

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

Roots and Tubers

Expert Working Group meets on ‘the business of food security’. Trinidad and Tobago Government Information Services Ltd, 26 May 2013

<http://www.news.gov.tt/index.php?news=12937>

Full Article

Day one of the two day Regional Expert Working Group Meeting on Roots and Tubers started off with an air of excitement and anticipation as participants representing the six countries along with representatives of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), Value Chains Management International (VCM) and CARDI, gathered together in the Rio Claro Room of the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad. The CTA funded project titled ‘Developing capacity to analyze and strengthen root and tuber value chain in the Caribbean Region, for improved food security’ has targeted the countries of Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago, with the focus commodities of cassava, yams and sweet potato.

Mr. Bruce Lauckner, Officer in Charge of CARDI commenced the Meeting with an overview of the objective of the Project, which is to 'contribute to improved value chains for roots and tubers and their processed products, leading to increase in domestic consumption of these products and where possible, additional exports that will increase farmer incomes and promote food security’.

The first presenter was Mr. Andrew Shephard of Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA). He stated that whilst there is no one definition for value chains, it simply has to be the direct link from consumer to farmers. Mr. Shephard believes that value chains are dependent on the consumers since farmers are obligated to produce exactly what the consumers want. Admittedly, value chains are defined by the type of linkage between farmers and markets. Hence, if farmers produce quality goods then long term relationships would be forged between farmers and markets and traders can dictate to the farmers exactly what consumers’ wants and desires and farmers may oblige leading to vertical integration/partnerships in value chains. Mr. Shephard outlined the importance of knowing what consumers want since the breakage of one link can lead to the collapse of the entire chain. He believes that ‘linking the farmers to consumers via value chains would promote more effectiveness and efficiency in the Region and would also help develop marketing skills for all involved in the chain such as farmers, exporters, traders, processors and even consumers. Such skills will improve the efficiency of the chain and this is the first step to develop an outline of a methodology to enhance those skills’.

Mr. Martin Gooch, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Value Chain Management International, in his presentation, debated value chains as opposed to supply chains stating that the difference has to do with management. Mr. Gooch emphasized how very strategic consumers are to the product since they determine the value. He further stated that value chain management is about management choice; it is about competing on value and establishing strategic relationships. He says that “the benefits of implementing a roots and tubers value chain would develop more ambitious businesses that would lead to a stronger economy”.

Other presenters included Mr. Ardon Iton, Marketing Specialist, CARDI.

Mr. Renato Gumbs of St. Vincent and the Grenadines sees ‘the roots and tubers value chain as an opportunity for Governments and businesses to make money and the end result would be food security

for consumers'. Whilst Mr. Alistair Edwards of St. Kitts and Nevis stated that benefits that would be realized from the value chain would be 'to formalize operations of farmers and players within the chain.' He stated succinctly that 'Food security is simply a finished benefit, business comes first.'

The expected results of the Project are:

Improved capacity of value chain actors in selected countries to analyse chains for roots and tubers (cassava, yam and sweet potato) in order to identify ways in which constraints can be overcome and chain efficiency can be improved

A practical methodology that can be used throughout the Region

Value chain stakeholders throughout the Region will be fully aware of the methodology and ways in which it can be used to assess roots and tubers value chains

There was a unanimous view that these results will be achieved as the approach for the Project was five-pronged, namely to assess roots and tuber value chain status in selected islands; review selected existing value chain methodologies; develop methodology suitable for Caribbean roots and tubers stakeholders; assess suitability of methodology developed for use by Caribbean stakeholders; and train Caribbean stakeholders in the use of the methodology.

Value chain management (VCM) is a systems-based approach, based on the premise that appreciable and continual improvements in businesses' performance can only occur by establishing closer, more coordinated operations across functional departments and with other businesses than traditional, transactional buyer-seller relationships allow. The adoption of VCM approaches enables businesses to innovate in ways that are extremely difficult for competitors to replicate, leading to a greater ability than competitors to reduce costs while simultaneously increasing revenue.

Courtesy CARDI

Cereals and Grains

Corn Drops by Business Recorder, 23 May 2013

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/1188462/>

Full Article

US corn futures dropped 1.5 percent, to their lowest since early April, on Tuesday as investors unwound bull spreads following a record planting pace last week that encouraged farmers to sell some old-crop supplies to ease cash market tightness, traders said.

A surge in corn planting progress during the past week eased farmer concerns about needing to hold onto supplies held in storage bins since last fall's harvest. That relieved some pressure that supported old-crop contracts this past month. "As the farmers get the crop planted, they are more interested in moving some old-crop inventory," said Chad Henderson, grain market advisor with Prime Agricultural Consultants. "You probably had a pick-up in farmer sales, especially as guys got chased out of the field." Wheat futures also fell, hitting a fresh seven-week low on pressure from the drop in corn prices.

Soyabeans were mixed, with the front-month July contract edging to a three-month high while deferred months weakened.

Investors have been building up bull spreads - buying old-crop contracts and selling deferred months - in corn as supplies ran thin at processors and elevators around the US Midwest. A weakening corn basis in some places provided a reason for some unwinding of those positions even as demand in the ethanol market remained firm.

"Bull spreaders have been working pretty aggressively and I think there are some that are starting to pull the trigger on coming out of a few of those," said Jason Britt, president of Central States Commodities in Kansas City. "You get a little profit taking." Chicago Board of Trade July corn futures settled down 9-1/2 cents at \$6.40 a bushel. Prices bottomed out at \$6.32-1/2, the lowest level for the front-month contract since April 8. The new-crop December contract was unchanged at \$5.20-1/4 a bushel. Prices had fallen to \$5.12 during overnight trading hours.

CBOT July wheat ended down 4-3/4 cents at \$6.80-1/2 a bushel, hitting its lowest since April 3 during the session. Soyabeans were mixed, with the old-crop July contract up 13-3/4 cents at \$14.78-1/4 a bushel while new-crop November dropped 4-1/4 cents to \$12.20-3/4 a bushel.

US growers took advantage of mostly clear skies last week to plant corn at a blistering pace, pushing progress to 71 percent from 28 percent a week earlier, the US Department of Agriculture said in a weekly report on Monday afternoon. The sowing progress topped exceeded analyst estimates in a Reuters survey that went from 59 to 70 percent. The increase of 43 percentage points indicates that farmers in the world's biggest corn producer seeded a single-week US record of 41.8 million acres. "It is unbelievable how quickly they can plant corn in the US which is putting pressure on prices," said Stefan Meyer, a manager for cash markets at brokerage INTL FCStone in Sydney.

Wheat up two Percent by Business Recorder, 24 May 2013

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/1188802/>

Full Article

Chicago Board of Trade wheat futures leaped 2 percent on Thursday, advancing for the second day in a row, with a falling dollar, big export sales of US wheat and technical buying boosting prices, traders said. Corn and soyabeans also rose, led by the old-crop contracts, as already historically low US supplies of each continue to shrink.

Soyabean futures continue uptrend and hit an eight-month high as a port strike in major exporter Argentina increased the focus on the tight short-term supply of the oilseed.

"There is strike talk, I'm not so sure how much of an impact this is having, but there is that chatter," said Rich Nelson, chief strategist for Illinois-based research and advisory firm Allendale Inc.

Argentina's striking port workers, who have stalled scores of cargo ships since walking off the job over a wage dispute earlier this week, failed to reach a wage deal on Thursday and vowed to continue the work stoppage until next week. Larger-than-expected export sales of wheat, corn and soyabeans in the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) weekly export sales report on Thursday contributed to advances.

Wheat posted its biggest one-day advance in two weeks and, along with corn, rose for the second day in a row. Soyabeans have risen for six straight sessions and already are up 4.3 percent for the week, the biggest one-week gainer in 10 months. At 11:13 am CDT (1613 GMT), CBOT July wheat was up 11-1/2 cents at \$7.00 per bushel, corn for July delivery was up 5-1/2 at \$6.64 per bushel and July soyabeans were up 18 cents at \$15.12-1/4 per bushel.

Wheat fell to a two-month low early in the week and was due for a recovery, traders said. Nelson said that while concerns remain about wheat crop weather in Europe and Russia, much of the strength in the wheat market on Thursday was tied to technical short covering.

"There is short covering, they exhausted the selling," said Shawn McCambridge, analyst for Jefferies Bache. "There was support from export sales and the dollar is sharply lower." The US Department of Agriculture's weekly export sales report released on Thursday showed net export sales of US wheat last week at nearly a million tonnes, well above analysts' estimates.

Corn prices also were recovering. The market declined earlier in the week in reaction to spectacular planting progress last week in the United States. Now a return of rain is slowing remaining field work. "We still haven't finished as far as the planting goes and finding some demand along the way is going to provide reasonable support," said Brett Cooper, a senior markets manager at INTL FCStone Australia.

Rainfall over the next week to 10 days in parts of the Midwest will delay remaining corn seedings and possibly cause a shift from corn to soyabean acreage, an agricultural meteorologist said on Thursday. Elsewhere in the Midwest, Widenor said warmer weather next week with highs in the 80s (degrees Fahrenheit) to lower 90s F would help dry soils between showers and speed corn and soyabean emergence.

Small Ruminants

Local farmers encouraged to raise their game in relation to small ruminants by the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines, 22 May 2013

http://www.gov.vc/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=936:local-farmers-encouraged-to-raise-their-game-in-relation-to-small-ruminants-production&catid=43:government-news&Itemid=159

Full Article

Local farmers are being encouraged to raise their game in relation to small ruminants production.

This call was made by Sub-Regional Director of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Dr. Cedric Lazarus, during last week's launch of the Farmers Field School Project for small ruminants. This programme, which is aimed at enhancing the production of small ruminants, is expected to play a critical role in ongoing efforts to reduce the amount of money spent on food imports.

Dr. Lazarus said that if local farmers can lift their game in small ruminants production then they will be able to take advantage of the tremendous opportunities which exist in this sector. He said these

opportunities exist in St. Vincent and the Grenadines as well as the outside world. Dr. Lazarus said Livestock production is a major area of attention throughout the Caribbean.

Organics

EU to facilitate trade with organic products. CTA Brussels Newsletter, 27 May 2013

http://brussels.cta.int/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=7693:eu-to-facilitate-trade-with-organic-products

Full Article

The European Commission is to facilitate international trade with organic products, and support access for developing countries' organic products to EU markets, the Council meeting on Agriculture and Fisheries held in Brussels on 13 May 2013 concluded.

The Council adopted some important conclusions on Organic farming, including the Application of the regulatory framework and development of the sector.

The current legal framework for the organic farming sector is to be reviewed, with a view to improving its usability, and to reducing to the minimum the various exceptions outlined in the regulations.

In the same time, there are intentions to encourage the promotion of the organic sector and increased consumption of organic produce through a harmonization of the application of the EU logo, as well as on-line information campaigns.

On 10th of April the public consultation on a new regulation on the organic production in Europe. 45 000 responses have been submitted to the online, out of which 96% were from citizens. These will feed the reflexion on a new framework regulation.

Climate Change

Caribbean farming gets its roots wet by Desmond Brown, 21 May 2013

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/05/caribbean-farming-gets-its-roots-wet/>

Full Article

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts, May 21 2013 (IPS) - As Caribbean communities grapple with the entwined challenges of climate change and food security, modern technologies offer hope that the region's stagnating agricultural sector can be made more profitable.

For the past six years, the University of Central Florida (UCF) has teamed up with the St. Kitts-based Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College (CFBC) to implement a climate change education project for sustainable development in the region.

The institutions are reporting “tremendous success” using hydroponics, organoponics and hybridponics, techniques that they insist are far more cost-effective.

“Climate change affects us all and one of the areas that we are most vulnerable is in the field of food security, namely agriculture. So my task as part of this team was to develop models to test various scenarios to see which one would be the most significant,” Stuart La Place, a lecturer at CFBC told IPS.

“Strawberries don’t usually grow in these climates but we have managed to grow them successfully and we are still growing them at the moment,” he said.

Hydroponics is a technique used to grow plants without soil, instead using mineral nutrient solutions in water.

The organoponics technique involves using a single layer of soil, sand, manure and potting soil for planting vegetables. La Place noted “this is being implemented in St. Kitts on a large scale at the moment.”

Hybridponics, he explained, “is a scenario we created at the college that lends itself to starting the initial growing techniques in hydro and then transplanting into the organo beds and we have had significant results.”

Former CFBC student Candace Richards agrees these methods are more cost-effective and profitable than traditional agriculture.

Noting that for a 20 by 20-foot plot, the hydroponic system costs 2,000 dollars to set up and the organoponics system 3,703 dollars, she said it’s “a worthy investment” since the estimated annual profits are in the region of 66,660 dollars after all costs are deducted. In comparison, a plot of the same size devoted to traditional agriculture produces approximately 740 dollars per month profit.

“This is better than traditional agriculture that requires more land space, is more labour intensive and presents challenges that can yield fewer crops,” Richards told IPS, pointing to the added advantage of having crops all year round rather than on a seasonal basis under traditional agriculture.

Using the organoponics method, it takes 45 days to get lettuce from seed to maturity, using 9.1 gallons of water; while with hydroponics, from a seed the lettuce takes 25 days to mature and uses significantly less water because it’s in a circulation system. The water keeps moving around and the only way out of that system is through the plant.

Growing lettuce the traditional way – planting in the ground – the growth cycle from a seed to maturity is 55 days and uses 11.3 gallons of water for a single plant from a dripper that delivers 50 millilitres per minute.

Each summer a group of UCF students visit St. Kitts and Nevis through the President’s Scholars programme at UCF to work with students at faculty at CFBC.

Charlene Kormondy was among 11 UCF students who travelled to St. Kitts and Nevis in 2012 under the programme.

“I was part of the agro technology team and our product was to build a shade house now known as the CFBC plant research facility,” she told IPS.

“When we got to St. Kitts we worked alongside students from St. Kitts and Nevis, CFBC professors and members of the local community to construct the shade house.

“It’s an example of action learning, implanting something that is a solution to a problem in the community and also generating knowledge about how to build these shade house systems and how to make agriculture more sustainable in the face of climate change, which you know could have temperature and precipitation impacts which could adversely affect crop production,” she said.

Now that the facility is up and running, Kormondy said it provides many tangible benefits to the community, including health benefits because the plants and vegetables grown there are substitutes for less healthy foods.

She said it can also lead to greater independence from foreign imports, and even gender equality.

“Women and children are the ones who are most vulnerable to climate-related disasters and socio-economic impacts, and this kind of agricultural system allows women to participate in agriculture but also have enough energy to devote to their role as primary caregivers and that’s because the growth of these plants are more efficient,” Kormondy said.

Another UCF student, Jessica Gottsleben, noted that a rise in tourism has led the economy and lucrative jobs to be less focused on agriculture, and food imports now exceed exports by a factor of four to one.

“Food supply is vulnerable from these climate-related disruptions,” she noted, adding that in future years the programme will seek to create local leaders from the youth being brought into the agricultural and business communities to increase self-sufficiency and resilience.

“The partnership has the potential to create jobs in existing sectors of agriculture and also create innovation in fostering jobs in areas such as agro tourism, agro processing, marketing, collecting evidence-based social data,” Gottsleben told IPS.

Sixteen CFBC students are currently registered in the programme and are trained in building the hydroponic system.

But UCF Professor Dr. Kevin Meehan said they are getting the wider community involved through what’s known as ‘The Take Five Programme’ that was implemented in February last year.

“We used a publicity campaign in print and electronic media to invite the general public as well as CFBC faculty to come to the campus to bring five containers (hence the name take five) and we would drill drainage holes in the containers, fill them with nutrient rich potting soil and then put in seedlings and then they would take those home to cultivate those buckets.”

Some 52 participants showed up over the course of three days at the CFBC campus.

“A second round of ‘Take Five’ was driven by the students and they adapted it as an outreach competition to the primary schools throughout the Federation,” Meehan said.

With funding from the Organisation of American States under the Special Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, Dr. Meehan said they are now getting ready to implement the programme in Barbados, Trinidad, Guyana and at two separate locations in Haiti. The UCF and CFBC representatives participated in a two-day UNESCO Sub-Regional Meeting on the environment and climate in Nevis on May 15 and 16.

It was organised by UNESCO in collaboration with the St. Kitts and Nevis National Commission on UNESCO and the Nevis Island Administration to support national adaptation policies to climate change in the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean.

Countries reach for food security while reducing agriculture's climate costs by Timm Tennigkeit and Andreas Wilkes. CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), 20th May 2013
<http://ccafs.cgiar.org/node/2021>

Full Article

While there is significant potential for climate change mitigation in the agricultural sector, our recently released research report finds that reducing emissions is also cost competitive.

Many developing countries are actually beginning to recognize low emissions development strategies as a promising pathway to pursue sustainable growth, while protecting their natural capital. Some of them have already prepared low-emission policies and measures in the agricultural sector.

For example, Brazil's Agro-Energy Plan is supporting mitigation activities aiming at improving agricultural efficiency and trade competitiveness. In Mexico, agricultural mitigation activities aim at reducing the drivers of deforestation.

In East Africa, Ethiopia's Green Economy Strategy will ensure that their agricultural mitigation activities contribute to food security through more efficient livestock and cropland nutrient management.

National integrated mitigation planning in agriculture: A review paper' is published jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).

It reviews national integrated mitigation planning activities in agriculture and the experiences that countries have had with the process.

The review aims to inform policy makers and advisers involved in low-emission development planning processes about ongoing agricultural mitigation actions in developing countries, highlighting the potentials, challenges and emerging best practices. It provides an overview of ongoing planning in the agriculture sector and in particular highlights the relevance of agriculture to national mitigation plans and actions.

Read more: [National mitigation actions in agriculture put under microscope in new brief](#)

Why include mitigation within agriculture?

Low-emission development in agriculture is important since agriculture contributes an estimated 10-12 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. This estimate does not however take into account the contributions of food production to emissions in other sectors such as energy or transport.

What is the total greenhouse gas footprint of the whole food system?

[Check CCAFS Big Facts site.](#)

In addition, agriculture is a driver of deforestation and other land use changes that contribute an estimated 17 percent of total global emissions.

In our review, we found that developing countries have considered the synergies between agricultural mitigation and a range of other development objectives, for example increased food security, reduced deforestation, reduced water pollution and heightened adaptation to climate change.

For the agriculture sector, however, low emission development is closely interlinked with the challenge to support these development objectives.

In fact, barriers to adoption may be more diverse than in other sectors, and will need to be adequately addressed.

We also found that about 40 percent of the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) submissions include agricultural activities. However, agriculture has only received a very small proportion of climate financing, which is a major constraint for this sector's low emission development.

Read the report for a complete review of our findings:

[National integrated mitigation planning in agriculture: A review paper](#), by Timm Tennigkeit, Andreas Wilkes and Katalin Symosi. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).

Soil and Water Management

GWP-C facilitates National Water Consultation in Antigua to inform global processes. Global Water Partnership, 20 May 2013

<http://www.gwp.org/en/GWP-Caribbean/GWP-C-IN-ACTION/News-and-Activities/GWP-C-Facilitates-National-Water-Consultation-in-Antigua-to-Inform-Global-Processes-/>

Full Article

The Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) with the support of its partner, the Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) hosted a National Stakeholder Consultation on Water in Antigua on April 11th, 2013.

The National Consultation forms part of a global consultation exercise to get country level feedback from 22 countries on their water priorities, to help shape the United Nations (UN) Post-2015 Sustainable Development Water Agenda.

This global initiative is one of the recommendations arising out of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012 which acknowledged the importance of the global community developing a sustainable development water agenda beyond 2015 through a consultative process that has ownership at all levels from all countries.

Of the 22 countries selected for the global initiative, Antigua and Barbuda is the only Caribbean territory. This greatly highlights the significance of the National Consultation held on April 11th as its overall objective was to obtain inputs from stakeholders from Antigua and Barbuda to influence the larger global policy dialogue. The Consultation also served to ensure that the Caribbean has input into the UN Post-2015 Agenda.

Through the assistance of the APUA, the National Consultation saw the participation of over twenty (20) local stakeholders from sectors such as agriculture, environment, tourism, government, forestry, water, health, community and other areas.

Having the opportunity to address stakeholders at an opening ceremony preceding the start of the Consultation were Ms. Avril Alexander, Regional Coordinator of the GWP-C, Mr. Ivan Rodrigues, Water Manager at the APUA and the Honourable Hilson Baptiste, Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and the Environment of Antigua and Barbuda.

Agricultural Development

CARDI Units across the Region participate in Agri Shows. Trinidad and Tobago Government Information Services Ltd, 24 May 2013

<http://www.news.gov.tt/index.php?news=12927>

Full Article

This year saw the CARDI Belize Unit again participating in the country's National Agriculture and Trade Show 2013 (NATS) which was held from 3 to 5 May 2013 at the Agriculture Show Ground in Belmopan, Belize. This year's theme was "Stimulating Prosperity in Agriculture and Food Production through Renewed Public - Private Partnership". The Keynote Speaker at the Opening Ceremony was the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Natural Resources and Agriculture, the Honourable Gasper Vega.

CARDI participated in the Show by displaying CARDI's activities and accomplishments in Belize through posters and display of plants and seeds. CARDI's participation also included the showing of videos on 'What is CARDI', 'Field Day of Red SICTA', and 'Protected Agriculture'. A novelty that was very popular with the more than three hundred (300) visitors

was the samples of cooked rice and black-eye and rice and red and black beans. One visitor shared her view on the samples, saying that it “tastes similar to traditional red kidney beans and rice”.

CARDI also sought the opportunity to provide one hundred pounds (100 lbs) of yellow corn seed, variety CARDI YC- 001 to the senior Farmer of the Year.

The official tour of the Show included DPM and the Minister of Natural Resources and Agriculture Hon. Gasper Vega; Chief Executive Officer Agriculture Mr. Jose Alpuche; CEO Natural Resources Ms. Beverly Castillo and Chief Agricultural Officer Mr. Eugene Waight.

Across the ocean, CARDI’s St Kitts Office participated in the St Kitts and Nevis Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources’ 20th Annual Open Day held on April 25 and 26 under the theme ‘Embrace the change, Face the Challenge, Maximize the Opportunities’. Among the visitors to the CARDI booth were farmers, Government officials and other agriculture stakeholders.

Agriculture Feeder Roads Project launched within 100 Days by GIS Grenada. Official Website of the Government of Grenada, 23 May 2013

http://www.gov.gd/egov/news/2013/may13/23_05_13/item_5/feeder_roads_project_launched_100_days.html

Full Article

ST. GEORGE’S, GRENADA, Thursday, May 23 2013: Government has made good on its promise to deliver phase two of the Agriculture Feeder Roads Project within its first one hundred days in office.

On Tuesday, a sod turning ceremony in the Grand Bacolet/Mama Cannes area officially marked the commencement of work under the project.

The Grenada Agriculture Feeder Roads Project phase two, comes at a cost of over 45 million dollars provided by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

Tuesday’s sod turning ceremony signaled the official start of the project ,even though work had already begun on the first site which is the rehabilitation of road from Grand Bacolet to Munich in St. Andrew.

Under phase two, roads will be reconstructed in all parishes nationwide.

Mr. Moujally Jabara of the Consolidated Contractors Company (CCC) gave the assurance that work will be done with the highest International standards, using as much local labour as possible.

“ CCC will be recruiting their staff from the areas where we will be working, so we invite those seeking employment to pass by our offices in Queens Park and submit their applications”, he announced.

Works Minister, Hon. Gregory Bowen says, Government was determined to ensure the project reconvened and people given their livelihoods again.

“Amidst all the noise for value for money, they won the bid again” the Works Minister said.

“It therefore means they were efficient in the first tender, and they’re efficient again notwithstanding there were still moves made at the late point after CCC would have won, to still replace CCC with a sole sourced company”, he added.

Mr. Bryan Constantine of the German company Diwi Consultants has been with the project since its inception in 2005.

He is pleased at the realization of phase two, as it raises the prospects for increased farming activity in the country.

Mr. Constantine recalled, some years ago when Minister Bowen and himself with a camera crew walked from Concord Falls crossing the river three times.

“At that time there was a lot of Agricultural activity. I recently walked the same route, and the land is now overgrown and deserted. We will therefore rebuild a small bridge across the river of the waterfall to open the land for farming again”, he said.

He said, if this is successful, two further bridges may be constructed to open up more lands.

Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South East Hon. Emmalin Pierre is happy that Government did in fact keeping its word to deliver to the people of Grenada.

“All hats are off saluting the Government of Grenada for what seemed impossible in four and a half years was indeed possible in one hundred days”, she said.

“It means a lot for our farmers, it means a lot for our students who had to make sure they had another pair of shoe travelling from one end to the main road. It means a lot for the residence who sometimes had to deal with the floods coming into their homes due to the water situation experienced here”, Minister Pierre noted.

Parliamentary Representative for St. Andrew South West, Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford described the event as legendary.

“We have been spreading so much material on this road. For years we’ve been trying and it was a waste of time, but we had no choice during those days. Now we see the reality that CCC is back here”, Hon. Bain Horsford said.

Dominica State College partners with Canadian Universities to improve agribusiness sector by GIS
Dominica, 22 May 2013.

<http://news.gov.dm/index.php/news/4-headline-news/691-dominica-state-college-partners-with-canadian-universities-to-improve-agribusiness-sector>

Full Article

In its efforts to develop a new Agribusiness Programme, the Dominica State College (DSC) at a press conference on Friday, announced its partnership with the universities of Guelph and Dalhousie both from Canada.

The programme is being facilitated by the CARICOM Education for Employment (C-EFE) project and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The DSC Agribusiness Programme will be developed over a 3 year period ending 2016, at a cost of four hundred and forty thousand Canadian dollars.

DSC President, Dr. Donald Peters remarked on how the programme connects with the vision of the Dominica State College.

“Levels of skill and education are vital components of the skills race and will increasingly determine the economic fortunes of many countries. So if we in Dominica believe that we can put out students with 6 CXC subjects and tell them to build a nation- it will not happen. You need skills, and not very many skills are being taught from Primary to Secondary School, so the College has a very unique position where it is able to train the bulk of the population as they leave high school for employment in the future.”

He further stated, “The state college is the best institution in the country and works with global universities. Today I received an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) from St. Georges University agreeing to take all our credits for our students who want to transfer to [that] university. Earlier this year we signed an MOU with the University of Arkansas and that means that if these major universities across the globe recognize that the Dominica State Colleges’ credits are acceptable to them [then] we have crossed the barrier and shifted the paradigm.”

The programme aims to enable learners to develop skills required by the labour market as well as increase opportunities for mobility across the CARICOM region.

According to the Dominica State College, the partnership is aimed at developing Vocational Programmes in Agriculture and ensuring that graduates of the programme are able to operate at a supervisory level and create self employment.

Dean in the Faculty of Education, Merrill Matthew indicated, “At the heart of the project is the need for the region and for the College to move away from the traditional academic supply driven programmes to one which is demand-driven, where the focus is on the learners and what they need.” His colleague, Dean in the Faculty of Applied Arts, Rawle Leslie reiterated,

“We realized that many of our graduates may not find jobs in the industry and we want to train our graduates in this field so that they can be Entrepreneurs themselves, they can identify a project and start their own business.”

Representative of Dalhousie University, Nancy Thornton, expounded on the project's focus. "This project is going to focus on training, we're going to be looking at labour market intelligence and how this can feed into new programs; Competency Based Education Training; Curriculum Development and Design and prior Learning Assessment And Recognition. These will all be different training modules that will occur over the life of the project. We will be helping the Dominica State College strengthen the linkages that they have with industry that are already very linked but we think that there's always areas for improvement so we'll support them in that; and we're also accompanying them in seeking NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) and CVQ (Caribbean Vocational Qualification) accreditation for the new programme that they develop in Agribusiness. Throughout the project as well we'll be looking at cross-cutting themes which include gender equality; how this project can promote gender equality in Dominica and within the Dominica State College; we'll be looking at environmental sustainability to make sure that the project is promoting that as well as entrepreneurship."

She noted that the programme will include the exchange of instructors and students between Canada, Dominica and the region.

"We foresee the mobility of students and instructors from Dominica coming to Canada as well as Canadian students and instructors coming here; there will also be regional movement [for meetings and workshops]."

Merrill Matthew was pleased to announce that the program is available to every Dominican who is interested.

"When the program is complete we will have a vocational qualification programme in agribusiness, this is available to every Dominican, it will not only be for the traditional secondary school student but it will be open to the farmers who want to come in. They may decide whether they want to do the entire qualification or whether they want to do units within the qualification. It is open across the board so that persons of all ages can benefit from it. The critical thing about the programme is that we are no longer asking a student who goes to an interview to say 'this is what I have', this programme will enable the student to go to an interview and say, 'this is what I can do'; the emphasis is on what the person can do and that is why we are going the Vocational Qualification route."

Taking a bite out of crime by Sasha Harrinanan. Trinidad and Tobago Newsday, 20 May 2013
<http://www.newsday.co.tt/news/0,177927.html>

Full Article

Food Production Minister, Devant Maharaj, says the ministry hopes to play a role in reducing crime in at-risk urban communities through the use of aquaponic systems to grow food.

"The aquaponics systems that we handed over to the St Augustine Rotary Club today (Friday) will be used by households in at-risk communities. The systems, which use less water and require less space than traditional forms of agriculture, are geared towards providing income streams for persons who may otherwise turn to a life of crime to earn money."

Maharaj was speaking to *Newsday* on Friday, following the official handing over of ten aquaponic systems to the St Augustine Rotary Club at the ministry's offices on Farm Road, St Joseph.

According to the minister, another benefit of growing food using this water-based system is the “significantly faster growth of a variety of plants, which makes it an effective way of sustainably providing any family with a balanced diet of safe and nutrient rich food. There is also the real possibility of generating a range of agri-entrepreneurs from commercial ventures and downstream businesses from this food production system.”

Maharaj also said a functional agricultural sector can assist in the reduction of hunger and poverty, improvement in rural livelihoods and facilitation of environmentally, socially and economically sustainable development.

Hence the establishment of “The Sustainable Food Production Programme”, which Maharaj said is a hybrid model “developed and introduced to address poverty and crime among youth and women, living in at-risk communities.”

This programme which received Cabinet approval is being managed by a cluster of Ministries that is led by the Ministry of Food Production and includes the Ministries of: National Security, People and Social Development (Poverty Reduction Unit), Planning and Sustainable Development.

Questioned about the status of Government's plan to establish a “Food Security Facility” (FSF) with Guyana, in which the Guyanese Government would allow Trinidad and Tobago access to thousands of acres of land in that country for food production, Maharaj said the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) governing the FSF was currently before the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

“This would be a bilateral agreement, so the MoU has to be vetted by the relevant ministries before being presented to Guyana. So far, it has been reviewed and approved by the Ministry of the Attorney General and is now before the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”

Maharaj then expressed hope the MoU would be approved “sooner rather than later, so I can present it to Guyana's Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Leslie Ramsammy. As a matter of fact, I spoke to Minister Ramsammy about the status of things on (Thursday) night while he was in transit at Piarco International Airport.”

“I'm confident,” the minister added, “Guyana will have no problems with the final version of the MoU.”

Small Farmers benefit from \$30M EU Economic Diversification Programme by the Jamaica Information Service, 19 May 2013

<http://www.jis.gov.jm/news/list/33933>

Full Article

Some 40 small farmers in St. Mary and St. Thomas are now in a better position to take care of themselves and their families after participating in the just concluded \$30 Million European Union (EU) funded Economic Diversification Programme.

The farmers, who were a part of the programme in Esher, St. Mary and Somerset, St. Thomas, were provided with the necessary materials, training, and technical support to enable their engagement in alternative agricultural activities. The initiative focused on the cultivation of scotch bonnet pepper, goat rearing and honey production.

The 17-month project, executed under the EU's Banana Support Programme (EUBSP), streamlined benefits for targeted farmers impacted by declines in banana production and exports due to natural disasters, falling prices on the world market and non-competitiveness in traditional European markets.

Addressing the 20 St. Mary beneficiaries in a closing ceremony for the Programme at the Esher Seventh Day Adventist Church, on May 17, Guest Speaker, Agriculture and Fisheries Minister, Hon. Roger Clarke, said the project's conclusion signaled "the beginning" for the farmers as "you have been put on your feet to start something new."

"I want to congratulate you (because) you have been successful. You have improved on your capabilities to do farming (and) you are appreciating what proper agricultural practice is about. I urge you to impart that knowledge to your colleague farmers within your own communities," Mr. Clarke urged.

He thanked the EU; the philanthropic entity and implementing organization, Food For the Poor (FFP); and the Rural Agricultural Development Agency (RADA); for their inputs in the project's success. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries had overall supervisory responsibility for the project.

Food For the Poor's Executive Director, Jacqueline Johnson, declared the programme a "resounding success."

She said it generated approximately \$6.14 million from over 60,000 pounds of peppers, 54 gallons of honey and 34 new goats yielded.

"We are confident that through the imparting of knowledge and skills as well as the development of marketing strategies, this Programme has created a launch pad for small farmers to benefit from new income-generating opportunities and increased possibilities," she stated.

Mrs. Johnson said that while the programme has concluded, the end results accruing to the farmers are continuing "and some are already making plans for expansion."

"Our 40 beneficiary farmers are certainly a major source of inspiration for all of us. My wish is that many young Jamaicans will get involved in farming in a serious way," she stated.

Head of Rural Development and Infrastructure with the EU Delegation in Jamaica, Thomas Opperer, in congratulating the farmers, pointed out that the welfare of small farmers, particularly in banana

producing territories, "is at the very heart of the EU's policy." He also assured that the EU will continue its support to the banana sector.

Minister without Portfolio, Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, and Member of Parliament for Central St. Mary, where Esher is located, Hon. Dr. Morais Guy, said the farmers' achievements are commendable.

He underscored the administration's commitment to rural development, particularly through agriculture and pointed out that the project's outputs are indicative of the sector's viability for substantial income generation.

"I hope that even though this programme has come to an end, that you (farmers) will continue to improve on what you have learnt and continue to improve on your agricultural practices," Dr. Guy said.

Two of the beneficiaries, Bridgette Russell and Jeffery Campbell from Esher, expressed gratitude on behalf of their colleagues, for the stakeholders' interventions.

Ms. Russell described the project as a "wonderful opportunity" that has served to enhance the welfare of the farmers, their families and the wider community.

"It has been a success. We appreciate all that you have done and we will continue to do our best in our endeavours," Ms. Russell said.

Mr. Campbell said news of the planned project implementation generated a sense of great anticipation and expectation among the targeted beneficiaries. He described it as a welcomed intervention for the community, on which they would expand.

Agricultural Conference

CARIBBEAN WEEK OF AGRICULTURE (CWA). Ministry of Agriculture Guyana, 20May 2013
<http://agriculture.gov.gy/caribbean-week-of-agriculture-cwa/>

Full Article

Theme: Linking the Caribbean for Regional Food and Nutrition Security and Rural Development

Date: October 4-12, 2013

Venue: Guyana International Conference Centre

Email: cwaguyana2013@gmail.com

CWA 2013 will focus on Fisheries & Forestry for Food Security & Rural Development

Objective and Vision

CWA is intended as a facility for increasing the prominence of agriculture and rural life so that the key decision-makers in the public and private sectors would be better able to acknowledge their

importance to the economy, social infrastructure and environmental stability. The convening of the CWA was also perceived as affording stakeholders an opportunity to forge a common vision for the repositioning of agriculture.

Major Annual CWA Activities/Events

Key events of the Caribbean Weeks of Agriculture have been the following:-

- An Exhibition & Trade Show.

Exhibiting high quality Caribbean primary produce and processed agricultural products, handicraft, etc., where exhibitors can meet with potential buyers/importers and conducted business while in Guyana.

- Workshop with a theme and topic that were the basis for discussion of key factors in the repositioning of agriculture and rural development in the Member Countries.
- Annual General Meetings of the Constituent (institutional) Members of the Alliance, viz.:
 - Meetings of the Forum of Ministers of Agriculture (Ministerial Forum)
 - CARDI Board of Governors Meeting
 - Alliance Meeting
 - the Caribbean Agri-business Association (CABA)
 - the Caribbean Council for Higher Education in Agriculture (CACHE)
 - the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CNRWP)
 - the Caribbean Forum for Youth in Agriculture (CFYA);
- Other related agricultural and/or rural development events/activities, example field tours to highlight agriculture.
- Organizational Structure for CWA

The CWA has been taking place under the aegis of the Alliance for Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu (“The Alliance”). Members of the Alliance include the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Technical Centre for Co-operation on Agriculture and Rural Development (CTA), Caribbean Agriculture Research & Development Institute (CARDI), the host country etc.

Guyana last hosted CWA in October, 2003.

CWA is headed by the Alliance (chaired by CARICOM Secretariat). Locally, CWA is headed by a Steering Committee (headed by the Permanent Secretary, MoA). There is a designated Co-ordinator of the CWA supported by a CWA Secretariat. The local Steering Committee has Sub-committee to carry out the main responsibilities. These sub-committees include:

1. Budget
2. Exhibition and Trade Show
3. Programme and Promotion
4. Ministerial Meetings
5. Protocol and Security
6. Logistics (include Transportation, Accommodation & Venue)

To Contact the Local Steering Committee, kindly send emails to: cwaguyana2013@gmail.com

Agriculture Health and Food Safety

Gov't endorses national plan for addressing chemical management by Agriculture News, Ministry of Agriculture Guyana, 20 May 2013

<http://agriculture.gov.gy/govt-endorses-national-plan-for-addressing-chemical-management/>

Full Article

The Ministry of Agriculture has publicly supported a National Implementation Plan (NIP) developed by the Pesticide and Toxic Chemical Control Board (PTCCB) aimed at addressing chemical management and use, with specific emphasis on the use and stockpiling of POPs (persistent organic pollutants) which are pesticides whose organic compounds are resistant to environment degradation.

Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of Agriculture George Jarvis signed an endorsement letter today, signaling the ministry's, as well as the Government's acceptance of the national plan at a ceremony at the Guyana International Conference Centre. Present were Chairman, PTCCB Dr. Leslie Munroe and International Consultant Richard Cooke. Cooke has played a significant part in the plan's development; having working with PTCCB since 2011 in creating the document; which was successfully developed with support from a grant from the Global Environment Facility.

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture George Jarvis with Chairman, PTCCB Dr. Leslie Munroe and International Consultant Richard Cooke at the endorsement of the National Implementation Plan

"I am pleased to endorse the NIP, and confirm that the NIP is in conformation with my Government's National Priority and commitment to the Stockholm Convention further more directing PTCCB ...to submit the NIP to the convention secretariat and to fulfill Guyana's obligation as a party," PS Jarvis said.

The NIP signifies Guyana meeting its obligation to the Stockholm Convention; a global treaty aimed at protecting human health and the environment from the use of POPs.

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture George Jarvis

The PS said that the plan which also allows for a number of integral steps towards sound chemical management as a country highlights seven aspects of commitment to addressing the POPs, and more generally sound chemical management on an ongoing basis.

He included in this list of seven; reaffirmation of the country's pledge to achieve the objectives of the Stockholm convention, linkage of the NIP to the current National Development Strategy, adoption of the cautionary approach with respect to efforts made towards meeting this objective, and integration of the country's effort towards addressing POPs within its boarder effort of ensuring sound chemical management under the framework of the International Conference on Chemical Management.

Partners and staff of PTCCB at the endorsement of the National Implementation Plan

The PS also endorsed the work of PTCCB; pointing to the critical role it plays in agriculture exportation. Explaining that Guyana is a net exporter of food and that most markets are hesitant to purchase food from countries which do not satisfy their criteria of being safe, the PS called on farmers and consumers alike to support the work of PTCCB and the NIP. “When those inspectors are coming out there to ensure that you comply with those regulations they are not doing it just because they want to harass you, they are there in order to protect national interest,” he said.

Whilst Guyana has never been a producer of chemicals defined under the Convention as POPs, it has however imported and used POPs either as chemicals or contained in products and equipment. Similarly Guyana would be expected to not have POPs released and stockpiled, waste and contaminated sites; issues under the Convention that the country is required to address.

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture George Jarvis presents PTCCB’s token of appreciation to International Consultant Richard Cooke for his effort in developing the National Implementation Plan

Dr. Munroe said that already Guyana is well advanced in addressing this issue. The major remaining POPs, and in limited use in the country are PCBs; which are largely associated with operating electrical equipment. There is some use of endrine and anti-DBT antibody. Guyana has received permission from the World Health Organisation (WHO) to use the latter with regards to vector control.

The Pesticide board banned the use of all other POPs some years ago.

“So what this plan does is look and see how we manage those POPs and PCBs and also how we manage pesticide generally, and this is the board’s responsibility to ensure that we have a very good stewardship of pesticides from the time we import them to the time up to when we dispose of the containers from which they come; there is not only the implication of use, but disposing of obsolete stocks and their containers,” Dr. Munroe explained.

He also spoke of the capability of the board to carry out this function, stating that the board has a laboratory capable of assessing whatever pesticide is imported in the country. It also has the staff as the board has spent a lot training personnel in this regard, Munroe said. The staff members have been exposed to local and overseas training.

The board as of May 14 has been meeting with its partners and stakeholders inclusive of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the pesticide importers and distributors and the Guyana Power and Light (GPL) to sell the NIP, recognising that the support of this group are needed to fully implement the plan nationally. The board’s discourse with GPL focused on the issue of PCBs in their transformers.

During the exercise, the board also presented a token to Cooke for what he has done and continues to do since 2011 with regards to crafting and implementing the NIP. Cooke, who does a lot of work in this regard, with many countries said that “Guyana is very well advanced in this area” and that the country’s ability to manage chemicals is probably the best he has seen in a small medium size developing country.

He called the NIP an “excellent piece of work,” and credited the board with doing all of the work, in its development. He also said that plan, is one that has been truly country implemented as most are done by some United Nations (UN) agency or an international financial institution.

Over the next five years the activities in the plan will be implemented with funding from the Government of Guyana and Global Environment facility.

Upcoming Events

May 2013

CTA / CARDI Expert Working Group on Value Chains

Date: 23-24 May 2013

Location: Trinidad and Tobago

Description: Focus of meeting will be the root and tuber value chains in the Caribbean Region.

June 2013

10th International Mango Symposium

Date: 3-7 June 2013

Location: Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

Website: http://www.cedaf.org.do/eventos/xmango2013/en/index_en.html

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.

Information: <http://www.rtb.cgiar.org/news-events/blog/setting-new-ambitious-objectives-for-the-global-cassava-partnership-in-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 Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS). Theme: Agribusiness Essential for Food Security: Empowering Youth and Enhancing Quality Products.

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/>

Brochure <http://isrc.in/internationalconference2013/Conference%20Brochure.pdf>

21th Annual International Mango Festival

Date: 13 -14 July 2013

Location: Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in the Coral Gables, South Florida, USA

Website: <http://www.fairchildgarden.org/Events/?date=2013-07&eventid=748>

September 2013

Science Forum 2013

Date: 23-25 September 2013

Location: Bonn, Germany.

Description: Will focus on “Nutrition and health outcomes: targets for agricultural research”

Website: <http://www.scienceforum13.org/>

October 2013

12th Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA)

Date: 4-12 October, 2013

Location: Guyana International Conference Centre, Guyana

Theme: Linking the Caribbean for Regional Food and Nutrition Security and Rural Development

Email: cwaguyana2013@gmail.com