IICA/CARDI...a fruitful relationship

Since 1989 CARDI and IICA have been collaborating under the framework of a technical cooperation agreement. In August, CARDI attended the thirty-sixth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee of IICA in Costa Rica, where the 2014-2015 Report on the IICA/CARDI activities were presented. Some of the key outputs under the IICA/CARDI collaboration for the preceding year included:

- The implementation of a programme to boost ginger production in St Lucia. Activities included the establishment of a demonstration plot, training of farmers and extension workers in crop production and management; the preparation and distribution of Tech Packs.
- Establishment of demonstration sites for the production of vegetables under protected agriculture structures in Guyana and St Kitts and Nevis.
- Strengthening roots and tuber production through the procurement of 2 mechanized planters in Guyana; training small farmer groups in the production, management and sharing of planting material; training hoteliers and bakers in making of composite bread; training 15 technicians from CARIFORUM countries in tissue culture production and management.
- In Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago small ruminant breeding stock was augmented with the introduction of superior breeds.
Sharing the results of the 10th EDF Project

CARDI hosted a series of one day workshops in Trinidad and Tobago, Belize and St Kitts and Nevis to share the results of the 10th EDF funded project on “Improving Caribbean Food Security in the Context of Climate Change”. The focus of this 4-year project, jointly implemented by CARDI and the Wageningen University (WUR), Netherlands was improving and increasing the resilience of local farmers to climate change. Some of the key outputs of the project were the completion of DNA fingerprinting for 105 sweet potato accessions in Barbados, St Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago by WUR; the identification and selection of varieties of corn, sweet potato, small red and black beans, to varying degrees of drought resilience; the characterization and establishment of germplasm plots for pigeon peas, sweet potato and cassava and the training of more than 100 farmers and extension officers across the project countries in Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) and Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs). This project has laid the foundation for more extensive research work on the conservation of economically important crops to the Region and the development and availability of adaptable germplasm to farmers.

CARDI at CWA

This year the Cayman Islands, one of the newest member states of CARDI will be hosting the Caribbean Week of Agriculture from 24-28 October 2016. The event’s theme is “Investing in food and agriculture”. CARDI, a member of the Alliance, has been involved in the planning of the week’s activities and will also be co-hosting and participating in several events. CARDI’s Executive Director, Barton Clarke will address the Plenary Session on the opening day. Together with ITC, CARDI will be hosting a seminar on the “Status of the Regional Coconut Industry and the Way Forward towards its development”. This workshop aims to review the results of interventions made in developing the coconut industry in the Caribbean region during the last three years and to agree on priority interventions for developing the coconut industry over the next five years. CARDI will also collaborate on a regional workshop highlighting the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR). On Thursday be sure to visit the CARDI booth at the Market Place where live demonstration on the preparation of small ruminant meat will be conducted by a Master Butcher. Rounding off the week, CARDI will host its Board of Governors meeting. Keep up with CARDI at CWA by following us on all our social media sites.

Changing cropping practices guarantees sweet potato yields

Sweet potato is one of the more popular root crops cultivated in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The Beauregard variety in particular, is highly valued and prioritized for the export market by the Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFan). However, this variety is highly susceptible to drought conditions, making production during the dry season in traditional sweet potato growing areas very challenging. CARDI successfully demonstrated that growing the crop at higher altitudes during the dry season produces yields of over 10,000 per acre. This is significant, as it is not feasible for farmers to use irrigation during the dry season. Increasing the zones under which sweet potato is cultivated ensures that Vincentian farmers can continue to meet the demand from the export market.

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