Agriculture Ministry to embark on test cultivation of corn and peas by the Ministry of Agriculture Guyana, 4 June 2013.

Most of the corn and peas in Guyana are imported from the Central American country of Belize, and in an effort to reduce the food importation bill on these two products, the Ministry of Agriculture is moving to grow them, Minister of Agriculture Dr Leslie Ramsammy has disclosed.

For more information see page 2

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.

For copies of documents cited, visit the web address or source of the information provided.
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
Cereals and Grains

http://www.globalresearch.ca/genetically-engineered-wheat-is-destroying-us-agriculture-oregon-wheat-found-contaminated-with-ge-wheat/5337277

Full Article

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that unapproved genetically engineered (GE) wheat was found growing in an Oregon wheat field. The discovery has implications for U.S. trade as Japan has already indicated it would stop purchasing U.S. wheat exports.

According to USDA officials, a Oregon farmer sprayed his wheat field, intending it to lay fallow for the next year. Despite multiple sprays of RoundUp, the farmer found so-called “volunteer” crops unexpectedly persisted, just as GE crops are engineered to do. The discovery prompted him to send samples to Carol Mallery Smith, scientist at Oregon State University, who determined that the crops were infused with the RoundUp Ready gene. USDA confirmed the results but officials have declined to comment on how the seeds ended up in this farmer’s field to begin with considering Monsanto has not conducted field trials in Oregon since 2001 when it reportedly withdrew from the state.

Since 1994, Monsanto has conducted 279 field trials of RoundUp Ready wheat over more than 4,000 acres of land in 16 states. Tests have been conducted in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming. After facing intense opposition from farmers and activists, Monsanto reportedly stopped its efforts to introduce GE wheat, but restarted extensive field trials again in 2011.

Contamination of non-GE crops, particularly for USDA certified organic crops, is a serious concern. Worries about harm to human health and the environment have prompted several state legislatures to consider bills that would require labeling of products with GE ingredients so consumers know what they are eating. Additional legislation proposed by Senator Bill Bowman (R-ND) in 2002 would have allowed farmers in North Dakota the right to sue Monsanto if wheat was found to be contaminated with genetically modified crops. The discovery is likely to prompt similar legislation if not litigation.

USDA regulates GE herbicide-tolerant plants under the Plant Protection Act, however its scrutiny of the full range of potential human health and environmental effects has been challenged by environmental groups as inadequate. GE wheat is not approved to be grown in the U.S. or anywhere world-wide.

While the world’s biggest wheat importer, Egypt, has made no move to stop importing U.S. wheat, Japan has cancelled its offer to buy U.S\ western white wheat. Meanwhile the European Union has prepared to begin testing shipments for the RoundUp Ready gene. These discoveries may have major implications for the U.S. economy. In 2012, exported wheat represented a gross sum of $18.1 billion, with 90% of Oregon’s wheat exported abroad.

“Nobody’s going to want to buy wheat from the PNW (Pacific Northwest) for a while,” said Roy Huckabay, analyst with the Linn Group in Chicago.
For more information on the environmental hazards associated with GE technology, visit Beyond Pesticides’ Genetic Engineering webpage. The best way to avoid genetically engineered foods in the marketplace is to purchase foods that have the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Certified Organic Seal. Under organic certification standards, genetically modified organisms and their byproducts are prohibited. For many other reasons, organic products are the right choice for consumers.

Agriculture Ministry to embark on test cultivation of corn and peas by the Ministry of Agriculture Guyana, 4 June 2013

Full Article

Most of the corn and peas in Guyana are imported from the Central American country of Belize, and in an effort to reduce the food importation bill on these two products, the Ministry of Agriculture is moving to grow them, Minister of Agriculture Dr Leslie Ramsammy has disclosed.

The Minister said the ministry is working anxiously on this plan which will see the crops being test grown, in small quantities and later following successful testing, introduced to local farmers for cultivation.

“I believe that we should not be importing black eye peas and corn, I believe that Guyana should be an important producer of black eye peas and corn…these are crops that Guyanese farmers can grow, so I have instructed the Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA) to use its land in Essequibo, and to plant 10 acres of black eye peas just to demonstrate it can be grown in Guyana.”

Similarly, the Minister said he also instructed the National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) to work with the GSA and utilise 10 acres of land at Mon Repos, and cultivate corn to demonstrate to farmers that it can be grown locally.

With the Barbadian company Santa Fe in Region Nine growing corn and with the ministry now getting onboard, Minister Ramsammy said, “we are hoping that some of the farmers will take this on, so if not eliminating importation of those products that we can in fact reduce their importation.”
Climate Change

Don't forget smallholder farmers on climate talks by John Alliage Morales 04 June, 2013

https://www.devex.com/en/news/don-t-forget-smallholder-farmers-on-climate-talks/81116?mkt_tok=3RkMMJWWWf9wsRonuajJcO%2Fh mjTEU5z16O0tWqezgokz2EFye%2BLIHETpocMSsRm6%2BNFAA AgAZVnyRQFH uWDeZg%3D

Full Article

World Environment Day is Wednesday, and governments kicked off on Monday the next round of U.N. climate change talks in Bonn.

But both events will largely ignore the plight of millions of smallholder farmers, among the most vulnerable to global warming and its consequences.

Elwyn Grainger-Jones, climate and environment head of International Fund for Agricultural Development, makes a case for the farmers and asks the international community to not ignore them in the discussions on climate change.

Their lives and livelihoods are at stake, and they need to be taken care of. After all, the 500 million smallholder farmers around the globe feed about a third of world’s population.

What they need, according to Jones, is a predictable and adequate flow of funding for projects that may help them adapt to climate change, like IFAD’s Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Program, currently a $340-million facility capable of funding 30-35 programs a year.

But financing adaptation is not a simple task — it requires an “institutional” change and a lot of money, notes the IFAD official: “Development, without consideration of climate change, cannot be truly called development, because we are ignoring one of the main contextual challenges.”

Devex spoke with Jones to learn more about the changing dynamics of climate finance, smallholder finance and IFAD. Here are a few highlights from our interview:

How much adaptation will cost us?

On the global level, UNFCCC and the World Bank produced a series of estimates and they ranged from $41 billion to $170 billion per year by 2030. IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute) estimated the annual cost for climate change adaptation in a developing country, agriculture sector, and they estimated that to be about $7 to $8 billion per year. But that’s a narrow view. It could be higher.

Currently how much are we financing adaptation?

It’s hard to measure what is adaptation expenditure, because there is a very blurry line between a good regular development project and what is a climate adaptation project. What is pretty clear is that most of the money that specifically dedicated for climate finance, most of that goes to mitigation. Not that much goes to adaptation and developing countries want more.

How do we generate money that is commensurate to the problem?
We have a real problem generating money for the problem. A lot of money for climate change has been driven by pledges made under the auspices of the climate negotiation process, the UNFCCC. And there was a surge in financing in 2009 emanating from Copenhagen. And now there are concerns whether we will be able to maintain or to increase existing level of finance for climate change.

There are various innovative ideas to increase finance for climate change — things like taxing untaxed activities such as aviation fuel, shipping fuel. There have been a lot of efforts to make that happen and so far, they have not succeeded. There’s a lot of potential there, but this requires a high level of international cooperation.

Climate change is a hot topic and many are trying to make their cases or their voices heard. But are the smallholder farmers overlooked by people and donors on the climate finance negotiations?

I think they are. The majority of the dialogues on climate change are focused on energy and energy extraction and energy use. They are not generally at the forefront of global discussions. And we would like to change that because we see them as essential constituency to be included in these discussions and also be a major recipient of climate finance.

Financing adaptation is one thing. But tracking where the money goes is another story. So how do we make sure that the funds really go to the most vulnerable? How do we ensure that the funds are spent effectively?

This is where climate finance is actually not different from development finance. In IFAD we have rigorous systems to ensure that our funds are targeted on the poorest members of society, because we have seen how local elites can capture finance so that they benefit and that their families benefit. We have seen examples that there might be some corrupt practices. But we have rigorous oversight.

What we cannot afford to see is that segmentation of causes, of uses of development, climate finance at the international level to create incoherence on the ground, of competing priorities on the ground, where it’s hard enough to pull its resources together.

One of the functions IFAD serves and one of the reasons we receive funding under ASAP is we reintegrate the finance, so that it can achieve multiple objectives and be coherent. We take climate finance, we take agriculture finance and some cases, we take finance on remittances, and on risk insurances and we integrate it as a package for governments, so that when it hits the ground, it kind of achieves multiple objectives.

Apart from accountability and efficiency challenges, the other concern is predictability of funds. What solutions can generate an adequate and predictable flow of funds?

One is for aid donors making forward pledges for climate finance, as they did in Copenhagen. That really helped provide a predictable flow of funds from 2009 to 2012. Another is the Green Climate Fund, with focus in part on smallholder farmers. The third is instruments such IFAD’s ASAP (Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Program), where we take some of the pledges and integrate it into our agriculture development programs in a way it provides predictable flow of finance lasting five to eight years to help communities plan ahead.

Currently, how much is total pledge for the ASAP?
ASAP is basically a stream of finance that once we know what we’ve got, we look at all our country programs, we look at where we can use that finance. At the moment we’ve got $340 million. Frankly, we can double that and spend the money well. At the moment, $340 million will finance about 30 to 35 projects over the next three years. Very quickly, this money will be committed and we’re looking for new finance. In fact, we even have 10 projects that are currently underfunded in the poorest countries like Ethiopia, Laos, Zambia. We currently have about $110 million of unfunded projects.

An ASAP investment does not happen on its own. Generally, it’s adding investment into a larger IFAD or government-supported program. So its objective is to leverage additional money. Our objective through ASAP is to reshape the $1 billion a year of IFAD investment and $2 to $3 billion of co-financing of investment generated in countries.

Should we generate new and additional adaptation financing schemes?

I think we clearly need more finance coming into this issue. I think many of the mechanisms are there to deploy this finance, because fundamentally adaptation is the other side of the coin of development.

There are two things that need to change. One is we need to genuinely integrate climate thinking in everything we do in development. I don’t think many organizations are there yet. And secondly, we need to maintain or increase flow of regular development finance, earmarks specific climate finance, which is important because it’s going to get harder to sustain poverty reduction.

Water Resources

Caribbean Lecturers to Learn about Using Water Management Toolbox in Education. GWP-C Press Release, 6 June 2013


Full Article

Over twenty (20) lecturers and researchers from universities across the Caribbean will meet in Barbados at The University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill Campus for the first-ever Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Knowledge Management Workshop to be held in the region on June 5th and 6th, 2013.

The two-day regional workshop is being spearheaded by the Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) in collaboration with its partner, the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) of The UWI, Cave Hill Campus in Barbados. The workshop will focus on the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Toolbox which was developed by the Global Water Partnership (GWP) based in Stockholm, Sweden and its partners.

The IWRM Toolbox is a free online database with a wide range of resources and tools that provide support in finding solutions to water related problems. It is a unique knowledge platform where experiences in water resources management can be shared.
The workshop therefore seeks to introduce tertiary level practitioners in the Caribbean to the IWRM Toolbox and to explore how it could be used in the academic environment of their universities to support their teaching of water resources management. The regional workshop presents an opportunity for these professionals to gain valuable knowledge that could help them establish a range of courses that are not currently being taught on water resources management; and help them share knowledge with their students on water management in a new and creative way. Representatives from the Knowledge Management team of the Global Water Partnership (GWP) in Stockholm will provide hands-on training to participants in the use of the Toolbox.

Addressing the Caribbean university lecturers at the opening of the workshop will be Mr. Peter Gibbs, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology of The UWI Cave Hill Campus. Other speakers will include representatives of the GWP-C and the CERMES.

Attending the workshop will be lecturers from universities and research institutes based in Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States Virgin Islands, among others.

The Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) sees that the engagement of these professionals can lead to a regional network of universities that can promote Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), share knowledge and experiences and build capacity in better water resources management in the Caribbean.

Agricultural Research

Ag research vital: Gates by The land, 3 June 2013

Full Article

WHEN backing global biotechnology crop research and development to feed the world’s poor, billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates puts his money where his mouth is.

Ignoring controversial headlines, Mr Gates is focused on delivering new plant varieties that can overcome challenging growing conditions and produce more nutritious foods.

And those foods may deliver genuine health and medical benefits for the world’s poorest countries, through research programs governed by strong regulatory regimes.

The Microsoft founder made his $67 billion fortune delivering a revolution in personal access to computer technology throughout the modern world.

He has now shifted gear and dedicated more than half of his personal fortune to philanthropy work which includes strengthening connections between improved agricultural production systems and genuine health and social outcomes.
Since its inception in 1994, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has given $26 billion towards aid programs like those currently being run in 100 countries, including Australia.

That work has reportedly saved an estimated six million lives by finding smart solutions to overcome health threats and nutritional shortages, confronting some of the world’s poorest nations like Africa.

The Foundation’s financial contribution even outstrips aid dollars provided by some of the world’s most developed countries.

Last week, Mr. Gates spoke about the practical mechanics of his philanthropy work at the National Press Club in Canberra before about 600 delegates.

He said Australia had an “excellent record” in global health and agricultural research and development (R&D), with many other discoveries in the pipeline for curing diseases like malaria and polio.

And there’s a new drought resistant sorghum variety on the way he said, with “magical” seeds that can survive and grow “even when there’s very little water”.

Mr. Gates said health and agriculture partnerships between Australian groups and his Foundation were “very, very strong”.

Monsanto Testing New GMO Wheat Strain. Announcement made as the agriculture company faces scrutiny for discovery of unauthorized GMO wheat in Oregon by Industry Week, 5 June 2013
http://www.industryweek.com/research-amp-development/monsanto-testing-new-gmo-wheat-strain

Full Article

WASHINGTON - Agriculture giant Monsanto (IW 500/95), in the spotlight over the discovery of unauthorized genetically modified wheat growing in Oregon, said Wednesday it has a new GM wheat strain under development.

The company is developing a new form of Roundup Ready wheat, resistant to Monsanto's herbicide Roundup (glyphosate) and also focused on improving yield, Robb Fraley, the firm's chief technology officer, said in a conference call with reporters.

Claire Cajacob, head of Monsanto's wheat research, said the company was testing a genetically modified, or genetically engineered, spring wheat in North Dakota, adding that field tests started in 2011.

Monsanto stopped testing its original Roundup Ready wheat strain in 2005 amid market concerns about the acceptance of GM products.

But it pushed back into the field in 2009, resuming work on wheat with the purchase of WestBred, a biotech wheat developer.

Monsanto's original Roundup Ready GM wheat strain, though approved as safe by the Food and Drug Administration, was not authorized for commercial use at the time Monsanto ended the tests.
But the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a week ago that it was found growing in an Oregon field by a farmer.

That rattled export markets sensitive to genetically modified organisms, and Japan suspended imports of some U.S. wheat, as did South Korean millers. In Europe, meanwhile, officials said they would check U.S. imports for signs of the GM wheat.

Monsanto officials were unable to explain how their original Roundup Ready wheat was growing in Oregon but said they were cooperating fully with the USDA investigation of the incident.

To the best of their knowledge, the officials said, the original Roundup Ready wheat seeds either were destroyed at the end of the program in 2005 or stored in a USDA facility in Colorado.

The company said it was not ruling out the possibility that the GMO seed was accidentally or purposely mixed in the seed the farmer planted.

Asked whether Monsanto was considering the possibility of sabotage, Philip Miller, vice president of regulatory affairs, said, "That's certainly one of the options we're looking at."

UN Food and Agriculture Organization report calls for food systems to improve nutrition by AHN, 5 June 2013
http://gantdaily.com/2013/06/05/un-food-and-agriculture-organization-report-calls-for-food-systems-to-improve-nutrition/

Full Article

New York, NY, United States (IRIN) – Poor health and losses in productivity caused by malnutrition are costing the global economy US$500 per person per year, or a staggering $3.5 trillion annually, according to a new report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Many communities rely on foods that do not meet their nutritional requirements, and when faced with food price shocks, poor families often cut out nutrient-rich foods like milk. The 2013 edition of FAO’s annual State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) report, released today, underlines the need to ensure all the institutions and people responsible for producing and processing food “align to support good nutrition”.

The report also provides an overview of the linkages between agriculture, quality food, health and the economy, emphasizing that “agriculture and the entire food system… can contribute much more to the eradication of malnutrition”. But while discussions on these linkages have been taking place for at least three decades, the problem of malnutrition remains unresolved.

Malnutrition comes in a variety of forms: undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity. Two billion people in the world suffer from micronutrient deficiencies, such as anaemia, for example, and more than a billion people are overweight and prone to chronic and life-threatening illnesses like diabetes.
The report urges policymakers to address malnutrition through changes in food systems, public health and education, as well as improvements in supply chains and agricultural productivity.

Incentives needed

John Hoddinott, a senior researcher at International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), told IRIN that the 2013 SOFA report “gets many things right: that malnutrition imposes high costs on individuals and societies, that addressing malnutrition requires multisectoral approaches, and that agriculture is essential for better nutrition.”

But Hoddinott – who authored several 2008 studies in the Lancet showing that inexpensive nutrition interventions can reduce infant and maternal mortality and boost economic growth in developing countries – has some reservation about the report.

He says SOFA “has less to say about the incentives needed at all points in the supply chain to ensure healthy food is available and accessible for all.”

For instance, rapid agricultural and economic growth has not translated into a significant reduction in child malnutrition in India, which has the largest population of undernourished children in the world. Various explanations such as economic and gender inequality have been offered, says SOFA, but the phenomenon remains “largely unexplained” and needs more research.

Lawrence Haddad, head of the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) says his problem with all reports that consider the linkages between agriculture and nutrition is that they do not talk enough about how to provide incentives to the agriculture sector to improve nutrition.

He said in an email, “We know WHY it is important, and there are plenty of opportunities (the WHAT), but they are only seen as opportunities by nutrition people, not by agriculture people. We need research to better understand institutional drivers, incentives and barriers.”

Questions remain

The 2013 SOFA recognizes that knowledge about many of the issues covered in the report remains incomplete. Many countries lack basic data and indicators for evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives attempting to improve food quality.

And the report points out that there are still many questions about the effectiveness of home gardens, the role of gender, the fortification of food with micronutrients, technological innovations, biodiversity and the role of local foods in improving nutrition.

There are also gaps in researchers’ understanding of consumer choice and nutritional outcomes. “Concepts such as ‘dietary diversity’ and ‘healthy diets’ remain fuzzy and difficult to measure objectively,” the report says.

Additionally, contentious issues involving import restrictions and targeted farm subsidies, which serve as a barrier to food production and trade, remain unresolved at the World Trade Organization.
Agricultural Development

Agriculture: Global agric production growth to slow down by Afrique en Ligue, 6 June 2013

Full Article

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) - Global agricultural production is expected to grow 1.5 percent a year on average over the coming decade, compared with annual growth of 2.1 percent between 2003 and 2012, according to a new report published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Thursday.

According to a FAO statement made available to PANA here, the OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2013-2022 report said limited expansion of agricultural land, rising production costs, growing resource constraints and increasing environmental pressures are the main factors behind the trend.

But it argues that farm commodity supply should keep pace with global demand.

The report expects prices to remain above historical averages over the medium term for both crop and livestock products, due to a combination of slower production growth and stronger demand, including for biofuels.

The report says agriculture has been turned into an increasingly market-driven sector, as opposed to policy-driven as it was in the past, thus offering developing countries important investment opportunities and economic benefits, given their growing food demand, potential for production expansion and comparative advantages in many global markets.

However, production shortfalls, price volatility and trade disruption remain a threat to global food security.

The OECD/FAO Outlook warns: 'As long as food stocks in major producing and consuming countries remain low, the risk of price volatility is amplified. A wide-spread drought such as the one experienced in 2012, on top of low food stocks, could raise world prices by 15-40 percent.'

Presenting the joint report in Beijing, China, OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said: 'The outlook for global agriculture is relatively bright with strong demand, expanding trade and high prices. But this picture assumes continuing economic recovery. If we fail to turn the global economy around, investment and growth in agriculture will suffer and food security may be compromised.'

FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva said: 'High food prices are an incentive to increase production and we need to do our best to ensure that poor farmers benefit from them. Let's not forget that 70 percent of the world's food insecure population lives in rural areas of developing countries and that many of them are small-scale and subsistence farmers themselves.'
'Global agriculture production expected to grow 1.5 percent a year' by Business Recorder Report, 7 June 2013
http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/1196083/

Full Article

Global agricultural production is expected to grow 1.5 percent a year on average over the coming decade, compared with annual growth of 2.1 percent between 2003 and 2012, according to a new report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Limited expansion of agricultural land, rising production costs, growing resource constraints and increasing environmental pressures are the main factors behind the trend. But, the report argues that farm commodity supply should keep pace with global demand, the report added. The 'OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2013-2022' expects prices to remain above historical averages over the medium term for both crop and livestock products due to a combination of slower production growth and stronger demand, including for bio-fuels.

The report says agriculture has been turned into an increasingly market-driven sector, as opposed to policy-driven as it was in the past, thus offering developing countries important investment opportunities and economic benefits, given their growing food demand, potential for production expansion and comparative advantages in many global markets.

However, production shortfalls, price volatility and trade disruption remain a threat to global food security. The OECD-FAO Outlook warns: "As long as food stocks in major producing and consuming countries remain low, the risk of price volatility is amplified. A widespread drought such as the one experienced in 2012, on top of low food stocks, could raise world prices by 15-40 percent."

China, with one-fifth of the world's population, high income growth and a rapidly expanding agro-food sector, will have a major influence on world markets, and is the special focus of the report. China is projected to remain self-sufficient in the main food crops, although output is anticipated to slow in the next decade due to land, water and rural labour constraints.

Presenting the joint report, OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said: "The outlook for global agriculture is relatively bright with strong demand, expanding trade and high prices. But this picture assumes continuing economic recovery. If we fail to turn the global economy around, investment and growth in agriculture will suffer and food security may be compromised." "Governments need to create the right enabling environment for growth and trade," he added. "Agricultural reforms have played a key role in China's remarkable progress in expanding production and improving domestic food security."
**IICA to provide assistance to Guyana** by the Ministry of Agriculture Guyana June 4, 2013  

**Full Article**

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) says it will support Guyana in developing its trade in agricultural products. IICA Director General, Víctor M. Villalobos met with Guyana’s Agriculture Minister Leslie Ramsammy, who outlined the country’s priorities that included the development of an agrofuels unit, the establishment of programmes to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change, and compliance with international trade standards. “We want an agricultural sector that will drive economic development and generate well-being, that is the kind of sector we want to see develop. In Guyana, we have the land, the water, and the technical expertise needed to promote this type of agriculture,” Ramsammy said.

Villalobos said that a few countries have been blessed with such a wealth of resources and Guyana should take advantage of them to feed the world and generate value added through agribusinesses. He noted that Guyana is especially important for IICA, as it is the headquarters for the regional integration grouping, CARICOM and the IICA provides technical and financial support for several regional initiatives including the Alliance for Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Jagdeo Initiative, which aims to bring about improvements in agricultural production. An IICA statement said that during the talks, Ramsammy also raised the issue of IICA cooperation in biotechnology, agro-processing and the creation of a market information system that would afford farmers access to information about the demand for, and possible prices of, their products.

**Ground Broken for Sorrel Plant in Westmoreland** by the Jamaica Information Service, 6 June 2013  

**Full Article**

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Roger Clarke, on Tuesday, June 4, officially broke ground for the establishment of a $24.8 million sorrel processing plant in Bethel Town, Westmoreland.

Work on the 204-square metre modern facility, which will consist of production area, dry and cold storage, and sorting area, as well as office and bathroom conveniences, is already well underway, and is expected to be completed within three months.

It will process sorrel to make jams, jellies and juices in addition to other value-added products, while significantly reducing the need for further imports for the Jamaican market.

The processing facility, which will be operated by the Bethel Town Agricultural Co-operative Society, is being constructed by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) under its World Bank-funded Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI).

Minister Clarke, in welcoming the project, said it symbolises Government’s intention to “seriously deal” with import substitution.
“This is yet another expression that this Government intends, in a very, very serious way, to deal with import substitution and to grow the agricultural sector. Why is it we have to import sorrel concentrate into this country to make drink, when sorrel can be grown almost anywhere in Jamaica?” he queried.

He informed that the Ministry is working with the Mexican Government to train persons in the use of machinery to make the harvesting of sorrel easier.

He noted that farmers in Central Westmoreland are already preparing lands to plant sorrel “so you had better hurry with the construction”.

General Manager at JSIF, Loy Malcolm, informed that project will “transform over 120 acres of sorrel into value-added products”.

“We at JSIF are happy to be a part of this and wish you all every success in this project,” she noted.

Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, and Member of Parliament for Eastern Westmoreland, Hon. Luther Buchanan, in his remarks, said the ground breaking exercise “means a brighter future for agricultural development in the parish of Westmoreland”.

The agro-processing facility is expected to realise a 400 per cent increase in revenue for farmers, while generating employment opportunities for community members.

Upcoming Events

June 2013

10th International Mango Symposium
Date: 3-7 June 2013
Location: Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

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 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/

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