Move to Rehabilitate Coconut Industry by Janelle de Souza. Trinidad and Tobago Newsday, 28 February 2013, Section A, pp.13

THE Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the St Patrick’s Coconut Growers Cooperative Society Ltd will work together to develop and rehabilitate the coconut industry in the country.

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For more information see page 4

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
Cassava

Cassava as you've never seen it by Neil Palmer. CIAT Blog, 22 February 2013
http://www.ciatnews.cgiar.org/2013/02/22/cassava-as-youve-never-seen-it/

Full Article

When I heard that CIAT cassava breeder Hernan Ceballos had some “very strange” cassava to show us, I didn’t waste any time in calling to clarify what he meant. He gave little away: “you have to see it.”

Very soon we were in one of CIAT’s vast fields of experimental cassava. I wondered what exactly we’d find: cassava roots with mildly amusing shapes? Multicoloured roots, perhaps? But Hernan wasn’t carrying a harvesting tool; it was the plants themselves that would be strange.

As we walked I hoped I’d be able to oblige Hernan’s conspiratorial charm by instantly recognising what it was about the plants that was strange. Hopefully it would be obvious to the cassava novice and not some hard-to-photograph quirk premised on a scientific technicality.

I wasn’t disappointed. Anyone who’s seen a “normal” field of cassava knows that the plants grow a few feet high, a few feet wide, are bushy – perhaps even a bit spindly – with finger-like leaves extending in all directions from the trunk, on the end of slim stalks – or petioles. A whole field of cassava is normally impenetrably dense. After passing trials of what I considered normal-looking cassava, one plot stood out immediately.

Rather than bushy, these were soaring columns of cassava – sturdy, compact, and standing nearly ten feet-high, the leaves growing straight out from the trunk with no petioles whatsoever. For want of a better analogy, they reminded me of Marge Simpson’s towering beehive hair-do, in a rich, racing green. According to Hernan, the CIAT researchers refer to the plants as “Asparagus Cassava.” They weren’t just strange; they were the strangest cassava plants I’d ever seen.

Hernan himself was clearly quite excited. Using cuttings maintained at CIAT’s gene bank, the centre’s cassava scientists had inbred the plants to see what kinds of hidden traits they would express – characteristics that normally lie dormant in their DNA.

The resulting tall, slim plants mean you can quadruple the number of plants per plot, Hernan told us. Assuming the yield per plant of Asparagus Cassava planted at high densities is comparable to conventional varieties at normal densities, you could be looking at a big boost in yields. That would be a boon for smallholders growing cassava for food, he continued, those supplying the ever-growing industrial demand for cassava starch, and due to increased production on the same area of land, would help reduce the workload of women producers in Africa.

The fact that Asparagus Cassava can be planted in neat rows, easily accessible and navigable by farmers also means they could be harvested mechanically, said Hernan. While machine harvesting is not suited to some parts of the cassava-producing world, industrial producers will surely take note.

An additional benefit is for livestock: mechanical harvesting of the Asparagus Cassava leaves – free of the fibrous petioles – would be much easier, and the resulting feed of higher quality.
Hernan is not the kind of scientist to use the phrase “green revolution” lightly in relation to his own research. But during our half-hour excursion to see the “strange” cassava, it kept popping up in relation to the crop’s potential. He told us that with Asparagus Cassava, the CIAT team would like to replicate the success of maize scientists, who increased the crop’s tolerance to “crowding”, enabling planting densities to increase three-fold with major gains in yields.

Few would dispute that a tripling of cassava yields would very likely signify the revolution the crop has been waiting for for so long. When high-density Asparagus Cassava trials begin in May 2013, Hernan will be able to put his hypothesis to the test.

Farmer grows 17-lb cassava. Trinidad and Tobago’s Newsday, Thursday, 28 February 2013
http://www.newsday.co.tt/hotline/0,174148.html

Full Article

A Moruga farmer has harvested a 17-pound cassava and is now reaping praises from the Ministry of Food Production. Via a press release issued yesterday, the ministry said it wants to recognise local farmer Gaston Smith for a bumper Cassava crop.

Smith, Farm Manager of MarVista Farms, a 47-acre farm located in La Fortune Trace, La Savanne, Moruga, has been consistently producing very large cassava tubers of excellent cooking qualities, over the last two years.

This variety of Cassava is called MX and it is popularly grown by local farmers. Smith, the ministry release states, utilizes the Crop Health Therapy System in his farm and has been able to obtain average tuber yields per plant of 30-35 lbs each. The planting density is 3,500 plants per acre. The tubers can range between three to four and as heavy as 17 lbs although nine to ten lbs is the norm.

Recently Bernardo Ospina a regional expert from The Latin American and Caribbean Consortium to Support Cassava Research and Development, CLAYUCA, praised Smith’s crop yield.

“I have to travel to many countries that grow cassava, not only in Latin America but Africa and I don’t remember in the last ten to 15 years having seen this level of production. So heartiest congratulations. I am telling the truth, it is really encouraging,” said Mr Ospina.

The Ministry of Food Production said it is proud of the hard work by local farmers such as Mr Smith, who are helping to make Trinidad and Tobago a food secure nation.
Cereals and Grain Legumes

**Soybeans, corn close higher** by Mike McGinnis. Agriculture.com, 25 February 2013

**Full Article**

DES MOINES, Iowa (Agriculture.com)--Much needed rainfall in Argentina is putting pressure on the CME Group soybean market. Corn and wheat markets trade weaker too Monday.

At mid-session, the March futures corn contract is trading 1/2 of a cent higher at $6.90. The March soybean futures contract is trading 20 cents lower at $14.41. March wheat futures trade 9 cents lower at $7.06 per bushel. The March soyoil futures contract is trading $0.61 lower at $49.74. The March soymeal futures are trading $4.90 per short ton lower at $422.00.

In the outside markets, the NYMEX crude oil is $0.28 per barrel higher, the dollar is higher and the Dow Jones Industrials are 50 points lower.

Jack Scoville, PRICE Futures Group vice president, says that it seems like a quiet affair with a lot of guys waiting to see the market's trend. For now, the weakness is more a reflection of crops coming from South America in the bean complex. And all of the snow out in the Great Plains is bearish for the wheat market. Meanwhile, corn is not seeing much, in the way of news,” Scoville says. The soybean export sales, announced this morning, was talked about on Friday and was probably why the market was higher off and on last night, he says.

"Corn keeps holding pretty well despite no news, as the cash market is incredibly strong. Bean complex cash markets are strong too, but the corn is the big deal. Wheat still not real exciting demand wise,” Scoville says.

Scoville adds, "The soybean price action is disappointing for a lot of guys looking at our cash markets and demand, but the harvest pace is picking up strong in South America and that seems to have the specs in a selling mood."

**Banana**

**Black Sigatoka being managed despite limited resources** by Dominica News Online, 28 February, 2013

**Full Article**

Despite limited resources Dominica is said to be doing well in its management of the deadly Black Sigatoka disease.
In July Dominica joined the ranks of Caribbean banana producing countries fighting the disease, which affects banana and plantain plants.

Head of the plant quarantine unit in Dominica, Ryan Anselm said while the country has been improving its skills in fighting the disease, there is still room for improvement.

He said there is also limited resource to implement measures in controlling the disease.

“We have placed an integrated pest management together where we expect farmers to go into their fields on a weekly basis to do the necessary sanitation practices,” he said.

He said de-leafing of affected plants is very important.

“This is a process where you cut the infested part of the leaves. We are asking farmers to do this because it will help in the fight. Weed control and appropriate spacing is also another strategy,” he said.

According to Anselm, nutrition is also another strategy.

“We want farmers to provide nutrition to the plant because the black sigatoka is a fight between the leaf and the disease. The field must be sprayed with a potent fungicide. It must be recommended by the ministry of agriculture,” he added.

The movement of infested material is also another concerned raised.

Anselm said there are areas in Dominica which are free from the diseases and movement of infected materials can infest these areas.

Coconut Industry

Move to rehabilitate coconut industry by Janelle de Souza. Trinidad and Tobago Newsday, 28 February 2013, Section A, pp.13

Full Article

THE Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the St Patrick's Coconut Growers Cooperative Society Ltd will work together to develop and rehabilitate the coconut industry in the country.

The groups yesterday signed a two-year general agreement for technical cooperation at the CARDI headquarters at the University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine.

Jairam Seemungal, Minister in the Ministry of , Food Production, reiterated Government's commitment to fund and support developmental work in the agriculture sector, and made reference to his recent trip to Guyana where he visited coconut estates, saying he was impressed by the management practices of the coconut farmers.
CARDI Executive Director Dr Arlington Chesney noted that, according to the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI), coconut oil was of excellent quality and assists with stemming the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

According to Pranesh Maharaj, president of the cooperative, CARDI identified the cooperative as a key player in getting the Government to develop plans and programmes for the coconut industry.

Livestock

T&T imports 85% of goat and sheep meat. Charles Kong Soo. The Trinidad Guardian Newspaper, 1 March 2013

Full Article

There is a potential market for goat and sheep meat, milk and cheese in T&T. This was relayed by the Director of Animal Production and Health in the Ministry of Agriculture, Cheryl Roach-Benn.

She was speaking on behalf of Food Production Minister Devant Maharaj at the opening of a two-day workshop entitled Improving Small Ruminant Production Based on Suitable Forages and Management, at the Centeno Livestock Station, El Carmen, on Wednesday. “According to the Centre for Food and Nutrition, T&T has witnessed a marked increase in its consumption habits with respect to animal protein,” Roach-Benn said.

“However, what the data also shows is there is a potential market and opportunity to increase the local production levels of not only meat, but milk production from both goat and sheep. “The Central Statistical Office reports that over 85 per cent of the sheep and goat meat consumed in T&T is imported.

“Recently goat milk and cheese have become staples on our grocery shelves and the demand for small ruminant products continues to increase whilst production lags behind consumption.”

IICA’s representative in the Dominican Republic, livestock scientist Dr Manuel Sanchez, said the goat milk and cheese produced in T&T were the best food he had eaten and were free from contamination of brucellosis and milk fever that are common in Mexico.

IICA representative in T&T Gregg Rawlins said appropriate production techniques were lacking in the areas of nutrition and management, production units, reproductive management and sanitary aspects.

Cardi representative Dr Janet Lawrence said the competitiveness of the domestic small ruminant industry was impacted by the quality of breeding stock, high import costs, improper husbandry and farm management practices, limited marketing and processing, limited use of value-added products,
poorly organised farmer groups, non-communication with each other and inadequate information flow among stakeholders in the industry.

TTGSS president John Borely said the sector was sitting on an enterprise filled with promise and the potential to produce high quality products. Borely said goat milk was the best and healthiest milk in the world, and its meat was more nutritious than rabbit and also had strong cultural links with the Caribbean, especially Jamaica.

**Meat processors urged to modernize facilities** by Douglas McIntosh, Jamaica Information Service, 27 February 2013

**Full Article**

Meat processors islandwide have been urged to modernize their facilities, in order to boost the output of by-products which can be derived from animals reared for consumption.

Agriculture and Fisheries Minister, Hon. Roger Clarke, contends that this move will significantly reduce foreign exchange expenditure on by-product imports, which can be produced locally, while generating employment.

Speaking at the Jamaica Social Investment Fund’s (JSIF) pig census/value chain analysis workshop, staged under a US$15 million Work Bank-funded Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI), at the Alhambra Inn, Kingston, on February 26, Mr. Clarke cited the “sound footing” on which the pig sub-sector has been placed, consequent on significant strides made by the farmers and other stakeholders.

“When one looks at the level of investment that is being put in the pig industry, one understands that these (stakeholders) are very serious about the growth and development of the industry. That level of investment cannot be made to come to naught,” he said.

Agriculture and Fisheries Minister, Hon. Roger Clarke (right), in discussion with IICA Representative in Jamaica, Ignatius Jean, during Tuesday’s (February 26) pig census/value chain analysis workshop, jointly hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) at the Alhambra Inn, Kingston.

Against the background of the country’s annual food import bill, averaging some US$800 million, coupled with other economic challenges, Mr. Clarke asserted that “production is going to be the order of the day”, while assuring that the Ministry and Government will endeavour to extend all the assistance necessary to ensure the industry’s sustainability.

The REDI, which is being jointly implemented by the Ministry and JSIF, aims to empower targeted agricultural stakeholders in business development and capacity building.

The census and value study is aimed at assisting the Ministry and industry stakeholders to meet established objectives and targets for the sector. It will also provide data to guide planning and investment decisions by interests at all levels.
This report also outlines 10 critical areas for improvement, which are opportunities for improving the value and resulting benefits of Jamaica’s pig and pork industry.

**PHD and dairy farmers reach agreement.** Barbados Advocate, 27 February 2013  

**Full Article**

Pine Hill Dairy and dairy farmers have both agreed to cuts for two months so as to ensure that consumers do not have to pay more for local milk.

Following a lengthy meeting at Pine Hill’s offices yesterday aimed at maintaining the current price of white milk to consumers, Pine Hill agreed to continue to absorb increases in the cost of processing, and the 15 dairy farmers present along with the Farmer’s Representative Committee have agreed to temporarily reduce the farm gate price on milk until April 30th, 2013.

Pine Hill has also agreed not to institute any further quota reductions to farmers through 31st December 2013 and to purchase the excess milk produced by dairy farms up to a limit of 5% of the revised quota.

During the two-month period, the two sides have also agreed to continue to aggressively pursue acceptance of a suitable industry assistance plan to be readied for implementation as early as possible after April 30th.

The temporary agreement comes as the PHD continues to make a loss on every single carton of white milk it sells, a position which CEO Richard Cozier says is “absolutely unsustainable”. “This is a bitter pill for all involved. The options at our disposal in regard to milk are becoming fewer and fewer. Pine Hill has absorbed all of the increases it can over the last 8 months. As is well known, we have represented to Government, and we continue to work with farmers so as to ensure the survival of the industry. It is absolutely critical that a holistic plan is agreed upon urgently.”

He continued, “Today’s agreement provides us with a ‘window’ within which to finalise those plans and seek Government approval therefore. The plans will be designed to better position the industry to grow whilst ensuring that prices are reflective of the economic conditions that prevail.”

Chairperson of the Farmer’s Representative Committee Annette Beckett said, “This agreement has been reached after robust discussion, in an effort to ensure that milk consumers continue to have fresh Bajan milk as an option, and that we sustain and grow the market for cow’s milk in Barbados. Our primary aim is to ensure the survival of the industry, and the decision to take a temporary cut, with a window for increased production (excess milk), is with the proviso that we (Farmer, Pinehill and Government) will be seeking a long-term solution.”

In respect of the temporary agreement, Chief Executive Officer at the Barbados Agricultural Society (BAS), James Paul said, “This is a significant landmark for the dairy industry and we hope this represents a way of resolving difficult issues through discussion and consensus. We at the BAS always try to bring stakeholders together, rather than have them take adversarial positions, to ensure long-term
benefits to the industry. It is our goal to ensure that farming is financially viable and also to give the consumer a quality product at a reasonable price.”

Commenting on the way forward, Mr. Paul also said, “We received assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture for dairy farmers and we must now develop a long-term strategic plan to see how we can develop the industry, how we can apply our resources over the next five years and what achievements can be made. We need to look at the market and see what new products we can bring.”

Farmer Matthew Power said, “The next two months will be hard but it is in the interest of keeping the price low to the consumer, so I feel comfortable with this temporary agreement.”

**Invasive Species - Red Palm Mite**

**Indian scientist: work on red palm mite must continue** by Dixie-Ann Dickson. The Trinidad Guardian Newspaper 25 February, 2013

http://guardian.co.tt/business/2013-02-25/indian-scientist-work-red-palm-mite-must-continue

Full Article

After one year of significant research on the red palm mite (RPM) by Indian scientist Avvura Sujatha, the Food Production Ministry now has to maximise and further that work. Sujatha was brought to T&T through a joint effort by the Ministry and the Caribbean Agriculture Research Development Institute (Cardi) facilitated through bilateral arrangements between the governments of T&T and India.

Sujatha, an entomologist, came to T&T in February 2012 and worked on finding a natural enemy for the RPM to assist in mitigation and control of the pest. At a farewell ceremony hosted by Cardi at its headquarters at UWI, St Augustine, Sujatha said it was important for T&T to continue what she has started to fully determine the success of the research.

“Out of 90 natural enemies that were collected, we found one potential natural enemy. We brought it to the laboratory and established a protocol for mass production,” she said. Sujatha said this has to be multiplied in large numbers, followed by field testing. She said the multiplication process had started, but must be continued.

Most importantly, Sujatha said, in addition to biological control, farmers must employ good agricultural practices, especially sanitation, ploughing, application of organic manures and fertilisers, and regular irrigation, etc. She said this would largely assist in creating a healthy environment so the RPM would not be able to thrive. Echoing similar sentiments was Dr Arlington Chesney, executive director of Cardi, who said the work done by Sujatha has resulted in a renewed commitment to resuscitating the coconut industry. However, he said, it is very important that the Food Production Ministry continue Sujatha’s work.

“We have to multiply the natural enemy and distribute them in the fields for testing. More importantly, we have to keep the estate or plantations clean so that the RPM does not have an environment in which it could be multiplied because it is very debilitating on the coconut industry. Chesney said they
also have to look at other pests that may be threatening the industry. “Therefore, Sujatha advised that we employ an integrated pest management programme, so that we could maximise the returns.”

He said the resuscitation of the coconut industry is very critical because there are several productive and economical uses of coconuts. For example: production of coconut water, virgin coconut oil and other by products of coconut. Former Food Production Minister Vasant Bharath, who now has the portfolio of Trade, Industry and Investment, said agriculture was one of the areas his ministry has targeted for diversification. He said trade played an important role in agriculture. The RPM, described as a red ring disease, is a phytophagous alien species first reported in the Caribbean in 2004 in the island of Martinique. It has since spread throughout the region. The mite was detected in T&T in 2006, when it significantly affected the coconut industry.

Climate Change

**Sus Gren maps Union Island for climate change** by Caribbean Climate, 28 February 2013
http://caribbeanclimateblog.com/2013/02/28/sus-gren-map-union-island-for-climate-change/

**Full Article**

The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5Cs) is proving full social media support for the second three dimensional participatory modeling (P3DM) exercise to be held in the Caribbean. The participatory community mapping exercise now underway on Union Island in the Grenadines will run from February 28 to March 8 when the resource will be presented to the community at the Ashton Resource Centre.

The P3DM exercise is being led by Sustainable Grenadines (SusGren) in collaboration with the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The one-week workshop includes representatives from local communities, schools and NGOs, as well as regional and international participants from various fields.

SusGren says the participatory three dimensional modeling (P3DM) tool will bring communities together and empower them to make decisions about their livelihoods, natural resources, culture, heritage and climate change in a bid to find ways to adapt and thrive in a changing climate. Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and other Caribbean islands are highly vulnerable to climate change and extreme climatic events.

Historically, hurricanes and floods have had the most disastrous impacts in the region. In the last half century, several storms and hurricanes have resulted in the loss of life and property. These events have caused the diversion of limited resources from other development priorities towards relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. There are likely to become more frequent with climate change. Other climate change impacts in the Caribbean are projected to include sea level rise, ocean warming, and changing rainfall patterns.

The P3DM activity is expected to enable community level responses to some of the anticipated challenges associated with climate change. The P3DM technique includes technology intermediaries,
particularly the integration of modern ICTs such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS), to create a living representation of local knowledge and cultural heritage, which forms the basis for spatial data interpretation and analysis. The P3DM is also a good way of showing how communities can get together to see show priority areas (i.e. flood zones, drought concerns, fish population and mangrove growth) can be managed collaboratively.

Agricultural Development

Dr Ramsammy concerned over region’s high food import bill by The Ministry of Agriculture Guyana, 1 March 2013  

Full Article

AGRICULTURE Minister, Dr. Leslie Ramsammy yesterday expressed concern over the high food importation bills of countries in the Caribbean Region.

The occasion was the opening of a workshop on the implementation and mainstreaming of regional fisheries policies into small-scale fisheries governance agreements in the Caribbean. The four-day programme is being hosted by the Fisheries Department of the Agriculture Ministry, in collaboration with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat, the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisation (CNFO) and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA).

In his speech, Ramsammy noted that the Caribbean can consider itself as a food-secure Region and stressed that Guyana is a food-secure country. “Food security is not just the amount of food we have to eat but the right kind of food, so nutrition security is an important part of it,” he emphasised.

Nevertheless, the minister maintained that, outside of developed countries, such as those in Western Europe and North America, no sub-region in the world can compete with the Caribbean in terms of food and nutrition security.

However, he stated that this comes at a cost, part of which is the high food importation bills that Caribbean countries have, noting that the vast majority of what is imported into the Region can be produced and supplied right here.

“Seven of our countries in CARICOM have a per capita food importation bill of over US$500, on an annual basis, when the global average in developing countries is just US$66 per capita. It means that we are importing more than 10 times of the average citizen in developing countries. That must be a rejected reality; we must change that reality and we have the capacity to do so,” he insisted.

He said, at present, Trinidadians are consuming tilapia imported from China and questioned whether all the demands of that country could not be supplied by countries within this Region instead.
According to Ramsammy, Trinidad’s tilapia requirements can, in fact, be satisfied just by the aquaculture operators in Guyana and the infrastructure already exists and the operators would be willing to meet those needs.

He said that although they have the capacity to produce large quantities, the operations are downscaled because the market does not exist.
Meanwhile, the minister announced that Guyana will be hosting the Caribbean Week of Agriculture in October this year.

“We are honoured and we commit to make this Caribbean Week of Agriculture one of the biggest and one that really meets its obligation in this Region,” he asserted.


Full Article

The Caribbean Farmers Network, CAFAN, has said it is taking steps to establish an improved compensation system for farmers who are providing agricultural produce under the PROPEL project.

The five-year PROPEL project is intended to help small farmers in the region to provide an adequate and consistent supply of agricultural products to large purchasers by enhancing their capacity.

Chief Co-ordinator of CAFAN, Jethro Greene, said it is expected to boost the confidence of farmers by reducing the lengthy payment period, which has been a source of discontent within the agricultural sector.

Mr. Greene said 2013 is expected to be a productive year for farmers as CAFAN continues to penetrate the lucrative UK market.

Agriculture sector, centre could help reduce food import bill. Barbados Advocate, 28 February 2013


Full Article

“IF you are importing $800 million in food, there must be opportunities to produce food; but if you want to eat New Zealand lamb, Idaho potatoes and Texas beef, then we have a problem. We will not survive if we continue importing, we have to produce more of what we consume in this country for the good of the economy, to save foreign exchange. Our estimate is, we can cut that food import bill by half in five years if we do what has to be done. But you can’t do it by believing agriculture is backwards,” charged Agriculturalist, Chelston Brathwaite.
Having received a significant gesture, a donation of 28 acres of land to the University of the West Indies to establish a Centre for Food Security and Entrepreneurship, Brathwaite believes that with research, greater opportunities for small farmers and more economical decision-making, the agriculture sector can be the answer to the high cost of living and high food import bill.

Brathwaite asserted that the days of traditional agriculture are gone, the days for the hoe and the fork are over. He said that it is with technological advancements and agriculture that is mechanised, if the sector does the value-added process, the farm can be a business.

Looking at the sugar industry today when the production is less than 10 per cent of what it was over five decades ago, he said, “Sugar is no longer king and no longer sweet economically. Times have changed and when times change, we must change. We have to do something different.”

He said that former Minister of Agriculture, Dr. David Estwick, had the right idea of Barbados producing sugar for local consumption and to produce energy. He said that the country cannot afford to continue to earn $1 000 per tonne of sugar when it takes $4 000 to produce a tonne.

“It is not economical, it don’t make sense,” asserted Brathwaite.

“We believe that the Centre can be a catalyst for transforming agriculture in Barbados. The objectives of the Centre, to provide resources. We hope this would be a model farm. We want to use the 28 acres as an agrotourism site.

It is on the way to Harrison’s Cave and we think if we develop a model farm, we want to put a restaurant there, cooking local foods and let tourists and everybody go and eat some good Bajan food,” Brathwaite said.

He concluded by saying that change is possible, that the centre can be a turning point in history, but that people need to give their support for the agriculture sector to survive and indeed make a difference.

More agriculture and employment opportunities needed. Barbados Advocate, 28 February 2013

Full Article

There needs to be a diversification of the tourism industry, greater job opportunities in the food and beverage sector, a development of our natural resources and wider education of farmers to help them be more marketable and earn more.

This challenge was voiced by Agriculturalist, Chelston Brathwaite, who says that there needs to be more job creation. He stated that we must move away from our distorted ideas within the tourism industry and also, if we are serious about a green economy, preservation of the environment is key, otherwise the result can be devastating.

“They need to generate jobs and employment opportunities in the food service sector of this country. We need to preserve the environment. The land is being overtaken by river tamarind and cow itch. You cannot have a green economy of a country covered in bush. You have to have a green economy where we produce our food,” beseeched Brathwaite.
He added, “The question I raise to you continuously, where are the jobs of the future going to come from? How are we going to employ our people? What are we going to give them to do? The government can’t employ anymore people. The public service is already full. Where are the jobs going to come from? There are no opportunities for going to England now to work on the London transport or going to Panama to build the Panama Canal. You have to find a job here. Where is it going to come from? If we do not use our natural resources to produce more of what we consume, look for opportunities to export and look for opportunities to generate wealth, we are going to be in serious trouble.”

In the tourism industry, he said that we should inject local produce into the industry instead of trying to feed the tourists New Zealand lamb, Idaho potatoes and Texas beef. He said that the industry should engage the agriculture sector.

Brathwaite asserted, “When we have breadfruit, sweet potatoes, Black Belly lamb, flying fish in this country, there are people who think the tourists want something from over and away, wrong perception. Tourists are looking for good food, clean food, healthy food and something different. They are not necessarily looking for things from the place from whence they came. But we have a distorted vision.”

Brathwaite, however, conceded that in order for local farmers to be more integrated they must bring their produce up to standard. He implored, “We need to respond to the supermarket revolution. Seventy-one per cent of our people are going to the supermarket to buy their food, so our farmers have to produce food that can be sold to the supermarkets. That means quality, reliability and good prices.”

(KG)

**Regional Meeting to Launch Rural Advisory Services Network**, by Sarojini Ragbir, Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, UWI, 28 February, 2013


**Full Article**

The Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension (DAEE), The University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, will be facilitating a meeting of Senior Regional Agricultural Extension Officials from Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, St Kitts, Antigua, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago, with the objective of launching a Regional Rural Advisory Services (RAS) Network.

The meeting is being supported by the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS), which is based in Switzerland. GFRAS’s mandate is to provide a forum to bring together and promote interaction and learning among the diverse stakeholders involved in Rural Advisory Services.

Rural Advisory Services (RAS) are about strengthening capacities, empowering rural people, and promoting innovations. RAS support people to obtain skills and information, and to address challenges so as to improve their livelihoods and well-being. Dr Wayne Ganpat, of the DAEE, is the focal point for GFRAS in the Caribbean.
At the CTA international extension conference titled Innovations in Extension and Advisory Services which was held 15th -18th November 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya, GFRAS held a side meeting of extension representatives from existing regional extension organisations with an interest in forming a regional network. The Caribbean region’s representation in Nairobi included Dr Wayne Ganpat, Dr David Dolly and Ms Wilhelmina Kissoonsingh. This became the genesis of this regional meeting. The Caribbean meeting will be held from 28th February 2013 to 1st March 2013 on the UWI St Augustine Campus. On the first day of the meeting participants will discuss and report on the present state of Agricultural Extension in their respective country. Also, GFRAS Programme Officer, Dorothee Loetscher, will engage participants on discussions on GFRAS’s programmes and projects.

On the second day, the meeting will address the new roles and responsibilities of Extension in the region, the role of networking, professional development for Extension Agents, funding, local and regional promotions, and follow-up actions. These deliberations will conclude with a debriefing session, which will also be attended by representatives from farmers’ groups, regional organisations, based in Trinidad and Tobago, and input suppliers.

New Minister of Agriculture of The Bahamas discusses overhaul of cooperation agenda with IICA.
Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture Press Release, 26 February 2013

Full Article
San Jose, Costa Rica, February 26, 2013 (IICA). The new Minister of Agriculture, Marine Resources and Local Government of The Bahamas, Alfred Gray, has established the priorities on which IICA should focus its technical cooperation in that country, namely, efforts to increase food production and make it sustainable, reduce the import bill, and improve agricultural health and food safety.

Appointed nine months ago, Minister Gray was invited to visit the Headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in order to adjust the organization’s projects to the policies adopted by the government. The Minister was accompanied by the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, Anthony McKinney.

During his visit, Mr. Gray met with the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica, Gloria Abraham, and also visited the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE).

The Director General of IICA, Victor M. Villalobos, placed the Institute’s technical capabilities at Minister Gray’s disposal, and informed him that regional projects were already under way related to agricultural health, agribusiness, and market information, among other topics.

“With respect to the improvement of food production, the objective will be to implement initiatives whose impact will be felt in the short term, and that make it possible to lower the import bill. We have access to the international research centers, germplasm, crop improvement techniques, and other tools on which we will draw to promote agriculture in The Bahamas,” Villalobos pointed out.

Minister Gray stated that one of the main challenges facing his country was how to make agriculture a more attractive option, especially to young people. “We do not have a developed agricultural sector;
we produce only 10% of what we consume. But we are growing gradually and hope that IICA’s presence in The Bahamas will help us make further progress,” he remarked.

IICA is already implementing activities related to several of the areas mentioned by the Minister. Recently, two specialists were sent to work on the modernization of the national agricultural health system, and a market information specialist will be undertaking a mission to the country within the next few days.

Minister Gray expressed interest in a small ruminants program that IICA will be implementing with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), and in becoming a member of CARDI.

The Minister also asked IICA for assistance with the equipping of a laboratory for plant, animal, and food safety analyses, as well as information on bio-energy.

*A meeting to discuss Costa Rica’s agricultural sector*

During his visit to Costa Rica, the Minister of Agriculture of The Bahamas met with his counterpart, Gloria Abraham.

The Costa Rican Minister stressed the importance of drafting a road map for the agricultural sector, which, in the case of Costa Rica, is contained in the Agrifood Policy. “It was prepared with contributions from a number of academics, and consultations were held with stakeholders to ensure that it reflected their concerns,” she pointed out.

The need to stimulate agricultural insurance and credit, and the importance of promoting planning of the harvesting and sale of products were other points addressed by the ministers.

One of the Caribbean country’s main concerns is how to get young people interested in the agricultural sector. During his visit to CATIE, the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture of The Bahamas, Anthony McKinney, highlighted the need to further promote the teaching of agricultural studies in primary and secondary schools, and to take advantage of the professional training and master’s and doctoral programs offered by international educational organizations.

IICA’s Director of Management and Regional Integration, Diego Montenegro, the IICA Representative in The Bahamas, Manuel Messina, and other Institute officials showed the Bahamian delegation the many different cooperation projects that could be carried out in the country.

**Guyana to host Caribbean Week of Agriculture 2013** by CMC, 26 February 2013


**Full Article**

CMC – Guyana will host the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) this year after a 10-year hiatus, senior programme coordinator of the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA) Jose Fonseca announced Monday.
The CWA, usually held in October, provides opportunities to profile aspects of agriculture in the Caribbean and affords regional agriculture ministers an occasion to seek to give meaning to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Agricultural Policy.

Fonseca, speaking during a workshop on the implementation and mainstreaming of Regional Fisheries Policies into Small-scale Fisheries Governance Arrangements in the Caribbean, said “the Caribbean Week of Agriculture is additional opportunity for fisherfolks to engage with policy makers”.

The conference here is being hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM)/Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisation (CNFO) and CTA.

Agriculture Minister Dr. Leslie Ramsammy assured that Guyana would do its best in hosting the CWA.

“We are honoured and we commit to make this Caribbean Week of Agriculture one of the biggest, and one that meets its obligation in this region,” he said.

Ramsammy said that the committee planning the CWA should ensure that fishing is a part of food production and should not be treated as an orphan.

“And indeed we must start now because there is a working group made up of CARICOM, FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation), IICA (Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture), CRFM, the Government of Guyana and so on.

“The Caribbean network of fisher-folk organisation should be a part of the working committee for Caribbean Week of Agriculture,” he added.

East Africa: Agriculture begins to attract insurance by Baz Waiswa, East African Business Week, 26 February 2013

http://allafrica.com/stories/201302261509.html?viewall=1
http://www.busiweek.com/feature/feature/4581-agriculture-begins-to-attract-insurance-

Full Article

Kampala — A farmer's predicament is when after a hefty investment in terms of finances, time and energy catastrophe, natural or manmade, strikes and loses the anticipated harvest.

This can be demoralizing on all fronts. Agriculture has turned to be a recruitive business being undertaken commercially with huge investments.

Agriculture is the mainstay of many economies world over but particularly developing countries increasing the quality and quantity of food production in which climatic conditions play a dominant role.

In East Africa, agriculture is the leading contributor to the GDP's of the five member states therefore it's an important component of life for the people within the region.
Extreme weather conditions like drought or excessive rainfall or even high temperatures has continued to threaten agriculture and increase risk for small-scale farmers who depend on subsistence agriculture as their source of livelihood as well as for commercial farming enterprises.

Erratic and inadequate rainfall is known to account for about 50 per cent of crop failures where there is over-dependence on rainfall, with little or no irrigation systems.

Agriculture as a sector has its own challenges and risks which call for protection especially now that it is a lucrative activity being approached in a modern way of handling business and investments. One way of thwarting these risks and challenges is by sheltering your agriculture investment by acquiring insurance just like you would secure goods in transit against fire or theft.

Insurance companies in the country are now shifting their goal posts to tap into the huge potential that the agriculture sector presents to them by having specially designed agro based cover under the face of agriculture insurance.

What it is

The agricultural sector include elements like crop farming, bee keeping, fish farming, forestry, animal husbandry and birds rearing aspects that agriculture insurance covers independently. Farmers need this kind of cover because crops and animals are prone to risk and with this cover farmers will go into farming with certainty.

Agriculture insurance covers a whole range of the agro business scope. From planting to delivering farm produce to the market.

Agriculture insurance in Uganda has been on and off because only a few farmers are aware of it yet the service providers' need a large pool of farmers (clientele) for them to introduce agro based policies on the market. Fewer clients are a big risk to the insurer because the premiums cannot settle claims in case something happens to the subject insured.

Small-scale farmers are risky

One of the leading problem as to why agriculture has not attracted insurance is that farmers do it on a small scale and are not aware of such insurance. This kind of policy thrives in areas were commercial farming is practiced. Large-scale farmers implement huge investments which are easy to evaluate and they understand the importance of insurance.

These small hold farmers are operating on decimal budgets or no financial budgets at all, they barely feel the risk as agriculturalists because they are growing and keeping animals for food.

The Managing Director of Lions Assurance Uganda, Newton Jazire, in an interview acknowledges that agriculture insurance has remained expensive because unlike other policies were customers are many farmers who need to wave off risks are few. Because few farmers buy the policy the insurer risks losing in case an accident happens. "One big claim will wipe all the premiums you have collected from other clients; it doesn't make economic sense." Jazire says.

The other problem is products that have been on the market have been plucked from elsewhere, copied and brought to Uganda yet the infrastructure of farming is totally different from wherever these policies originate.
"A product that you would sell to a large scale farmer in Southern Africa cannot work with a small scale farmer here, one it would be very expensive two it offers a farmer what he doesn't require on his small farm." Jazire noted revealing that the industry is embarking on developing products relevant to the local market.

Lions Assurance for its part has engaged key stakeholders in the financial sector, Farmers Federation and cooperatives to devise ways of coming up with a product which suites the small scale farmers in Uganda.

Lions Assurance will between April and May this year put on the market a policy they are calling agriculture insurance scheme for small scale farmers. Jazire says they will partner with these institutions in selling this cover.

Most products that have failed in Uganda are tailored in South Africa, Zambia and, Zimbabwe countries that have commercial farmers as compared to Uganda.

Costly Venture

The agriculture insurance product is one of the most expensive policies in the land despite the potential it posses and the insurers can only do little since the agricultural structures in the country are weak. There is need for an effort to move from a substance to commercial farmers to increase production and for farmers to be organized.

David Tumuhaise the Technical Manager, Uganda Insurers Association, believes that one of the many challenges hindering the roll out of this product is affordability.

Tumuhaise says insurers are building internal capacity, doing parameter developments and partnering with stakeholders but one key stakeholder, the government, has not come on board.

"It's an essential service but not reaching the intended beneficiary, government can say, I will subsidize the service so that people can afford it or it can do it the other way and say give out the service when you suffer a loss I will come and bail you. Those are the key things that government can do to help insurance." Tumuhaise said in an interview.

Tumuhaise explains that the insurers are aware of the market potential but the risk that awaits them is immense. "Increase production will result profitability for farmers hence affording to buy the policy." He adds.

Determining Premium

Determining premium requires that the insurer indentifies different risks that are peculiar to a certain crop or livestock. Inspection of the business premises is carried out by agronomists.

"Once we know the risk that you want to cover, because the farmers tell us, we outsource a professional actuarial Valuer to establish the premium." Jazire explains

Insurers are working with financial institutions to make it a condition for them to lend to farmers who have bought the agriculture insurance policy. This will protect both the farmer and the financier
"Insurance is becoming like any other input say fertilizers, seeds, ploughs etc because it guarantees you that anything you're putting into the project, if anything happens you will be able to continue, you will not die out of business." Jazire advises

**Low returns**

Like the case is with other insurance products the lack awareness, agriculture insurance is face with a similar problem. This is mainly attributed to the low levels of education. The other problem is the low incomes of farmer's requiring low cost insurance a thing that has made pricing a concern.

When asked how much agriculture insurance contributes to the general sector earnings, Uganda Insurance Associations Tumuhaise said it's very minimal close to insignificant.

"It is very minimal of course we are just thinking of going into it because of the cost involved, if you look at our report almost nothing is coming out of, actually we don't do a report for it. We can look at it as a new product. Even those who have done it have done it as a pilot project."

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**Zero Hunger Challenge MOU signed.** Official Website for the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, Press Release, 25 February 2013

**Full Article**

A weeklong visit by a team made up of key representatives from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), along with two consultants, ended, on Friday, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for the Zero Hunger Challenge for Antigua and Barbuda.

Among those present for the signing were Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and the Environment Hon. Hilson Baptiste Minister of Agriculture, Dr. John. R. Deep, FAO Sub-regional Coordinator for the Caribbean, Greg Rawlins from IICA, Nutritionist Juanita James, and senior officials from public sector.

“The work has just begun, and our task will be to make sure we eradicate hunger in Antigua and Barbuda and (to ensure that our efforts are) sustainable,” Minister Baptiste said.

“The key implement is to help people to help themselves. I urge all Antiguans and Barbudans, along with the government ministries, to come on-board to make this a success.”

The minister thanked the overseas agencies for leading the charge and expressed confidence for success. Rawlins, in turn, thanked Baptiste and the entire team.
“We are extremely pleased to work with our partners from FAO as well as the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, especially Minister Baptiste for his leadership, and the other ministries involved for their commitment to this process in support of the Zero Hunger Challenge,” Rawlins said.

The Zero Hunger Challenge aims to provide 100 per cent, year-round access to adequate food; ensure that there are zero stunted children; create sustainable food systems and 100 per cent growth in small-holder productivity and income; and eliminate food wastage.

The goal is to do achieve the objectives in two years.

**Government's horticultural programme proves beneficial.** Government Information Service Dominica, 22 February 2013


**Full Article**

Farmers across the country are being encouraged to register with Government’s Horticultural Programme to receive the benefits under the programme.

The Government funded support programme was instated to assist farmers to increase and improve production within the horticultural sector and to meet market demands.

Agriculture Minister, Hon. Matthew Walter visited a few farms this past Wednesday to assess the impact of government’s support to the farmers registered with the horticultural programme.

“‘The horticultural programme responds only to persons who are registered under the programme. If you want to benefit under the programme you have to register and in addition to getting yourself registered you have to meet the criteria of the programme. There are specific criteria with respect to the production of dasheen, passion-fruit, pineapples, yams and so forth and you have to meet those criteria. If you are unable to meet the criteria, the division of agriculture can be quite accommodating with respect to your capacity and your deficiencies and based on your objectives. They will be a bit considerate and bring you into the programme but you have to try your utmost best to be able to meet the targets set by the division of agriculture.’”

He says, prior to this programme there was a lack of productivity and market demands were not being made and Dominica’s agricultural industry was being short changed.

Under the horticulture programme, farmers are actively involved in the production of dasheen, passion fruit, yam, tannia, sweet potatoes and pineapples. In addition, farmers are given assistance in the area of inputs, such as fertilizer and also planting materials.

One farmer, who has been involved in the production of passion-fruit on four acres of land in Macoucherie, says the passion-fruit business is a lucrative one.

Another farmer suggested that being registered enables him to be a respected professional in his field.

So far, eight hundred and fifty farmers have benefitted under the Horticultural Programme.
Agro-Tourism

Linkage between tourism and agricultural sector to be increased by Andrea Braham, Jamaica Information Service, 1 March 2013

Full Article

Government is seeking to increase business between the tourism industry and the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, in a bid to boost the economy.

Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, Hon. Dr. Wykeham McNeill, says the linkages will boost local production and help to reduce the country’s import bill.

Dr. McNeill was speaking at a stakeholders’ consultation at the Terra Nova Hotel in Kingston on Thursday, February 28, where the linkages between the tourism and agricultural sectors were explored. A consultation with the manufacturing sector was held last year.

The Minster noted that everyone was looking to tourism as the driver of economic growth in the country, but greater effort has to be made to ensure that “our homegrown produce and manufactured goods are used in the sector to ensure that the country retains more of what it earns.”

To ensure this happens, a Task Force has been created with representatives from Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture, Jamaica Agricultural Society, Jamaica Manufacturers Association and other entities to work together in a bid to better serve the various sectors.

Dr. McNeill also reported that there will be a unit established within the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment that will facilitate the linkages.

“We are going to pull all the discussions we have had with agriculture and manufacturing, with other areas, such as entertainment and transport, and what we will be doing is putting in place a policy document that deals specifically with deepening the linkages between tourism and all the other areas of our society,” he said.

Speaking on behalf of the Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS), President, Senator Norman Grant, welcomed the initiative, calling it a “game changer” and a huge opportunity to grow the economy by engaging the large and small farmers.

The Senator pointed out that the tourism sector’s current overall consumption of local fresh produce, fruits and meats is at 10 per cent. He proposes an incentive to the hotels that use locally grown produce.

State Minister in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, Hon. Damion Crawford (left), in conversation with Chief Executive Officer of Jamaica Broilers, Christopher Levy (right), and Chief Technical Officer in Ministry of Agriculture, Marc Panton, as they arrive at the Terra Nova Hotel in Kingston on February 28, to participate in a stakeholders consultation on the linkage between tourism and agriculture.

Senator Grant noted that the Jamaican farmers have the capacity to produce a substantial amount of the $1.5 billion worth of food that is imported in the country. He expressed confidence that they can
produce the quantity and quality required on a consistent basis, if they know that they have a ready market in the hotels.

“We are ready to step up to the plate to be a part of that solution that will be aligned to our Vision 2030 plan,” the Senator said.

In the meantime, Managing Director of the EXIM Bank, Lisa Bell, has proposed a solution to the short term cash flow problem of farmers, especially those who deliver to the tourism sector and have to wait 60 days to be paid.

Noting that the waiting period affects the farmers’ ability to produce the next crop, Mrs. Bell said one simple solution is for the EXIM Bank to commit to work with the buyers to put in “a receivables financing product.”

“What that means is that once you deliver your product to the buyer, we will pay you and wait for payment from your buyers, so that it doesn’t tie up your cash flow,” Mrs. Bell said, noting that this system exists in many countries.

The Ministry’s Permanent Secretary, Jennifer Griffith, presented findings from last year’s consultation with the manufacturing sector, and pointed out that both findings will be incorporated in a policy document.

Information and Communications Technology

Smart Agriculture. Eurasia Review, 24 February 2013)
http://www.eurasiareview.com/24022013-smart-agriculture/

Full Article

Integrating embedded systems into the IT infrastructure holds immense potential for the productive sectors of the economy. At the “Embedded World 2013” trade show in Nuremberg from 26 to 28 February, Fraunhofer researchers – using “Smart Farming” as an example – will demonstrate how the interaction of machines in cyber-physical systems operates safely and securely.

Climate change, population growth and increasingly scarce resources are putting agriculture under pressure. Farmers must harvest as much as possible from the smallest possible land surface. Until now, the industry confronted this challenge with innovations in individual sectors: Intelligent systems regulate engines in order to save on gas, for instance. With the aid of satellites and sensor technology, farming equipment can automatically perform the field work; in doing so, they efficiently distribute seed, fertilizer and pesticides on the arable land. Nonetheless, optimization is gradually hitting its limits. The next step is to network these individual systems into cyber-physical production systems. They map the entire process electronically, from the farm computer to the harvesting operation. Thus, these systems can substantially increase efficiency and quality once again. At the 2013 Embedded World trade show (26 to 28 February in Nuremberg) – specifically at the joint Fraunhofer booth 228 in Hall B5 – researchers from the Fraunhofer Institute for Experimental Software Engineering IESE in
Kaiserslautern will demonstrate how agriculture will be able to benefit from networked systems in the future.

*Intelligent networking as competitive advantage*

For their exhibit, the experts intentionally chose the field of agriculture: A miniature tractor with an implement moves across a plot of land on an agricultural diorama. Located at the edge of the farmland are two tablet PCs. Visitors to the trade show can use them to start up the automated control of the farm equipment. Six screens are suspended above the model farm. They display the processes behind the automation, showing how software manages the functionality. Today’s tractors and implements feature extensive use of electronics and software – these are known as “embedded systems.” The motto of the exhibit is “SEE: Software Engineering Explained”. The visualization helps visitors to understand the challenges and solutions of interconnecting embedded systems and IT systems. With intelligent networking, farmers can improve farming productivity. “To many people, software is just an abstract thing,” explains Ralf Kalmar, business area manager at IESE. “However, working with it pays off. Indeed, it is becoming the next major factor in innovation in several industries.”

The networking of ag operations is not limited to simple task management for agricultural machinery. Over the last few years, the number of “players” in ag business has soared: Besides seed and fertilizer producers, sensor technology and data service providers are joining in the mix, offering geodata and weather data, for instance; systems for e-government and smartphone apps for identifying pests are also used.

“The challenge lies in linking all systems intelligently, and in creating standards for interfaces so that all participants can benefit,” says Dr. Jens Knodel, Smart Farming project manager. For this reason, he adds, it is helpful to provide them with the methods of software engineering: from standards management and system architecture to programming code – with particular attention paid to security and reliability.

*Better understanding for software development*

The chances are good that Kaiserslautern will deliver important momentum to the agricultural industry – thanks to the excellent environment. The Fraunhofer researchers are collaborating with John Deere, which runs the European Technology and Innovation Center (ETIC) in the city. The Fraunhofer Innovation Cluster “Digital Commercial Vehicle Technology,” where the majority of the solutions that are on display were engineered, has existed since April 2007. In addition to IESE, other parties involved include the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Mathematics ITWM and companies from throughout the region. Through the Commercial Vehicle Alliance, the cluster is tied to the Center for Commercial Vehicle Technology at the University of Kaiserslautern, and to the Commercial Vehicle Cluster GmbH.

After the trade show, the exhibit will be converted into a “Living Lab.” “It is not restricted to agriculture, but may be of interest to small and medium-sized enterprises, for instance,” says Knodel. “Based on the production units installed in the laboratory, they can see the benefits that networking holds for them – and launch their own development projects.
Upcoming Events

March 2013

2013 Climate Smart Agriculture Global Science Conference
Date: 20-22 March 2013
Venue: University of California
Location: Davis, California, USA
Description: The 2013 Climate Smart Agriculture Global Science Conference promises to bring three important issues under the spotlight: farm and food systems; landscape and regional issues; and the integrative and transformative institutional and policy aspects that will bridge across scales to link science and practice to ensure food security, poverty alleviation and multiple ecosystem services.
Information: http://ccafs.cgiar.org/events/20/mar/2013/climate-smart-agriculture-global-science-conference

May 2013

3rd Global Cassava Partnership for the 21st Century (GCP21) Strategic Meeting
Date: May 2013
Location: Bellagio, Italy
Description: The 3rd GCP21 Strategic Meeting, which will take place in Bellagio, Italy, in May 2013, will be focused on a daunting question: Is it possible to eradicate cassava viruses in Africa? The select group of 32 scientists and developers from 24 institutions who attend that meeting will focus on the use of a range of technologies to efficiently control cassava viruses.

June 2013

Global Cassava Partnership for the 21st Century (GCP21) second meeting on cassava landraces
Date: June 2013
Location: Tanzania
Description: Global Cassava Partnership for the 21st Century (GCP21) second meeting on cassava landraces is scheduled in June 2013 at IITA offices in Tanzania. The meeting’s goal is to deliver products such as draft standard operating procedures to collect, evaluate, preserve and identify these landraces and a roadmap to start the work in East and Central Africa.

49th Annual Meeting Caribbean Food Crops Society (CFCS)
Date: 30 June to 6 July 2013
Location: Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
Description: The 49th Annual Meeting will be celebrated 30 June to 6 July in the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Trinidad. Joint meeting of the CFCS, Caribbean AgroEconomic Society (CAES) and the International
Contact: CFCS website  http://cfcs.eea.uprm.edu/

July 2013

International Conference on Tropical Roots and Tubers for Sustainable Livelihood under Changing Agro-climate
Date: 9 -12 July 2013
Location: Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India
Website: http://isrc.in/internationalconference2013/