



Agriculture in the News

Issues Affecting Caribbean Agriculture

HQ/002/18

13 – 19 May 2018 Issue compiled by CARDI

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Roots and Tubers

Scientists meet to tackle challenges facing root, tuber and banana seed systems. CGIAR (Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas), May 16, 2018 by RTB.

<http://www.rtb.cgiar.org/blog/2018/05/16/scientists-tackle-challenges-facing-root-tuber-banana-seed-systems/>

... researchers from around the world came together in late March, 2018, in Nairobi, Kenya. The group of researchers met with the goal of discussing a toolbox to study root, tuber and banana seed systems, learn from them, and design better seed interventions, all with the goal of ensuring that quality seed is made available to farmers and gets into the food production chain...

Presentations <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/p431qjrd5li7fk/AADpIKVbbfVbZfCIT4U05gLa?dl=0>

Improving Lives Through Agricultural Research

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Cassava breeding hasn't improved photosynthesis or yield potential. College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, May 10, 2018
<https://aces.illinois.edu/news/cassava-breeding-has%E2%80%99t-improved-photosynthesis-or-yield-potential>

URBANA, Ill. – Cassava is a staple in the diet of more than one billion people across 105 countries, yet this “orphaned crop” has received little attention compared to popular crops like corn and soybeans. While advances in breeding have helped cassava withstand pests and diseases, cassava yields no more today than it did in 1963. Corn yields, by comparison, have more than doubled.

University of Illinois researchers analyzed four African cultivars to find out how breeding has impacted photosynthesis—the process that transforms light energy and carbon dioxide into yield. They found that unimproved landraces of cassava – cultivars that have not been bred for improvements like pest and disease resistance – are actually 20 percent better at photosynthesizing than their improved counterparts, as [reported in Food and Energy Security](#). ...

... The paper, “**Toward Improving photosynthesis in cassava: characterizing photosynthetic limitations in four current African cultivars,**” is available [online](#) [DOI 10.1002/fes3.130]...

Cereals & Grains legumes

Breaking Ground: Lorena Gonzalez fast-forwards action on hunger using technology By Matthew O’Leary (CIMMYT), May 17, 2018
<https://www.cimmyt.org/breaking-ground-lorena-gonzalez-fast-forwards-action-on-hunger-using-technology/>

Over 174,000 tonnes of rice exported to Mexico to date. Guyana. Department of Public Information May 9, 2018
<http://dpi.gov.gy/over-174000-tonnes-of-rice-exported-to-mexico-to-date/>

The local rice industry and the trade relationship between Guyana and Mexico continue to see significant improvement as over 174,000 tonnes of paddy have been exported to Mexico, to date.

Sargassum seaweed

Action Plan Sargassum clean up Campaign approved. Grenada. Website of Government of Grenada
http://www.gov.gd/egov/news/2018/may18/08_05_18/item_1/action-plan-sargassum-clean-up-campaign-approved.html

St. George’s, May 8, 2018: The Ministry of Climate Resilience, the Environment, Forestry, Fisheries, Disaster Management and Information in collaboration with the Ministry of Health will embark on a cleanup action of the sargassum on beaches in Grenada and Carriacou

Agroenergy /Biofuels

The New Feedstock Frontier By Ron Kotrba. Biodiesel Magazine May 17, 2018

Cutting-edge research and development has the potential to turn conventional wisdom on its head and revolutionize how, and from where, plant oils are obtained.

<http://www.biodieselmagazine.com/articles/2516357/the-new-feedstock-frontier>

... Modern farming practices and improved crop varieties have led to incremental increases in per-acre yields over time, but what if scientists could tap into the genetic makeup of the beans and remove the inhibitor that caps oil production at 20 percent? Or how about if researchers could redirect oil production to grow significant quantities of harvestable oil not in seeds but in vegetative stalks and leaves? Work at Brookhaven National

Laboratory and schools such as the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the University of Florida are pioneering such research to make the impossible a reality. Scientists at BNL led by biochemist John Shanklin have identified an enzyme—ACCCase—central to determining the rate of oil production in oilseeds...

Organic farming

Our 2017 Annual Report is now available online! IFORM Organics International 14.05.2018
<https://www.ifoam.bio/en/news/2018/05/14/our-2017-annual-report-now-available-online>

Climate Change

The road to climate resilience. It can start in any rural community. IWMI – International Water Management Institute, May 18, 2018
<http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/2018/05/the-road-to-climate-resilience/>

Rural communities across the developing world face growing pressures from climate change impacts and other problems associated with unsustainable agricultural practices, water pollution and the overuse of aquifers. These communities urgently need to build adaptive capacity, so they can thrive, despite the mounting odds against them. As outlined in a new set of project briefs (listed at the end of this article), the journey towards resilience can begin now, right where rural people live and work, leading to results that complement much-needed investment from national governments, the private sector and international aid agencies.....

“Layering” climate smart rice-wheat farming practices in India boosts benefits by Julie Mollins. International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), May 8, 2018
<https://www.cimmyt.org/layering-climate-smart-rice-wheat-farming-practices-in-india-boosts-benefits/>

... Now, new scientific research into “layering” climate smart agriculture techniques shows promise, demonstrating the potential for crop adaptability to climate change. Experiments reveal the possibilities for high productivity, benefits for water and energy supplies resulting in a smaller environmental footprint....

Agricultural Development

Bees must be protected for the future of our food. First World Bee Day to be observed on 20 May 2018. FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 19 May 2018.
<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1132329/icode/>

Minister Shaw to Tackle Food Imports in Tourism Sector By Garfield L. Angus. Jamaica Information Service, May 18, 2018
<https://jis.gov.jm/minister-shaw-to-tackle-food-imports-in-tourism-sector/>

Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw, says the Ministry intends to tackle the issue of food imports in the tourism industry head-on.

The majority of the island’s total food imports, about 60 per cent, are directed to the hotel, restaurant and institutional (HRI) sector.

Mr. Shaw said it should not be the case that most of the food served by hotels “literally comes into the island on the same planes that fly in the tourists”.

“It’s not just fresh foods, but processed foods as well,” he noted, while addressing **the launch of Things Jamaican’s ‘True Stories – From Farm to Shelf’** at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston on May 15....

Agriculture is quintessential for Africa and must be leveraged for transformation, says ECA's Songwe. UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), 13 May 2018

<https://www.uneca.org/stories/agriculture-quintessential-africa-and-must-be-leveraged-transformation-says-eca%E2%80%99s-songwe>

Addis Ababa, 13 May 2018 (ECA) - "Agriculture is the quintessential sector for the transformation of the African continent and we must treat it as such," the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) – Ms. Vera Songwe has told a wide-range of African leaders and delegates attending the 51st Session of ECA (and Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development).

Ms. Songwe was speaking at the launch of a new report titled *Agriculture, Powering Africa's Economic Transformation*, by the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) – founded by former ECA Executive Secretary – Dr. K.Y. Amoako.

The Report is a comprehensive assessment of the state of Africa's agriculture and gives clear pointers as to how to rapidly transform the sector to leverage the continent's overall economic transformation and development. It is predicated on the reality that Africa has a comparative advantage in respect of unused arable land, water resources, labor and long growing seasons and that the continent possesses the lion's share of the world's unutilized arable land....

Government in Focus- Featuring Honourable David Osborne, Minister of Agriculture, Trade, Lands, Housing and the Environment [Government of Montserrat](#)

<https://soundcloud.com/user-987002611/government-in-focus-ft-hon-min-of-agriculture-david-osborne-tuesday-may-8-2018>

Please click on the link below to have a listen: [Government in Focus ft. Hon Min. of Agriculture David Osborne, Tuesday May 8, 2018](#)

Listen to Government in Focus ft. Hon Min. of Agriculture David Osborne, Tuesday May 8, 2018 by Radio Montserrat (ZJB) #np on #SoundCloud
soundcloud.com

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION: Photovoice

Worth a thousand words: Using Photovoice to document the climate change experiences of farmers in Vietnam by Renz Louie Celeridad (World Agroforestry Centre). Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), May 15, 2018

<https://ccafs.cgiar.org/news/worth-thousand-words-using-photovoice-document-climate-change-experiences-farmers-vietnam#.WwcqGCApCM>

.. Photovoice is a participatory method that utilizes photography to share people's experiences through photos and images. In the context of climate-smart agriculture (CSA), it can be used to document climate change-related issues as perceived by farmers. This documentation can then be used to enlighten policy makers and development organizations regarding the challenges that farmers face every day. Furthermore, photovoice can serve as a knowledge-sharing platform for farmers, enabling them to inform each other of effective climate change adaptation practices....

EDUCATION

Farmer Field School certifies twenty-nine by Hinkson Butcher, Ministry of Agriculture. May 17, 2018

<http://agriculture.govt.lc/news/farmer-field-school-certifies-twenty-nine>

PARTICIPANTS UNDERWENT 22 WEEKS OF INTENSIVE TRAINING IN SUBJECT MATTERS RELATING TO ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.

More farmers are now certified agri-entrepreneurs following training in good agricultural practices.

A Farmer Field School graduation exercise was held in the administrative building of the Meat Processing Facility in Vieux Fort, and saw the culmination of 22 weeks of training in swine production.

Twenty-nine individuals completed the programme. The graduation ceremony for swine producers marks the end of the fifth Livestock Farmer Field School to be undertaken by the FAO in the Caribbean....

UPCOMING EVENTS

May

St Kitts & Nevis Landcare Workshop, May 2018

Hosted by Australian Landcare International / CARDI/ University of Wolverhampton

Date: Nevis: 18 May 2018; St Kitts: 22-25 May 2018

Information: <http://www.cardi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/St.-Kitts-and-Nevis-Landcare-Workshop-Poster.jpg>

10th World Potato Congress

Date: May 27 - May 31, 2018

<http://www.rtb.cgiar.org/event/10th-world-potato-congress/>

July

54th Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Food Crops Society

Date: 8-13 July, 2018

Location: Belize City, Belize

Description: Theme “Multi-functionality of Agriculture in the Caribbean Basin in Countries with Predominant Tourist Industries”

Hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration.

Call for Abstracts: Please fill out the submission form available on our website and submit by May 11, 2018 to: Ina I. Sanchez, MSc | Coordinator – Research & Innovation. Phone: (501) 623-0771, Email: ina.sanchez@agriculture.gov.bz . Research, Development and Innovation Center, Ministry of Agriculture, FFESD&I, Central Farm, Cayo, BELIZE

<https://www.facebook.com/CARIBBEAN.FOOD.CROPS.SOCIETY/>

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

30th International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) hosted by International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE)

Date: July 28 - August 2, 2018.

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Theme: “New Landscapes and New Mandates for Agriculture”

Website: <http://www.icae2018.com/Default.aspx>

October

18th International Triennial Symposium of the ISTRC (International Society for Tropical Root Crops)

will be in Cali, Colombia from 22nd to 26th October 2018.

<http://www.istrc.org/194-18th-international-triennial-symposium-of-the-international-society-for-tropical-root-crops-istrc-cali-colombia-from-22nd-to-26th-october-2018>

November

2018 International Annual Meeting, "Enhancing Productivity in a Changing Climate," of The American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America, and the Canadian Society of Agronomy

Date: 4-7 November, 2018

Location: Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Website: <https://www.acsmeetings.org/>