Since 1991, the dreaded Black Sigatoka disease (BSD) has been in the Region, where it has resulted in a drastic decline in banana and plantain production. To assist farmers in combating the disease CARDI through the financial assistance of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) implemented a project entitled the ‘Development of an Integrated Disease Management Programme for Black Sigatoka Disease’ in the Windward Islands and Guyana. The objectives of the project were to develop an integrated disease management (IDM) programme for BSD and to train stakeholders in BSD management. During the project, the Institute together with our partners made some key interventions that assist farmers in better managing the disease. Some of these included the development of an IDM framework for BSD, training of stakeholders in BSD management and the development of information products including an evaluation report on the performance of the introduced BSD-tolerant varieties. A key component of IDM programme was the evaluation of introduced BSD tolerant banana and plantain hybrids from Bioversity International and the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA). Preliminary results suggest that FHIA 23 and FHIA 03 accessions performed well against the disease and were highly rated by consumers in organoleptic tests. Access the final project report @ http://bit.ly/2uCEswW.
In the month of July, CARDI will be hosting public consultations in each member state, to garner feedback on the Institute’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022. The Strategic Plan provides the guiding framework on how the Institute will achieve its strategic goal of contributing to food and nutrition security through the development of innovations that contribute to sustainable, climate resilient value chains over the next five years. The Consultations will address the programmes and implementation strategy. Executive Director, Barton Clarke says these consultations will give all persons and organisations with an interest in agriculture the opportunity to understand CARDI’s work and to contribute to its relevance and effectiveness. The received feedback will be used to finalise the Strategic Plan before implementation in January 2018. The schedules for these consultations will be published on the Institute’s website and social media platforms. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Barbados moving towards the development of the coconut industry

Unable to meet the growing demand for coconuts, Barbados is moving towards the development of its industry. The first in a series of stakeholder meetings on the development the Coconut industry was held on 28 June at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, where newly appointed CARDI Representative to Barbados, Ansari Hosein delivered opening remarks. In his remarks, Hosein emphasised the need for policy interventions, broad based stakeholder engagement and investment from the private and public sectors in responding to the challenges faced by the industry. Also speaking at the opening was Suzanne Eddy Babb, Chief Economist at the Ministry of Agriculture who said that in developing the industry the Government will be adopting a value chain approach. Barbados will benefit from the ongoing project “Coconut Industry Development for the Caribbean” financed by the European Union and jointly implemented by the Geneva based International Trade Centre(ITC) and CARDI. In the short term, CARDI will partner with the Ministry of Agriculture to establish observation trials and germplasm banks to provide high quality planting material, conduct training for farmers in nursery management and coconut production and work with vendors and processors to improve their operations.

CARDI will hosts public consultations in July to get feedback on the Institute’s Strategic Plan

CARDBI represented at Caribaea Meeting

Michelle Singh and Kistian Flemming represented CARDI at the Second Caribaea Initiative Research and Conservation Workshop, which took place at the Marriott Resort, St Kitts from 31 May to 3 June 2017. CARDBI Representative to Bahamas, Michelle Singh collaborated with the Department of Food Production, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine on a paper entitled the Neotropical animal production for conservation on the Island of Trinidad, West Indies. The paper anlaysed the hunting of wild animals on the island and took an indepth look at the work that was done to improve the reproduction of Agouti in captivity. According to Singh, this work has enabled farmers and researchers to identify the best time to mate female agoutis to increase populations in captivity. Singh also collaborated with Flemming and Kerry Dore of the University of Texas to produce a paper on the “Cause for Concern: The potential threat to human health by vervet monkeys in St. Kitts and Nevis”. The green vervet monkey which has been on the island since the 1600s, has been responsible for widespread destruction in the agricultural sector. The paper highlights the potential indirect impact of human-vervet interaction through human consumption of crops contaminated by monkeys. Results indicate, increasing levels of vervet-crop interaction over the last seven years placed the population at greater risk for contracting bacterial pathogens such as Salmonella and E.coli O157:H7. This potential risk posed a threat both to human health, and by extension, food security for St. Kitts.