
(CARICOM Secretariat, Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown, Guyana) Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) which will be held in Georgetown, Guyana, 4-12 October, is being marketed as a great opportunity not only for pursuing food security but also for promoting agriculture as a business, modernising the sector, and creating and expanding networks.

For more information see page 9

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

As harvest begins, crop matures under dry skies. Quincy Journal, 16 September, 2013

Full Article

The U.S. corn crop marched toward maturity without further drought damage according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported today. With 53 percent of the crop in good or excellent condition, 22 percent of the crop had reached full maturity and 81 percent reached the dent stage by September 15.

"While many growers have noticed the impact of late-season drought on their crops, official reports continue to forecast a crop that, while lagging in progress, is not declining in quality at this point," said National Corn Growers Association President Pam Johnson. "The drought monitors show conditions have reached the severe stage in several key corn-growing areas of the upper Midwest, thus we realize that the impact of weather conditions throughout the season cannot yet be fully assessed."

Corn maturity continues to lag following a late, cool planting season with corn at full maturity currently 19 points behind the five-year average of 41 percent at this time. Likewise, only four percent of the total U.S. corn crop had been harvested by Sept. 15, six points behind the five-year average. While many areas of the country have not yet begun harvesting corn, Texas and North Carolina made significant progress with 61 and 53 percent of corn acreage harvested respectively, nearing the five-year average for those states.

The corn condition remained largely unchanged from the prior week's forecast with 13 percent of the crop reported to be in excellent condition and 40 percent in good condition. Despite the flash drought conditions reported in many areas, the percentage of corn in good condition was forecast only one point lower than the previous week. Notably, the crop quality far surpasses that seen last year when only three percent of the crop remained in excellent condition and 21 percent in good at this point in the season.

"While weather can still impact the crop as it reaches maturity, we are growing closer to having a more accurate handle on this quality and quantity of corn grown with each passing week."

Brazil soybean planting starts early by Agriculture.com, 19 September, 2013

Full Article

As U.S. farmers work to harvest their 2013 corn and soybean crops, Brazilian farmers are busy planting their 2014 soybean crop.

In fact, soybean planting has started earlier this year in the center-west of Brazil, especially in the states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul. In an attempt to ensure themselves of a double-crop opportunity (mainly with cotton), several farmers have decided to give the soybean crop a better chance to finish on time.
However, Mother Nature may have something to say about early attempts to plant.

The bad news for Brazilian farmers right now is that precipitation is near 0.98 inches in some regions of Mato Grosso, which is low for a safe crop in the area.

Hallowing time finished on September 15 in the area. Hallowing is an initiative started by some farmers of the center-west of Brazil in order to avoid the risks of soybean rust, which later became law. They do it by not planting soybeans in an off-season period. Not obeying the hallowing can lead to penalties such as fines.

Compared to last year, planting is starting one week earlier. In the southern state of Paraná, the soybean planting might start this week because the wheat harvest has just finished after significant losses due to frost in the middle of the winter.

Looking ahead, the weather forecast in the next 15 days for Paraná, however, shows the precipitation level will be adequate for soybean planting, according to Brazil's National Institute of Metereology. Rio Grande do Sul is the last state in Brazil to plant its oilseed because it finishes the wheat harvest in October or November.

For 2014, there are some early indicators as to how this year's soybean season will play out, according to Mr. Luiz Pacheco, a market analyst from Curitiba.

"Much like last year, we could be seeing confirmation of the same trend where Mato Grosso will gain more soybean area. But the state of Paraná will continue to offer more profit when it comes to the grain itself, the crush, and the oil. Everything else will depend on the weather," explained Pacheco.

Meanwhile, the latest National Supply Company report still did not predict the total soybean area for the 2013/2014 season. However, Agroconsult says that the area for the oilseed will grow 5.8% to 72.9 million acres.

**Mango**

**Australian mango exporters gain U.S. access** by Freshfruitportal.com, 19 September, 2013

http://www.freshfruitportal.com/2013/09/19/australian-mango-exporters-gain-u-s-access/?country=trinidad%20and%20tobago

Full Article

U.S. authorities have amended regulations to allow imports of Australian mangoes, using the same treatment options given to Pakistan against the fungus Cytosphaera mangiferae. Australian mangoes - mangos net au

In a final rule, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) said exporters would need to undertake a systems approach, complying with a series of measures including broad-spectrum fungicide treatment.

Irradiation will also be necessary to ward off the risk of mango seed weevil and fruit flies.

Unlike their Pakistani counterparts, Australian mango shippers will have the option to irradiate the fruit at home or on U.S. soil.
“The mangoes would also have to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate with an additional declaration that the conditions for importation have been met,” the rule said.

“This action would allow the importation of mangoes from Australia while continuing to protect against the introduction of plant pests into the United States.”

APHIS expects Australia to ship roughly 1,200 metric tons (MT) of mangoes to the U.S. annually, representing about 0.5% of the North American country’s total mango imports.

Climate Change

Climate change mitigation earmarked as key area for EU funding. Demerara Waves, 18 September 2013

Full Article

Guyana is treating climate change mitigation as one of its key concerns in talks with donor partners as it prepares for another billion-euro round of funding from the European Union.

The media was Wednesday briefed on a two-day preparatory meeting ahead of the 11th European Development Fund [EDF] Programming Seminar for the Caribbean Region which opens on Thursday in Georgetown.

Director of Programming in the Ministry of Finance Tarachand Balgobin said that while the seminar will be dealing with the regional representatives it is hoped that the officials will also address the national programmes.

“In terms of the engagement we have been having with the local (EU) delegate here in Guyana, two main areas have been discussed and one of them is infrastructure and the other has to do with climate change and climate change-related types of activities.

We have not concluded that discussion so we’re still engaged with the local delegation office in Guyana to design the interventions on the national programme,” he said.

Caribbean Forum of African Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM) Director General Percival Marie noted that in recent times the EU and CARIFORUM had endorsed a five-point joint strategy for cooperation. The areas identified were crime and security; regional integration and cooperation; climate change; institutional and economic development of Haiti; and a general collaboration between the two blocs at the wider international forum.

“As the Caribbean region we use the three dominant thematic areas, crime and security, regional cooperation and climate change as the main pillars on which we anticipate and hope to go forward with our regional programme with the European Union with specific attention and support for Haiti as a basic overarching theme,” Marie said.
However, he noted that specific projects have not yet been identified since they were still to learn the value of the assistance coming their way for the particular areas under the 11th EDF.

“It is a joint process and we’ll probably spend some time on Friday discussing that kind of structure and that kind of process, that’s the intent of the seminar,” Marie explained.

The EU Delegation in Georgetown has said that European Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs will be here for three days to participate in the seminar.

According to the Delegation, he is also expected to hold separate bilateral meetings with the National Authorising Officers of the attending member states and with representatives of the CARIFORUM Directorate.

Also on his itinerary is a visit to the Mangroves Restoration Project funded by the European Union and the Government of Guyana.

The 11th EDF will cover the period 2014 – 2020 and it is expected that the EU will provide its CARIFORUM partners with EURO 1 billion or US$1.4 billion in grants for the most vulnerable people in the Caribbean region.

“Grassroots action” to curb global climate change by Nathan Russell. International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), 16 September, 2013


Full Article
New scientific evidence demonstrates that a potent chemical mechanism operating in the roots of a tropical grass used for livestock feed has enormous potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Referred to as “biological nitrification inhibition” or BNI, the mechanism markedly reduces the conversion of nitrogen applied to soil as fertilizer into nitrous oxide, according to papers prepared by CIAT scientists and partners for the 22nd International Grasslands Congress taking place this week in Sydney, Australia. Nitrous oxide is the most powerful and aggressive greenhouse gas, with a global warming potential 300 times that of carbon dioxide.

“Nitrous oxide makes up about 38 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture, which accounts for almost a third of total emissions worldwide,” said Michael Peters, who leads CIAT’s research on tropical forages. “BNI offers what could be agriculture’s best bet for keeping global climate change within manageable limits.”

Scientists at CIAT and the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS) have researched BNI collaboratively for the last 15 years.

“This approach offers tremendous possibilities to reduce nitrous oxide emissions and the leaching of polluting nitrates into water supplies, while also raising crop yields through more efficient use of nitrogen fertilizer,” said G.V. Subbarao, a senior scientist at JIRCAS.

As a result of recent advances, scientists have developed the means to exploit the BNI phenomenon on a large scale:
• CIAT researchers have found ways to increase BNI through plant breeding in different species of
  Brachiaria grasses. The new techniques include methods for rapidly quantifying BNI in
  Brachiaria together with molecular markers, which reduce the time needed for field testing.

• Center scientists have also gathered evidence that a maize crop grown after Brachiaria
  humidicola pastures gave good yields with only half the amount of nitrogen fertilizer normally
  used, because more nitrogen was retained in the soil, thus reducing nitrous oxide emissions and
  nitrate leaching.

• In addition, scientists have developed hybrids of Brachiaria humidicola and delivered these, with
  support from the German government, to farmers in Colombia and Nicaragua for productivity and
  quality testing. Based on evaluation of the new hybrids and with the aid of simulation models,
  researchers are studying where else the hybrids can be introduced.

  “Livestock production provides livelihoods for a billion people, but it also contributes about half of
  agriculture’s greenhouse gas emissions,” Peters explained. “BNI is a rare triple-win technology that’s
  good for rural livelihoods as well as the global environment and climate. It defies the widespread
  notion that livestock are necessarily in the minus column of any food security and environmental
  calculation.”

  “The problem is that today’s crop and livestock systems are very ‘leaky,”’ said Subbarao. “About 70
  percent of the 150 million tons of nitrogen fertilizer applied globally is lost through nitrate leaching
  and nitrous oxide emissions; the lost fertilizer has an annual estimated value of US$90 billion.”

  “BNI has huge possibilities for reducing nitrogen leakage,” said CIAT scientist Idupulapati Rao.
  “Grassland pastures are the single biggest use of agricultural land—covering 3.2 billion hectares out
  of a global total of 4.9 billion. In Brazil alone, 11 million hectares of grassland have been converted
to maize and soybean production. Instead of more monocropping, developing countries need to
integrate Brachiaria grasses into mixed crop-livestock systems on a massive scale to make them more
sustainable.”

Originally from sub-Saharan Africa, Brachiaria grasses found their way to South America centuries
ago—possibly as bedding on slave ships. Improved varieties of the grass are widely grown on
pasturelands in Brazil, Colombia, and other countries, and they have recently been taken back to
Africa to help ease severe shortages of livestock feed.

In a major breakthrough, JIRCAS scientists discovered several years ago the chemical substance
responsible for BNI and developed a reliable method for detecting the nitrification inhibitor coming
from plant roots. Scientists at CIAT then validated the BNI concept in the field, demonstrating that
Brachiaria grass suppresses nitrification and nitrous oxide emissions, compared with soybean, which
lacks this ability.

  “Our work on BNI started with a field observation made by one of our scientists in the 1980s—back
then it was nothing more than a dream,” said Peters. “But now it’s a dream with an action plan and a
lot of solid scientific achievements behind it.”
Soil and water management

Caribbean Water Ministers meet to address wastewater policy and financial challenges. Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C), 18 September 2013

Full Article

Bridgetown, Barbados, September 18, 2013: Ministers with responsibility for Water in several Caribbean countries will gather at the 9th High Level Session (HLS 9) Ministerial Forum which takes place on 10 - 11 October 2013 at the Hilton Barbados Resort. This Ministerial Forum is part of the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association’s (CWWA’s) 22nd Annual Conference and Exhibition, which is being hosted by the Barbados Water Authority (BWA).

HLS 9 will be held under the auspices of Dr. The Honourable David Estwick, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Water Resource Management. The theme is “Water and Sanitation and the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Addressing Wastewater Policy and Financial Challenges in the Caribbean.”

It is a fact that 85% of wastewater entering the Caribbean Sea remains untreated, negatively impacting on the near shore marine environment, human health, tourism and livelihoods. Yet even as we produce more and more wastewater, and social, environmental and economic costs increase, investment in wastewater management receives little attention and throughout the region wastewater treatment continues to be neglected.

It is against this background that Ministers and senior officials involved in water resources management will through dialogue, seek to achieve greater harmonisation of water governance within the region thereby leading to the development and implementation of regional approaches/policies for water sector management in the Caribbean. They will also discuss available opportunities for training, financing new infrastructure and south-south cooperation as well as endorse specific approaches and activities.

The HLS which is a joint initiative of the CWWA and the Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) will this year see a collaboration with the Global Environment Facility’s Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (GEF CReW), a four year project which began in 2011 and which aims to provide sustainable financing for the wastewater sector, to support policy and legislative reforms and to foster regional dialogue and knowledge exchange. Other regional partners including CARICOM, CARPHA, CAWASA, UWI and UNEP, involved in water and wastewater management are expected to provide technical support and guidance for the discussions.

The media is invited to the Official Opening Ceremony of HLS 9 at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday 10th October 2013. For more information on the HLS please contact:

Ms. Gabrielle Lee Look, Communications Officer, Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C)
Tel: +868 663 4829; Fax: +868 645 7805. E-mail: gleelook@gwp-caribbean.org
Mrs. Donna Sue Spencer, Communications Specialist, Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater (CReW). Tel: +876 922 9267-9; Fax: +876 922 9292. E-mail: ds@cep.unep.org
Water for Food seminar addresses global food security efforts by the Daily Nebraskan, 18 September, 2013

Full Article

The Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Institute hosted a seminar concerning global food security efforts at the Nebraska East Union Tuesday.

The seminar promoted a partnership between the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, a global agricultural research and rural development organization, Ruben G. Echeverría is the director general of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, which is a member of a larger consortium of agricultural organizations called the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

Echeverría’s presentation highlighted developing projects, new researching opportunities and further involvement concerning food security efforts within CGIAR.

“I am fully convinced we need to reconnect the United States with the international system of agricultural research,” Echeverría said, “Agriculture is back in the agenda and there are a tsunami of issues that need to be addressed.”

Echeverría believes humans face the greatest food security challenges. Growing population and fast-changing environments affecting growing seasons are introducing new problems where questions of crop production, fresh water distribution and environmental sustainability are being called into question.

“Unless we find new and better partnerships and ways to share data and research, we can never hope to diagnose regional agricultural challenges across the globe,” Echeverría said.

The International Center for Tropical Agriculture started in Colombia but now has research facilities in Kenya and Vietnam. The goal of CIAT is to dig deeper into the data collected by these facilities so science innovations and techniques can be used to impact communities.

Roberto Lenton, founding executive director of the Water for Food Institute attended Echeverría’s presentation and believes there are a lot of potential partnerships and research opportunities to be made between the International Center for Tropical Agriculture and UNL.

“The vision for the Water for Food Institute was that we will do research, give policy advice and provide education on how to use water more effectively and efficiently for food security,” Lenton said.

The Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Institute was established in 2010. This institute has a presence on all four University of Nebraska campuses, but as the organization grew involvement expanded to international projects so national research could be conducted.

“The idea of the institute was that information was constantly being shared,” Lenton said. “What was learned about Nebraska could be shared internationally and what was learned internationally could be shared with Nebraskan farmers and agencies.”

The Water for Food Institute is comprised of faculty from several departments relevant to the management of food production, the college of public health at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the law and agriculture programs at UNL, to name a few, Lenton said.
Lenton doesn’t know of any UNL partnerships specific to the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, however, one program in particular called Water, Land, and Ecosystems described in Echeverría’s presentation has participation from the Nebraska Universities.

The Water for Food Institute is always looking for opportunities for students to go overseas to obtain field experience and exposure to different agricultural environments. Currently, UNL’s involvement is particularly with the larger CGIAR organization, but Lenton thinks there are many exciting opportunities to be gained through the International Center for Tropical Agriculture.

“Whether it be university students going on to achieve post doctoral research or for faculty to go on sabbatical,” Lenton said, “I hope the result of Echeverría’s visit is that more students and faculty gain experience and become enriched through CIAT.”

Agricultural Development

**Community Development Division host Agronomy Workshop.** Government of Antigua and Barbuda Press Release, 20 September, 2013

**Full Article**

Participants of this year’s Homes, Families and Gardens Festival competition and other individuals continue to garner useful information that would assist them in the proper management of their gardens.

The Community Development Division in the Ministry of Social Transformation hosted an agronomy workshop Wednesday at the Dunbars Experimental Station in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture.

The one-hour session was facilitated by Agronomists Jemal Ralph and Dennis Roberts. Agronomy covers a broad range of topics such as plant breeding, pest and weed control, irrigation, soil fertility and crop rotation on which participants were able to gather information.

In addition, they were further educated on the purpose of the Dunbars Experimental Station, which according to Ralph, is responsible for carrying out experiments on new chemicals being introduced, new varieties of crops and germination tests among others.

During the month of August, several other workshops were held to include one on horticulture facilitated by George Purcell at Hortico and another on garden arrangement with Barbara Japal and Kath Trafton from the Antigua and Barbuda Horticultural Society.

Another workshop on plant protection will also be organised.

Registration for the Community Development Division’s sixth annual Homes, Families and Gardens Festival competition ends on September 30. It is being held under the theme “Think beautification for the nation’s health and wealth”.

_Agriculture In the News September 15–21, 2013. Issue compiled by CARDI_
Great opportunity for promoting, modernising agriculture. CARICOM Secretariat Press release, 199/2013. (19 September 2013)

Full Article

(CARICOM Secretariat, Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown, Guyana) Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) which will be held in Georgetown, Guyana, 4-12 October, is being marketed as a great opportunity not only for pursuing food security but also for promoting agriculture as a business, modernising the sector, and creating and expanding networks.

The premier agriculture event in the Caribbean Community’s (CARICOM) calendar is being hosted by the Government of Guyana and will be convened this year at the Guyana International Convention Centre (GICC) under the theme ‘Linking the Caribbean for Food and Nutrition Security and Rural Development’.

CWA is a collaborative event with the main partners being the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), the Caribbean Agricultural Research Development Institute (CARDI) and the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Cooperation on Agriculture and Rural Development (CTA).

As preparatory activities shift into high gear, organisers are confident of a successful event that will push agriculture to the forefront, raise the Community’s awareness of the importance of the sector to national and regional development, and create opportunities for greater collaboration and interaction among CARICOM Member States and with their extra-regional partners. As such, they are encouraging stakeholders in the sector to take full advantage of the event that is held once each year in a CARICOM Member State.

In addition to full-time farmers, persons who are not fully engaged in the sector will also get exposure at the CWA. Expectations also are that professionals in other fields and those who had once tilled the land, will be able to tap into the opportunities that are available in agriculture.

The organisers are encouraging those who once farmed and those who have moved on from agriculture, to re-enter the food production enterprise.

This year’s edition of the CWA will feature about 42 activities including workshop/seminars on modernizing agriculture, productivity, agricultural health and food safety, field visits, a Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) and an exposition, beginning on 9 October that will showcase the agricultural pursuits and development of CARICOM. ‘Cook off’ competitions featuring mouth-watering Caribbean cuisine will also be held.

Activities begin on Friday 4 October with a two-day Media Science Workshop hosted by CARDI and CTA, that has become a staple of the event. The event attracts media representatives from across the Caribbean as key stakeholders in the agriculture sector.

Other workshops will focus on Information and Communication Technology; Monitoring and Managing Pest Populations under a Changing Climate; the Development of the Coconut Industry in the Caribbean; Livestock; the Implementation and Mainstreaming of Regional Fisheries Policies; and Agricultural Health and Food Safety.
According to IICA Representative in Guyana, Mr. Wilmot Garnett, for the first time at the CWA, attention will be placed on the Cost of Production exercise in the agriculture sector, since it was an area that was often overlooked.

“Agriculture is a business, but we find that our farmers don’t write down and document things so we will be using a template and actually using some commodities, and we will go through this step by step with the farmers on how to ensure they are making money, that they are making a profit. Agriculture is a business and we need to instill that in our farmers, especially the young folks,” Mr. Garnett said, and added that there will be a focus on precision farming.

Visitors to the event will have an opportunity to tour several places of agricultural interest in Guyana, including the Guyana Sugar Corporation’s (GUYSUCO’s) Enmore Estate and Packaging Facility, the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority’s (NDIA’s) Hope Canal, the Guyana Rice Development Board’s (GRDB’s) Burma Research Centre, the Guyana School of Agriculture, the Satyadeow Sawh Aquaculture Center, the Guyana Livestock Development Authority, the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute and Mangrove Tour, the Hydromet’s Doppler Radar Tower and the Sante Fe Farm.

CONTACT: piu@caricom.org; caricompublicinfo@gmail.com

Europe tells Caribbean to improve project implementation. Demerara Waves, Thursday, 19 September 2013

Full Article

European Union (EU) Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs has urged the Caribbean to do better on the implementation of projects being funded by the European Union.

His call came on Thursday at the opening of an EU - Caribbean Forum of African Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM) seminar to discuss the 11th European Development Fund (EDF). This round of funding will see some one billion euros in grants coming towards the Caribbean for the period 2014 – 2020.

According to Piebalgs, the rate of disbursement under the almost 900-million-euro 10th EDF had slowed with 332 million euros being paid out in 2011, 280 million euros in 2012 and only 64 million euros in 2013.

“We must reverse the trend of slow implementation, make real progress and together ensure that we can complete our work under 10th EDF.” According to the Commissioner, any delay in disbursement is a loss of money.

Piebalgs also called for a more strategic approach in the way the funds were utilised with more actors being involved in project implementation.
“Who can do it the best in the shortest time possible so for me it is quite crucial that the results are achieved but it is expected in good quality and as fast as possible.”

The EU official also suggested that grant funding be utilised to pilot investments. “We focus very much on human capacity building but I believe that we forgot that grants have extreme value providing a measure for growth and sustainability. In today’s world you can get a loan but the problem is you need to repay it but very seldom grants. Grants are extremely valuable in my opinion for investment.”

Piebalgs said that that was why they had increased the investment facility from 40 million euros to 140 million euros.

Guyana has identified climate change mitigation and infrastructure as two key on which it will be talking to the EU.

A Joint Agreement between the EU and CARIFORUM outlines five broad areas to be funded by the EDFs. They are crime and security; regional integration and cooperation; climate change; institutional and economic development of Haiti; and a general collaboration between the two blocs at the wider international forum.

Caribbean gets 1 billion Euro grant. Demerara Waves, 19 September, 2013

Full Article

European Union (EU) Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs on Thursday announced a one billion Euro grant package for the Caribbean.

Addressing the opening of a two-day programming seminar for the Caribbean being held in Guyana, Piebalgs said the EU wants to use some of the funds to tackle rising crime and help in the reconstruction of Haiti which continues to suffer from hurricanes and an earthquake in recent years.

“Security, in my opinion, is very much related to the fight against drugs because that is an enormous potential of money and lawlessness and as the countries are relatively small, it is extremely difficult to fight global crimes,” he said.

Experts say the Caribbean is a transit-point for South American cocaine to North America and Europe, contributing to the proliferation of guns and the emergence of youth gangs.

Funds would also be spent on climate change and energy to build resilience against exogenous shocks.

The EU Commissioner said the emphasis would be on predictability and delivery of results for bilateral and regional projects. “We are not disengaging but we are trying actually to focus more on quality in a more strategic approach with you,” he said.

He said some of the grant funds would be used to “scale up cooperation efforts with Haiti, which is continuing its struggle towards reconstruction and against poverty.”
Aimed at ensuring that there is value for money, Piebalgs hopes to ensure that the Caribbean Investment Facility can be used to work with investment banks to blend loans with grants and mobilize sufficient resources for larger-scale infrastructure projects.

Secretary General of the 15-nation Caribbean Forum of the former European colonies in Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific, Irwin La Rocque hoped that the Regional Programme for the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) would be based on several areas that have been previously identified.

He also expected that the distribution of the funds between and within those areas would reflect the Caribbean’s regional and national priorities in keeping with the CARIFORUM/EU Joint Strategy.

The areas include strengthening regional integration and cooperation processes; implementation of the Caricom Single Market and Economy and the Economic Union of the sub-regional Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, effective implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement, development of enterprise through private sector development, energy, education and skills development, and Food and Nutrition Security.

The CARIFORUM/EU Joint Strategy, endorsed by the European and CARIFORUM Council of Ministers, provides that “the guiding principles for the Joint Strategy are joint ownership, mutual accountability, solidarity, co-management and co-responsibility.

Other themes cover the reconstruction and institutional support to Haiti; Climate Change and natural disasters, and Crime and Security.

**Backyard Hydroponics launch.** Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Food Production Press Release, 18 September 2013


**Full Article**

The Backyard Hydroponics is a joint programme among the Ministry of Food Production, the Ministry of People and Social Development and the Ministry of Local Government’s Unemployment Relief Programme (URP). The launch took place on Tuesday 17th September, 2013, at the La Horquetta Community Centre. This joint venture, Backyard Hydroponics teaches crop production using sharp sand hydroponics techniques and is geared to empower citizens to become self-reliant.

The project was launched in the La Horquetta/Talparo constituency with the intention of extending this initiative to all constituencies. The next constituencies for the programme will be Siparia and Caroni Central. On the programme nineteen (19) trainees received training basics of crop production and container planting with hydroponics; and practical planting of crops using sharp sand hydroponics in concrete pots. Training is provided by the Ministry of Food Production’s Agriculture Now Training Unit (ANTU).

On the day of the launch trainees collected their production kits. Each kit comprise: concrete pots; sharp sand; barrel; watering can; fertilizers; spray bottle; seedlings; and information leaflets which will allow them to continue to produce safe and nutritious food. Personnel from the Ministry of the People and Social Development will visit the participants to ensure that they are practicing what they have
learnt and the participants themselves can come back to the training site once per week for the following eight (8) weeks to provide an update on their home progress and ANTU trainers to help them with any problems that they may face.

The trainees are part of the **Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer Programme** under the Ministry of People and Social Development. The aim is to promote self-sufficiency and eventually less dependence on the TTCard and have access to safe nutritious food. To be eligible to participate in the Backyard Hydroponics programme participants must be:
- holders of the food card and in need of assistance
- able to accommodate 15 pots in their yard
- interested in the programme
- committed to the programme

**Information & Communication**

**Bridging the information gap in agriculture.** FAO, 16 September 2013

**Full Article**

AGORA makes online scientific literature available to over 100 poor countries - Tenth anniversary celebrated in Rome

**16 September 2013, Rome** - AGORA, a programme that brings key scientific literature on food, and related fields to students, researchers and scientists, has become a crucial tool for some of the world's poorest countries.

Ten years after its launch in 2003, AGORA (*Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture*) now provides free or low-cost access to over 3 500 key journals and 3 300 books in food, nutrition, agriculture and related biological, environmental and social sciences.

"Lack of access to knowledge is a major bottleneck for many poor countries to develop their agricultural sector and ensure food security," said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva celebrating AGORA’s 10th anniversary in Rome.

Graziano da Silva added that knowledge is only valuable to the extent that those who need it can access it.

"And this is the strength of the AGORA partnership: FAO, publishers and the scientific community have come together to facilitate the access to knowledge to hundreds of thousands of people worldwide."

"Knowledge is a public good. By putting this public good at the reach of those in the poorer countries, we are helping to break an important barrier that hinders development," he said.
AGORA has opened the door on a huge array of technical knowledge for 116 of the least developed FAO member countries where food insecurity is greatest.

Individual scientists, academics and practitioners from over 2 500 institutions in those countries have downloaded millions of articles from AGORA over the ten years.

AGORA is one of the four literature access programmes of the Research4Life public-private partnership between WHO, FAO, UNEP, WIPO, Cornell University, Yale University, the International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers, nearly 200 internationally recognized publishers, and several technical partners including Microsoft.

"Our congratulations to AGORA for reaching a decade of service to scientists in the developing world," said the CEO of Elsevier, Ron Mobed. "We are very proud to be a founding member of AGORA and Research4Life - working with partners like FAO towards enhanced quality of life for all."

The Partners of the Research4Life programmes, including AGORA, have pledged their continued support until 2020.

Agriculture Research

Ag Research: Double Digits to One. Kansas State University, K-State Research and Extension News, 6 September 2013

Full Article

Publicly funded agricultural research has a high return on investment, but cuts in funding could inhibit progress in feeding the world.

MANHATTAN, Kan. – In the early 1800s, the world population for the first time reached more than a billion people. In 2010, the population reached 6.8 billion. Based on prior trends, the population is expected to reach 8.9 billion by 2050, and in 2150, the projection is 9.75 billion people living worldwide.

“We’re going to have to feed them somehow, and we also want to increase the general standard of living,” said Julian Alston, agricultural and resource economics professor at the University of California-Davis. He spoke about the return on public investment in agricultural research as part of the 2013 Congressional Assistants Tour, hosted by K-State Research and Extension Aug. 29-30.

According to Alston, the solution to feeding more than 9 billion people in the future is more public funding for agricultural research. The availability for safe, affordable food for a growing world population is important, as is the need to preserve natural resources used for farming. Alston said future challenges agriculture face include competing demands for land and water, competing demands
with biofuels, a changing climate, and co-evolving pests and diseases. All of these challenges require continued ag research that in the past has shown a great return on investment.

Alston has researched the impact public research funding has had on U.S. agriculture. The findings were published in a 2010 book he co-authored titled, “Persistence Pays: U.S. Agricultural Productivity Growth and Benefits from Public R&D Spending.” He found that $1 invested in agricultural research has a return of about $33.

“That’s a fantastically good investment,” Alston said. “There’s nothing I know that is as good an investment as that. It’s not just a monetary payoff, but in addition to that, it’s an investment in preserving resources. It’s assuring food security of the world. It’s assuring competitiveness of American farmers in a world where other countries are trying very hard to do better than we are.”

Alston said the benefit-to-cost ratio is so high because the United States is not spending enough on agricultural research. If the United States spent more, eventually it would drive the benefit-to-cost ratio down to 1:1—the point at which it will have done the socially optimal amount of research.

The U.S. Food, Conservation and Energy Act, otherwise known as the Farm Bill, budgets about $150 billion in spending per year, but only $3 billion is allocated for agricultural research. Ag research is the part of the Farm Bill budget that has the biggest payoff to society, yet it is an area where funding is shrinking.

Not only is public funding shrinking, but U.S. agricultural productivity relative to other countries has been on the decline. Countries such as China, Brazil and India are becoming more efficient and productive. Alston called this a big change in the world table and said if the United States does not increase public funding for ag research to help boost productivity, it will be importing more food.

“I think over time progressively we (U.S.) are going to be less competitive,” Alston said. “Our agriculture sector is going to become less important relative to the rest of the world. When you combine our slowing investment in productivity-enhancing technology with our propensity for regulating production, it’s going to be increasingly difficult for the United States to compete in agricultural production.”

There are reasons why public funding for ag research has declined, he said, adding that more people need to lobby for the cause. One reason people push aside the need for such funding might be the delay in payoff, maybe 25 or 50 years after that first dollar is invested. Most people want to see a quicker payoff.

Alston said the idea is that agricultural research and development is “slow magic.”

“It takes many years before the research spending has consequences in our farmers’ fields,” Alston said. “If we spend money today, it may take 25 years before it has its full impact on farm productivity.”

The research can be subtle, he said, likening ag research to drilling for oil. Drilling can lead to many dry wells, but every now and then, the drillers hit a gusher.

“Agricultural research is like that, and on average, it’s been a complete bonanza,” Alston said. “Looking forward, we don’t know where the next bonanza is going to be. We just know in the past it’s been a very good investment, and there’s every reason to think in the future it will continue to be one.”
Alston said doubling the public funding for ag research is a good start to helping the United States remain productive and a player in feeding the world in the future. Doubling public funding, to more than $6 billion, is a small amount in the scheme of things, considering how much it could benefit the United States in agricultural productivity, natural resource preservation and staying competitive globally.

Many private groups have stepped up to assist in ag research funding, which has helped as public funds diminish. But Alston pointed out that a lot of agricultural research and development is necessary simply to prevent yields from falling, given the competition from ever-evolving pests and diseases and changes in climate.

“You’ve got to run hard just to stay in place,” Alston said. “You have to do a lot of investment just to keep up with nature.”

More state and federal dollars for research might also help make agriculture research more attractive for undergraduate and graduate students who want to pursue careers in science and prepare to take over for the majority of scientists who are retirement age and older.

The world will depend on the availability of public funding and knowledgeable scientists to carry the agricultural industry forward. That investment will help the billions of people around the world who suffer from malnutrition and live in poverty to become more productive, modernize and have access to markets, Alston said. Every dollar spent can help the United States continue to be a leader in this effort and stay at the forefront in feeding the world.

Agricultural Trade

CARICOM Website to improve market access for local exporters. Jamaica Information service, 19 September, 2013

Full Article

Local exporters now have greater access to information on existing and potential markets within the Caribbean, to better enable them to fulfill clients' demands and streamline their operations.

This, as the Jamaica Exporters Association (JEA) has established the CARICOM market access website.

The recently launched website is a collaborative endeavour with the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ), and is financed through the Caribbean Development Bank’s (CDB) Caribbean Aid for Trade and Regional Integration Trust Fund (CARTFund) under a US$15 million funding provision from the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID).

The website provides data on tariff and non-tariff measures, including information on customs tariff and clearance fees, as well as customs procedures and documentation.
It also outlines information on additional duties and taxes, measures related to the importation of services, and lists contact details for the relevant authorities dealing with import/export procedures for each CARICOM member state.

Speaking at the official launch at the JEA’s Winchester Road offices in Kingston, Industry, Investment and Commerce Minister, Hon. Anthony Hylton, welcomed the facility, arguing that the data speaks highly of the content quality, adding that this should greatly determine the website’s effectiveness.

“It’s not sufficient to have a mass of data. It is very critical that the data be organised in such a way that it is not only user-friendly, but when used, is likely to yield the desired outcomes. I have reason to believe that the database, based on what I have been told, should be a very exciting and interesting tool,” he said.

Mr. Hylton contended that the market access web portal is “critical” to developing Jamaica’s export sector and should go a far way in preventing stakeholders from committing “costly mistakes” by empowering them with appropriate information.

“The web site will allow business leaders to make prudent decisions through the provision of essential information, which must be factored into those decisions…in the same way government needs to make informed decisions,” he argued.

The Minister commended the JEA/PSOJ collaboration, noting that it is indicative of the organisations’ understanding of the need for partnership to support a sector, which is critical to medium and long-term economic growth.

He added that, more importantly, the organisations have demonstrated a clear understanding of the government’s export-led growth strategy “and are playing their role(s) in facilitating the export-led growth agenda.”

“This…launch…signifies a step in the right direction and one which will redound to significant levels of success to the Jamaican exporters and, ultimately, the Jamaican economy,” the Minister reasoned.

While noting that the website is a “work in progress” with information currently only available on CARICOM countries, Mr. Hylton said the content is expected to be expanded in the future to include information on other countries, “as Jamaican exporters seek to penetrate and cement their positions on global platforms.”

He expressed optimism that “if we put our shoulders to the wheel, embrace global best practices and high standards, and make all our businesses export-ready, Jamaica will be able to transform its economy and maintain dominance on many global platforms.”

In her remarks, former JEA President, Marjory Kennedy, underscored the need for local firms to have information that will guide their market access strategies to increase trade within CARICOM.

She pointed out that the JEA is “continually striving” to achieve its mandate of increasing Jamaica’s export earnings, and recognises that the website can complement the various strategies being pursued to promote Jamaican goods and services “so that we can regain a greater share of the CARICOM market.”

“This can contribute to the reversal of the trade imbalance between Jamaica and CARICOM. The disparity on trade with CARICOM is approximately 10 to one and it is therefore critical that we maximize every opportunity to reduce this trade imbalance,” she argued.
As such, Mrs. Kennedy said the JEA will integrate the website into its information hub to ensure members have access to information that will support their export initiatives.

She said the JEA also anticipates a continuation of the collaboration with the PSOJ and CDB, to ensure that the website is fully developed to become an “invaluable tool for Jamaican exporters, manufacturers and service providers.”

PSOJ President, Christopher Zacca, said the organisation anticipates the website also being used by the wider public “as a tool to facilitate trade within the region.”

The CDB’s CARTFund Consultant, June Alleyene Griffin, stressed that the website’s establishment “is only the start”, and urged that follow-up supporting activities be undertaken by stakeholders.

“We need to have the users, the private sector, use the information, indicate where there are gaps, so that the portal and the information provided can be strengthened and we can really see some serious results,” she urged.

**Upcoming Events**

**September 2013**

**2013 National Goat Conference - North Carolina A&T State University**
*Date:* 15-18 September 2013  
*Location:* Joseph S. Koury Convention Center, Greensboro, North Carolina, USA  
*Theme:* “Looking Towards the Future”  

**Science Forum 2013**
*Date:* 23-25 September 2013  
*Location:* Bonn, Germany.  
*Description:* Will focus on “Nutrition and health outcomes: targets for agricultural research”  

**CGIAR Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas (RTB) Annual Meeting**
*Date:* 26 September - 28 September 2013  
*Location:* Montpellier, France  

**First International Conference on Global Food Security**
*Date:* 29 September - 2 October 2013  
*Location:* Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands  

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](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

Global Water Partnership-Caribbean - 9th High Level Session (HLS 9) Ministerial Forum  
Date: 10 - 11 October 2013  
Location: Hilton Barbados Resort, Barbados  
Description: Ministers with responsibility for Water in several Caribbean countries will gather at the 9th High Level Session (HLS 9) Ministerial Forum which takes place on 10 - 11 October 2013 at the Hilton Barbados Resort. This Ministerial Forum is part of the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association’s (CWWA’s) 22nd Annual Conference and Exhibition, which is being hosted by the Barbados Water Authority (BWA). Ministers with responsibility for Water in several Caribbean countries will gather at the 9th High Level Session (HLS 9) Ministerial Forum which takes place on 10 - 11 October 2013 at the Hilton Barbados Resort. This Ministerial Forum is part of the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association’s (CWWA’s) 22nd Annual Conference and Exhibition, which is being hosted by the Barbados Water Authority (BWA).  

Cassava–Based feed system in Africa: Roadmap to a commercial feasibility  
Date: 28-30 October 2013  
Location: IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria  
Description: The Global Cassava Partnership for the 21st Century, the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), the CGIAR research programs – Roots, Tubers and Bananas, Livestock and Fish, Humid Tropics, and the feed private sector, having common interests in the development of a cassava-base feed system in Africa are partnering to organize a workshop in IITA, Ibadan, Oct 28-30, 2013, to ask the question: What is the best way to develop a cassava-based feed system in Africa?  
Website: [http://livestockfish.cgiar.org/2013/08/19/cassava-feed/](http://livestockfish.cgiar.org/2013/08/19/cassava-feed/)

Cassava–Based feed system in Africa: Roadmap to a commercial feasibility  
Date: 28-30 October 2013  
Location: IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria  
Description: The Global Cassava Partnership for the 21st Century, the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), the CGIAR research programs – Roots, Tubers and Bananas, Livestock and Fish, Humid Tropics, and the feed private sector, having common interests in the development of a cassava-base feed system in Africa are partnering to organize a workshop in IITA, Ibadan, Oct 28-30, 2013, to ask the question: What is the best way to develop a cassava-based feed system in Africa?  
Contact: Dr. Claude M. Fauquet, Director GCP21, CIAT.  
Email: c.fauquet@cgiar.org

November 2013

International Conference on ICT4ag
Date: 4-8 November 2013  
Location: Kigali, Rwanda  
Website: http://www.ict4ag.org/en/

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