

## Cassava

**Cassava processing plant under construction in St. Elizabeth** by Alecia Smith-Edwards, Jamaica Information Service 25 April, 2014

<http://jis.gov.jm/cassava-processing-plant-construction-st-elizabeth/>

### Full Article

A processing plant is currently being constructed in St. Elizabeth to produce cassava and sweet potato flour, to supply the local baking industry.

To be managed by the University of the West Indies (UWI), the entity will be located at the Sydney Pagon Agricultural School (formerly Elim Agricultural School).

Making the announcement during his contribution to the 2014/15 Budget Debate in the House of Representatives on April 23, Agriculture and Fisheries Minister, Hon. Roger Clarke, said this undertaking is being carried out with funding support from the Government of Colombia.

He noted that this arrangement is part of a partnership between the UWI and the Latin American and Caribbean Consortium to Support Cassava Research and Development (CLAYUCA) of Colombia, to conduct research on cassava production and processing.

Mr. Clarke said the Government has been working to form alliances with academia and the private sector to undertake collaborative research, aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity.

In this vein, he pointed to the Ministry's co-operation with brewing company, Red Stripe's parent company, Diageo, to use locally grown cassava in their beer formulation, thus replacing imported barley.

"The first 26 acres of cassava have been planted, and we are working with Diageo to establish best practices to obtain maximum yields, before the project is rolled out to our farmers," he said.

The Minister noted, however, that as the Ministry increases its collaboration with academia, it has been recognized that the various curricula in its agricultural tertiary institutions are not aligned with the needs of the sector.

"In this regard, I am working closely with my colleague Minister of Education (Hon. Rev. Ronald Thwaites), to totally revamp the content and offering of these institutions and to position them to make a significant contribution to our food safety objectives, given their land resources," he said.

## Fruits: Banana, Citrus Greening Disease, Marketing

### **Agriculture Experts: We have to work all together to prevent the Fusarium Wilt into America.**

Trinidad and Tobago Government News, 30 April 2014

<http://www.news.gov.tt/content/agriculture-experts-we-have-work-all-together-prevent-fusarium-wilt-america#.U2GzdkZOWdY>

#### **Full Article**

The Tropical Race 4 (TR4) of the Fusarium Wilt fungus has been severely affecting Southeast Asia's banana and plantain crops. However, with the recent emergence of reports of this particular disease outside of Asia, the Caribbean banana industry is now at a severely high risk. As such, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), together with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have been implementing strategies in the prevention of this disease by increased awareness. And so, it was with this objective in mind that a 'Sensitization Seminar on the threat of Tropical 4 Race by Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. cubense- Fusarium Wilt (Panama Disease) of Bananas and Plantains' was held on Wednesday 30 April, 2014 at the Auditorium at the Frank Stockdale Building UWI Campus, St. Augustine, Trinidad.

The main speaker and lead consultant, Dr. Luiz Perez- Vincente PhD provided an overview of the Fusarium Wilt disease, showing how the disease affects not just banana and plantain plantations but also the economy and food sustainability. He also reinforced the importance of increased awareness saying that "This could be a very serious problem. Our main task is prevention ... we all have to work together to prevent the outbreak of Fusarium." Dr. Luiz- Vincente's presentation highlighted the main constraints of production systems, and symptoms of the Fusarium wilt disease, which includes: yellow leaf syndrome and the non-yellow leaf syndrome and the distinctive symptoms between bacterial wilt (Moko) and Fusarium.

Dr. Luiz- Vicente also highlighted management practices that could lead to solutions, such as:

- Quarantine procedures
- Introduction and adoption of high density annual cropping systems
- Healthy planting material use
- Chemical control
- Bio control
- Long rotations with non-host plants

He ended by stating that whilst the TR4 Fusarium wilt disease is not yet present in the Caribbean, there is a need for cooperation in order to prevent the outbreak of the disease. Reiterating the importance of awareness saying, "We have to work all together to prevent the entry into America".

Mr. Barton Clarke, Trinidad and Tobago Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) stressed the importance of increased awareness of the Fusarium Wilt disease. He believes that the responsibility for the prevention of the disease does not rest solely on members of the agricultural sector, stating, "This is not the business of those in agriculture. This is everybody's business." He further stated that this disease can impact the entire population and so urged everyone to, "put every possible asset in place to avert this problem", stressing the importance of such strategic partnerships, saying, "We have a collective responsibility to assist in managing the disease."

Professor Neela Badrie of the University of the West Indies affirmed that most people enjoyed eating bananas and plantains and so the TR4 Fusarium wilt disease affects everyone. She stated that few plant diseases are as vast as the TR4 disease and so there is a need to implement preventative measures. Dr. Marcia Blair-Thomas, Head of CARDI's Trinidad Unit stated that, "Banana and plantain continues to be important to the economy of the Caribbean as well as for food production" and thus identified the TR4 disease as being very critical.

The Seminar and upcoming 5-Day Regional Workshop are being hosted with the objective to arm persons with the required knowledge and training in dealing with this disease and increase public awareness.

CARDI ... presenting the 'facts on agriculture and research for development'.

**Surprising find: UF/IFAS discovers citrus greening affects roots before leaves.** [Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, IFAS News, 30 April, 2014](http://news.ufl.edu/2014/04/30/citrus-greening-roots/)  
<http://news.ufl.edu/2014/04/30/citrus-greening-roots/>

### **Full Article**

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Although citrus greening enters trees through their leaves, University of Florida researchers have discovered that the deadly disease attacks roots long before the leaves show signs of damage – a finding that may help growers better care for trees while scientists work to find a cure.

“The role of root infection by insect-carried bacterial pathogens has been greatly underestimated,” said Evan Johnson, a research assistant scientist with UF’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

Hundreds of researchers throughout the world are rushing to find a viable treatment for citrus greening, which is devastating Florida’s \$9 billion citrus industry and has affected citrus production throughout North America.

Johnson was the lead author of a scientific paper outlining the research published in the April issue of the journal *Plant Pathology*. He and his fellow team members – Jian Wu, a graduate student in soil and water science, researcher Diane Bright and Jim Graham, a professor of soil microbiology – are based at the UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred.

Citrus greening first enters the tree via a tiny insect, the Asian citrus psyllid, which sucks on leaf sap and leaves behind bacteria that spread through the tree. Johnson said the bacteria travel quickly to the roots, where they replicate, damage the root system and spread to the rest of the host tree’s canopy. The disease starves the tree of nutrients, leaving fruits that are green and misshapen, unsuitable for sale as fresh fruit or juice. Most infected trees die within a few years.

It was originally thought that the leaves and fruit were affected first, but the team’s research found that greening causes a loss of 30 to 50 percent of trees’ fibrous roots before symptoms are visible above ground.

“This early root loss means that the health of a citrus tree is severely compromised before the grower even knows it is infected,” Johnson said.

Experts say this research is significant in the fight against greening.

“Based on the work of Dr. Johnson and his colleagues, we now know how important roots are in the development of greening disease,” said Jackie Burns, director of the CREC. “We hope further investigations on the role of roots in this disease will lead to future management solutions that help growers remain productive until a permanent solution can be found.”

To battle greening, UF/IFAS researchers have attempted everything from trying to eradicate the psyllid to breeding trees that show better greening resistance. While Johnson’s research is not a cure, it may help more trees survive as scientists continue their search.

“We are still trying to determine how the bacteria are killing the roots,” Johnson said. “This finding suggests that growers should focus more effort on maintaining the health of the root system in relation to other soilborne pests and overall soil quality to maintain as much of the root system as possible.”

Johnson suggested that growers increase the acidity levels of irrigation water and soil to match the optimum pH for the rootstock (preliminary results show that this improves root density compared to untreated groves) and water more frequently for shorter periods. Those treatments are being studied by UF researchers in Lake Alfred and at the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center in Immokalee.

He added that while psyllid control is essential, growers should make careful decisions on how many resources to devote to any management strategy for greening-infected trees, based on their economic means, until field trials have been completed.

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**Europe: consumer education key to exotic fruit growth.** FreshFruitPortal.com, 28 April, 2014  
<http://www.freshfruitportal.com/2014/04/28/europe-consumer-education-key-to-exotic-fruit-growth/?country=trinidad%20and%20tobago>

### **Full Article**

The exotic fruit market in Europe is set to expand, but importers claim growth will only be notable and sustainable if consumers are adequately educated about how to use the fruits and benefit nutritionally.

“The exotics market is still very new and nowhere near maturity but demand and consumption are definitely increasing,” explains Soraya Bahrami, co-founder of Toucan Fruit, a U.K.-based exotics importer-distributor which recently celebrated its first year in business.

“We have seen a keen interest from some of the U.K. supermarkets who have started to introduce more exotic and rare fruits to test the market and respond to changing consumer tastes.

“In particular they are interested in the different passion fruit varieties that we supply, such as maracuya (passion fruit) and granadilla.”

According to Bahrami, Marks & Spencer, Asda and Morrisons recently started stocking some exotics that are new to the U.K. market, such as tamarillo and [achacha](#); a small orange-colored fruit that belongs to the mangosteen family. Upmarket retailers like Harrods, Harvey Nichols and Fortnum & Mason are also seeking to expand their exotics ranges, she says.

“Harrods has radically changed its produce department to place a greater emphasis on exotics because they know that as people travel more and see these fruits they will increasingly demand them,” Bahrami claims.

“With the heightening health craze we are also seeing demand for exciting and nutritional products and a desire to go back to basics.

In addition to retailers, Bahrami says that wholesalers, foodservice operators and restaurants are showing a strong interest in sourcing more exotics, while the fruits are also becoming more accessible through online retailers like Amazon.

All exotic fruits have interesting growth potential and the future looks especially bright for passion fruit, according to Joost Verrest, managing director of major importer Total Exotics Europe.

“Passion fruit is already there and physalis is very popular in certain countries like Germany and the U.K. but it’s not reached the same level in other places like the Netherlands,” Verrest tells [www.freshfruitportal.com](#).

In terms of country suppliers, meanwhile, he says Colombia presents much promise in particular on account of the nation’s excellent growing conditions.

“Colombia grows a lot of exotics like passion fruit and physalis and I believe there is much more to come, especially with increasing stability within the country,” he says.

#### *Sustaining long-term sales*

Verrest is confident the exotics market will expand and believes even more products will be added to the category, but he argues there are many issues and barriers that will be difficult to overcome.

Indeed, he says the exotics category will only become “really interesting” if sales are truly sustainable.

To achieve that, he claims the mainstream exotic items must first be strengthened in terms of consumer understanding and acceptance.

“The market continues to be very much based on the core exotics offer and there are a lot of fruits within that category that consumers are still struggling with,” Verrest states.

“Pineapples are known by everyone but even now consumers don’t really know how to use them or how to peel them. So pineapple sales remain concentrated to the peak seasons like Easter and Christmas when most consumers want the fruit because it looks good in fruit bowls.

“Consumers still don’t know how to choose melons either and they can’t distinguish between melon varieties unless the fruit is cut open so they can see the color of the flesh inside.”

Behrami agrees that a lack of consumer knowledge is hampering growth and will take time to remedy.

“Consumers believe that exotics are not easily accessible, difficult to process and/or unpalatable,” she says.

“The key is to educate them about how to eat, ripen, store and prepare these fruits as well as raising their awareness of the health benefits.”

Verrest says more in-store and on-pack communication for the core items in the exotics category will be vital for paving the way for the niche items, such as pomegranates, passion fruit, physalis, pitahaya, figs and Key limes.

“The first challenge is to build a story and image around those core products, and to communicate that directly to consumers.

“You need to communicate what you can do with the product and how easy it is to use because this removes the barrier and builds sustainable growth.

“If consumers know they can make guacamole in five minutes and get more nutrition from it than eating pre-made guacamole then it’s more appealing and it makes sense.”

Verrest claims there is lots of value that can be added to a product by creating a concept, providing the right information on packaging and offering the fruit already ripened.

“It’s not just about a brand. You need to conceptualise a category and then realise it together with your retail partners to make a difference, to really build something and to create sustainable growth.

“Then you can look at what belongs on the shelf; how important it is and how interested you are in it.”

Verrest points toward the commoditization of kiwifruit as an example of just how much could be achieved for other exotics fruits with the right communication and supply.

## Ginger

**Agriculture Ministry discussing funding for ginger industry with overseas investor** by Douglas McIntosh, Jamaica Information Service 24 April, 2014

<http://jis.gov.jm/agriculture-ministry-discussing-funding-ginger-industry-overseas-investor/>

### Full Article

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is expected to conclude discussions soon with a major private investor entity in Switzerland for the provision of funding, through a venture capital programme, for the local ginger industry.

Portfolio Minister, Hon. Roger Clarke, says the entity's input is expected to significantly boost "active interventions" already undertaken by the Ministry which have yielded tremendous success in the industry, while providing farmers with working capital support "they so desperately need."

The entity, he informs, is "extremely fascinated" by the model of small farmers working in contractual relationships with a guaranteed market.

The Minister made the announcement while making his contribution in the 2014/15 Budget Debate in the House of Representatives on Wednesday, April 23, under the theme: 'Continuing the Growth – Going for Export'.

Mr. Clarke advised the House that the Ministry is currently midway in discussions with the entity, which is being pursued in collaboration with Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO), adding that "it is our expectation that we will soon wrap up an agreement."

He noted the level of ginger production recorded through interventions such as the provision of, among other things, planting material and an enabling environment through extension and marketing support.

"In our ginger programme, from the surplus that the Export Division makes on processing and trading ginger, we provided some \$150 million in the last two years in pre-financing farmers, through the provision of clean planting material working capital, and other inputs," the Minister outlined.

He pointed out, however, that despite the Ministry investing substantially in providing planting material in particular, its capacity to provide these input is "way below" the demand for such. This, he pointed, has been a "major limiting factor" to facilitating an even more rapid expansion in ginger production.

Mr. Clarke advised that scale of production in the area of processing has "seriously challenged" the capacity of the Export Division to process the volume of ginger produced, hence their having to outsource a portion of this undertaking.

He also informed that the Ministry cannot sustain the interventions due to fiscal challenges.

Minister Clarke said that with the industry having an export potential of 21,000 tonnes, valuing US\$105 million, there is room for more investors.

In noting the challenges that the country's ginger farmers are likely to encounter, particularly in accessing funding from traditional financial institutions with the kind of ease that is required for efficient production, Mr. Clarke called for wider stakeholder intervention in the industry, particularly the private sector.

He said the policy environment created by the Ministry to prioritise local production over imports, coupled with strong extension support, and market guarantees, "should provide the stimulus to the private sector to come on board to provide willing farmers with the working capital support they so desperately desire."

"If we are going to realize the full potential of the ginger industry, including value-added and utilize this to create wealth for our farmers and our people, it is time for the private sector to get on board," he underscored.

## Climate Change

**Donors replenish Global Environmental Facility, but biodiversity is still underfunded.** CCCCC, 3 May, 2014

<http://caribbeanclimateblog.com/2014/04/23/donors-replenish-global-environmental-facility-but-biodiversity-is-still-underfunded/>

### Full Article

US\$4.43 billion has been pledged by 30 donor countries for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to support developing countries' efforts over the next four years to prevent degradation of the global environment.

The announcement, made at the Fourth Meeting for the Sixth Replenishment of GEF Trust Fund, held in Geneva, Switzerland, 16-17 April 2014, further stated that the funding will support projects in over 140 countries to tackle a broad range of threats to the global environment. These threats include climate change, deforestation, land degradation, extinction of species, toxic chemicals and waste, and threats to oceans and freshwater resources.

The GEF is the main global mechanism to support developing countries' to take action to fulfill their commitments under the world's major multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

"This is a significant development. We welcome the efforts of the GEF Secretariat and the commitments of donor governments to replenish the GEF capital and thus allow the GEF to continue to serve as the financial mechanism of the CBD and other MEAs," said Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, CBD Executive Secretary. "This will ensure that the GEF maintains its support for developing countries and countries with economies in transitions to support the implementation of their commitments under the CDB, in particular the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and the updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans and associated national targets."

"However, this still serves as a reminder that donor countries failed to fulfil the target set at the Eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11) in Hyderabad, India, to double the international financial flows by 2015 relative to the 2006-2010 average," underlined Dias.

“This means that we have missed the opportunity to significantly increase the investment on biodiversity to increase the efforts for achieving the implementation of the Aichi Targets,” said Mr. Dias. “This limited effort of multilateral funding, which represents a 30% increase over the baseline of 2006-2010, puts undue pressure on bilateral funding, domestic funding and private funding to compensate for this shortcoming to meet the estimated funding gap if we hope to achieve the agreed Aichi Targets by 2020,” he said.

The conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity can provide solutions to a range of societal challenges. For example, protecting ecosystems and ensuring access to ecosystem services by poor and vulnerable groups are an essential part of poverty eradication.

Failing to pay due attention to the global biodiversity agenda risks compromising the capacity of countries to eradicate poverty and to enhance human well-being, as well as their means to adapt to climate change, reduce their vulnerability to extreme natural disasters, to ensure food security, to ensure access to water and to promote access to health.

“Without adequate funding for the global biodiversity agenda the continual availability of biological resources and ecosystems services will be compromised and impact the capacity of the business sector to continue to operate and supply the market with products, services and employment,” said Mr. Dias. “I encourage all countries to ramp up their contributions complementary to the GEF Trust Fund to ensure a better and more sustainable future for us all.”

#### *The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties up to now, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a subsidiary agreement to the Convention. It seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 166 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal. For more information visit: <http://www.cbd.int>.

**Nitrogen on the table: pollution, climate and land use.** The Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH), 25 April 2014

[http://www.ceh.ac.uk/news/news\\_archive/nitrogen-pollution-why-what-we-eat-matters\\_2014\\_20.html](http://www.ceh.ac.uk/news/news_archive/nitrogen-pollution-why-what-we-eat-matters_2014_20.html)

#### **Full Article**

A new report quantifies for the first time how much our food choices affect pollutant nitrogen emissions, climate change and land use across Europe.

The [executive summary](#) of the European Nitrogen Assessment Special Report on Nitrogen and Food, Nitrogen on the Table, was released today (Friday 25 April 2014). The Special report provides an assessment of what would happen if Europe were to decrease its consumption of meat and dairy products. It shows how much cutting down on meat and dairy in our diets would reduce nitrogen air and water pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions, while freeing up large areas of farmland for other purposes such as food export or bioenergy. It also considers the health benefits of reduced meat consumption. The full report is published next month.

Report lead author Henk Westhoek, programme manager for Agriculture and Food at PBL (the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency) said, "The report shows that the nitrogen footprint of meat and dairy is considerably higher than that from plant-based products. If all people within the EU would halve their meat and dairy consumption, this would reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture by 25 to 40%, and nitrogen emissions by 40%.The EU could become a major exporter of food products, instead of a major importer of for example soy beans."

Prof Mark Sutton, an environmental physicist at the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and a co-author of the report, said, "Humans' use of nitrogen is a major societal challenge that links environment, food security, and human health. There are many ways in which society could improve the way it uses nitrogen, and this includes actions by farmers and by ourselves.

"Our new study shows that adopting a demitarian\* diet across Europe would reduce nitrogen pollution levels by about 40%, which is similar to what could be achieved by adopting low-emission farming practices."

The work has been conducted by the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). In 2011 the Task Force produced the first European Nitrogen Assessment (ENA) which showed that better nitrogen management will help reduce air, water and soil pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, simultaneously reducing threats to human health, biodiversity and food security.

The UNECE Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen is tasked with providing policy makers in the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution with scientific evidence to support international decision making on environmental policies, especially as these link air pollution with water, soil, climate and biodiversity.

Professor Sutton said, "As the EU now starts to renegotiate the National Emissions Ceilings Directive, it is an open question to what extent countries will emphasise technical measures or such behavioural changes. One of the major barriers to action is the international trade in food commodities. The result is that countries fear that tackling nitrogen pollution will reduce their international competitiveness. The present study shows that there is huge power for pollution control in simply reducing our meat and dairy consumption."

*Additional information:*

- CEH issued a [press release](#) for this story.
- Nitrogen on the Table - [executive summary of the European Nitrogen Assessment Special Report on Nitrogen and Food](#), published 25 April 2014 on the [Task Force for Reactive Nitrogen](#) website.

## Soil and Water Management

**Gov't to pump \$64 million into rainwater harvesting** by Douglas McIntosh, Jamaica Information Service, 26 April, 2014

<http://jis.gov.jm/govt-pump-64-million-rainwater-harvesting/>

### Full Article

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is slated to this year establish rainwater harvesting systems, at a cost of \$64 million, as part of its efforts to reduce the effects of climate change on the agricultural sector.

Portfolio Minister, Hon. Roger Clarke, says the allocation will also fund training for the farmers and other sector stakeholders in smart agricultural practices, and proper water and land management, as well as promote more efficient use of water, through drip irrigation systems.

He made this disclosure during his 2014/15 Budget Debate presentation in the House of Representatives on Wednesday (April 23) under the theme: 'Continuing the Growth – Going for Export'.

Mr. Clarke said the latest projections from the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change, which he described as “frightening”, highlight disaster which the agricultural sector is likely to encounter from factors such as impending rising temperatures and extreme drought, “if we do nothing.”

“The Government, in response to climate change, has spent over \$5 billion to install new irrigation systems in the last 10 years, to ensure sustainable agriculture through the reduction of our dependence on rainfall,” he informed.

Two of these systems, he said, were established and commissioned in New Forrest, Manchester, and Yallahs, St. Thomas, around which two of the island’s agro-parks have been created.

Mr. Clarke also advised that grants, totaling \$40 million, have been allocated from the Cane Expansion Fund, to 15 cane farmers islandwide, to enable them to install drip irrigation systems on their properties.

Additionally, he said the Ministry continues to provide resources to the National Irrigation Commission (NIC) for the lining of earthen canals, in a bid to lessen water loss during distribution.

“The great challenge is to mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation in our farming practices. We commit to work with the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), and the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment, and Climate Change; and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, to mobilize more resources for climate change adaptation in the (agricultural) sector,” Mr. Clarke stated.

## Agricultural Development

**FAO and National Geographic announce collaboration exploring future of food.** FAO, 30 April, 2014

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/230918/icode/>

### Full Article

Partnership kicks off with live-streamed May 2 event in Washington, D.C., and May cover story in National Geographic Magazine

The National Geographic Society and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) are teaming up to raise awareness on food and agriculture issues as National Geographic, a U.S.-based nonprofit institution, begins an eight-month, in-depth report on food issues starting with a May cover story in National Geographic magazine and online at NatGeoFood.com.

The official launch of the collaboration will be marked by a three-day event taking place 2-4 May 2014 at National Geographic headquarters in Washington, D.C., beginning May 2 with an afternoon panel discussion, Food: A Forum, which will highlight issues of food security and sustainability. The event will be live-streamed at NatGeoFood.com.

The panel discussion will be followed by a two-day Future of Food Hackathon May 3 and 4, during which scientists, data journalists and programmers will develop apps and tools to address solutions for feeding the planet by exploring broad FAO data sets that shed light on food distribution, transportation, costs and environmental legacy over the last 50 years.

From May through December, FAO experts will provide perspective and data for National Geographic's food coverage, which includes in-depth articles in the magazine each month and additional features on the NatGeoFood.com website. Both organizations will share content and participate in related events to help educate and promote awareness about hunger and nutrition.

Among the themes that will be addressed are food and agricultural statistics and trends, feeding megacities in a world of changing demographics, reducing food loss and waste, the role of animal and insect protein in diets, and global forestry issues.

"Combining FAO's specialized expertise with National Geographic's 126 years of award-winning photography and reporting is very exciting, and this agreement will help bring up-to-date information about hunger and nutrition challenges and solutions to a very wide public audience," said Mehdi Drissi, FAO Chief of Media Relations.

National Geographic magazine, the Society's official journal, is read by more than 60 million people each month in 40 languages, while the Society's digital media receives more than 27 million visitors a month.

"Reporting on food is a natural extension of our coverage of water, population and environmental issues," said Chris Johns, editor in chief of National Geographic magazine. "We believe offering clear-eyed information about issues surrounding this essential topic is an important service to our audiences, and we are thrilled to partner with FAO, an organization that is on the front lines working in this area."

The two organizations plan to collaborate on a number of initiatives throughout the year, including the Committee on World Food Security (13-18 October 2014), World Food Day (16 October 2014), the Second International Conference on Nutrition (19-21 November 2014) and the International Year of Family Farming that runs throughout 2014.

National Geographic editorial staff met with senior FAO experts in Rome in February to gather information for the series and develop a framework of collaboration that will be formalised with the signing of a memorandum of understanding later this year.

The Future of Food series is the latest in a number of large-scale National Geographic investigations that have included energy, climate, water and population.

**Agriculture Ministry Moves to Boost Non-Traditional Exports** by Douglas McIntosh, Jamaica Information Service 25 April, 2014

<http://jis.gov.jm/agriculture-ministry-moves-boost-non-traditional-exports/>

### **Full Article**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries will shortly embark on a programme aimed at increasing and safeguarding the export of Jamaica's non-traditional agricultural produce and products.

The programme, which will target local farmers and exporters, aims to create an export platform framework that facilitates exchange between suppliers and purchasers in Jamaica and overseas.

This is to be achieved through, among other things, local participants receiving training in and exposure to international business practices; training in marketing and negotiation skills; as well as product validation through participation in trade fairs and missions.

The programme, which Agriculture and Fisheries Minister, Hon. Roger Clarke, says has been used in other countries to successfully promote and expand exports, is being carried out under the Ministry's Agricultural Competitiveness Programme (ACP), in collaboration with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA).

Mr. Clarke says the programme is slated to be rolled out "within weeks", adding that IICA representatives will be in the island to assist the Ministry in identifying and training farmers and existing and potential exporters, and thereafter, "taking them into the marketplace to liaise directly with buyers and distributors."

The Minister made the announcement during his contribution to the 2014/15 Budget Debate in the House of Representatives on Wednesday, April 23, under the theme: 'Continuing the Growth – Going for Export'.

In noting the "serious potential" for creating a niche in overseas markets which non-traditional produce and products such as yam, Irish and sweet potatoes, condiments, ginger, and poultry

products have, Mr. Clarke said exportation of these items has “proceeded for years without any defined supporting structure from the State.”

He commended the local exporters who have built an infrastructure to purchase produce from farmers to, principally, ship to Jamaican Diaspora markets. The Minister noted, however, that, in many instances this effort was akin to “shooting in the dark.”

“Usually, the importer on the other side is, similarly, a consolidator who buys products from all over and sells to a distributor. The dynamics of the Diaspora market has now shifted, as most of our products are no longer positioned in ethnic markets, but in the mainstream,” he stated.

The Minister said, consequent on this, local exporters face considerable risk of non-payments, and, most times have no control over the fate of their shipments once these arrive at the designated destination.

The end result, he added, is that “we have been operating sub-optimally to our export potential.”

Hence the need, Mr. Clarke further said, for the government to create the export platform which would complement, among other things, the health certification system and pre-clearance facility currently in place.

Additionally, he suggested that it could prove beneficial if the government or Jamaica Exporters’ Association (JEA), consider the strategic placement of representatives in the country’s main export markets to coordinate the attendant logistics associated with exportation to keep track of shipments, thus ensuring payments to exporters.

As part of efforts to deal with this development, Mr. Clarke informed that the government, through the Ministry, has moved to establish links between buyers and distributors in the export markets, with exporters and farmers in Jamaica.

“In fact, we are following strong interests from the Fresh Produce Consortium of the United Kingdom, whose representatives were in Jamaica two weeks ago to explore the possibilities of acquiring supplies of sweet potato.” the Minister informed.

The Consortium is an association of fresh produce importers whose members comprise 700 businesses, inclusive of retailers, distributors, importers, wholesalers, processors, packers, and food service companies, he explained.

“So already, we have identified some large farmers in our agro-parks who are now negotiating contracts with buyers in the Fresh Produce Consortium to supply sweet potato. We have gone further to source planting material for the variety of sweet potato required by the Consortium. Our pledge is to work with these farmers to ensure that they conform to good agricultural practices, so critical for exports to the United Kingdom,” the Minister added.

**More Local Foods for School Feeding Programme** by Latonya Linton. Jamaica Information Service, 24 April, 2014

<http://jis.gov.jm/local-foods-school-feeding-programme/>

### **Full Article**

The Government is moving to align the needs of the School Feeding Programme to production in the seven agro-parks across the island.

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Roger Clarke, made the disclosure during his contribution to the 2014/15 Budget Debate in the House of Representatives on Wednesday, April 23.

He noted that this is part of measures to include more locally produced food in the School Feeding Programme.

The Programme seeks to increase the nutritional levels of the country's children, and enhance the livelihood of Jamaican farmers.

"I am happy to report that since October 2013, Nutrition Products Limited (NPL) has been using liquid eggs in their solid snacks as partial substitution for imported margarine and vegetable oil," Mr. Clarke said.

He informed that this egg is being supplied by the Jamaica Egg Processors Limited, which has since supplied some 2,151 kg of liquid eggs, valued at about \$1.340 million, and used in the production of over 476,000 buns.

Additionally, NPL has diversified its solid snack offerings, to include banana and carrot cakes and banana muffins.

"All the carrots and bananas for these products have been sourced locally. The banana purchased to date is 2,925 kilogramme (kg), valued at \$163,607, while the total volume of carrots purchased is 1,905 kg valued at some \$92,444," Mr. Clarke said.

## **Third CARICOM-Mexico Summit**

**Ramotar highlights importance of Agriculture at CARICOM – Mexico Summit.** INews Guyana, 30 April 2014

<http://www.inewsguyana.com/ramotar-highlights-importance-of-agriculture-at-caricom-mexico-summit/>

### **Full Article**

Speaking on the theme of his CARICOM portfolio responsibility, President Donald Ramotar said that there was a growing recognition of the importance of agriculture, which was vital for food security and essential in maintaining the political stability of the Community as well as the region as a whole.

The President attended the Third CARICOM-Mexico Summit held on Tuesday April 29 in Mérida, Yucatan, Mexico.

President Ramotar welcomed the announcement made earlier by Enrique Peña Nieto, President of Mexico regarding his Government's financial contribution to the Inter-American Institute for Agriculture for assistance to CARICOM States to support the improvement of the agricultural sector, an important aspect of Caribbean life.

He reminded the meeting that it was the rise in food prices in Tunisia that had started the crisis which was unfortunately still raging in the Middle East.

Highlighting the challenges which CARICOM faced in the agricultural sector, President Ramotar pointed out that despite the many initiatives taken, the CARICOM Region was still a net importer of food with the food bill amounting to more than US\$4b per year.

He said that it was clear that the Region needed a joint agricultural policy through which Member States could complement each other and raise their production to reduce the vulnerability in the sector, in the process examining the many problems that have emerged and those that were emerging.

Referring to the impact of climate change on agriculture, President Ramotar cited GUYSSUCO as a practical example, explaining that since 2004 it was expected that there would be 120 days for land preparation for planting of sugar cane. Due to changing weather patterns, the average amount of days per year had been reduced to 80.

There was also need to have easy access to each other's markets. However to accomplish this, it was necessary to improve the transportation links – maritime and air transport.

Another task was for the Community to jointly work to fight the huge food subsidy by developed countries which results in dumping thus keeping the countries in a state of dependency.

Another challenge was that of making agriculture attractive for young people to become involved. The solution was to introduce more technology into the agriculture sector and for this it was necessary to invest in human resources to produce the modern farmer.

The President said that countries of the Community must also aim to transform their agricultural products from just being raw materials to agro- industries. This is important to create jobs both in agriculture and in industry where additional skills would be required and where value would be added.

President Ramotar posited that it was time that the Community began to consider some form of division of labour in agriculture which would help to broaden the amount of agricultural products that the region could make available to its peoples.

Linked to the development of the agricultural sector and agro-industry was the need for reliable and affordable energy, particularly for processing of agricultural products. In this regard, President Ramotar noted that the Community could benefit from Mexico's experience and expertise.

In acknowledging the strengthened relations between Guyana and Mexico, President Ramotar recognized the active role played by the Mexican Ambassador resident in Georgetown. He also drew attention to the investment made by Mexican company Qualfon as the largest single private and foreign employer in Guyana which was planning to expand its operations, encouraged by its favourable business experience.

He expressed his appreciation to President Peña Nieto for the warm welcome and hospitality that he was accorded. He was accompanied by Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Irfaan Ali, Minister of Housing and Water and Acting Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce and Ambassador Elisabeth Harper, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **Discussions on Agriculture at Third CARICOM-Mexico Summit build on triangular cooperation.**

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Press release 98/2014. (30 April 2014).

[http://www.caricom.org/jsp/pressreleases/press\\_releases\\_2014/pres98\\_14.jsp](http://www.caricom.org/jsp/pressreleases/press_releases_2014/pres98_14.jsp)

#### **Full Article**

*(CARICOM Secretariat, Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown, Guyana)* Cooperation between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) will be enhanced with discussions on agriculture at the Third CARICOM Mexico-Summit being held in Merida, Mexico. This sentiment was expressed by Secretary General of the Caribbean Community, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, at the opening of the summit. According to the CARICOM Secretary-General, the discussions build on a programme of co-operation between the CARICOM Secretariat and IICA and the provision of scholarships to CARICOM nationals by Mexico, through IICA.

Citing agriculture as one of the priorities identified by the CARICOM Heads of Government in the Community's drive towards sustainable development, Ambassador LaRocque stated *"We see food and nutrition security as a fundamental aspect of our development and a vital goal to benefit our people, and gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Mexico and the role of IICA as we seek to achieve that goal and strengthen the Community's resilience"*.

Turning to the issue of climate change, which was another area of focus at the summit, Secretary General LaRocque said the ability to achieve many of CARICOM's development goals was severely undermined by its effects. He added that unusual weather patterns and the intensity of the storms which were symptomatic of the effects of climate change, emphasised the vulnerability of CARICOM countries and their economies. He observed that climate change has demonstrated the increasing importance of focusing on comprehensive disaster management, and called for Mexico's support, in this regard.

"We would welcome the support of Mexico in the efforts to obtain a legally binding instrument that strengthens the action of the international community against climate change and look forward to its adoption at the Twentieth Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to be held in Lima, Peru, next December" the Secretary General said. Ambassador LaRocque also said that fostering the resilience of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), must be viewed as a key objective of both the upcoming SIDS Conference in Samoa later

this year as well as the global efforts in negotiations for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The Secretary General asked for Mexico's support, noting that they have been supportive in other areas in the past.

“As projects in new areas such as Non Communicable Diseases and Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary measures come on stream, they will benefit from the positive experience of what has gone before” he said.

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## **Agri-business**

**Cocoa farmers reap higher prices** by Sasha Harrinanan. Trinidad and Tobago Newsday Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014

<http://www.newsday.co.tt/politics/0,194126.html>

### **Full Article**

Local cocoa farmers in the Tamana cluster are expected to earn 50 percent more per kilogramme of cocoa beans, following the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Food Production Ministry and the Trinidad and Tobago Fine Cocoa Company Limited (TTFCC), on Wednesday (April 30) at Radisson Hotel, Port-of-Spain.

Food Production Minister Devant Maharaj noted that farmers currently earn “between TT \$19 - \$20 per kilogramme (but) when the company's factory is up and running, they are expected to get close to \$33. So immediately, there is an incentive for farmers to engage in this activity.”

Cocoa beans purchased by TTFCC would be processed into cocoa liquor; pure cocoa mass in liquid form, which would for the foreseeable future, be sold exclusively to UK-based Artisan du Chocolate; an investor in TTFCC, to be made into a branded Trinidad Heritage line of gourmet chocolate products.

Declaring his elation to be signing an MoU which was “the first of its kind” and which would “facilitate a joint venture arrangement in which cocoa beans from a designated farm in the Tamana cluster, in the first instance,” Maharaj said there is indeed a market for high quality Trinidad chocolates overseas.

“Artisans du Chocolat held a soft launch of (Trinidad Heritage) in the UK last year and their product was sold out within a month. This is incredible and is tangible evidence,” the minister added, “of the dynamic opportunities for success in the cocoa industry.”

Maharaj also expressed hope that the MOU would promote more local value added activities, instead of focusing on the export of raw beans, which has traditionally accounted for 95 percent of the beans exported.

This would be partly driven, he explained, by other groups, cooperatives and processors having “the opportunity to use processing equipment during the down times of operations” at the TTFCC factory, which is expected to be up and running in the fourth quarter of this year.

Director of TTFCC, Ashley Parasram, said the purpose of the MoU is to establish a cocoa liquor operation “in relation to getting an understanding of what the demand is, what the market capacity is and what sort of equipment do we want to achieve this.”

The company would also be consulting growers and estate owners about their requirements.

Parasram also pointed out that fine cocoa beans alone is not enough to ensure a high quality chocolate at the end of the production process.

“You need to have the best value-added processing to ‘get out there’. You can have a very good bean, have very good (cocoa) liquor and you can mess up the actual chocolate side very easily. One of our consultants...said most of your fine cocoa brands are actually not very good quality because the processing equipment used is quite poor,” Parasram shared.

Hence TTFCC’s decision to partner with Artisan du Chocolat.

## **Information and Communication Technology**

**Agriculture Ministry open to use of more IT Solutions** by Alecia Smith-Edwards, Jamaica Information Service 24 April, 2014

<http://jis.gov.jm/agriculture-ministry-open-use-solutions/>

### **Full Article**

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Roger Clarke, says that with the technology applications (apps) developed last year, Government is paving the way for the creation of more innovations that can resolve other issues within the sector.

“We have developed the framework for open participatory technology development, that is, our databases are now open to allow for the development of other information technology solutions to solve concrete problems in the sector,” he said.

The Minister was making his contribution to the 2014/15 Budget Debate in Parliament on Wednesday, April 23.

Mr. Clarke noted that the administration has been working to better support the nation’s 220,000 farmers, by re-inventing its extension services through greater use of technology.

This is evidenced in the computer tablets that were provided to all extension officers, as well as the creation of two apps, in partnership with the Mona School of Business and Management – the CLIP App and the Harvest API App.

The Minister pointed out that the Harvest API App will enhance the information exchange among players in the agriculture value chain with respect to farm-gate prices and volumes.

“This will increase transparency, empower our farmers and provide the kind of information that will improve the management of the marketing of goods,” he said.

In relation to the CLIP App, Mr. Clarke noted this will enable the police to have instant and mobile access to the Rural Agricultural Development Authority’s (RADA) Farmer Registration database via cellular phones.

“This will make a critical difference to our capacity to combat praedial larceny,” the Agriculture Minister said.

## **Family Farming**

**Family farmers hold keys to agriculture in a warming world.** National Geographic, 2 May, 2014  
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/05/140502-climate-change-agriculture-family-farm-science/>

### **Full Article**

Half a billion small-scale farmers are helping pioneer sustainable techniques.

This story is part of National Geographic's special eight-month Future of Food series. To learn more about it, join our Food: A Forum live-streaming event on May 2 at 2 p.m. EST.

The challenge is huge but the solution may be small—very small.

Faced with global warming and a population that will swell to nine billion by 2050, a growing number of experts say that the way to feed the masses as climate change makes growing our food more difficult is to focus on family farmers, who often can barely feed themselves.

When policymakers in the developed world talk about feeding billions of extra mouths in the decades to come, it's multinational agribusinesses—which operate industrial-size farms—that usually get most of the attention.

But in the long run, it's small-scale farmers in the developing world, using low-tech but sustainable agricultural techniques, who may be best poised to lead the way in adapting to a warmer world and ensuring the security of the global food supply.

There are more than 500 million family farmers who produce at least 56 percent of the world's food. Most are subsistence farmers, scratching out barely enough to feed their own families, with little or nothing left over to take to market.

A report on family farms released in March by the sustainable agriculture group Food Tank credits these small-scale farmers with contributing to global food security—that is, having sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis—through the use of more sustainable agricultural practices.

For instance, while agribusinesses use fertilizers and pesticides to yield bumper crops of single grains like corn and wheat, smallholder farmers are growing indigenous plants that help protect increasingly stressed natural resources (like water) and that improve the density of nutrients in crops.

That helps explain why the Food Tank report, which crunched data from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other sources, concluded that smallholder farms "are not only feeding the world, but also nourishing the planet."

The United Nations, for its part, has designated 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming to raise the profile of these unsung agricultural workers and spotlight the roles they could play in the face of challenges like climate change, malnutrition, and poverty.

#### *Small-Scale Vulnerability—and Resilience*

A sobering report released last month by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned of cataclysmic consequences of global warming that are already being felt, including drought, extreme heat, and flash floods.

Those changes have an outsized impact on farmers.

For years, civil wars, corrupt governments, poor infrastructure, and other political conditions were the major impediments to food production and distribution.

But Jerry Glover, a U.S. Agency for International Development agroecologist, says there's been a "significant shift ... In many regions, an emerging cause of food insecurity is the lack of ability of those farm fields to support yields that are necessary because of land degradation and the effects of climate change."

Glover and sustainable agriculture experts like Danielle Nierenberg, president of Food Tank, see smallholder farms in the developing world—and sometimes on city rooftops in the developed world—as leading the way in navigating an increasingly uncertain agricultural landscape.

In its recent report, Food Tank cited the many low-tech "agroecological approaches" used by smallholder farms "to combat climate change and create resilience to food price shocks, natural disasters, and conflict."

Among them: agroforestry, which integrates trees and shrubs into crop and livestock fields; solar-powered drip irrigation, which delivers water directly to plant roots; intercropping, which involves planting two or more crops near each other to maximize the use of light, water, and nutrients; and the

use of green manures, which are quick-growing plants that help prevent erosion and replace nutrients in the soil.

Former U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman recently returned from Guatemala, where farmers are adding vegetables—and biodiversity—to traditional corn and bean fields, rotating coffee with other crops to fight a deadly leaf fungus, and using drip irrigation techniques to grow mangos and plantains.

Such labor-intensive methods haven't been widely adapted by big agriculture, which has generally been more focused on increasing yields on some of the world's most productive lands.

Indeed, large-scale monoculture farming, with its heavy use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and genetically modified seeds, has contributed to the disappearance of about 75 percent of plant genetic diversity over the last century, according to the FAO.

At a time when Food Tank says that 30 percent of the world's arable land has been depleted of nutrients and has become less productive because of unsustainable agricultural methods, family farmers who plant a variety of indigenous crops are obtaining 20 to 60 percent higher yields than farmers who cultivate only one crop.

And "forgotten crops" like millet, sorghum, and the now-trendy quinoa—often staples of smallholder farms—can go longer without water and can better resist disease than mass-produced and resource-thirsty corn, wheat, soybeans, or rice.

"These are the crops often referred to as 'poor people's food' or sometimes even 'weeds,'" Nierenberg says, "but these are foods that can be resilient to the impacts of climate change."

### *Farming Out of Poverty*

Even as they demonstrate ways to help feed a more crowded, warmer world, small-scale farmers are among the most threatened by climate change and the surging population.

Many family farmers till two hectares (about five acres) or less, often on marginal lands susceptible to changing climate and catastrophic weather events in developing areas of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Central America.

And despite their vocation, they're among the world's poorest and most malnourished. To make matters worse, they live disproportionately in regions that are expected to see the largest population bumps by midcentury, making limited resources even scarcer.

"Most of the poverty in the developing world is in rural and agricultural areas," says Glickman. "To the extent that we can give family farms [and] smallholder farms in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia additional tools to use better farming methods, better seeds, better fertilizer, more technical information to grow better crops, we help pull them out of poverty."

According to a UN Millennium Project Task Force report cited by Food Tank, about half of the world's hungry live on smallholder family farms.

Investing in these "stewards of the land," as Nierenberg calls them, so that they can grow more nutritious food will not only help raise them out of poverty but also help a warming planet.

**Haiti Development Briefing no.6: Modernising family farming, an alternative to ensure food security.** Université Notre Dame d'Haïti (UDERS), Cayes, Haiti 29 April, 2014  
<http://www.cta.int/en/article/2014-04-29/haiti-development-briefing-6.html>

## **Full Article**

### *Context*

Agriculture is one of the most important pillars of the Haitian economy. Overall, it accounts for more than 25% of the country's GDP and could potentially provide 60% of export revenue and eventually repay debt with local agricultural products. To date, agricultural production in Haiti is mainly provided by family holdings. According to the 2008 World Bank report, 1.5 billion people on the planet live on small sized farms. In Haiti, approximately 90% of farms are family owned and more than 60% of the population work on these. However, in spite of the role and the importance of family farming in Haitian economy, the farmers, who are the main providers to this wealth, still work and live in difficult conditions. National economic and agricultural policies should work in favour of these Haitian farmers who should logically be the primary beneficiaries of any governmental action undertaken. Today, these fertile lands, which were used for the production of food crops, are not sufficiently valued to provide produce for the national and regional market. PROMODEV believes that family farming is the basis of food security for the Haitian population. Therefore, the prerequisite solution to eradicating hunger and food insecurity in Haiti is the support, modernisation and promotion of family farming. Improving family farming productivity could feed the thousands who every year suffer from hunger in Haiti.

### *What is family farming?*

Family farming includes all agricultural activities that rely on the family, in relation to many aspects of rural development. Family farming promotes the organisation of agricultural, forestry, fishery, pastoral or aquaculture production, under the management of the family, and mainly relying on the family workforce, including both men and women. In developed as well as developing countries, family farming is the main form of agriculture in the sector of food production. At the national level, several key factors can successfully contribute to its development, including: agro-ecological conditions and territorial characteristics, environmental policies, access to the marketplace, access to land and natural resources, access to technology, to agricultural extension services and to credit; demographic, economic, socio-cultural conditions, the availability of specialised education. Family farming plays an important role at the socio-economic, environmental and cultural levels. Family farming can contribute to employment creation, reducing rural exodus and depleting fewer natural resources and generating income for smallholder farmers. Additionally, it can develop alternative technologies by using agricultural and livestock by-products such as soil fertilizers. These technologies promote clean and sustainable agriculture.

### *Family farming in Haiti*

A family farm is defined as "an agricultural production unit where property and work are intimately linked to family". From this perspective, Haitian agriculture is essentially family farming. Is this true

when observing the Artibonite Valley where rice cultivation makes use of paid workforce to run the farms that depend very little on families? Can subsistence farming based on indirect tenure that produces, it is said, mainly for the family using only surplus for the market be called family farming? Would it be accurate to say that traditional work organisations in Haiti (konbit, escouade, douvanjou, etc.) pertain to family logic rather than community logic?

As a very complex social object, farming is considered to be the result of various technical, economic, social and cultural realities. Therefore, shouldn't factors such as traditional knowledge be included in farming differentiation criteria? This further justifies the need to discuss family farming diversely, instead of as one homogeneous concept, regardless of socio-ecological areas, agricultural systems or income levels. Who has described and classified family farming in Haiti?

Based on the opposition between family logic (work organisation and farm propagation method) and autonomy-dependence logic in relation to goods and financial markets, Lamarche (1998) identified four categories of farms:

- the peasant or subsistence model,
- the business model,
- the family business model
- and the alternative or transition model.

The peasant or subsistence model is very domestic/family oriented and independent; the alternative model is not very domestic or dependent; the family business model is very domestic and very dependent; and the farm business model is not very domestic and very dependent. The subsistence model seems to best fit most of Haitian agriculture which relies mainly on hoes and machetes.

Other researchers, such as Abramovay (1998) think it time to re-evaluate the concept of subsistence farming on the grounds that the logic behind farming is not family consumption and selling surplus but rather producing for the person one is indebted to and eating the surplus. This is what seems to be happening with vegetable producers on the outskirts of big cities (spinach producers in the Plaine du Cul-de-Sac) or onion farmers in the Artibonite Valley and those who produce export commodities (coffee, cocoa, etc.) or raw materials for agro-industry.

The general agriculture census (MARNDR, 2008) revealed that 73% of farms from a total of 1.4 million units are smaller in size than a "karo/carreau" (1 ha. 29 ca. equivalent to 1.29 hectares)[1]. Amongst this 73%, one finds small, mini and micro farms which can be differentiated by the number of employees they have, their production volumes and the income generated (Liboreiro, 1979). Is the importance of this category in terms of national agriculture significant with regards the international agricultural supply chain? And if so, by how much?

The challenges that face family farms in the country are daunting. They primarily concern land fragmentation, subsequent to the inheritance law that requires equal division of the farm between heirs. As there is no law that ensures the conservation of agricultural holdings, family farming is less likely to last over time. They also concern a shift in cultural relations. A survey conducted amongst farmers in the Western department shows that, as late as twenty years ago, 90% of farmers did not want their sons to become farmers.

The development of family farming in Haiti, with regards the purpose of this discussion, raises three important issues, irrespective of the classification used to categorize them.

1. First, the utilisable agricultural areas tend to be reduced by uncontrolled urbanisation as noted in cultivated plains, progressive soil salinization as recorded in irrigated areas, and colluvial deposits from flooding caused by overflowing rivers.
2. Secondly, family farms are, at the present time, not environmentally friendly due to poor land use, the lack of erosion control practices and the reduction of fallow between crop seasons.
3. Thirdly, paradoxical as it may seem, only family farming can prevent environmental degradation, as soil protection and restoration may only be done parcel by parcel at farm level.

#### *The International Year of Family Farming*

The International Year of Family Farming 2014(IYFF) aims to raise the profile of family farming and small-scale farming by focusing the world's attention on their significant contribution to: eradicating hunger and poverty, improving food security, nutrition and livelihoods, natural resources management, environment protection and sustainable development, particularly in rural areas.

The aim of IYFF 2014 is to bring family farming back to the forefront of agricultural, environmental and social policies in national action programmes, by identifying the issues that need to be addressed and the existing opportunities in order to promote a transition towards a more equitable and balanced development. The IYFF 2014 will promote debate and cooperation on a national, regional and global level to lead to a better understanding of the challenges smallholder farmers face and identify effective ways of supporting family farming.

#### *Future prospects*

The Haitian Government and its partners, as well as civil society must implement several programmes/support projects throughout the ten (10) geographical departments in the country. The aim of these programmes/projects is to stimulate the systemisation, experimentation and consolidation for the support of production, processing, conservation and collective marketing of agricultural products by farmers(Collective Agricultural Entrepreneurship).It is therefore about supporting self-promoted initiatives by farmers in and around the agricultural sector in order to enhance their skills in agriculture.

We recommend the use of the Backup to Farmers' Organizational Dynamics (BAFOD).With this approach, tools and procedures can be developed to help farmer organisations to design their own development strategies and to define institutional forms adapted to their conditions and conducive to good governance.

#### *Briefing objectives and expected results*

The aim is to support the creation of the conditions necessary to achieve greater productivity for family farming and fair and equitable remuneration for the work done by farmers.

More specifically, PROMODEV intends to:

- Replicate in Haiti the briefings organised by the CTA in Brussels in partnership with the European Commission, the ACP Secretariat and Concord;
- Draw attention to efforts to overcome the major obstacles to modernising family farming in Haiti;
- Enhance understanding with regards the issues at stake in the country's agricultural sector;
- Facilitate the dialogue process towards possible solutions to the crisis in Haitian agriculture;
- Raise awareness with partners as to the major challenges for strengthening local production;

- Increase exchange of information and expertise on proven successes in the field of food security;
- Facilitate networking amongst (between) development partners.

These objectives will enhance information sharing and encourage networking amongst stakeholders in order to face the key challenges of rural development, in the context of EU/ACP cooperation.

The meeting on 29 April 2014, in Cayes, is based on a participatory approach and is part of the National Strategy for Agricultural Extension.

#### *Expected results*

On the one hand, policy makers and development partners will be better informed on key issues on rural development. On the other hand, in terms of solutions and by supporting agricultural research to benefit farmers, they will help solve the issue of food insecurity.

Via the establishment of a platform for communication and exchange for stakeholders involved in rural development, the media will have a better understanding of agricultural issues, the challenges this sector faces and the interventions to be undertaken to overcome these problems.

#### *Publications and communication*

A desk for publications, magazines and books will be set up on the day of the Briefing. Should you have publications for the participants, PROMODEV will be pleased to distribute these through its display of work and achievements.

Information provided before, during and after the Briefing will be published on the briefing blogs: <http://bruxellesbriefings.net>/<http://haitibriefings.net> and on the PROMODEV website: [www.promodev.ht](http://www.promodev.ht)

## Upcoming Events

### **2014 International Year of Family Farming (IYFF). FAO**

<http://www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/home/en/>

#### **Description**

The 2014 **International Year of Family Farming (IYFF)** aims to raise the profile of family farming and smallholder farming by focusing world attention on its significant role in eradicating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainable development, in particular in rural areas.

The goal of the 2014 IYFF is to reposition family farming at the centre of agricultural, environmental and social policies in the national agendas by identifying gaps and opportunities to promote a shift towards a more equal and balanced development. The 2014 IYFF will promote broad discussion and cooperation at the national, regional and global levels to increase awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by smallholders and help identify efficient ways to support family farmers

May 2014

### **Caribbean Sustainable Development Solutions Network**

The launch meeting of the Caribbean Sustainable Development Solutions Network

**Date:** 7-8 May 2014

**Location:** University of the West Indies (UWI)-Mona Campus in Kingston, Jamaica.

**Website:** <http://unsdsn.org/what-we-do/national-and-regional-networks/regional-sdsn/regional-sdsn-for-the-caribbean>,

**Building Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security. IFPRI 2020 Conference**

**Date:** 15-17 May 2014

**Location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Website:** <http://www.2020resilience.ifpri.info/>

**7th Caribbean Beekeeping Congress and the 2nd Annual Caribbean Bee College**

**Date:** 26-30 May 2014

**Location:** St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands at the Albert A. Sheen Campus, University of the Virgin Islands, Kingshill,

**Contact:** [CBC.CBCVI@gmail.com](mailto:CBC.CBCVI@gmail.com)

June 2014

**The International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) Annual Meeting**

**Date:** 16-19 June 2014

**Location:** Edinburgh, UK

**Website:** <http://seedtest.org/en/annual-meeting-2014- content---1--1409.html>

July 2014

**50th Caribbean Food Crops society (CFCS) Annual Meeting, United States Virgin Islands.**

**Date:** 5-12 July 2014

**Website:** <http://cfcs.eea.uprm.edu/>

**XII World Congress of Computers in Agriculture and Natural Resources**

**Date:** 27- 30 July, 2014

**Location:** San Pedro, San José, Costa Rica

**Description**

This congress provides a forum for agriculture related professionals to exchange information on applications and developments in the use of Information Technologies. It covers a wide array of topics. These include new applications of well established and understood technologies to innovative and entrepreneurial applications of emerging technologies, in addition to issues related to policy and knowledge dissemination. Contributions from various countries will allow a broadened perspective for all attending. This congress is sponsored by International Network for Information Technology in Agriculture and the University of Costa Rica (UCR).

**Abstracts submission deadline:** 15 February, 2014

**Website:** <http://wcca2014.ucr.ac.cr/>

**Conference on Ecological and Ecosystem Restoration 2014**

CEER is a Collaborative Effort of the leaders of the National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration (NCER) and the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER).

**Date:** 28 July - 1 August, 2014

**Location:** New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

**Website:** <http://www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/CEER2014/>

August 2014

**XI International Congress on Management of Amazonian and Latin American Wildlife**

St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago,

**Date:** 17 - 22 August 2014

**Location:** St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago,

Theme: "Alternative Sustainable Conservation & Utilization Methods for Neo-tropical Animals"

**Website:** <http://xicimfauna.org/>

**Banana**

**ISHS/ProMusa Symposium will be held as one of the symposia of the 29th International Horticultural Congress**

**Date:** 17-22 August, 2014

**Location:** Brisbane, Australia

**Description**

Theme: "**Unravelling the banana's genomic potential**". This symposium will take stock of ongoing research efforts with the impact of the recently sequenced genome but also other areas of research. Special attention will be given to Fusarium wilt tropical race 4, which is already a major problem in Asia and poses a huge threat for banana production in Africa and Latin America. The contribution of banana to human health and nutrition will also be highlighted, with a special focus on the crop's diversity.

**Website** [http://www.ihc2014.org/symposium\\_36.html](http://www.ihc2014.org/symposium_36.html)