



IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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Agriculture *in the* News



Issues Affecting Caribbean Agriculture

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Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) in collaboration with its partner the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) will engage technicians and practitioners in the Agriculture Sector from Barbados in a training workshop on Water Use Efficiency (WUE).

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AGRICULTURE IN THE NEWS is a monthly 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.

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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

Water

Recurring droughts highlight need to better manage water resources, safeguard food security by FAO, 27 August 2012 <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/154876/icode/>

Full Article

Drought in some parts of the world has hurt global grain production and contributed to food price spikes virtually every other year since 2007, highlighting the need to transform the way water is used - and wasted - throughout the entire food chain.

This is one of the key messages that FAO is transmitting this week at World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden. The annual event brings policy makers and experts from around the globe together to discuss pressing issues related to water and its management.

In a speech made today at the Week's opening ceremony, FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva stressed that "there is no food security without water security," noting that FAO's recent report, *The State of Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture*, warns that water scarcity and pollution are posing a growing risk to key food production systems around the world.

"Agriculture, as we practice it today, is one of the causes of this phenomenon, as it represents 70% of all freshwater uses," said Graziano da Silva.

But, he also noted, the food production sector also offers tremendous potential for changing how the world uses water.

"Agriculture holds the key to sustainable water use," said Graziano da Silva. To achieve that and meet the world's growing demand for food, "we need to produce in a way that conserves water, uses it more sustainably and intelligently, and helps agriculture adapt to climate change" he added.

Toward that end, FAO is proposing a new framework for water management in agriculture: *Coping with water scarcity: An action framework for agriculture and food security*.

FAO's framework stresses in particular the importance of the following areas where policy and action should focus:

Modernisation of irrigation: age-old canal irrigation schemes need to be modernized to respond to the needs of tomorrow's farmers, allow for the more efficient use of water and increase productivity. Future irrigation will increasingly be piped irrigation and combine different sources of water, including groundwater, in a sustainable way.

Better storage of rainwater at farm level: by storing water in small ponds or directly in the ground, farmers can reduce drought-related risks and increase productivity.

Recycling and re-using: water re-use, in particular treated wastewater from urban centers, can play an important role for agricultural production in arid areas. A more systematic way of safely using such water can boost local production.

Pollution control: better water quality regulations, together with effective enforcement mechanisms, needs to be put in place to reduce water pollution, which aggravates water scarcity.

Substitution and reduction of food waste: agricultural policies must consider the potential that rainfed production still offers in many places, and seek a much more integrated combination of irrigated and rainfed farming.

At the same time, the reduction of post-harvest losses must be part of any water scarcity coping strategy. Of all food produced globally, 30 percent - the equivalent of 1.3 billion tons - is lost or wasted every year along the value chain from field to fork. Reducing these losses go a long way towards reducing pressuring on natural resources that are essential to food production, like soils and water.

Additional information

[Coping with water scarcity: An action framework for agriculture and food security](#)

[A finite resource, pushed to the brink: how water scarcity impacts food security](#)

[Climate change will place additional pressure on availability of water for food production](#)

Practitioners in the Agriculture sector in Barbados to be trained in water use efficiency by Global Water Partnership - Caribbean, 4 September 2012 <http://www.gwp.org/Global/GWP-C%20Files/GWP-C%20Press%20Release%20-%20WUE%20in%20Agriculture%20Workshop%20in%20Barbados.pdf>

Full Article

Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) in collaboration with its partner the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) will engage technicians and practitioners in the Agriculture Sector from Barbados in a training workshop on Water Use Efficiency (WUE). The workshop will take place from September 5th - 7th, 2012 at the Blue Horizon Hotel in Christ Church, Barbados.

The workshop developed by GWP-C, sets out to build capacity for improved management of water through the application of water use efficiency techniques in agriculture in the Caribbean. The workshop will provide training to practitioners in the field on WUE for the agriculture sector and specifically demonstrate the benefits of improved WUE; provide examples of demand calculation models for WUE in the agriculture sector; explain the economic benefits of improved WUE; and foster discussions on retrofitting the industry with WUE devices. Workshop participants will be trained in this area using a training programme on WUE for the Agriculture Sector developed by the GWP-C.

A short opening ceremony will precede the start of the workshop on September 5th, 2012 from 9:00am -9:30am. The opening will feature an address by Mr. Charleston Lucas, Chief Agricultural Officer (A.g.) in the Ministry of Agriculture of Barbados. Also speaking will be Ms. Avril Alexander, Regional Coordinator of the GWP-C; as well as representatives from the CARDI.

The GWP-C was established in 2004 and is committed to fostering an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach at the community, national and regional levels by working through its multi-sectoral partnerships. GWP-C has more than 60 partners from 20 Caribbean territories all working toward a water secure Caribbean.

Water Use Efficiency training in the region is one of various activities initiated by the GWP-C to support Caribbean countries in the sustainable management of their water resources. This is the first time GWP-C and the CARDI will be carrying out the training programme in Barbados. Previous instalments of the workshop have been held in St. Kitts and Jamaica between 2009 and 2011.

Agricultural Development

Evelyn aims to improve regional recognition for CPHD by Monique Washington, 31 August 2012

<http://www.thestkittsnevisobserver.com/2012/08/31/evelyn-aims.html>

Full Article

As the new Technical Secretary of the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum, Nevis' Eric Evelyn aims to improve the group's visibility throughout the region.

Evelyn, a Quarantine Officer and Supervisor of Communications in the Department of Agriculture, was elected to the position two ago at the 5th Annual CPHD Forum held in the British Virgin Islands.

He has been a member of CPHD for four years, one of 26 quarantine officers from member countries. He explained that the officers come together to discuss and give advice on plant pests and diseases that affect their countries and ways that countries can safeguard their crops.

“Over the years there have been a number of threats to the Caribbean agriculture in terms of diseases and pests. When we come to these forums we give updates, we come together and discuss, presentations are made on what can be done and we are also advised. So when we go back home we know what to do to take certain measures,” he informed.

He said the forum gives members a chance to interact with the other directors to find out what is happening in their countries and how they are dealing with their situations.

“They can advise you in case you get the problem as to what you can do to prevent it from spreading and safeguard the country's agriculture.”

In his new position as Technical Secretary Evelyn informed that one of his principle objectives is to help build a more structured forum.

“This is the first time this position was created. Previously there was just a Chairman that was elected at the beginning of the annual meeting. What we are trying to do is to give the forum a bit more structure rather than every time you come, you just select a chairperson for one year,” he said.

One of the main reasons for the restructuring, he said, was to get more regional recognition.

“We want to be more recognised in the Caribbean. The group wants us to have more structure, they want us to be more recognised so they decided, why not this year do a three-member body and let them serve for two years and do whatever has to be done, in terms of organising,” Evelyn informed.

He said that part of his responsibilities included a lot of follow-up in terms of correspondences to other members of the forum.

“It's a totally new structure. I will be doing a facilitation role in terms of correspondence coming in and getting everything finalized. We are working on a charter that will govern the affairs of the group. We will be working on a website so we will be trying to get ideas from people. We still haven't decided on the logo yet and the theme,” he said.

Evelyn said that information and advice that he receives will be disseminated to farmers throughout Nevis in a number of ways.

“I have a weekly television program and a radio program that comes on three times a week. For those who don’t watch TV or listen to the radio, there are meetings and training workshop which the farmers can attend and receive the information,” he said, adding that when farmers come together for meetings or training “we take the opportunity to impart information to them”.

He pointed out that there are many things affecting the Caribbean’s agriculture sector now, including Black Sigatoka and Lethal Yellowing disease. Evelyn revealed that the Windward Islands are currently being affected by the Black Sigatoka which affects banana trees and is transferred from plant to plant by the fruit itself.

He informed that Nevis has been importing bananas from Dominica, an island affected by the disease. He assured that at the forum questions and concerns were raised with the Plant Director from Dominica on how they are containing the disease.

“He advised us as to what exactly they are doing to make sure it doesn’t come on the bananas. We have to make a decision as to if we can trust that what he is saying,” the Agriculture official said.

Lethal Yellowing disease, he revealed, was another topic raised at this year’s forum. Lethal Yellowing disease has destroyed hundreds of thousands of coconut trees in the Caribbean, including Nevis.

“We were advising countries that do not have the Lethal Yellowing on what are some of the measures you must put in place because once it gets there that’s it,” he said.

He surmised that if the forum was held before the Lethal Yellowing had spread “maybe it would not have gone so far in Nevis”.

IICA reiterates support for agricultural development by Caribbean News Now, 14 August 2012

<http://www.caribbeannewsnow.com/topstory-IICA-reiterates-support-for-agricultural-development-12171.html>

Full Article

KINGSTON, Jamaica -- As the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) celebrates its seventieth anniversary, under the theme “Sowing Innovation to Harvest Prosperity”, the Jamaican office is reaffirming IICA’s mission of promoting competitive and sustainable agriculture. To this end, IICA Jamaica has once again, and for the fourteenth year in a row, awarded youths for their innovation and excellence in agriculture.

According to IICA Jamaica Representative, Ignatios Jean, the Youth In Agribusiness Awards (YIAB) epitomises IICA’s principle of leadership through excellence.

“If we are looking at food security in a serious way, we must encourage, promote and develop youth leadership in agriculture. This year, Nicholas Powell and Bryan Wright were recognised and awarded for their productive technologies, marketing initiatives and investment in crop and livestock production respectively. These youths exemplify and chart the direction in which the agricultural sector should be heading,” said Jean.

Turning to IICA’s culture of information sharing and technology transfer among member states and to strengthen domestic markets, Jean said that the visit to Jamaica of the St Lucian Minister of Agriculture, Land, Forestry and Fisheries along with a delegation is being facilitated by IICA.

“We are in Jamaica to explore procedures involved in processing liquefied eggs. St Lucia is already self-sufficient in whole egg production. However, there are lots of potential for value-added industries, especially in the cruise ship sub-sector of the tourist market. Jamaica was chosen for this knowledge-sharing experience because of its expertise and, the good lessons it has to share,” commented Moses Jn Baptiste.

Also speaking about his experience at the annual Denbigh Agricultural Show, the minister was very pleased.

“I am very impressed with government authorities, their commitment to Denbigh and to agriculture; more so, the interaction of the Jamaican agriculture minister as well as the quality of the exhibits seen. It is evident that a lot of time was put into the planning and presentation of the expo and I leave Jamaica with a good perception of the agriculture sector. I want to thank IICA for its support,” Minister Baptiste said.

The Inter-American Institute for Co-operation On Agriculture was established in 1942 to address the Americas’ agriculture problems and foster mutual understanding among leaders of agriculture with Jamaica becoming the first English-speaking member state in 1975. Its technical assistance programme spreads across a variety of sub-sectors in agriculture including agribusiness, agricultural health and food safety; and rural development.

Caribbean Week of Agriculture launched in Antigua by Government of Antigua and Barbuda, 28 August 2012

http://www.antigua.gov.ag/article_details.php?id=3425&category=38

Full Article

The 11th Caribbean Week of Agriculture was officially launched yesterday amid delegates from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and various regional and international agriculture-related organizations.

The launch set the tone for the actual Caribbean Week of Agriculture which will run from October 14th to 20th, 2012 in Antigua. The theme for this year’s C.W.A. is “Celebrating Youth and Gender in Caribbean Agriculture- Each Endeavoring all Achieving.”

The C.W.A. 2012 will take the form of an exhibition, ministerial meetings, workshops, agro-processing, Caribbean manufactured goods and services and the expertise of Caribbean people.

An alliance between CARICOM, Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO), The Technical Centre for Agriculture & Rural Cooperation (CTA), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute (CARDI) along with the government of Antigua/Barbuda serves as the impetus to the C.W.A.

According to Desiree Fields-Ridley, Officer in Charge Directorate of Trade & Economic Integration, Caricom Secretariat, “the alliance has sought to promote the contribution of agriculture to the development of the region, through the institutionalization of the Caribbean Week of Agriculture.”

Fields-Ridley says that “the partnership of the alliance and C.W.A. has evolved into the C.W.A. as the premier regional forum for dialogue and consensus-building for the re-positioning of agriculture and enhancement of the quality of rural life in the Caribbean.”

Countries participating in the 11th C.W.A. in October are: Anguilla, Antigua/Barbuda, Belize, Barbados, The Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago.

Renewable Energy

UWI pushes agriculture, renewable energy in the region by The Barbados Advocate, 29 August 2012

<http://www.barbadosadvocate.com/newsitem.asp?more=local&NewsID=26593>

Full Article

The recently held three-day workshop on renewable energy in agriculture was demonstrative of the University of the West Indies' (UWI) push to disseminate vital information on the potential benefits of integrating the two sectors.

In an interview with Workshop Co-ordinator and UWI lecturer, Dr Indra Haraksingh outlined that in Trinidad there was a growing interest in the use of renewable energy in agriculture. She further anticipated a greater increase with the establishment of the new Faculty of Agriculture and Food Production at the St. Augustine campus which came on stream this month.

Despite the lack of an equivalent faculty at the Cave Hill campus in Barbados, the UWI lecturer noted that the University intended to spread the information through the use of workshops and short courses with the goal of increasing the interest in the area of agriculture.

She said, "As the University of the West Indies, we span the entire region, having centres throughout the Caribbean. There are the three main campuses in addition to the Open Campus. Quite apart from these there are schools in the various islands and through the dissemination of information with the short courses we will try to develop some techniques of renewables into the operations of the farm so that all of the information can reach the islands."

According to Dr. Haraksingh, through the DIREKT [Small Developing Island Renewable Energy Knowledge and Technology Transfer Network] project training has already been conducted in St. Lucia and Grenada, Barbados and Jamaica.

"We are therefore trying, as far as the resources can take us, to conduct renewable energy workshops in the Caribbean region," she said.

Disaster Risk Management

Agriculture Minister says disaster risk management must be at the forefront in order to achieve sustainable development by Jamaica Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 29 August 2012

<http://www.moa.gov.jm/News/2012/2012-08->

[29_Agriculture_Minister_says_disaster_risk_management_must_be_at_the_forefront_in_order_to_achieve_sustainable_development.php](http://www.moa.gov.jm/News/2012/2012-08-29_Agriculture_Minister_says_disaster_risk_management_must_be_at_the_forefront_in_order_to_achieve_sustainable_development.php)

Full Article

Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries, Roger Clarke, has said that disaster risk management must be at the forefront if Jamaica is to achieve sustainable development. Minister Clarke made this pronouncement at the closing ceremony of the two-year Gustav Agricultural Rehabilitation Project on August 23.

Minister Clarke explained that although the country is not able to control when disasters occur, mitigation measures must be put in place to ensure that the impact of those disasters are not so great. To do this, he said that the country "must engage in proactive forward planning and disaster preparedness on an ongoing basis".

He said the agricultural sector was vulnerable to disasters and as such greater synergies must be placed on disaster mitigation and adaptation which will contribute to the sustainability of the sector as well as the Government's efforts to secure the country's food security thrust.

"Mitigation and adaptation must be at the centre of the thrust to expand the sector...It is too often the case that we wait until after a disaster to implement corrective measures...At the end of the day, we have to become more efficient, apply best practices and use the resources we have judiciously," Mr. Clarke said.

Outlining the Government's drive to be proactive in this regard; the Minister explained that RADA supported by the FAO commenced a €334,000 12-month study recently to 'Strengthen Community Preparedness and Resilience to Natural Disasters in Selected Vulnerable Areas in Jamaica'. The project being undertaken in the communities of Rocky Point, Old Harbour Bay, New Market, Cascade and Halls Delight will support the preparation of disaster plans, stockpile agricultural inputs in case of natural disasters and support the development of disaster risk reduction plans.

Additionally, Minister Clarke pointed out that the Ministry has implemented its own Agricultural Disaster Risk Management Programme to sensitize agricultural stakeholders on the importance of preparation so as to reduce risk in the event of a natural disaster, through media messages and texting farmers. Meanwhile, USAID Mission Director, Denise Herbol underscored the importance of putting in place a robust mitigation programme to reduce the risk and damage similar to that of Tropical Storm Gustav.

Food Security

Food inflation falls to 22.6 percent by Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 26 August 2012

<http://www.news.gov.tt/index.php?news=11612>

Full Article

Food inflation fell to 22.6 percent in July compared with 24.1 percent in June, a decrease of 1.5 percent.

The Central Statistical Office released the latest information on inflation on August 26.

Food inflation, the main driver of the headline inflation rate, measured 22.6 percent (year-on-year) in July 2012, compared with 24.1 percent in June 2012.

This slower increase in the rate of food prices was caused mainly by the prices of several foods having gone down for the month of July.

The price of vegetables were down to 35.5 percent in July compared with 42.1 per cent in June, fish was down to 8.2 percent compared with 11.3 percent in the previous month, bread and cereals down to 3.1 per cent compared with 4.5 percent, milk, cheese and eggs down 4.6 percent compared with 4.7 percent and sugar and confectionery products were 5.3 percent compared with 5.5 percent in June.

All food prices did not show a decrease; by contrast, slightly faster year-on-year price increases were recorded for meat which was at 5.9 percent compared with 5.0 percent in June and oil and fats which were at 13.2 percent compared with 13.0 percent.

The statistics also indicated that inflation slowed for the second consecutive month in July and headline inflation, measured by the twelve month change in the Index of Retail Prices, declined to 10.8 percent (year-on-year) in July, down from 11.0 percent in June.

However, on a monthly basis, headline inflation rose by 0.8 percent in July after having declined by a similar rate in the previous month.

Core inflation, which excludes food prices, rose to 2.8 percent in July 2012 from 2.3 percent in June 2012. This uptick in the core inflation rate resulted from price increases in a broad set of categories including alcoholic

beverages and tobacco (4.8 percent), clothing and footwear (3.4 percent), recreation and culture (6.0 percent) and health services (2.6 percent).

Nevertheless, the CSO's statement indicated that underlying inflationary pressures are relatively subdued.

The report also noted that at the international level, a severe drought in the mid-west USA has affected crop development and has pushed up corn prices by almost 23 per cent in July relative to June. In addition, untimely rains in Brazil, the world's largest exporter of sugar, has contributed to an increase in sugar prices.

The statement also noted that while the effects of these increases have not yet fully impacted our domestic food inflation, some local retailers have already signaled their intention to pass on these global price increases to consumers. Egg producers, for instance, have announced an 8.8 percent increase in the wholesale price of eggs due to the higher cost of imported poultry feed.

Youth and Agriculture

Investment in agri R4D is key to youth empowerment and economic growth in Africa, says IFAD boss, by 22 August 2012 http://www.iita.org/2012-press-releases/-/asset_publisher/CxA7/content/investment-in-agric-r4d-is-key-to-youth-empowerment-and-economic-growth-in-africa-says-ifad-boss?redirect=%2F2012-press-releases

Full Article

Increasing investments in agricultural research for development (R4D) could bring the much-awaited agricultural transformation to Africa and help address the rising wave of youth unemployment and its attendant poverty, according to the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Dr Kanayo Nwanze. Delivering a talk at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan, Dr Nwanze said Africa and indeed Nigeria should not shy away from committing more resources to agricultural research and development if they really want to witness an African Green Revolution.

“Agric research is the cornerstone of development... it is the vehicle that conveys development and we must invest in it,” he said.

Dr Nwanze, who completed his visit to IITA on Wednesday, also supported calls for investments to rejuvenate research institutions such as IITA—a position earlier made by Nigeria's former President Olusegun Obasanjo.

According to him, such investments will have a positive trickle down effect on the youths by way of generating improved technologies that could attract youths to agriculture and also build their capacities in solving both present and future challenges to food security. Citing research studies, Dr Nwanze said that for every dollar invested in agricultural research, returns on investments were about US\$9 in sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2003, African governments made a commitment to allocate at least 10 percent of national budgets to agriculture but not many have actually met the target. Consequently, low investments in agriculture places Africa in a disadvantaged position behind its Asian and Latin American counterparts in areas such as irrigation, fertilizer usage, and advanced seed technology. Despite its agrarian nature, Africa spends billions of dollars each year importing food, including 45 percent of its rice and 85 percent of its wheat. Dr Nwanze in his lecture titled, “Rejuvenation: Investing in agriculture for the future of Nigeria and its young people,” said that Africa could turn around its ‘fortunes’ for the better by paying more attention to agriculture.

“Our leaders need to know this. If we are thinking of investing in the future of our children, then we must think agriculture. The impact of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by agriculture in any country is twice that of other sectors,” he explained.

Dr Nwanze, from Nigeria, who was part of those that led IITA’s work on the biocontrol of cassava mealybug in Africa in the early 1980s said that the success of the biocontrol program was able to save cassava—a staple to more than 200 million people in Africa. That is, every dollar invested in biocontrol research had saved one person in Africa.

He said the breakthrough in the biocontrol program also demonstrated the importance of agricultural research, stressing that even the Green Revolution in Asia was a product of agricultural research.

The IFAD president said that the growing population in Africa, which in the case of Nigeria will double by 2050, demanded more attention to agriculture.

“This is the only way to have regional stability, cohesion, peace, and development,” he said.

He commended IITA for its work on agricultural research, and pledged IFAD’s support in rejuvenating the Institute.

IITA Director General, Dr Nteranya Sanginga said that the growing youth population is both an opportunity and a ‘time bomb’ for Africa.

“They are an opportunity if we convert their energies to agricultural development but they could be a ‘time bomb’ if we fail to do so,” he explained.

Upcoming Events

Third Caribbean Sustainable Energy Forum (CSEF) to be held in Saint Kitts and Nevis during 13-14 September 2012.
<http://www.csef3.org/>

Theme: Advancing Energy Integration and Energy Access through Renewable Energy (RE) and Energy Efficiency (EE) in CARICOM

Programme includes session: Bio-energy Integration in CARICOM

September 2012

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

Date: 23 – 28 September 2012,

Venue: University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB), Ogun State, Nigeria

Website: <http://www.istrc.org/>

Theme: *The Roots and Tubers of Development and Climate Change* - Tropical roots and tuber crops are essential to meeting global food security needs, improving staple foods of world's poor and creating new opportunities in global food supply.

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September 2012

XI International Conference on Goats

Date: 24-27 September 2012

Venue: Canary Islands

Website: <http://www.icg2012.org/>

October 2012

Caribbean Week of Agriculture

Date: 14- 20 October 2012

Venue: Antigua and Barbuda

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>