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**Schools awarded for pesticide awareness, safety practices** – as Agriculture Ministry pushes for better storage of agro chemicals by GINA, 29 October, 2013


The Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board (PTCCB) presented its 2013 Pesticide Awareness Awards today at the Impeccable Banquet Hall on Brickdam, as part of its observances for Pesticide Awareness Week, which is held under the theme, “Pesticide-Store Wise, Saves Lives”.

There were four awards presented, three to recognise the top three of seven secondary schools that participated in the PTCCB competition and created the ‘best’ pesticide awareness corner, within their schools.

**For more information see page 11**

**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
Cassava

Researchers and partners discuss value addition in cassava through cassava-based feeds. International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), 1 November 2013

Full Article

More than 50 experts on cassava, nutrition and livestock, the private sector—represented by producers and feed millers—and representatives from donor groups, the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, and development partners, came together in IITA this week to discuss how cassava residues or by-products such as cassava peels can be used in industry and to add value to the industrial cassava value chain.

The meeting, held at IITA 28-30 October, aimed to come up with a roadmap for developing a cassava-based feed system for livestock, an action plan for Nigeria, and pilot projects that would serve as models in Africa.

The meeting was organized by IITA, GCP21, the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the CGIAR Research Programs on Roots, Tubers and Bananas, Livestock and Fish, and Humidtropics, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), and the private livestock feed sector.

As part of Nigeria’s Agricultural Transformation Program, the cassava transformation plan seeks to create a new generation of cassava farmers, producers, and processors oriented towards commercial production to generate cassava for specific value-added chains. The plan aims to turn the cassava sector in Nigeria into a major player in the local and international production and processing arena for flour, starch, sweeteners, ethanol and dried chips markets through private sector-led value-added chains.

Traditionally small farmers discard the peels that are left as waste near processing locations for feeding their animals (poultry, goats and pigs). Few attempts have been made to establish a nutritionally and economically sustainable cassava-based feed system using local products to replace imported products in the feed industry.

Enhanced production under the Cassava Transformation Plan will produce over 2 million tonnes of additional cassava by-products each year, offering a unique opportunity to support a cassava-based feed system at an industrial scale.

The use of cassava-based feeds in Nigeria will bring several benefits including cutting down on maize imports, most of which are used as feeds for livestock, according to the researchers.

“Africa imported maize worth US$4.63 billion in 2011 of which Nigeria’s feed industry alone accounted for 1.2 million tons worth about $350 million,” says Dr Iheanacho Okike, Country Representative for ILRI based in Ibadan.

“If we use cassava peels for livestock feeds, for instance, we will be able to reduce the amount we spend on maize importation, and more importantly reduce the competition between man and livestock for maize,” he added.
Efforts to transform Nigeria’s agriculture have raised the production of cassava to more than 50 million tons per annum, with several factories now processing cassava to products such as flour, garri, glucose, and ethanol. This growing demand and processing of cassava is also churning out cassava residues including cassava peels to the environment.

Dr Peter Kulakow, IITA Cassava Breeder, said the “use of cassava peels in livestock is a win-win situation for both agriculture and the environment. It is basically converting waste to wealth,” he added.

Dr Claude Fauquet, Director of GCP 21, said the use of cassava-based feeds would widen the opportunities for cassava farmers and help alleviate poverty.

According to him, Africa, being the lead producer, needs to take advantage of the crop, by creating/tapping into value addition.

Fauquet also said Nigeria produces 50% of the world’s cassava although poverty levels in the country remained high when compared with Latin America and Asia.

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr Akinwumi Adesina praised IITA for its continuing work on cassava and for hosting the conference.

He said the government had concluded arrangements to establish additional ethanol and starch processing industries in three cities across the country to create more value addition for cassava.

Represented by Dr Martin Fregene, Senior Technical Advisor, the minister said on completion, the factories would be producing cassava residues which if converted to feeds would create additional jobs and incomes for the country.

According to him, the nation’s agricultural transformation plan aims to create about 3.5 million jobs through the establishment of agro-based industries by 2015.

For more information, please contact: Andrea Gros, a.gros@cgiar.org or Godwin Atser, g.atser@cgiar.org.

Roadmap for cassava-based animal feed system in Africa to be drawn in IITA. International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), 28 October 2013

Full Article

Top international researchers will meet with decision makers, business people, and other stakeholders working in the Nigerian cassava sector in the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan, 28 to 30 October. The meeting aims to draw a roadmap for a cassava-based animal feed system that will highlight action plans for adding value to the cassava business in Nigeria. The roadmap will have a potential to serve as a model for all cassava-producing countries in Africa.
“We need to seize this opportunity and harness the benefits of every part of the cassava crop for national development, income generation, nutrition enhancement, and poverty alleviation,” says Dr Kenton Dashiell, IITA Deputy Director General, Partnerships and Capacity Development.

Nigeria, the world’s top cassava producer, is transforming its cassava sector and strengthening the value chain of the root crop to make it more competitive. Reforms in cassava-growing countries in Africa, backed by supportive government policies and improved varieties developed by agricultural research centers have significantly raised the productivity of cassava. In Nigeria, annual production of cassava climbed to 52.4 million tons in 2011.

The increase in production of cassava roots is also generating 5 – 7.5 million tons of wet peels (10 – 15% of whole tuber), as farmers and industry rev up processing of cassava. Dr Iheanacho Okike, a researcher with the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) based in IITA, says the peels could contribute largely to the income of farmers, and provide additional economic options for livestock and fish producers if converted to animal feed. Additional benefits accrue to consumers due to increased production of milk, meat and fish, and the additional availability of maize and other grains that could otherwise have gone into the feed system.

The IITA-hosted meeting involves representatives from many international research institutes and is organized by the Global Cassava Partnership for the 21st Century, the CGIAR Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas (RTB) and co-hosted by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD).

As the second most important food crop in the least developed countries and the fourth most important source of food energy in the world after wheat, maize, and rice, cassava is generally grown by small holder farmers, who appreciate its tolerance of drought and poor soils, one of the reasons why the root crop has been dubbed “the crop of the 21st century.”

Cassava also holds great postharvest potential as food for the household, feed for livestock, and raw material for a wide array of value-added products – from coarse flour to high-tech starch gels. Both the roots and leaves can be directly fed to livestock, or used in producing commercial feed.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, “animals raised on cassava have generally good health, good disease resistance, and a low mortality, and require few, if any, antibiotics in their feed.”

Dr Claude Fauquet, GCP21 Director notes that “When the cassava transformation agenda of Nigeria is completed, the production of cassava by-products (peels) is expected to reach 2 million tons dry matter per year… this is the perfect time to set up a feed manufacturing system on an industrial scale.”
Cereals and Grain Legumes

Rice production reaches historic high – 514,000 tonnes recorded to date by GINA, 29 October, 2013

Full Article

Guyana’s rice farmers have produced a record production, surpassing the 500,000 tonnes that were targeted for the entire 2013, and based on the current outlook, last year’s production record may be exceeded by 100,000 tonnes, Agriculture Minister Dr Leslie disclosed today.

A new rice variety

“On Monday the 21st October, for the first time in our history, we reached a goal which many persons in this country said would be impossible, and those who believe it was possible thought that it would not happen till 2020. On the 21st October 2013, Guyana surpassed 500,000 tonnes of rice in our production,” the Minister announced.

“At the present time we are approaching 522,000 tonnes. I used that number because last year’s production was 422,000 tonnes, it was a record and for us to break that record, with more than 100,000 tonnes is an astounding story, one that all of Guyana should be very proud of,” the Agriculture Minister said.

At present, the current rice production is 514,000 tonnes, but there is about six to seven percent of the cultivated land yet to be harvested. Expectations are now high that the country can reach the 600,000 – tonne mark, the Agriculture Minister said.

Rice farmers inspecting paddy in a field that was cultivated using the six-point practices

“Indeed I would say to everyone that should we be able to find the markets, not the market that would take our rice, because we have enough people who want our rice, but the markets that would pay us the price we want for our rice, then we can reach 600,000 tonnes within the next year or maximum two years,” the Minister said.

Meanwhile the Minister noted that this massive achievement by the farmers came not as a result of increased acreage, but as a result of higher yields. “We consistently now surpass five tonnes per hectares, that used to be another magical goal that we are now reaching routinely, and we believe that we can reach six tonnes per hectares.”

The agriculture ministry is working towards that, “because if we can do that, that is another 100,000 tonnes without adding more land, and that would mean that our cost of production would go right down and allow us to compete with other countries on the world market,” the Minister said.

Guyana had two successive years (2011 and 2012) of production of more than 400,000 tonnes of rice. The 412,000 tonnes set for 2012 was surpassed by 10,000 tonnes. A total of 334,000 tonnes were exported, while in 2011, the production was 402,000 tonnes.

New rice varieties and management strategies such as the six-point practices have been credited for higher yields of rice.
http://www.ifpri.org/blog/aflatoxin-briefs-finding-solutions-food-safety

Full Article

Aflatoxins—naturally occurring fungal toxins that contaminate grains and other crops—pose one of the world’s most significant food safety risks, particularly in developing countries. On November 5, IFPRI will launch a series of 19 policy briefs on managing aflatoxins as part of IFPRI’s 2020 Vision Initiative and under the auspices of the IFPRI-led CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH).

Understanding and managing deadly aflatoxins can directly improve food safety for vulnerable people worldwide. However, doing so requires a varied approach because aflatoxins affect human health, trade, animal health, and nutrition, according to co-authors Laurian Unnevehr, Senior Research Fellow at IFPRI, and Delia Grace, veterinary epidemiologist at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). “That’s why we invited briefs on a wide variety of aflatoxin-related topics, from health outcomes to markets, because aflatoxin is a multifaceted challenge,” said Unnevehr.

Starting with an overview of known health risks, the series examines aflatoxin control from an international trade context to see how market incentives can provide solutions. Since aflatoxins can be toxic—even at very low levels—several briefs examine effective detection and diagnostic technologies. The brief by Sheryl Schneider, Stéphane Méaux, and Eleni Pantiora, all from the World Food Programme, emphasizes preventative measures in aflatoxin control through the provision of another new technology: Blue Boxes, portable grain-testing tools that allow for on-the-spot testing of crops at any stage of the supply chain.

Another brief by George Mahuku, Marilyn Warburton, Dan Makumbi, and Felix SanVicente, goes a step further and discusses the development of aflatoxin host-resistance in maize plants. These aflatoxin management approaches, combined with an enabling policy and regulatory environment, have the potential to increase food safety while also improving human and animal health.

The series concludes with cases from several CGIAR centers that demonstrate the use of new technologies and detection methods to help manage the complex problem. The briefs respond to the policy community’s increasing interest in aflatoxins, offering a variety of perspectives on addressing the health and environmental risks they pose. “The series provides a good way of bringing together up-to-date information on aflatoxins by experts,” said Grace, who also serves as the A4NH theme leader for food safety.
**Banana**

**Panama disease spreads among bananas again** by Plant Research International. News Wageningen UR (University & Research centre), 1 November, 2013


**Full Article**

Panama disease is causing significant damage in banana cultivation in Southeast Asia. Together with a number of partners, scientists from Wageningen UR (University & Research Centre) have demonstrated that the disease – caused by the fungus Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. cubense – has now also migrated to Jordan. This means that Panama disease is becoming increasingly widespread and major banana-producing countries in Africa and Latin America are also under threat. A concerted international approach is needed to safeguard the food security of millions of people. The results of the study were published in the scientific journal Plant Disease.

The banana is not just the world’s favourite fruit – for many people it is a vital important source of food. During the twentieth century, tens of thousands of hectares of banana plantations in Latin America were destroyed by Panama disease. Banana plants died en masse and soils are contaminated for decades. The introduction of the resistant Cavendish banana variety saved the day and clones of the Cavendish banana are now cultivated worldwide. Late last century, however, a new, highly aggressive strain of the fungus was discovered in Southeast Asia. Tropical Race 4 (TR4) is starting to have a huge effect on the Cavendish cultivar in Southeast Asia and there is currently no way to protect the banana.

**Panama disease detected in Jordan**

There were suspicions a few years ago that some banana plantations in Jordan were infected with Panama disease. The Jordanian Ministry of Agriculture later sent samples of the fungus to Professor Randy Ploetz of the University of Florida, who forwarded them to Gert Kema, a scientist at Wageningen UR. PhD students from Gert Kema’s research group infected different banana plants with the fungus from the Jordan samples. These plants developed the same symptoms as banana plants infected with samples from Southeast Asia. Subsequent DNA tests showed that the Jordan strains were identical to TR4. The scientists have thereby established that TR4 has now spread beyond Southeast Asia.

**Major threat to Africa and Latin America**

Relatively few bananas are grown in Jordan – bananas are cultivated on around 1000-1500 hectares – but 80% of the plantations are now infected. It is unclear how Panama disease spread from Southeast Asia. Gert Kema argues that it is only a question of time before TR4 reaches Africa. In Africa, bananas are an important part of people’s diet, and the introduction and spread of Panama disease would threaten the food security of millions. “A concerted international approach is now needed to prevent the spread of Panama disease and, in the worst-case scenario, contain it”, Kema states.

Wageningen UR carried out this research together with the University of Florida, the Jordanian National Centre for Agricultural Research and Extension, and the University of Jordan. The study was
funded by INREF, a public-private partnership between Wageningen UR and various international partners. INREF focuses on finding solutions to counter the disastrous effects of Panama disease.

First Report of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* Tropical Race 4 associated with Panama Disease of banana outside Southeast Asia by Mr. Fernando Alexander Garcia, Miss Nadia Ordonez, Mr. Joshua Konkol, Dr. M. AlQasem, Z Naser, Dr. M. Abdelwali, Dr. Nida M Salem, Cees Waalwijk, Prof. Randy C Ploetz, and Dr. Gert Kema


Climate Change

5Cs supports the Caribbean’s first ‘National Consultation on a Framework for Climate Services’. By CCCCC, 20 October 2013 http://caribbeanclimate.bz

Full Article

The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) supported the region’s first National Consultation on a Framework for Climate Services in Belize last week (October 30- November 1, 2013). The consultation, organized in association with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the National Meteorological Service of Belize, and the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH), sought to advance the priorities under the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) by focusing on:

- Assessing climate services needs in the agriculture and food security sector based on generated climate information in the country;
- Recommending effective mechanisms and practices to improve interfacing and interactions between climate service providers and users;
- Articulating the capacity building needs in terms of mandates, infrastructure and human resources for all the components of GFCS;
- Recommending actions to improve productions, sustainable operations and accessibility for climate predictions and services to aid the flow of climate information from global and regional scale to national and local scales;
- Charting a roadmap for the effective development and application of climate services in support of agriculture and food security and other climate sensitive sectors in Belize particularly water, which is of strategic import to the Agricultural Sector of the Caribbean Region.

The consultation brought together key decision-makers and users from the initial four priority areas under the GFCS: agriculture and food security, water, health and disaster risk reduction. It identified suitable mechanisms for improving and sustaining the flow of climate information to users with particular focus on agriculture and food security. The exercise also sought to enhance understanding of the need for climate services on sectors most impacted by climate change that can be implemented at the national level across the Caribbean.

The Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) was established in 2009 at the World Climate Conference-3, which was organized by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in
collaboration with other United Nations (UN) agencies, governments and partners to steer the development of climate services worldwide. 

The vision of the GFCS is to enable society to better manage the risks and opportunities arising from climate variability and change, especially for those who are most vulnerable to such risks. 

The GFCS, which was launched in the Caribbean in May 2013, use five components for the production, delivery and application of climate information and services in the four priority areas outlined:

- User Interface Platform
- Climate Services Information System
- Observations and Monitoring
- Research, Modelling and Prediction
- Capacity Development

Soil and Water Management


Full Article

Thursday, October 31, 2013 – The Ministry of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology is collaborating with the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Human Services and Gender Relations, to host a two day wastewater training workshop.

Health, Wellness, Human Services and Gender Relations has come on board for this initiative.

Sustainable Development and Environment Officer, Lavina Alexander says the wastewater management network is expected to improve wastewater management in Saint Lucia.

“This is the first initiative being executed under a small scale funding agreement for which the Government of Saint Lucia has received funding from the United Nations Environment Programme to address wastewater management by building capacity and raising awareness of the impact of poor waste management on our coastal and natural resources.”

Alexander explains that as a signatory to the Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution (LBS) Protocol, Saint Lucia is committed to addressing issues related to wastewater management.

“The Caribbean Environment Programme of the United Nations (UNEP-CEP) has indicated that land-based sources and activities constitute the greatest threat to Caribbean public health and coastal and marine habitats. Specifically in the case of Saint Lucia, improper sewage treatment and disposal has been identified as one of the biggest threats to the island’s coastal waters and habitats. The Government of Saint Lucia recognized the importance of the Caribbean Sea to the continued economic development of the island and, as such, Saint Lucia became the fourth country to ratify the Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution (LBS) Protocol in January 2008. The upcoming workshop seeks to build national capacity in waste water management as a party to the LBS protocol.”
The opening ceremony for the two day wastewater training workshop, will be held on October, 31st 2013 at the Bay Gardens Inn, Rodney Bay.

Biotechnology

**Overcoming smallholder challenges with biotechnology.** FAO News, 29 October 2013

**Full Article**

From breeding to bugs, a new FAO publication looks at biotechnologies at work in small-scale crop, livestock and fish production

**29 October 2013, Rome** – A new FAO publication calls for greater national and international efforts to bring agricultural biotechnologies to smallholder producers in developing countries.

The publication, *Biotechnologies at Work for Smallholders: Case Studies from Developing Countries in Crops, Livestock and Fish*, asserts biotechnologies can help smallholders to improve their livelihoods and food security.

*Biotechnologies at Work for Smallholders* covers 19 case studies in crops, livestock and fisheries, written by scientists and researchers worldwide. It describes the practical realities and experiences of taking biotechnology research and applying it in smallholder production of bananas, cassava, rice, livestock, shrimp and more, in different parts of the developing world.

The case studies encompassed a wide range of biotechnologies. They included older or "traditional" ones like artificial insemination and fermentation, and cutting-edge techniques involving DNA-based methodologies - but not genetic modification.

The publication was prepared by a multi-disciplinary team at FAO as part of an agricultural biotechnologies project partially funded by the Government of Canada.

“With the right institutional and financial arrangements, governments, research institutions and organizations can help to bring biotechnologies to smallholders, improving their capacity to cope with challenges like climate change, plant and animal diseases, and the overuse of natural resources,” said Andrea Sonnino, Chief of FAO’s Research and Extension Unit.

**Case studies**

Four case studies were from India, two from China and one each from Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Cuba, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Thailand.

Researchers used their knowledge of DNA markers to develop a flood-tolerant rice variety in India with a potential yield of 1-3 tons per hectare more than previously used varieties, under flood
conditions. After being released in 2009, the new variety, Swarna-Sub1, spread rapidly and was used by three million farmers in 2012.

“In summary, submergence-tolerant varieties provided opportunities for improving and stabilizing yields in flash flood-affected areas, significantly contributing to national food security,” stated Uma Singh and colleagues from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) who prepared the case study.

In China, the Jian carp was developed using within-family genetic selection and gynogenesis (a reproductive technology resulting in all-female offspring that have only received genes from their mother). The Jian carp is now grown on about 160,000 fish farms and makes up over 50 percent of common carp production in China.

In northern Cameroon, the use of DNA-based diagnostic tools in the field allowed veterinary authorities to quickly diagnose outbreaks of Peste des Petits Ruminants, a highly contagious viral disease affecting goats and sheep. Rapid and accurate disease diagnosis meant that the authorities could stamp out these outbreaks and stop the spread of the fatal disease to other flocks.

“Without this rapid response, thousands of sheep and goats would likely have succumbed to the disease during these outbreaks, leading to millions of CFA francs in losses,” affirmed Abel Wade and Abdoulkadir Souley from the National Veterinary Laboratory (LANAVET) in Cameroon.

The editors say biotechnologies can improve crop-, livestock- and fish-related livelihoods by boosting yields and enhancing market access. Introducing new and traditional biotechnologies on family farms can also keep production costs down and improve sustainable management of natural resources.

Lessons learned

The publication offers lessons from the case studies which can be used to inform and assist policymakers in making decisions on programs involving biotechnologies. High up on the list was the need for national political commitment to improving smallholder productivity and livelihoods; financial support from non-governmental sources to supplement national efforts; and, long-term national investment in both people and infrastructure linked to science and technology.

The publication also found international and national partnerships were vital for achieving results, as was the sharing of genetic resources, techniques and know-how across national and continental borders.

Biotechnologies at work for smallholders also underlines the importance of involving smallholders in the process at all stages, taking into consideration their knowledge, skills and own initiatives.
Agricultural Development

**November is Eat Jamaican Month** by Judith A. Hunter, 1 November, 2013

**Full Article**

November has been designated ‘Eat Jamaican Month’ by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The month-long series of events and public awareness campaign coincide with the 10th Anniversary of the ‘Eat What We Grow…Grow What We Eat’ campaign, which was launched in 2003 by the Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS).

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Roger Clarke, while addressing the recent World Food Day celebrations, said the ‘Eat what we Grow…Grow what we Eat’ campaign should not be seen as a simplistic appeal.

It is a national call for action, he said, and encouraged all Jamaicans to play their part in responding to the appeal to plant and consume more local foods.

“I believe that we all wish to see the day when we eat more of what we produce locally in order to reduce our huge food import bill, which now stands at some US$1 billion,” the Minister said.

Meanwhile, President of the JAS, Senator Norman Grant, said he fully endorsed the ‘Eat Jamaican Month’ campaign, during which the JAS would collaborate with the Ministry and other stakeholders in several events.

These include a Thanksgiving Church Service on Sunday, November 3, at the Portmore New Testament Church of God, Port Henderson, in St. Catherine; supermarket and media promotional activities; farmers’ markets; debate and seminar on food safety and food security; and a grand Eat Jamaican Exposition to be held under the patronage of the Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen, on the lawns of King’s House on Monday, November 25.

**Schools awarded for pesticide awareness, safety practices – as Agriculture Ministry pushes for better storage of agro chemicals** by GINA, 29 October, 2013

**Full Article**

The Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board (PTCCB) presented its 2013 Pesticide Awareness Awards today at the Impeccable Banquet Hall on Brickdam, as part of its observances for Pesticide Awareness Week, which is held under the theme, “Pesticide-Store Wise, Saves Lives”.

There were four awards presented, three to recognise the top three of seven secondary schools that participated in the PTCCB competition and created the ‘best’ pesticide awareness corner, within their schools.
The fourth award was to recognise the agro-chemical supplier in Guyana with the best storage facilities for pesticide. This award was presented to Geddes Grant.

Minister of Agriculture Dr. Leslie Ramsammy, speaking at the event noted that all the schools that were involved in the competition are winners. “You are all winners. There is really no loser, when we have awareness, we all win, and we are trying our best that Guyana is not only aware of the goodness and the dangers that come with pesticides,” he said.

The Agriculture Minister noted that “Guyana has evolved from a time when we used pesticides indiscriminately to now where we are making people aware.” In Guyana, there is much more respect of the dangers that pesticides bring, he noted.

He conceded that there is still room for improvement, especially in the area of storage. He said he was comforted by the fact that pesticide importers are making every effort to improve their own storage, but noted that storage by users and at the local level leave much to be desired. “Some of those facilities that sell to the communities leave much to be desired. We have established rules for storage, and these rules have not always been followed,” the Minister said.

He said that when the PTCCB attempts to implement the law, they are simply trying to make sure pesticides remain effective and at the same time, persons are not exposed to the dangers of the chemicals, which are played out daily.

The Minister noted that persons who are exposed unnecessarily to pesticides experience respiratory illnesses, and reproductive problems. There is also the biggest problem of suicide which is committed by ingesting the chemicals. In Guyana on average 150 to 200 young people commit suicide every year through consuming poison, Minister Ramsammy said.

He said that all stakeholders, including children must play their part to create awareness to ensure just the opportunities not the perils of pesticides are achieved. “We must combat those perils with knowledge, with awareness and a willingness to do what is right,” the Minister said.

PTCCB’s Registrar, Trecia David said that the Board is working with children, because it is easier to effect changes in them.

“In Guyana one of the hardest things to do is to get the persons who have been using things like pesticides for 20 or 30 years to change their mind set, and so many places where you go, farmers and other pesticide users purchase these products, but they store them anyhow…so it’s an alarming issue that we are dealing with. That is why we are going to secondary schools, we want the students, we want the young people to be able to go home and assist in changing of the mind set of those persons. We want them to play a role in actually changing common practices they have been using in Guyana when it comes to chemical use,” she said.

Noting that the activity is part of a series being implemented for Pesticide Awareness Week, David expressed hope that every activity, during the remainder of the week, will yield results, and that “somewhere someone will walk away with the understanding that the way you store chemicals is important to the health and safety of those around you.”

The award winners were; Best Pesticide Awareness Corner in Secondary School; first position-Corentyne Comprehensive High School, second position-Zeeburg Secondary School and third position-Charity Secondary. In addition to receiving awards, these schools also received a quantity of
farming equipment; with the school in the first position receiving $100,000 in farming equipment, the second placed school, $80,000 and the third, $60,000.

The Board worked with the schools, providing the material/information for the construction of the ‘pesticide awareness corner’. The schools were judged according to their adherence to stipulation to the size for the corner, (8×8) and their use of the space; their creativity, use of language, flow charts, student participant at the corners and the use of materials provided by the PTCCB.

Others schools that were involved in the competition but not quite successful were Fort Wellington Secondary School, Wakapoa Secondary, Patentia Secondary and Central Corentyne Secondary. These schools each received a consolation prize of an agriculture text book, costing $20,000.

Agro-Tourism

Agro-Tourism Farmers’ Markets launched in resort areas by Glenis A. Rose, 1 November, 2013
http://jis.gov.jm/agro-tourism-farmers-markets-launched-resort-areas/

Full Article

A series of seven farmers’ markets are to be held in the resort areas of Negril, Montego Bay and Ocho Rios over the next seven months, as the Government looks to bolster linkages between tourism and agriculture and promote local produce.

This is being done through the Agro-Tourism Farmers’ Market Initiative, which is being funded by the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) at a cost of $10 million.

The project got underway on October 30, at the Norman Manley Beach Park in Negril, with some 35 farmers and farmers groups from the parishes of Westmoreland and Hanover participating.

Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, Hon. Dr. Wykeham McNeill and Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Roger Clarke, were on hand for the launch, which saw hundreds of locals and visitors haggling over prices for top quality fresh food, fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices.

Also on sale were craft items, jewelry, clothes from local designers, and patrons also enjoyed music and cooking demonstrations and partook of local cuisine.

Minister McNeill said that the staging of the farmers’ markets underscores the Government’s commitment to bringing all sectors together “to ensure responsible tourism that brings benefits to wide segments of the society”.

He said that not only do these linkages provide a great opportunity to increase tourism’s contribution to the country’s economic development, but also support the Ministry’s mandate of “tourism for all”.

“Agro-tourism farmers’ markets like this one build stronger links between the agricultural and tourism sectors and help stimulate a vibrant local fresh produce market. They also build resilience in rural communities by developing local livelihoods, inspiring entrepreneurship and reducing the economic and social cost of imported produce,” he stated.
Minister Clarke, in welcoming the initiative, stated that the markets will ensure increased consumption of local foodstuff and cuisine in the country’s hotel and hospitality industry.

He said that they are also in keeping with the ongoing Eat Jamaican campaign and the ‘Grow what we eat … Eat what we grow’ campaign.

“We are aware that we cannot grow everything that we do consume. Part of our agricultural strategy, therefore, is that of increasing local production, reducing imports where possible and expanding exports … failure is not an option,” Minister Clarke stated.

The agro-tourism markets are intended to replace the regular farmers markets by not only bringing buyers and sellers of agro-produce together, but by infusing manufactured goods, craft, entertainment, live demonstrations into a package that can be an attraction for tourists, locals, as well as regular market goers.

The Negril market is intended to be a prototype for the other events to be held in the other resort areas, with one market to be held every month up to May 2014.

Partners in the staging of the markets include the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), Jamaica Manufacturers Association (JMA), Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC), and the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA).

Information & Communication - Open data


Full Article

The CGIAR Consortium is pleased to announce their support for the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition initiative launched today at the Open Government Partnership in London. It is the first global open data initiative spanning across public and private entities including donors, international organizations and businesses.

The initiative seeks to support global efforts to make agricultural and nutritionally relevant data available, accessible, and usable for unrestricted use worldwide. The focus is on building high-level policy and public and private institutional support for open data. The initiative encourages collaboration and cooperation among existing agriculture and open data activities, without duplication, and brings together all stakeholders to solve long-standing global problems.

At the G-8 International Conference on Open Data for Agriculture in Washington earlier this year, participants made a number of commitments to Open Data for Agriculture. Following the conference, the governments of the United States (USDA lead) and the United Kingdom (DFID lead) partnered to form this global initiative.
Open Data is a powerful tool for long-term sustainable development by improving the economic opportunities for farmers and the health of all consumers. Open access to research, and open publication of data, are vital resources for food security and nutrition, driven by farmers, farmer organizations, researchers, extension experts, policy makers, governments, and other private sector and civil society stakeholders participating in ‘innovation systems’ and along value chains. Lack of institutional, national, and international policies and openness of data limits the effectiveness of agricultural and nutritional data from research and innovation. Making open data work for agriculture and nutrition requires a shared agenda to increase the supply, quality, and interoperability of data, alongside action to build capacity for the use of data by all stakeholders.

With a focus on open data for agriculture and nutrition, the initiative seeks to:

- advocate for new and existing open data initiatives to set a core focus on agriculture and nutrition data;
- encourage the agreement on and release of a common set of agricultural and nutrition data;
- share learning and guidance: by increasing widespread awareness of ongoing activities, innovations, and good practices;
- advocate for collaborative efforts on future agriculture and nutrition open data endeavours; and,
- advocate programs, good practices, and lessons learned that enable the use of open data particularly by and for the rural and urban poor.

In line with global movements for open data and open access, the initiative also seeks to advocate for open data and open access policies by default, in both public and private sectors, whilst respecting and working to balance openness with legitimate concerns in relation to privacy, security, community rights and commercial interests.

GODAN is open to public and private entities including donors, international organizations and businesses. Thirty-five partners had already signed on to the GODAN Statement of Purpose as of October 28, and all partners will meet in 2013 to discuss next steps.

For more information:
- Key documents relevant to CGIAR Open Access commitment
- Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN Initiative)

Follow the hashtags: #GODAN, #OGP13, #OpenAgData
Upcoming Events

October 2013

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? http://livestockfish.cgiar.org/2013/08/19/cassava-feed/
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