### CARDI Award for the Caribbean’s Top Agriculture Student

Trinidad and Tobago Government Information Service, 29 July, 2013


Established in 2007, the CARDI award to the top Caribbean Examination Council’s Agriculture Science student is presented to the student who achieves a grade one in Agriculture, grade two in Mathematics and English ‘A’ and grade one or two in another technical or general CXC subject.

For more information see page 15

### AGRICULTURE IN THE NEWS

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.

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Our Vision

To be the centre of excellence in the Caribbean for the provision and application of research and development in agriculture and rural enhancement.

Our Mission

To contribute to the sustainable economic well being of Caribbean people by the generation and transfer of appropriate technology through research and development within the agricultural value chain.

www.cardi.org
Cereals and Grains

**Wheat closes higher on strong world demand.** Farming UK, 1 August, 2013

**Full Article**

Beans fell sharply despite the USDA announcing a sale of 290,000 MT of new crop US soybeans to unknown. Some of the selling on front month Aug 13 may have been linked to tomorrow being first notice day on the contract. There's talk that China may have bought a cargo of western Canadian beans for Nov shipment.

India’s Agriculture Commissioner estimated India’s soybean crop at a record 14.7 MMT. Michael Cordonnier estimated 2013 US bean yields at 42.0 bu/acre, unchanged from his previous estimate. All eyes remain focused on the US weather. "Eastern Midwest soybeans still have the potential to make a very good crop. Illinois, Indiana and Ohio all reported at least 70% good-excellent soybeans in late July. Soybeans are most resistant to drought than corn, hanging on and waiting for rain. If soaking rains develop in August, the key pod-filling stage, a favourable yield may occur," said Martell Crop Projections. However, "the new 5-day forecast is way drier than yesterday, a dramatic reversal on the part of the GFS model. The forecast now calls or mostly dry conditions in the Midwest, though Nebraska and SW Iowa may get meaningful rain. Scattered rains up to 0.60 inch are also possible also in the Great Lakes region. Otherwise, the Midwest outlook is dry. I cannot remember a period when the GFS model was so erratic," they added. Aug 13 Soybeans closed at USD13.50, down 17 1/2 cents; Nov 13 Soybeans closed at USD12.03, down 17 cents; Aug 13 Soybean Meal closed at USD429.20, down USD9.70; Aug 13 Soybean Oil closed at 42.11, down 36 points.

**Corn**

The corn market managed a little short-covering recovery after six down days. South Korea bought 50 TMT of Black Sea origin corn for Jan shipment at USD233.44 C&F (equivalent of GBP152.57). The Brazilian vessel line-up apparently shows 3 corn boats heading to the US. Safras e Mercado yesterday forecast Brazil's 2013/14 corn crop falling from 82.0 MMT this season to 77.57 MMT. They said that 1st corn will decline from 33.05 MMT to 29.28 MMT and 2nd crop corn from 45.2 MMT to 42.46 MMT.

The Ukraine State Weather Centre said that the corn crop there would be "at least" 25 MMT this year versus 20.9 MMT last year, helped by plantings rising 13.6% from 4.4 million ha to 5.0 million ha. On the US weather front "rainfall increased last week in the Midwest, but these were hit-or-miss showers. Corn improved where rains occurred but deteriorated where it stayed dry.

Nationally 63% of corn made the good-excellent grade, identical to a week ago. July pollinating conditions have been dry in all 4 leading corn states Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska and Minnesota," said Martell Crop Projections. "July rainfall to date ranks among the driest in 35 years with only 2.4 inches in the corn belt. Corn has been subsisting on stored ground moisture. June was very wet, otherwise crop conditions would be far worse," they added. Michael Cordonnier estimated 2013 US corn yields at 153.0 bu/acre, unchanged from his previous estimate. The weekly ethanol report is out tomorrow. That's been steadily falling in recent weeks, from 881,000 barrels/day three weeks ago, to 876,000 bpd two weeks ago and only 853,000 bpd last week. The bulls will be hoping for a reversal of that trend, and may likely get it if recent reports of more physically available domestic corn suddenly coming
onto the market are correct. Sep 13 Corn closed at USD4.95 1/2, up 6 1/4 cents; Dec 13 Corn closed at USD4.77 1/2, up 4 1/4 cents.

**Wheat**

Wheat closed higher on all three exchanges on strong world demand. China’s CNGOIC said that the country had bought 1.5 MMT of Australian wheat in the past 6 weeks. It is thought that they've already bought 3.45 MMT of US wheat, along with smaller quantities of French and Canadian wheat, bringing their total known purchases so far for 2013/14 to over 5.5 MMT.

Taiwan bought 97,200 MT of US wheat for August Sept shipment. Japan lifted its ban on importing US western white wheat. They then issued their normal Tuesday tender, looking for 178 TMT of US, Canadian and Australian wheat, the tender also included almost 90 TMT of US western white wheat. Egypt bought 240 TMT of Ukraine and Romanian wheat in its fourth tender of the month. South Korea’s NOFI bought 50 TMT of Black Sea origin wheat for Jan shipment and are negotiation another cargo for Jan shipment. There's talk that Brazil may need to buy up to 1 MMT of US HRW wheat as their own crop has been hit by frost and Argentina has nothing to sell until they bring in their 2013/14 crop at the end of the year. Dryness in Western Australia means that wheat production in the state will only make 8.5 MMT "at best" according to one local analyst.

ABARES currently estimate the crop there at 8.8 MMT versus only 6.9 MMT in last years drought-hit crop. Production in WA would normally be expected to be around 10 MMT. The Andersons are reporting quality problems in US SRW wheat due to heavy rains in the beginning of July. Sprouted wheat is said to be the worst in some areas for more than 20 years. There are also reports of quality problems with Russian wheat, whilst early harvested crops in France and Germany are said to be displaying low protein levels. Sep 13 CBOT Wheat closed at USD6.55 1/4, up 3 3/4 cents; Sep 13 KCBT Wheat closed at USD6.96 1/4, up 6 cents; Sep 13 MGEX Wheat closed at USD7.37 1/4, up 3 cents.

**US corn market continues to weaken.** Farming UK, 29 July, 2013  

**Full Article**

The US corn market continues to weaken, trading at a near three-year low as favourable weather forecasts boost crop development.


- Strategie Grains has raised its estimate of EU-28 soft wheat by 1.9mln t to 133.4mln t.

- The GB 2013/14 wheat crop area is reported at 1.61mln hectares, down 19% year-on-year due to adverse weather.

- Russia’s National Grain Producers Union sees the 2013 wheat crop at 45-48mln t, below official forecasts.
The Argentine Agriculture Ministry estimates 2013/14 wheat crop at 12mln t, up from 9mln t this year.

Markets remain under pressure, as relatively benign US weather dominates price direction. Earlier forecasts of hotter weather entering the US corn belt at the key pollination stage have been replaced with cooler, wetter conditions, ‘almost ideal’ for crop development.

This has resulted in corn prices trading at their lowest levels since 2010 on the assumption that yield and output could rise, dragging wheat prices down in their wake. Although there has been recent support for wheat, with increased buying activity from China and Egypt and recent crop rating concern over the US spring wheat crop, adequate stocks levels provides little long-term support, especially with the likelihood of increased corn supplies.

EU markets have again tested contract lows, reacting to weaker global markets. EU prospects continue to improve as harvest continues, and, with recent Egyptian tenders placing Romanian and Black sea supplies at a hefty discount to French, this could set the tone for a different export picture to last season. Early French cut wheat is reported with proteins falling below 11%. Even though this may improve as the harvest moves north, the market has already built in a protein (export) premium.

In the UK, the release by DEFRA placing the GB wheat area at 1.61mln hectares has done little to stop the bearish sentiment. Based on a 10% rise in yield, this would produce a wheat crop of around 11.8mln t, and whilst this is above earlier projections it would still be 1.5mln t below the 2012 output. However, spot demand remains limited and with signs of increased sellers of old crop supplies, prices have fallen, currently trading at a relatively small premium to new crop values. The dynamics of the balance sheet could alter this season with the news that Ensus has been sold and is likely to re-open some-time late summer/early autumn. The extra demand, if wheat based, will increase the domestic demand for wheat and raise import requirements.

Jonathan Lane, Gleadell’s Trading Manager, comments on the OSR market

- We have seen US farmer selling pressuring soybean prices in the US and short-term weather forecasts continue to point to favourable conditions in the key bean and corn growing areas.

- The MATIF rapeseed contract and its physical derivatives of oil & meal have continued to come under pressure as the harvest in Europe gets under way. We are also hearing early reports of good oil content and big crops from the Black Sea regions.

The UK domestic market remains reasonably quiet with farmers still reluctant to sell. We feel farmers that require cash flow and harvest movement may be forced to sell and could therefore face potentially lower prices as harvest pressure erodes prices.
**Tropicalized maize haploid inducers for doubled haploid-based breeding.** CIMMYT, 20 July 2013

**Full Article**

The doubled haploid (DH) technology enables rapid development of completely homozygous maize lines and offers significant opportunities for fast-track development and release of elite cultivars. Besides simplified logistics and reduced costs, use of DH lines in conjunction with molecular markers significantly improves genetic gains and breeding efficiency. DH lines also are valuable tools in marker-trait association studies, molecular marker-assisted or genomic selection-based breeding, and functional genomics.

Generating DH lines involves four major steps: (1) *In vivo* haploid induction; (2) haploid seed identification using morphological markers; (3) chromosome doubling of putative haploids; and (4) generating D1 (DH) seed from D0 seedlings. *In vivo* haploid induction is achieved by crossing a specially developed maize genetic stock called an “inducer” (as male) with a source population (as female) from which homozygous DH lines are developed.

**What are tropicalized haploid inducers?**

Adoption of DH technology by public maize breeding programs and small- and medium scale enterprise (SME) seed companies, especially in developing countries, is limited by the lack of inducers adapted to the tropical/subtropical conditions. The CIMMYT Global Maize Program, in collaboration with the Institute of Plant Breeding, Seed Science and Population Genetics of the University of Hohenheim (UHo) now has tropical haploid inducers for sharing with the interested institutions under the terms outlined below.

The tropically adapted inducer lines (TAILs) developed by CIMMYT and UHo showed high haploid induction capacity (~8-10%) and better agronomic performance than temperate inducers, in trials at two CIMMYT experiment stations in Mexico. A haploid inducer hybrid developed using these TAILs revealed heterosis for plant vigor and pollen production under tropical conditions, while maintaining similar haploid induction rates (~8-10%). CIMMYT and UHo decided to share the seed and grant authorization for use of one of the tropicalized haploid inducer lines (one of the parents of a hybrid inducer) and the hybrid inducer to interested applicants, after signing of the relevant material transfer agreement (MTA) and with restrictions to protect the intellectual property rights of both institutions for the inducer lines.

**Process of indenting for the tropicalized haploid inducers**

Interested applicants should send a letter of intent or an expression of interest in the tropicalized haploid inducers. CIMMYT may seek more information, if required, and will share the relevant MTA template for signing by applicants. The general guidelines to obtain inducers for research use and commercial use are as follows.

**For research use by publicly-funded national agricultural research systems**

Publicly-funded institutions interested in access to the haploid inducers for specific purposes (e.g., to develop DH lines for breeding programs) may send a letter of intent or expression of interest to CIMMYT. For eligible institutions, the haploid inducers will be provided free-of-charge by CIMMYT.
and UHo, after signing of a Research Use MTA. Commercial use of the inducers by institutions or others should be in accordance with a separate license agreement for commercial use (as given below).

For commercial use

Applicants may access the inducers for commercial use pursuant to signing of a Material Transfer and License Agreement with CIMMYT and UHo. Applicants shall pay UHo a one-time licence fee of USD 25,000 for provision of seed of two haploid inducers; these include one of the parents of a tropicalized haploid inducer hybrid and the haploid inducer hybrid itself. If applicants wish to access the other parent of the haploid inducer hybrid, an additional one-time licence fee of $10,000 will be payable to UHo.

Acknowledgments

Support for joint research on doubled haploids by CIMMYT and the University of Hohenheim has come from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; the Howard G. Buffett Foundation; SAGARPA, the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food.; USAID (US Agency for International Development); Dr. Dr. h. c. Herrmann Eiselen and the Foundation fiat panis, Ulm, Germany; the Tiberius Services AG, Stuttgart, Germany; Vilmorin Seed Company; DTMA (Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa) project; MAIZE CGIAR Research Program; and the International Maize Improvement Consortium (IMIC) project under MasAgro (Sustainable Modernization of Traditional Agriculture).

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Climate Change

Jamaicans need to be more aware of climate change. Jamaica Information Service, 1 August, 2013

Full Article

Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, Hon. Robert Pickersgill, has emphasised the need to increase climate change awareness among Jamaicans, noting that the issue is “everybody’s business.”

Mr. Pickersgill said tackling the effects of climate change on Jamaica will require a communal approach, “as we will all be affected. ”

The Minister was speaking at the launch of a special video feature entitled: ‘Climate Change and its Impact on Jamaican Farmers’, held at the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), in Kingston, on July 31.
“(This approach) must entail co-operation, communication and consistency of effort from everyone. We cannot allow progress toward the Vision 2030 goals to be derailed by climate change related impacts,” he argued.

The Minister lamented that the impact of climate change on a small island such as Jamaica can have significant repercussions on its economic and social viability. He noted that the weather phenomenon impacts health, natural resources, infrastructure as well as access to water and food security.

“The impacts are likely to continue to greatly hinder Jamaica in its debt repayment efforts, while the economic cost of climate related impacts will continue to increase,” he noted.

Mr. Pickersgill, therefore, commended the PIOJ and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for its work in developing the educational video, which aims to increase public awareness on the topic. The video, which was produced by the Jamaica Information Service (JIS), will be aired on over seven stations, including TVJ, CVM TV, JNN, PBCJ and Love TV, as well as featured in JIS’ Jamaica Magazine programme.

It shows interviews conducted with farmers in the Bog Hole community of Clarendon, who have been adversely affected by long periods of drought as well as periods of flooding, caused by climate change.

Mr. Pickersgill said the video is a timely reminder that all Jamaicans must find new and innovative ways to lessen the impact of climate change on the environment.

For his part, Pilot Programme for Climate Change Resilience (PPCR) Focal Point Manager, PIOJ, Hopeton Peterson, said the video has been produced within the context of the implementation of the PPCR.

The PPCR is a global project aimed at improving the ability of vulnerable countries like Jamaica to withstand “the shocks and stresses” of climate change.

The programme provides technical assistance and investments to support countries’ efforts to integrate climate risk and resilience into core development planning and implementation. Jamaica is one of six countries in the Caribbean benefiting from the PPCR.

Mr. Peterson informed that so far in Jamaica, the project has supported the development of a strategic programme for climate resilience, which entails three main components.

These include: improving climate data and information management; mainstreaming climate change adaptation in the local sectoral and national plans and implementing integrated adaptation strategies in the Rio Minho basin in Clarendon; and providing financing mechanisms for sustained adaptation initiatives by the public and private sectors and community-based organisations.
We’re working to improve agriculture amidst a changing and variable climate. Caribbean Community Climate Change, 1 August 2013
http://caribbeanclimateblog.com/2013/07/30/we-are-working-to-improve-agriculture-amids-a-changing-and-variable-climate/

Full Article

The Caribbean Community Climate Change (CCCCC), with support from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITR), has been working to boost the Caribbean’s capacity to cope with agricultural risks amidst climate variability and climate change.

Changing weather patterns, more frequent occurrences of weather extremes (floods and droughts), increased intensity of hurricanes, rising temperatures and projected sea level rise are predicted to have devastating impacts on the regional agricultural sector and the region’s food security. The region is already experiencing some of the projected negative impacts on the sector.

Institutional Development

Training of regional meteorological officers in statistics in Applied Climatology.

Building the climate monitoring capacity of the regional research network.

As such, the Centre leveraged UNITR’s support to build the capacity of the region’s premier institutions: the Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) and the Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute (CARDI), as well as regional meteorological organizations, to provide timely and user friendly climate information to the farming community in the region.

Under the UNITR-funded CCCCC executed project, regional meteorological officers were trained to carry out statistical analyses on regional weather data and to use these outputs to be in a better position to warn the farming community of oncoming conditions for their operations. This allows the farming community to make the necessary operational adjustments and avoid the usual experience of loss of investment and livelihoods.

To ensure the training delivered was effectively utilized, eleven automatic Agrio-Meteorological Stations (weather stations) were installed at CARDI’s premises in ten Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Jamaica and Belize.

This network of weather stations has tremendously boosted the organization’s research capability, which is highly dependent on its ability to constantly measure and monitor critical weather parameters.

Previous UNITAR support to CARDI has resulted in improved capacity to carry out impact studies on the sector using biophysical models coupled with climate change scenarios generated from the regional climate modeling exercises in the region. This places the region in a position to take proactive action to avoid deleterious consequences which are projected to be experienced in the agriculture sector as a result of climate change.
Minding the gaps: scientists hail major advance in adapting food crops to climate change

Full Article

Global efforts to adapt staple foods like rice, wheat and potato to climate change have been given a major boost as new research reveals the details and whereabouts of their “wild relatives” – their undomesticated distant cousins that could contain secrets to making food crops more productive and resilient.

Some of these wild and weedy species have evolved to tolerate drought, higher temperatures or pest and disease outbreaks, all of which are expected to become more frequent as a result of climate change. But according to the new research carried out by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) together with the UK’s University of Birmingham, as part of a project led by Kew’s Millennium Seed Bank and the Global Crop Diversity Trust, less than half of these plants are conserved in the world’s gene banks, meaning scientists are missing out on significant opportunities for breeding more productive, climate-smart crops.

Using a technique called gap analysis, scientists studied 29 of the world’s most important food crops – including rice, wheat, potato, bean, barley, banana, plantain, oat and sorghum. They found that of the 455 wild relatives identified, over half are seriously underrepresented in gene banks. But fortunately, the new findings also show where these species might be found in the wild. With the new information, collecting teams will head out later this year to seek out the highest priority and most-at risk species in the largest coordinated conservation exercise for crop wild relatives ever undertaken. The study and the collecting work is part of a major 10-year project funded by the Government of Norway to help boost the resilience of staple foods crops to climate change.

“This is a major step forward in the global effort to make our food crops more resilient to the effects of climate change,” said Andy Jarvis, leader of CIAT’s Decision and Policy Analysis Research Area. “Crop wild relatives are a potential treasure trove of useful characteristics that scientists can put to good use for making agriculture more resilient and improving the livelihoods of millions of people.”

Adding urgency to the need for field collections, some of the regions where the wild species might be found are already at risk, with climate change itself, urbanisation, pollution, and the spread of agriculture threatening unique habitats. For example, in Costa Rica, suburban expansion around the capital San Jose threatens the closest wild relative of common bean – a crop grown by millions globally. Similarly, expansion of industrial agriculture in southeast Brazil currently threatens habitats for high-priority relatives of sweet potato and rice.

Click to read this article on the work, published by Nature News, and visit the project website, where an interactive map of the results will be published soon.
Biotechnology

Key points in the genetically modified food debate by the Associated Press, 2 August, 2013

Full Article

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of the biggest stumbling blocks to securing a massive free trade agreement between the United States and Europe is a sharp disagreement on genetically modified foods.

Much of the corn, soybean, sugar beets and cotton cultivated in the United States today contains plants whose DNA was manipulated in labs to resist disease and drought, ward off insects and boost the food supply. Though common in the U.S., they are largely banned in the 28-nation European Union.

Washington wants Europe to ease restrictions on imports of these foods, commonly known as GMOs for genetically modified organisms, but the EU is skeptical they are safe. Intense emotions on both sides of the divide make it difficult to separate between strongly held belief and science.

A look at key points in the debate:

SAFE OR UNSAFE?

Most studies show genetically modified foods are safe for human consumption, though it is widely acknowledged that the long-term health effects are unknown. The Food and Drug Administration generally recognized these foods as safe, and the World Health Organization has said no ill health effects have resulted on the international market.

Opponents on both sides of the Atlantic say there has been inadequate testing and regulation. They worry that people who eat genetically modified foods may be more prone to allergies or diseases resistant to antibiotics. But they have been hard pressed to show scientific studies to back up those fears.

GM foods have been a mainstay in the U.S. for more than a decade. Most of the crops are used for animal feed or in common processed foods such as cookies, cereal, potato chips and salad dressing.

Europe largely bans genetically engineered foods and has strict requirements on labeling them. They do allow the import of a number of GM crops such as soy, mostly for animal feed, and individual European countries have opted to plant these types of crops. Genetically engineered corn is grown in Spain, though it amounts to only a fraction of European farmland.

The American Medical Association favors mandatory, pre-market safety testing, something that has not been required by U.S. regulators. The WHO and the U.N. food agency, the Food and Agriculture Organization, say the safety of genetically modified foods must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

CAN GM FOOD HELP COMBAT WORLD HUNGER?

By 2050, the world's population is projected to rise to 9 billion from just over 7 billion currently. Proponents of genetically modified foods say they are safe and can boost harvests even in bad
conditions by protecting against pests, weeds and drought. This, they argue, will be essential to meeting the needs of a booming population in decades to come and avoiding starvation.

However Doug Gurian-Sherman, senior scientist for the food and environment program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, an advocacy group, said genetic engineering for insect resistance has provided only a modest increase in yields since the 1990s and drought-resistant strains have only modestly reduced losses from drought.

Moreover, he said conventional crossbreeding or cross-pollinating of different varieties for desirable traits, along with improved farming, are getting better results boosting yields at a lower cost. In fact, much of the food Americans eat has been genetically modified by those conventional methods over thousands of years, before genetic engineering came into practice.

"Overall, genetic engineering does not get nearly the bang for the buck as conventional breeding” and improved agricultural practices, Gurian-Sherman said. His organization advises caution on GM foods and favors labeling, though it acknowledges the risks of genetic engineering have sometimes been exaggerated.

Andrea Roberto Sonnino, chief of research at the U.N. food agency, said total food production at present is enough to feed the entire global population. The problem is uneven distribution, leaving 870 million suffering from hunger. He said world food production will need to increase by 60 percent to meet the demands of 9 billion by 2050. This must be achieved by increasing yields, he added, because there is little room to expand cultivated land used for agriculture.

Genetically modified foods, in some instances, can help if the individual product has been assessed as safe, he said. "It's an opportunity that we cannot just miss." 

TO LABEL OR NOT TO LABEL?

Europe requires all GM food to be labeled unless GM ingredients amount to 0.9 percent or less of the total. The U.S. does not require labels on the view that genetically modified food is not materially different than non-modified food. Opponents of labeling say it would scare consumers away from safe foods, giving the appearance that there is something wrong with them.

U.S. activists insist consumers should have the right to choose whether to eat genetically modified foods and that labeling would offer them that choice, whether the foods are safe or not. They are pushing for labeling at the state and federal level. California voters last year rejected a ballot initiative that would have required GM food labeling. The legislatures of Connecticut and Maine have passed laws to label genetically modified foods, and more than 20 other states are contemplating labeling.

COULD GM FOOD TORPEDO THE TRADE DEAL?

Absolutely. The U.S is pressing for the restrictions on importing genetically modified food to be eased but there is no sign that the EU’s firm opposition is softening. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said recently that Europe will defend its restrictions in the trade negotiations, which began last month. Some in the U.S. see the European resistance as just another form of protectionism that promotes domestic products over imported ones.

GM foods are not the only seemingly intractable issue standing in the way of a comprehensive free trade agreement to remove most tariffs and other trade barriers, aiming to boost jobs and growth. Genetically modified foods are part of a broader set of restrictions on both sides related to agriculture.
and food safety. There are also significant differences on intellectual property and financial regulations, among other thorny issues.

**Agricultural Development**

**$350,000 set aside for Farm Labour Support.** Official Website of the Government of Grenada, 1 August 2013
http://www.gov.gd/egov/news/2013/aug13/01_08_13/item_2/farm_labour_support.html

**Full Article**

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ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA, Thursday, August 01, 2013 - GIS: Government has pumped EC$350,000 dollars into the Farm Labour Support Program, which was launched July 15th. Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Senator Simon Stiell, made the disclosure during the recent sitting of the Senate.

Agriculture official says, that some 1,500 farmers will benefit from the exercise, which is also designed to boost local food production.

The program is also another of government’s ploy to provide employment.

Senator Stiell made it clear, that they were not selling off or privatizing the estates; but are partnering with the Private Sector in an attempt to bring the estates back to life.

“We have budgeted EC$350,000 for this program, which also includes Carriacou”, Senator Stiell said.

He indicated, that there will be nine teams, each consisting of 10 workers, who will be employed fortnightly.

The venture according to the Ministry of Agriculture is providing temporary employment for four hundred and fifty (450) workers.

Stiell said, that the program will be closely and carefully monitored to ensure that it is efficiently executed, indicating that there were significant inefficiencies in the past.

Lands were cleared but never planted. We will be monitoring this to ensure that we get the best value for money and every acre cleared is put under cultivation.”

Senator Stiell indicated, that a government selected committee has been appointed to oversee the venture.

“That appointment has been made, and that committee will convene shortly to start the process. It will not be a process that will be done in isolation”, he said, noting that a wide cross section will be involved.”

Government will be engaging the unions, farmers, community groups, other stakeholders and the Ministry of Finance to ensure that the process of commercialization is in the best interest of the Tri-Island State.
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Stiell sees the move as a great opportunity to boost Agriculture production for local consumption, and that will derive much needed revenue.

“It is about addressing our food security issues. If we are serious about increasing our national production, not just for domestic consumption; but for exports to generate much needed foreign exchange, we have to put these estates into productive use.”

The Grand Bras, Mt Reuil, Bellevue and Laura are among the Estates identified for action.

**CAFAN Head says less talk more action required in agriculture** by Joy-Ann Gill, Barbados Government Information Service, 31 July, 2013

**Full Article**

Caribbean governments have been told to do less talking and show more action in relation to agriculture.

This advice came last Saturday at the opening of a Web 2.0 Training and Exchange workshop, designed by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation and the Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN), at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus.

Chief Coordinator of the CaFAN, Jethro Greene, providing a historical context on the fall of agriculture in the region, said it was declining because many years ago most governments in the region, as well as bureaucrats, had “decided to kick agriculture under the table”.

Regional governments were, therefore, urged to not just talk about agriculture, but to show what actions were being taken. The CaFAN Head said: “You show me the government that has delegated an adequate funding to agriculture. You look at what percentage of the budgets throughout a lot of these countries go into agriculture and then ask yourself if it is not just a theoretical exercise again.”

Pointing out that it was for this reason CaFAN had decided “let us start to act”, Mr. Greene acknowledged that his organisation had recognised that in order for the region to advance in agriculture it needed to move away from just what is being shown. He said: “When we talk about agriculture people just see farmers. Farmers are just one component of agriculture. In order for agriculture to advance, we need to have more intellectual muscle in the agricultural system.

“You need accountants, technologists, researchers and people who specialise in marketing to make this thing work. You need a whole heap of people in a value chain to make this thing work as a business, just like how they do it in the United States, in Japan – all the developed countries. We don’t need to go far, just look at how they do their agriculture.”

It was also noted that, marketing had a role to play, and Mr. Greene stressed the importance of countries developing good integrated production and marketing plans to address gluts and adverse actions by some major producers.

Farmers’ organisations as well as the private sector were also advised to take a serious step towards ensuring that they were not just talking, but acting. And, the Chief Coordinator lamented that there was a food and nutrition security policy, yet governments were not looking at “the low hanging fruits”.

*Agriculture in the News July 28 – August 3, 2013. Issue compiled by CARDI*
“You have over 50 per cent of your people dying from NCDs. You have children in schools eating junk. You have a lot of merchants dropping real junk in the market, while your fruit and vegetable go to spoil. All you need to do is start within your school system to link the kinds of healthy foods you have within the region to the health of all people,” Mr. Greene suggested.

And, he pointed out that years ago the region was tricked and told that its “roots and tubers were so bad”, but was now hearing “it gives you long life”. He stressed, however, that the most dangerous product according to the new research emerging was “excessive use of white flour”- the basis of most of our diets.

According to Mr. Greene, it was for these reasons that CaFAN required young leadership to work, and it was not by accident that the workshop was being held at the University. “We need the schools, we need the university… One of our techniques [is about] how do we bring the university to the people… We want to show that agriculture is not just farmers; it has its linkage to the school and to health. At the end of the day, it is linked to our very lives,” the CaFAN Head stressed.

**URP Agriculture Programme launched.** Trinidad and Tobago Government Information Service Limited (GISL), July 24, 2013

[http://www.news.gov.tt/content/urp-agriculture-programme-launched#.UglUMPVvCZQ](http://www.news.gov.tt/content/urp-agriculture-programme-launched#.UglUMPVvCZQ)

**Full Article**

More than 10,000 Unemployment Relief Program (URP) workers will now be involved in the agricultural industry under a special program which aims to make the URP sustainable and efficient in its use of resources.

Speaking at the formal launch of the URP in Agriculture Programme, on July 23, at Invader’s Ground, Felicity, Minister of Food Production, Devant Maharaj said that the lives of over 10,000 URP workers will be enriched from this programme.

The Minister added that under the old URP there was neither sustainable nor effective use of resources and the decision was made in keeping with the pillar of “People –Centered Development, to reform the programme.

The URP Programme is now divided into a three-part developmental programme which includes the URP Agriculture, URP Social Services and URP Corporations.

Under the URP in Agriculture there are three core services: a three month training programme to provide semi-skilled labour for farmers; provision of training and infrastructure to agriculture community projects under a Pilot Community Supported Agriculture Programme and maintenance of infrastructure on farmer’s holdings such as small access roads and waterways, including of irrigation and drainage channels.

Further, the URP in Agriculture trains and enables person’s the hands-on experience to work on farms, a partnership with farmers to help alleviate the labour shortage.
Persons trained are exposed to various areas of agriculture; including home gardening, grow boxes, integrated pest management, crop marketing and sales, as well as life skills.

So far 572 persons from 12 different locations including: Pt. Fortin, Princes Town, Sangre Grande, Brasso, Sea Lots and Chaguanas were trained.

Another training session carded soon will target another 229 persons.

In three years’ time, the programme hopes to target another 3000 more persons to train who may be able to become entrepreneurs in the agriculture sector.

Further, the community Supported Agriculture Programme will dish out training to participants in crop and nursery production, plant propagation, Aquaponics and small ruminants in various communities.

The aim of the Food Production Ministry is to empower communities so that they can stand on their own after one year of assistance from the ministry. A stipend will be provided for persons involved.

The infrastructure aspect of the programme will look at repairs and maintenance of irrigation channels and agriculture access roads.

Minister of Food Production said that the combination of training and infrastructural development in the agriculture sector has the potential to stimulate our economy and support entrepreneurial initiative and innovation and will significantly reduce the food import bill.

Courtesy the Ministry of Communications

Agricultural Education


Full Article

The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the Ministry of Agriculture, yesterday, awarded the top 2013 Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) agriculture candidate.

Guyanese Saudia Raffik, who also topped Caribbean students was to receive US$250, in the Ministry of Agriculture boardroom, at Regent and Vlissengen Roads, Georgetown, but was absent and her brother, Javed Raffik and father, Mohammed Raffik, collected the award on her behalf.

Executive Director of CARDI, Guyanese Mr. Arlington Chesney said it was a pleasure to be making the presentation to Saudia’s family, moreso because she is also Guyanese. He recalled that the award was inaugurated in 2007 and the first was presented in 2008 and there are certain criteria that a
Established in 2007, the CARDI award to the top Caribbean Examination Council’s Agriculture Science student is presented to the student who achieves a grade one in Agriculture, grade two in Mathematics and English ‘A’ and grade one or two in another technical or general CXC subject.

This year’s top student is Guyanese, Saudia Raffik. Receiving the award, in the form of US$250, on June 26 at Guyana’s Ministry of Agriculture Georgetown office was Ms. Raffiz’s brother, Javed Raffik and father, Mohammed Raffik. On hand to present the award were the Hon. Dr. Leslie Ramsammy Minister of Health and Dr. Arlington Chesney, CARDI’s Executive Director.

Chesney is noted to have said that ‘we need more young blood in agriculture’. This is clearly a call for more students across the Region to view the field of agriculture as a viable career option. He opined on the variety of attractive jobs available in the sector, including engineers, exporter, scientist, researcher and international marketer, among others.

CARDI … a Regional organization that seeks to contribute to the economic well-being of Caribbean people by the generation and transfer of appropriate technology through agricultural research for development.
PSS Presents ‘Nature Serenity’ Products for Shop Dominica this Weekend by GIS Dominica, 2 August 2013

Full Article

In anticipation of shop Dominica 2013, fifth form business students of the Portsmouth Secondary School have increased production of their ‘Nature Serenity’ products.

GIS news visited the students’ production floor on Thursday where about four young entrepreneurs guided by their teacher, Roslyn Walter, were busy labelling their products.

The group which was formed in May last year has had its products featured in supermarkets and is meeting demands and industry standards.

They produce a wide variety of goods, endorsed by the Bureau of Standards. These include sea salt, virgin coconut oil, rum punches, seasoning pepper sauce, shaped cocoa, coffee packets and much more.

Mackisha Brumant a producer with Nature Serenity says her organisation has big future plans.

““We intend to make it grow; to make our own factory to produce; to help promote our local stuff instead of them going to waste and to decrease on our import rates.””

The entrepreneurs behind Nature Serenity source their raw materials from their own gardens or purchase from other farmers.

Teacher Walter is grateful for the support of members of the private sector as well as the individuals and other small business owners.

She said, “I am very optimistic because the students who are here with me, they have already started their own businesses. They are hoping that as the finances come in they can expand.”

Ronald Austrie, principal of the Portsmouth Secondary School expressed that he is overwhelmed at the students’ dedication and their success.

““When we started off I had no idea that it was going take off in that manner,” he said.

He informed Gis news that after a symposium held in 2012, the panellists were so impressed that they encouraged students to pursue business.

He said with the support of the National Development Foundation, the Dominica Manufacturers Association, the Small Business Unit and the Dominica Bureau of Standards his students have been able to accomplish much.

In the quest to empower youth and boost the manufacturing industry, administrators of Nature Serenity only need one thing – Dominica’s support.
“Don’t hesitate; let us help the young people grow.” That is the plight of their Business Teacher, Roslyn Walter. She called on locals to support the young people’s dream by purchasing their products.

Nature Serenity products ranging from five to thirty-five dollars will be featured this weekend at the annual shop Dominica campaign.

Agricultural Trade

http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres13_e/pr692_e.htm

Full Article

The future of world trade, and the global trading system, will be shaped by a range of economic, political and social factors, including technological innovation, shifts in production and consumption patterns, and demographic change, according to the 2013 World Trade Report published by the WTO on 18 July 2013. Director-General Pascal Lamy said: “One element clearly stands out in the Report, and that is the importance of trade for development”.

“The transformation of trade has been underway for some time,” said WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy. “It is manifested most clearly in wider geographical participation in trade and the rise of international supply chain production. One element clearly stands out in the Report, and that is the importance of trade for development. The forecasts and reflections contained in this report do not foresee a reverse of globalization. But we should remember that the gains it brings could be nullified or at least mitigated if short-term pressures are allowed to override long-term interests, and if its social consequences in terms of the unevenness of its benefits are neglected. This is why renewed efforts are needed to revive the vibrancy of the global trading system.”

One of the most significant drivers of change is technology. Not only have revolutions in transport and communications transformed our world but new developments, such as 3D printing, and the continuing spread of information technology will continue to do so. Trade and foreign direct investment, together with a greater geographical spread of income growth and opportunity, will integrate a growing number of countries into more extensive international exchange. Higher incomes and larger populations will put new strains on both renewable and non-renewable resources, generating even greater need for careful resource management. More effort must also be devoted to addressing environmental issues, the report says.

Economic and political institutions will continue to have a significant role to play in shaping international co-operation, including in trade, as will the interplay of cultural customs among countries. Non-tariff measures will gain in prominence and regulatory convergence will likely constitute the greatest challenge to the trading system of the future. The future of trade will also be affected by the extent to which politics and policies successfully address issues of growing social concern, such as the availability of jobs and persistent income inequality, as well as environmental concerns, say the authors of the World Trade Report 2013.

Main points of the Report
Trends in international trade

Dramatic decreases in transport and communication costs have been the driving forces behind today’s global trading system. Geopolitics has also played a decisive role in advancing and reinforcing these structural trends.

In the last 30 years, trade in merchandise and commercial services have increased by about 7 per cent per year on average, reaching a peak of $18 trillion and $4 trillion respectively in 2011. When trade is measured in value-added terms, services play a larger role.

Between 1980 and 2011, developing economies raised their share in world exports from 34 per cent to 47 per cent and their share in world imports from 29 per cent to 42 per cent. Asia is playing an increasing role in world trade.

For a number of decades, world trade has grown on average nearly twice as fast as world production. This reflects the increasing prominence of international supply chains and hence the importance of measuring trade in value-added terms.

Simulations show that in a dynamic economic and open trade environment, developing countries are likely to outpace developed countries in terms of both export and GDP growth by a factor of two to three in future decades. By contrast, their GDP would grow by less than half this rate in a pessimistic economic and protectionist scenario, and export growth would be lower than in developed countries.

Fundamental economic factors affecting international trade

Demographic change affects trade through its impact on countries’ comparative advantage and on import demand. An ageing population, migration, educational improvements and women’s participation in the labour force will all play a role in years to come, as will the continuing emergence of a global middle class.

Investment in physical infrastructure can facilitate the integration of new players into international supply chains. The accumulation of capital and the build-up of knowledge and technology associated with investment, particularly foreign direct investment, can also enable countries to move up the value chain by altering their comparative advantage.

New players have emerged among the countries driving technological progress. Countries representing 20 per cent of the world’s total population accounted for about 70 per cent of research and development (R&D) expenditure in 1999, but only about 40 per cent in 2010. Technology spill-overs are largely regional and stronger among countries connected by production networks. In addition to the traditionally R&D intensive manufacturing sectors, knowledge-intensive business services are emerging as key drivers of knowledge accumulation.

The shale gas revolution portends dramatic shifts in the future pattern of energy production and trade as North America becomes energy sufficient. Increasing water scarcity in the future in large swathes of the developing world may mean that the long-term decline in the share of food and agricultural products in international trade might be arrested or even reversed.

Ample opportunities exist for policy actions, at the national and multilateral level, to reduce transportation costs and offset the effect of higher fuel costs in the future – improving the quantity and quality of transportation infrastructure, successfully concluding the Doha Round negotiations on trade facilitation, introducing more competition on transport routes, and supporting innovation.
Improvements in institutional quality, notably in relation to contract enforcement, can reduce the costs of trade. Institutions are also a source of comparative advantage, and trade and institutions strongly influence each other.

Trade openness and the broader socio-economic context

Successful integration into global markets requires the constant need for individuals and societies to cope with changes in the competitive environment. These adjustments can put labour markets under strain and can shape attitudes towards trade openness. Job losses in the short-run can exert pressure on governments to use barriers to trade. In the end, it is open economies with a well-trained workforce and a business-friendly environment as well as an effective social protection system that tend to be better placed to adjust successfully.

Societies’ transition to a sustainable development path requires careful management of the multifaceted relationship between trade and the environment in order to maximize the environmental benefits that open trade can bring. Competitiveness concerns may result in governments incorporating trade-restrictive non-tariff measures into environmental policies as a means of compensating affected firms and sectors. Such green incentive packages may undermine their environmental effectiveness and exacerbate their potentially adverse trade effects.

The expansion of trade needs to be supported by a stable financial and monetary system – delivering a sufficient volume of trade finance at an affordable cost, particularly for developing countries, and macroeconomic policies that promote exchange rate stability.

Prospects for multilateral trade co-operation

Some of the main trends which will affect world trade in the coming decades are the emergence of international value chains, the rise of new forms of regionalism, the growth of trade in services, the greater incidence of non-tariff measures, higher and more volatile commodity prices, the rise of emerging economies, and evolving perceptions about the link between trade, jobs and the environment.

These trends will raise a number of challenges for the WTO. Trade opening, especially in the context of non-tariff measures beyond WTO disciplines, is taking place outside of the WTO. A greater focus on regulatory convergence will therefore be required. Interdependence between trade in goods and trade in services is increasing. Frictions in natural resource markets expose some regulatory gaps. The emergence of new players affects global trade governance in ways that need to be better understood. Coherence between WTO rules and non-trade regulations in other multilateral fora needs to be maintained.

Addressing these challenges will involve reviewing and possibly expanding the WTO agenda. Traditional market access issues will not disappear but new issues, particularly with regard to non-tariff measures, are emerging. Internal governance matters as well as the role of the WTO in global governance may need to be addressed. An important issue will be how to “multilateralize” the gains made in preferential trade agreements and to secure regulatory convergence.
Major changes in global trade by Accion y Reforma Agricola, 28 July, 2013

Full Article

The World Trade Report 2013 focuses on trade as cause and effect of the change, and examines the factors shaping the future of global trade.

The world is changing extremely rapidly under the influence of many factors, among others, the changing patterns of production and consumption, constant technological innovation, new forms of trade and obviously policy.

One of the main drivers of change is technology. If the revolution in transport and communications has transformed the world we live in, new breakthroughs such as 3D printing and the continued expansion of information technology will continue. Trade and foreign direct investment, along with the geographic extent of growth of income and opportunities, allow an increasing number of countries are integrated into a network of more extensive international exchanges. The increase in income and population will put further pressure on resources, both renewable and nonrenewable, which will force prudently manage. Environmental issues also require increasing attention.

Economic and political institutions, as well as the interaction between the cultures of different countries, helping to shape international cooperation, including in the field of trade. The future of trade will also depend on the efficiency with which the political and policy measures to respond to increasingly raise issues over social concerns, such as persistent unemployment and income inequality. These and other factors are discussed in the World Trade Report 2013.

Source: World Trade Organization (Centralamerciadata.com)

Ten trends for the next ten years

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." John F. Kennedy

For the study "Delivering Tomorrow - Customer Needs in 2020 and Beyond", Deutsche Post, DHL brought together experts from around the world to hear their views and analysis of future trends in the global economy.

Global Evolution - The world economy grows

■ Climate change has become the big issue and unleash a "green revolution" in products and services. Sustainable energy production is on the threshold of a breakthrough.
■ The gap between rich and poor is expected to continue growing. We must act decisively to counter this.
■ China is the undisputed winner of economic growth and will join the ranks of the world's technology leaders.

The "new" client: New needs, expectations, behaviors

■ Internet will transform customer expectations and behavior worldwide. The focus will be on the identification, transparency, availability and speed.
■ The Ecofriendliness and conscious consumption will increasingly determine buying behavior.
■ The convenience, comfort and simplicity will be the basic requirements.
Communicating person to person will remain a priority.

Logistics Changes: The new industry model

- Logistics sector will become a trendsetter and set new standards in cooperative efforts and "green" business.
- The location outside borders and outsourcing (outsourcing) create new possibilities. The value chain will expand in all directions in logistics services.
- Logistics providers evolve increasingly consulting firms, offering value-added services.

Upcoming Events

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/
First International Conference on Global Food Security
Date: 29 September - 2 October 2013
Location: Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands
Website: http://globalfoodsecurityconference.com/index.html

October 2013
First Global Yam Conference “Yams 2013”
Date: 3-6 October, 2013
Location: Accra, Ghana
Description: First Global Yam Conference “Yams 2013” will be held in conjunction with the 12th Symposium of the International Society for Tropical Root Crops (ISTRC)-African Branch, from 3 to 6 October 2013 in Accra, Ghana
Website: http://www.iita.org/web/yams2013

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

November 2013
Entomology 2013: Entomological Society of America (ESA) 61st Annual Meeting
Date: 10-13 November 2013
Location: Austin, Texas, USA
Theme: Science Impacting a Connected World
Website: http://www.entsoc.org/entomology2013