



IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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# Agriculture *in the* News



## Issues Affecting Caribbean Agriculture

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**Barbados 60 To 65 Per Cent Self Sufficient In Food Production** by Aisha Reid. BGIS, 28 November, 2013  
[http://gisbarbados.gov.bb/index.php?categoryid=13&p2\\_articleid=11637](http://gisbarbados.gov.bb/index.php?categoryid=13&p2_articleid=11637)

Barbados is more self-sufficient in food production than many people may know.

This declaration has come from Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management, Dr. David Estwick, who was speaking during the launch of the Ministry's pilot food zone project, for St. Michael and St. George in the St. George Parish Church car park, yesterday morning.

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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.



IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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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.

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## Citrus

**Citrus Certification Programme Close To Self Sufficiency** by GIS Dominica, 29 November 2013

<http://news.gov.dm/index.php/news/4-headline-news/1159-citrus-certification-programme-close-to-self-sufficiency>

### Full Article

Experts are saying that the Citrus Certification programme, designed to rehabilitate Dominica's Citrus Industry affected by the Citrus Tristeza virus (CTV) and the Citrus Greening Disease, is close to "self sufficiency".

The Citrus Certification programme which commenced in 2007, serves to provide growers with disease-free material for citrus farming. These materials were being regularly imported.

According to a release from the Division of Agriculture, four years after experimental crops of Cleopatra mandarins, rangpur limes, Volkamer lemons and C-35 Citranges were planted, fruits and seeds of these varieties can now be produced.

The Division of Agriculture is also reporting that four other varieties of citrus crops have begun flowering.

That means that within two years, importation of Citrus Planting material will be unnecessary since the citrus certification programme would be able to sustain itself and distribute to farmers island-wide. Since the effects of Citrus Tristeza virus and the Citrus Greening disease in 2000 and 2012 respectively, over five million dollars have been invested in the Citrus Industry by the Government of Dominica.

The Citrus Certification Program was developed with technical assistance, design and training from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), IICC, Cuba and Venezuela Governments.

## Livestock

**Ease for farmers.** The Barbados Advocate, 28 November 2013

<http://www.barbadosadvocate.com/newsitem.asp?more=local&NewsID=33618>

### Full Article

Come December 2, poultry and livestock farmers in this country will be paying less for feed from Pinnacle Feeds Limited.

Word of this came from Jason Sambrano, the company's Chief Financial Officer. He made the disclosure while addressing those attending the official launch of Agrofest 2014, which will be held from February 28 to March 2 on the grounds of Queen's Park and the adjacent Weymouth B field, under the theme "Encouraging Entrepreneurship Through Innovative Agriculture".

Pinnacle Feeds has once again signed on to be the platinum sponsor of the annual exhibition.

Speaking to the media after the launch, Sambrano explained that this reduction follows a similar price cut in September, which saw feed prices fall by some five per cent. This time, he said, the price of the various feed products will drop by between three and five per cent across the board. He noted that the first decrease came by way of changes in their purchasing methodology, which saw them making savings by engaging in more forward buying of commercial commodities such as the key inputs of corn and soybeans.

“So with that purchasing trend, we are able to capitalise on lower costs of commodities coming forward for December, January [and] February; so having purchased two to three months out, we are able to more actually determine these are the savings we can make and these are the reductions we can pass on right now,” he said.

The Chief Financial Officer added, “We recognise our responsibility to the population of Barbados in trying to reduce the cost of our food supply, so we felt that this was a good time, especially with Christmas coming up, to show that we are working at doing our part at being a force for good, in terms of making food more affordable in Barbados.”

Sambrano made the comments as he revealed that the company has experienced a decline in sales in all the feed categories this year, which he said is linked to the economic conditions in the country. He stated that a look at the volume of sales between 2008 to the present would show in some cases they have seen more than a 30 to 40 percent decline in sales.

“But we continue to work feverishly to maintain the quality of our feeds, to provide our farmers with the best feeds possible so it would be most nourishing to the animals, and also we stay committed to the Barbados public in terms of maintaining jobs and ensuring that we work as efficiently as possible. Barbados is a high cost jurisdiction but we try to work efficiently through output and manufacturing processes, implementing certain efficiencies within our plant to try to keep the cost of feed down, while maintaining our labour force etc,” he stated. (JRT)

## Climate Change

**Small Island States Score Major Victory on Loss and Damage** by Marcathian Alexander. Government of Saint Lucia, 27 November, 2013

<http://www.stlucia.gov.lc/press-release/small-island-states-score-major-victory-loss-and-damage>

### Full Article

Small Island States went into the UN Climate Change Conference in Warsaw, Poland with major expectations for progress on the important issue of Loss and Damage. Almost every Head of Delegation for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and most Delegation Heads of the Group of 77 plus China, in their speeches at the High Level Segment of the Conference of the Parties identified Loss and Damage and Climate Financing as two of the issues in which they hoped concrete action would be taken by this year's Conference.

Saint Lucia's Minister for Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology told the 19th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change "Addressing loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change, including slow onset impacts, is an issue of fundamental importance to Small Island Developing States like ours, whose communities and economies are trying to cope with losses to which there is little or no capacity to respond". He went on to state "it is essential that we deliver, here in Warsaw, on the undertaking made at Doha, to arrive at a substantial outcome on Loss and Damage."

It is for these reasons that AOSIS sees the decision by the Climate Change Conference to establish the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage as a major victory for Small Island States. This new mechanism will operate under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and will allow the Convention to address Loss and Damage from extreme weather events and slow onset events like sea level rise, which for years Small Island States have argued extends beyond the scope of adaptation.

Getting an agreement on the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage was described as an intense process that involved intense negotiations, several late night bilateral meetings and debates over text between the G77 countries and the Annex 1 Parties, particularly the United States, the European Union, Australia and Norway. Saint Lucia's Minister for Sustainable Development, Hon. James Fletcher, was one of the key ministers leading the negotiations on behalf of AOSIS and the G77, while Dawn Pierre-Nathaniel of Saint Lucia, a senior Sustainable Development and Environment Officer in the Ministry of Sustainable Development, provided essential technical support to the negotiations of AOSIS and G77.

**Today's Forecast Is for Climate-Proof Farming** by Jewel Fraser. Inter Press Service News Agency, 25 November, 2013

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/11/todays-forecast-climate-proof-farming/>

### **Full Article**

Even as weather extremes bedevil Caribbean farmers, Ramgopaul Roop has turned his three-acre fruit farm into a showcase for how to beat climate change.

His conservation farming methods include water harvesting and growing lemon grass as mulch. Since the grass is also a weed, it discourages the growth of other harmful weeds without the use of herbicides.

“Farmers always asked, ‘When do we plant? When is the rain going to start?’” -- Dr. Leslie Simpson “Because of the system using lemon grass and pommecythere trees growing lower than the lime trees, my land is covered with vegetation, so that we can adapt to climate changes,” Roop told IPS.

“If it is hot, we have this natural mulch under the crop. If it is raining, it helps to reduce the soil erosion,” he explained.

Roop is now the regional administrator for the Caribbean Agribusiness Association (CABA), an organisation mandated by the 15-member regional grouping Caricom to work with regional farmers’ groups to find agroprocessing opportunities.

CABA serves as a collective voice for farmers in the region through advocacy and assistance with trade negotiations.

Roop, who has farmed in Trinidad for 25 years, said that compliance with a country’s environmental regulations is key to success. This has proven true in the case of his own property, Rocrops Agrotech, which is used as a model farm by Trinidad and Tobago’s Environmental Management Authority.

His strategies have enabled Rocrops to supply agroprocessors with 10,000–12,000 limes weekly, 52 weeks a year, over the past five years.

“If farmers adopted the methods that I have implemented, they would be able to develop small holder farms to produce year-round to increase their level of production so that they could fulfil commitments to processing facilities,” he said.

“Small-holding farms can be developed into a sustainable unit that can be passed on to the next generation,” Roop added.

Across the region, Caribbean farmers are seeking reliable climate data to help them make better decisions when planning their crops. To meet this demand, the European Union and African, Caribbean and Pacific group (ACP) are training meteorologists to interact directly with farmers to provide accurate, timely information on weather patterns.

Monthly or trimonthly agricultural bulletins also discuss the possible effects on agriculture of the weather forecasted by the agro-metereologists.

Jamaica has also launched a website dedicated to providing twice-daily weather forecasts for farmers. Farmers can plug in the name of their location for detailed information on temperature, humidity, windspeed and other relevant data.

The training of the agrometereologists and the publishing of the bulletins are part of a larger EU-ACP project known as the Caribbean Agrometereological Initiative (CAMI), whose aim is to improve agricultural productivity in the region through the “improved dissemination and application of weather and climate information using an integrated and coordinated approach.”

CAMI’s partners include the Caribbean Institute for Metereology and Hydrology and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), among others.

Dr. Leslie Simpson said that Caribbean farmers have been in dire need of “access to information about what is happening and what is expected to happen with regard to climate change, and then information on how they can deal with these changes and risks.”

Farmers at workshops co-sponsored by CARDI “always asked, ‘When do we plant? When is the rain going to start?’” said Dr. Simpson, who is the natural resources management specialist with responsibility for climate change at CARDI.

The region’s increasing climate variability and the effects of climate change are making it difficult for farmers to determine when best to plant their crops, since the type of crop planted at a given time of year depends on the amount of rain expected then.

Region-wide discussions with farmers revealed that the foremost needs were for seasonal and inter-annual climate forecasts, forecasting for crop disease and pest incidence, and user-friendly weather and climate information.

Dr. Simpson said that “dealing with the variability of the present weather situation is the first step [for farmers] in dealing with any future climate change.”

CAMI notes that, “Short-range forecasts are normally available one day in advance, but modern agricultural practices ...require weather forecasts with higher lead time which enable the farmers to take ameliorative measures.

“Thus, for the agricultural sector, location-specific weather forecast in the medium range (three to 10 days in advance) is very important. These forecasts and advisories should be made available in a language that farmers can understand.”

A second CARDI project now underway to help Caribbean farmers deal with climate change is being sponsored by the European Development Fund and administered by the ACP. This project is to help identify strains of crops that would be resilient to climate variability and climate change.

Dr. Arlington Chesney, CARDI’s executive director, told IPS that the project would focus firstly on starches and vegetable protein since “those are critical components of the diet of the majority of people in the region.”

Among the crops identified for research are sweet potato, cassava, corn, peas and beans. Dr. Chesney said the project has done a review of the soil types and changes in temperatures and rainfall patterns in various islands over the past 20 years, preparatory to selecting the crop varieties for investigation.

“We would try to characterise these varieties morphologically and genomically. We are looking at their DNA to determine if there are some inherent characteristics that are more resilient to climate

change so that we could, with time, have a group of these varieties that we could say have a better than average chance of doing well under these new [climate] conditions,” Dr. Chesney said.

Much of the DNA work will be done by CARDI’s European partner in the project, the Wageningen University in Holland, which is considered one of the foremost agricultural universities in that country.

The university “will also do matching between the DNA crop performance and ecological measurements, temperatures, and rainfall,” said Dr. Chesney. CARDI will be providing mainly logistical and technical support on the project.

Dr. Chesney, like CAMI, stresses that his organisation’s work on equipping farmers to cope with climate change seeks to ensure the region’s food supply by improving farmers’ standard of living.

**Climate smart agriculture must be farmer-smart, gender-smart and equity-smart too** by [Daisy Ouya](#). Agroforestry World, World Agroforestry Centre, 15 November, 2013  
<http://blog.worldagroforestry.org/index.php/2013/11/15/climate-smart-agriculture-must-be-farmer-smart-gender-smart-and-equity-smart-too/>

#### **Full Article**

High hopes are pinned on the agriculture sector to play its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, through undergoing a deep transformation to become climate smart. Agriculture is considered to be “[climate-smart](#)” when it contributes to increasing food security, and raises climate adaptation and mitigation in a sustainable way.

According to the recently released [UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2013](#), agriculture has the potential to contribute to reducing global emissions to the tune of between 1.1 and 4.3 gigatonnes annually. Merlyn Van Voore, Adaptation Fund Coordinator at UNEP, said reductions in emissions from all sectors are urgently needed if we are to avert a rise in temperature this century that will have catastrophic effects on people and the environment. Van Voore was speaking on 12 November 2013, at an event held on the sidelines of the ongoing [UNFCCC](#) climate change conference in Warsaw.

The event, titled ‘Scaling up climate-smart agriculture: policies, development and adaptation potentials,’ was organized by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). A panel of six experts at the event, with nearly 170 participants, emphasized that to be truly smart and socially acceptable, the conversion to climate smart agriculture will need careful planning.

“We have huge technical potentials, but what is economically feasible or implementable is much lower,” said Henry Neufeldt, Head of the climate change unit at the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), and lead author of the Emissions Gap Report chapter that deals with Agriculture.

“Enabling policies and support for farmers are essential to overcome barriers to adoption of climate smart practices,” he added, and gave several examples of both. Sheila Sisulu, special envoy of the minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, South Africa, said the discussions on

climate smart agriculture must take care to include women, who produce 80% of the food consumed in Africa, and youth.

“When we go climate-smart, let us not go gender-foolish,” said Sisulu.

Heru Prasetyo, Deputy Head of Planning and International Relations in the President’s Delivery Unit for Development in Indonesia, discussed how population imbalances can inadvertently lead to a rise in greenhouse gas emissions. He referred to the Indonesian president’s vision of “Sustainable Growth with Equity.”

Heru paraphrased this as “If it’s not smart for the equity of people, it is not smart at all.”

As part of his talk, Arild Angelsen of the Norwegian University of Life, gave examples of win-win outcomes and win-lose outcomes of particular climate smart practices. Taking the example of production systems that require little labour and/or displace labour without offering alternative work options, Angelsen said climate smart agriculture also has to be ‘farmer smart’. “It must be a good deal for the farmer and also for the climate,” said Angelsen.

Krystyna Gurbiel, Poland’s Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development said the EU Common Agricultural Policy has undergone a fundamental transformation in the last decade, to become more climate-focused.

Panelists offered examples of policies that have led to a conversion to climate smart practices. “When the government of Niger stopped enforcing that trees belonged to the state, farmers access to the trees was restored. Since that time, five million hectares of parklands have been [re-greened](#) through an agroforestry practice known as farmer-managed natural regeneration,” said Neufeldt.

This success story shows the power of land tenure policy to induce a transformation in farmers’ practices. As a positive side effect of the re-greening millions of tons of carbon have been sequestered. Neufeldt emphasized that carbon sequestration comes as a co-benefit, and is not a primary motivation of farmers’ adopting certain practices; food security, livelihood resilience and income diversification are some of the benefits of climate smart practices like agroforestry that makes them attractive to farmers.

The panelists strongly recommended proof-of-application studies in countries, which will help discover socially acceptable ways to go from small scale to large scale application of climate smart technologies. “We need to do more research on adoption, and dialogue more to understand the non-obvious things that influence farmers’ decisions.” said Wendy Mann, Senior Policy Advisor, Economics and Policy Innovations for Climate-Smart Agriculture with FAO.

Climate smart farming thus has to be approached in a smart, first-things-first fashion, with household food security being the first box to check off.

“If we want farmers, particularly the poorest ones, to invest in more secure livelihoods in the future, we need to invest, first, in securing their food security,” said Neufeldt.

## Food and Nutrition Security

**Barbados 60 To 65 Per Cent Self Sufficient In Food Production** by Aisha Reid. BGIS, 28 November, 2013

[http://gisbarbados.gov.bb/index.php?categoryid=13&p2\\_articleid=11637](http://gisbarbados.gov.bb/index.php?categoryid=13&p2_articleid=11637)

### Full Article

Barbados is more self-sufficient in food production than many people may know.

This declaration has come from Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management, Dr. David Estwick, who was speaking during the launch of the Ministry's pilot food zone project, for St. Michael and St. George in the St. George Parish Church car park, yesterday morning.

Dr. Estwick noted that research conducted for the new White Paper on Agriculture, showed that the sector in Barbados had been given a "pretty raw deal" in terms of its public relations, as they were a plethora of negative pictures which highlighted Barbados' high food import bill.

The Agriculture Minister stated that the research showed Barbados produced 60 to 65 per cent of the food it consumed, while there were approximately 15 to 20 products that Barbados imported heavily.

"How many of you are aware that we are almost totally self-sufficient in eggs, pork, chicken and a lot of vegetables ... and when that document is released post Cabinet, you are going to be shocked," he emphasised.

Dr. Estwick said that the White Paper should be presented to Parliament in the upcoming weeks, after which it would be made available to the public.

**Ministry of Agriculture Launches Milestone Food Zone Project** by Aisha Reid. BGIS, 28 November 2013

[http://gisbarbados.gov.bb/index.php?categoryid=13&p2\\_articleid=11635](http://gisbarbados.gov.bb/index.php?categoryid=13&p2_articleid=11635)

### Full Article

The agricultural sector in Barbados achieved a major milestone yesterday, when the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management, launched a pilot food zone project, yesterday at the St. George Parish Church car park in the Glebe. It will involve farmers in the districts of St. Michael and St. George.

The food zone, first conceptualised by ambassador-designate to China, Dr. Chelston Braithwaite, has now come to fruition as an initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture. It is supported by the Barbados Agricultural Marketing Development Corporation (BADMC), the Barbados arm of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture in Barbados.

The initiative will help the ministry to better assist farmers in a number of areas, by way of new technologies which should help to increase crop production and also assist with marketing of crops.

Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer with responsibility for Crops, Dr. Dennis Blackman, said that when the project achieved its goals, it would be duplicated across the island.

“There are a lot of farmers in Barbados who have small plots of land, maybe less than an acre, and even though they are good farmers they may be unable to increase their production... but because of that we want them to increase their techniques, for example, this co-op [St. George Farmers’ Cooperative], is looking to assist with enhancing the production of its members by sourcing green houses for them and [in] that way they will be able to produce better quality food and also have the support of the Ministry and their own Cooperative to make them [the green houses] as reasonable as possible.”

Minister of Agriculture, Dr. David Estwick said that the project did not “just happen”, but it was planned thoroughly because the ministry and other entities in the Barbados agricultural sector recognised the importance of building linkages between farmers and others involved in the sector.

“We thought about all of those people who are involved in the production process ... the post harvesting process, and then all of the other elements [including] agro processing... We must bring all of those together and all of those are now brought together for the first time in Barbados in a structured way, within this first pilot food zone;” he added.

Dr. Estwick urged the farmers in the zone to work collectively as a team, in order to obtain the best price for their raw materials. “...So, when you want your drip irrigation, don’t do it individually; when you want your fertilisers, don’t do it individually. Every farming input that you want can be done through the BADMC, giving you the cheapest input for those particular items in your farming production cost structure. That is going to radically alter not only your cash flow capability but it’s going to radically alter what you are going to do. This is how you use the institutional frame work of the government to be able to advance that type of situation,” the Agriculture Minister said.

There are approximately 526 farmers located in the parishes of St. Michael and St. George, with approximately 244 located physically within the identified area of the food zone.

**First ‘food zone’ launched in St. George** by Regina Selman Moore. The Barbados Advocate, 28 November, 2013

<http://www.barbadosadvocate.com/newsitem.asp?more=local&NewsID=33621>

### **Full Article**

The first of a number of Food Zones to come on stream in Barbados, has been launched.

The launch of the Food Production Zone pilot project took place yesterday at The Glebe in St. George, on the grounds of the St. George Parish Church car park. The launch was streamlined by the Ministry of Agriculture, with aid from the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (BADMC) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The aim of the food production zone is to strengthen the food security position of Barbados, by empowering farming communities to adequately respond to market requirements, through increased

agricultural production and the creation of sustainable agro-processing enterprises. The farmers operating in the central zone of St. George and its outskirts of St. Michael, will be better equipped to respond to and cater to the requirements and demands of the market place and St. George will now become an agricultural hub, via the Food Zone.

While giving an overview of the Food Zone concept at the launch, Dr. Dennis Blackman, Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer with responsibility for crops, noted that the vision to develop and establish food zones first originated with prominent agriculturalist Dr. Chelston Brathwaite (who was also present) in his paper “A Vision for the Future of Agriculture in Barbados”. The Vision of Brathwaite is now taking root in actual steps to expand food production in Barbados, he said, while at the same time aiming to reduce exports and save foreign exchange.

Pointing to an agricultural survey undertaken in the St. George/ St. Michael Food Zone District, Blackman noted that the district supported approximately 526 farmers, of which 244 are located within the actual designated physical boundary. And of this number he said, 77 had one acre or more, while the remaining 167 controlled less than one acre. Hence the 167 farmers’ production is not as high as they would like and so, steps are being taken to help them increase their productivity on small plots of land.

“So the Ministry’s role is to bring together farmers and to put them in a position to be able to supply various organisations within this zone, within Barbados, and outside of Barbados,” Blackman explained. “We are making contact with food processors in the area, distributors in the area, eateries in the area, and there are several eateries in St. George and St. Michael area and some of them...have told me that they already purchase produce either from The St. George (Farmers) Coop or from other farmers in the area” he added.

“So we want to intensify that nexus between the farmers and the various organisations that buy food. And that is our plan...,” Blackman noted, adding that additional food zones will come on stream in the future.

**‘Eat Jamaican Day’** By Chris Patterson. JIS 25 November, 2013

<http://jis.gov.jm/scores-attend-eat-jamaica-day-celebration-kings-house/>

### **Full Article**

The East Lawn of King’s House was abuzz with activity on Monday, November 25, as scores of persons turned out to participate in the ‘Eat Jamaican Day’ 10th anniversary celebration.

Several booths were mounted showcasing high quality local produce, while patrons were able to access valuable information on the benefits of eating locally.

Organisations involved in the exposition included: the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Social Development Commission (SDC), Banana Board, Coffee Industry Board, Jablum, National Irrigation Commission, T. Geddes Grant Agriculture, Hampden Estate Gold, among others.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Roger Clarke, said that the campaign is a concerted drive towards the development of the country’s agricultural sector.

“When we eat what is grown locally by our local farmers, we support them, increase their income, increase their ability to care for their families, expand the economy of their local rural community and consequently expand the growth of the wider national economy,” he said.

Mr. Clarke informed that since the campaign was launched in 2003, Jamaica has become self-sufficient in the production of chicken meat, pork, and eggs. He noted that significant strides have also been made in the production of Irish potato and animal feed.

“Since 2003, we have moved consumption of local Irish potato from below 40 per cent to some 80 per cent today and we are well on our way to 100 per cent self-sufficiency by 2015.

“While it is true that a significant proportion of the animal feed we use is still imported, today, through our Agro Parks programme, we have commenced the local cultivation of sorghum to substitute for imported animal feed and we have set ourselves the target of increasing our hay production,” he stated.

The Eat Jamaica campaign, the Minister said, is in keeping with efforts by the Government to reduce the country’s US\$1 billion food import bill. “We wish to reduce that exorbitant bill and to increase our disproportionate Agricultural Export Earnings (US\$279 million). The trade gap is too wide,” he stated.

He said that while it is not possible for Jamaica to grow everything that is consumed in the island, “there are tremendous benefits to eating local produce and expanding our import substitution thrust.”

“We utilise events like Eat Jamaican Day and Eat Jamaican Month, to strengthen our on-going public education and awareness programme. I think the campaign has stirred our recognition of that fact and has indeed found resonance among the population. Since 2003 some things have changed, and despite the challenges, there have been some improvements,” he said.

Minister Clarke said he looks forward to a time when Jamaica, like some of the more developed countries of the world, has greater levels of food self-sufficiency and security, and a higher level of human development index.

In his brief remarks before reading a proclamation to declare November 25, as ‘Eat Jamaican Day’, Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen, stated that the agricultural sector remains an industry towards national development.

During the ceremony, several individuals and organisations that have served in various aspects of the agricultural industry were honoured

The annual ‘Eat Jamaica Day’ forms part of activities to observe November as ‘Eat Jamaica Month’.

## **Agriculture Development**

**Trinidad farmers to utilise land in Canje basin** by GINA, 24 November, 2013

<http://gina.gov.gy/wp/?p=17172>

### **Full Article**

After discussions with Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment Robert Persaud Trinidad and Tobago's Agriculture Minister Devant Maharaj, told the media that land has been identified in the Canje basin, Region Six for investors and farmers of the twin island republic for agricultural development.

Speaking to the media, Maharaj pointed out that there will be scientific and empirical data regarding the potential for farming in accordance with the Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) before it is offered to investors.

"It's not farmers, but we want investors to come in to farm with their primary function to invest," Maharaj emphasised.

Earlier this year, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago whereby lands were to be made available for the TT investors and farmers.

Up until, November 21 these lands were still unidentified, but what was determined was the what would be produced.

This project follows through on the Jagdeo Initiative proposed to CARICOM for countries to collaborate with Guyana and expand its underdeveloped agricultural lands. This strategy is geared towards reducing food import bills from countries outside the region, increase inter-regional food security, and reduce food inflation.

Trinidad and Tobago is currently looking at ways and means through which it can reduce its import of food from outside of CARICOM. However, it does not have the availability of land at its disposal to grow more of its own food.

## Information & Communication

**Monsanto's Billion-Dollar Bet Brings Big Data to the Farm** by [Ashlee Vance](#). Bloomberg Businessweek, 2 October 2013

<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-10-02/monsanto-buys-climate-corporation-for-930-million-bringing-big-data-to-the-farm>

### Full Article

As if we needed any more proof that the Big Data phenomenon is well and truly upon us, Monsanto ([MON](#)) has agreed to acquire the Climate Corp. for \$930 million. The real stunner of a deal marks one of the largest buys of a new-era data analytics company.

Climate Corp. was founded in 2006 under the name Weatherbill by a pair of Google ([GOOG](#)) engineers who wanted to capitalize on the world's increasingly unpredictable climate. The new company offered insurance against weather-related incidents such as a rainout at the U.S. Open tennis tournament or a concert cancelation. As time went on, the company settled on a business model that revolved around providing a new type of insurance for farmers.

Historically, farmers have relied on federal crop insurance to protect them against the costs of their inputs—fertilizer, seed—during hard times. This setup, though, leaves farmers at a break-even point and does not address the profit they may have made from the crop. The Climate Corp. stepped in to offer insurance that would cover the profit, and it did so in a very innovative way. The startup turned the U.S. into a grid and used weather data to measure temperature and rainfall and other factors. If a farmer bought a policy that covered drought and his land didn't receive the specified amount of rain covered by the policy, he was paid out automatically by Climate Corp. based on the measurements—no need to file a claim.

### [Video: Subsidized Federal Crop Insurance Grows Big Profits](#)

Last year I traveled to Indiana to meet [some of the farmers](#) using this type of insurance. It was early days for Climate Corp., to be sure, and farmers were just starting to wrap their heads around the company's proposal. Louis Wischmeier, a grower with 5,300 acres of farmland near Columbus, Ind., had embraced the new insurance to cover so-called specialty crops, such as avocados and blueberries, that the government program won't touch. "This gives us a huge chance to feel comfortable targeting high-profit, specialty crops," he told me.

Monsanto [played down](#) the insurance business it's buying by not even mentioning it until the sixth paragraph of a statement announcing the deal. Instead, it portrayed Climate Corp. as a Big Data agriculture whiz. "The Climate Corporation is focused on unlocking new value for the farm through data science," said Hugh Grant, Monsanto's chairman and chief executive officer. "Everyone benefits when farmers are able to produce more with fewer resources." The statement goes on to celebrate the startup for building "the agriculture industry's most advanced technology platform combining hyper-local weather monitoring, agronomic data modeling, and high-resolution weather simulations to deliver a complete suite of full-season monitoring, analytics and risk-management products."

The takeaway here seems to be that Monsanto sees Climate Corp. as a data and analytics service arm that will aid farmers in what's being hailed as the era of Precision Agriculture. Startups have arrived delivering cheap sensors that constantly monitor the moisture and nutrients in soil, while others have

started using satellite images to measure the yields of crops. All this information needs to be pulled and analyzed by someone who knows what she's doing.

## Upcoming Events

December 2013

### **3rd Global Conference on Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security and Climate Change**

**Date:** 3- 5 December 2013

**Location:** Johannesburg, South Africa

**Description:**

High-level discussions on a Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance. The Conference is organized by the governments of the Republic of South Africa, the Netherlands, and in collaboration with other partners, including FAO and the World Bank. The 3rd Global Conference in South Africa will provide the platform for global leaders; practitioners; scientists; farmers; organized agriculture; civil society; the private sector; and NGOs to discuss and share experiences on successes, and to deliberate the challenges and threats to food and nutrition security under the impact of climate change

**Website:**

<http://www.egfar.org/sites/default/files/files/Conference%20Announcement%2020%20September%202013.pdf>

**Further information will be published at:** <http://www.arc.agric.za/>