Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves lectured the audience on agriculture and his upbringing on a farm with his parent.

Dr. Gonsalves told the audience that the Tissue Culture Laboratory will reduce and eliminate the cases of Black Sigatoka and Moko diseases, since the PCR machines installed at the Laboratory can test the tissue culture to determine if its free from the diseases.

He disclosed that the new building has a floor space of 2,100 square feet which will result in an additional 60,000 plantlets being produced annually, at an average cost of US\$1.00 per plant.

Chief Agricultural Officer Reuben Robertson chaired the function, while Senior Agricultural Officer Seithroy Edwards did the vote of thanks. Persons also had the opportunity to tour the facility.

## **Agricultural Development**

**Haiti's Martelly continues agricultural push, with help from Venezuela** by Caribbean Journal, 7 August 2012  
<http://www.caribjournal.com/2012/08/07/haitis-martelly-continues-agriculture-push-with-help-from-venezuela/>

### **Full Article**

Haiti is continuing its drive to promote the growth of agriculture in the country.

The latest move came Monday as Haiti President Michel Martelly visited the Artibonite Valley to open the new Community Centre Mill of Timonette.

Martelly was joined by a delegation including Venezuelan Ambassador to Haiti Pedro Antonio Canino Gonzalez and Agriculture Minister Jacques Thomas to open the mill centre, which includes three rice mills, a dozen tractors and other agricultural equipment.

The mill is part of a project led by the Artibonite Valley Authority (ODVA) to build 12 similar centres in the region.

Timonette, Desdunes and Verrettes are the first three beneficiaries of the project. There is already reportedly funding to build five more centres, with \$9 million coming from Venezuela's PetroCaribe programme.

Local farmers in Timonette also received 1,5000 bags of fertilizer at discounted prices as part of the programme, along with more than 9,000 free agricultural tools.

"[Haiti] can count on the cooperation of Venezuela," Canino said.

Martelly asked the Venezuelan envoy to convey his "thanks" to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and the Venezuelan people for what he called "frank cooperation" between the two countries.

According to government figures, Haiti's Artibonite Valley at one time produced 125,000 tonnes of rice per year. That number dropped to 65,000 tonnes in 2004, although it recently increased to 90,000.

Martelly said that number was still insufficient, however, given that Haiti imports approximately 350,000 tonnes of rice each year.

## Food Security

**PM proposes policy to reduce food import bill** by Christopher Serju, Jamaica Gleaner, 9 August 2012 <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20120809/business/business5.html>

### Full Article

PRIME MINISTER Portia Simpson Miller has given the clearest indication of the Jamaican Government's willingness to use trade policy to address the country's growing food-import bill, which last year stood at US\$930 million, more than US\$100 million over the previous year.

Delivering the keynote address on the final day of the Denbigh Agricultural, Industrial and Food Show on Jamaica's 50th anniversary, she noted that, as a country, our Independence will mean little if we are unable to feed ourselves. She issued this warning: "As a Government, we are prepared to use trade policy to discourage the importation of wholesome food that can be produced here in Jamaica." However, the prime minister did not state specifics.

Charging that "agriculture must rise again", she declared that the sector would never realise its full potential without the tourism sector consuming significantly much more local produce. Lamenting that since 1962, when it contributed some 12 per cent to the country's gross domestic production (GDP), this had now fallen to 6.6 per cent. Prime Minister Simpson Miller explained that the ministries of Agriculture and Tourism are, in fact, collaborating to get more local produce used in hotels.

The prime minister also announced that a National Food Security Policy was in the final stages of preparation and would be ready for launching next month. This policy, she said, would outline specific targets for food production, while at the same satisfying our nutritional needs. In addition, it would ensure that our children have the wholesome and nutritional food necessary for their growth and development.

## Marketing

**Jamaica to benefit from marketing project** by Douglas McIntosh, Jamaica Information Service, 8 August 2012 <http://www.jis.gov.jm/news/list/31499>

### Full Article

Jamaica is one of four Caribbean countries set to benefit from a US\$25 million pilot project, to be funded and implemented by the Canadian Hunger Foundation in the region over the next two years, aimed at building marketing capacity.

Speaking at Saturday's (August 4) opening of the 60<sup>th</sup> Denbigh Agricultural, Industrial and Food Show, at the Denbigh Showground, May Pen, Clarendon, Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS) President, Senator Norman Grant, said Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and St. Vincent are also set to benefit from the pilot project.

The initiative is expected to be pivotal to efforts being mooted by the JAS, for increased regional trade within CARICOM, with the JAS President stressing that, "we need to find a way to make that (project) work."

"For the very first time, we will have an international organisation that will be seeking to partner with local farmers organisations, such as the Jamaica Agricultural Society and the Christiana Potato Growers Association, to be implementers of this project. We can do it, and we will take agriculture to another level," Senator Grant declared.

The President cited the need for what he described as a "national conversation" locally to explore the possibility of tapping into the markets of CARICOM member states, in order to facilitate inter-regional trade.

"We are, presently, not trading enough within CARICOM, and I think that if we have dialogue we can (explore the possibilities), so that the revenues that are generated are shared by farmers within CARICOM, rather than members seeking to import food within our region," he argued.

To this end, Senator Grant disclosed that the JAS will be engaging counterpart agricultural organisations from Barbados, Cayman Islands, and Trinidad and Tobago, among others, in dialogue, “as part of our thrust...to see how we can work together to get agricultural trade going in the region.”

## ICTs and Agriculture

**Ministry creates a virtual Backyard Gardening Zone** by Stevenson Skeete, Ministry of Agriculture, Barbados Website, 2 August 2012

[http://www.agriculture.gov.bb/agri/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=684:ministry-backyard-zone&catid=194:food-crop-research&Itemid=153](http://www.agriculture.gov.bb/agri/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=684:ministry-backyard-zone&catid=194:food-crop-research&Itemid=153)

### Full Article

Facebook users who love gardening have been mingling in a special virtual space. It's a place where they go daily to get and share ideas and tips. The place is the Backyard Gardening Zone, an experimental effort of the Ministry's Food Crop department at using a social media platform to share modern ideas on sustainable gardening.

The membership has grown to a modest 184 persons, but the “reach” goes well beyond. Every week the outreach is anywhere from 400 to 700. Visitors are mainly Barbadians at home and in the USA, but the reach extends to 20 countries.

Visitors to the zone get to see and share photos and videos of garden experiences, while taking advantage of technical tips on growing crops. There are also links to information on the health benefits of fruit and vegetables and many other useful types of information. The sharing experience has been already encouraging. As time goes on it is hoped that more and more persons will share their own experiences and touch the gardening lives of others.

Facebook gardeners are being encouraged to reach out and “touch” others with their “green” hands. The idea in mind is that posting a single photo can be like saying 1000 words to someone else. It may be about a better gardening technique, solving a problem or whatever other experience there is to share. Everyone has their own “story” to tell and one may never know who is “touched” by that outreach effort.

The site can be visited on Facebook by the following

link: <https://www.facebook.com/bookmarks/pages#!/pages/Backyard-Gardening-Zone/247440910343>

For those who are not “facebookers”....most of the photos can even be seen by non-Facebook users.

Internet users are welcome to visit the Zone today

## Upcoming Events

**Title: Climate Change and our coasts: Exploring possibilities, finding solutions**

### Description:

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States' (OECS) Reduce Risk to Human and Natural Assets Resulting from Climate Change (RRACC) project will host a seminar aimed primarily at government officials that will discuss: current issues and the state of coastal resources in the OECS; integrated coastal area and watershed management; impacts of climate change on the subregion's economy; and policy, legal and institutional arrangements for coastal areas management in the OECS.

**Dates:** 12-14 September, 2012

**Location:** St. Kitts and Nevis

**Contact:** Tecla Fontenard, Communications Specialist, ESDU

**Phone:** +758-455-6327

**Fax:** +758-452-2194

**Email:** [tfontenard@oecs.org](mailto:tfontenard@oecs.org)

**Title:** World Food Day

**Description:**

World Food Day 2012 will focus on "Agricultural Cooperatives - Key to Feeding the World" at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO). The World Food Day organizers have also released an informational brief on agricultural cooperatives.

**Dates:** 16 October 2012

**Location:** FAO Headquarters, Rome (Lazio, Italy)

**For more information:** <http://www.fao.org/getinvolved/worldfoodday/en/>

**Title:** The 16th International Symposium of the International Society for Tropical Root Crops (ISTRC)

**Description:**

The International Society for Tropical Root Crops (ISTRC) was established in 1967. The Society's triennial symposia serve as a unique platform for interaction among scientists working on all tropical root and tuber crops (Sweetpotato, Cassava, Potato, Andean roots and tubers, Yams and Aroids) from various backgrounds from around the world to share experiences, build collaborations and develop strategies to contribute to sustainable development.

**Date:** Sunday 23rd – Friday 28th September 2012.

**For more information see:**

[http://istrc2012abeokuta.multiply.com/journal/item/1/16th\\_ISTRC\\_Triennial\\_Symposium\\_Announcement](http://istrc2012abeokuta.multiply.com/journal/item/1/16th_ISTRC_Triennial_Symposium_Announcement)