

Ministers' Brief



Farmers of the Year, Belize on stage with Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Godwin Hulse at the Opening of the National Agriculture and Trade Show (Photo courtesy: NATSBelize)

Rewarding farmers in Belize

CARDI was delighted to join with partners in Belize to recognize and reward the Farmers of the Year, 2019 at the country's premier agricultural event, the National Agriculture and Trade Show (NATS). The competition was held under the theme "Innovations in Technology: Driving a Climate Resilient and Competitive Agriculture and Food Sector."

Representatives from CARDI, the Pesticide Control Board and Department of Agriculture judged the competition and after two rounds of farm evaluations from across all six districts, Dan Isai Lopez, Ana Eloisa Morales and Christian Eden Salazar Jr were adjudged the winners.

Dan Lopez from San Antonio, Cayo

District is the Male Farmer of the Year. Dan farms 60 acres of land - 40 is dedicated to vegetable and fruit farming while the remaining 20 is kept under reserve. According to Dan the reserve along with good agricultural practices are helping him successfully combat some of the ills associated with climate change. The proud father of 2 is happy that he can provide healthy, wholesome meals to his family while positively contributing to his country's food and nutrition security.

Ana Eloisa Morales who hails from Selena Village in Cayo District is the Female Farmer of the Year. From the 25 acres she farms, Ana grows herbs and spices, bananas, plantains, coconuts and a variety of fruit trees. She also rears Tilapia and is involved in value addition.

The income generated from her operations helps to comfortably sustain her family. Ana also dedicates her time to work with adults and youths on several agronomic outreach programmes in her community.

The Junior Farmer of the Year is Christian Eden Salazar Jr. Christian is 22 years old and rents 12 acres of land in Concepcion Village, Corozal where he grows a range of vegetables including tomatoes, sweet pepper, hot pepper, cucumber, radish, okra and cilantro all using drip irrigation. He also rears chickens for meat and eggs and has plans to get into sheep production.

The NATS was held from 26-28 April 2019, in Belmopan. CARDI is a proud platinum sponsor of this event.

Bahamas, on the move to expand the production and usage of Cascarilla.



Cascarilla is a key ingredient in the production of the Italian liqueur Campari
(Photo courtesy: Flowerperfumes.net)

The Government of Bahamas is exploring the potential of expanding the production of Cascarilla (*Croton eluteria*) and growing new businesses around this valuable shrub. The Bahamas Development Bank is partnering with the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, the Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation (BAIC), The Department of Forestry, The Department of Cooperatives, The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI), The Bahamas, Environment, Science and Technology Commission (BEST), The Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and CARDI on this initiative.

CARDI Bahamas was part of the team that visited the out islands of Acklins, Crooked and Samana Cay from 20-24 May 2019 to conduct research on Cascarilla's habitat, agronomy and harvesting practices. The team also engaged with the local communities on these islands to discuss the development of a value added industry.

The Cascarilla bark is a key ingredient in the production of the popular aperitif Campari. The bark is currently exported to Italy, United Kingdom, France, USA and Germany. The oil is also very valuable and used in manufacturing of perfumes and medicines.

The plan is to increase exports by developing a sustainable industry. The focus is on developing a sustainable propagation plant and the establishment of locally based, oil processing plants.

With Bahamas' thrust to diversify its economy the industrialisation of Cascarilla will create jobs, develop the economies and spur small business development on these islands.

CARDI and CDF sign Memorandum of Understanding to foster greater collaboration in the field of Agriculture

The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will allow both agencies to collaborate in and facilitate the implementation of activities geared towards reducing disparities between Member States participating in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) generally and in the sphere of agriculture sector related activities in particular.

The primary areas of cooperation under the MOU for both agencies are:

- I. Sharing of knowledge, expertise and technology via mechanisms such as technical assistance provision, internships and similar initiatives; and
- II. Building and/or augmenting capacity in the Preparation, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of agriculture sector programmes and projects supported by the CDF within the CSME.

Through this collaboration, the two agencies will seek to foster enhanced access to finance, technical assistance, training and the capacity building required to support agriculture sector research and development and entrepreneurship in the Caribbean region.

The CDF was launched in 2008 and is a key developmental mechanism in the architecture of the CSME and is committed to achieving its vision to lead in providing effective, efficient and sustainable solutions that address the challenges faced by disadvantaged countries, regions and sectors participating in the CSME.



CARDI's Executive Director, Barton Clarke and CDF's Chief Executive Officer, Rodinald Soomer at the MOU signing at CDF's Headquarters, Barbados, 17 April 2019

Decade of Family Farming launched by the United Nations



The Caribbean is estimated to have 1.5million family farms

2019-2028 has been declared as the United Nations Decade on Family Farming by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

It is estimated that 90% of all farms worldwide are family owned and operated and they produce 80% of the world's food. These family owned operations are fundamental to: food and nutrition security, generation of employment, revitalization of rural economies and preservation of biodiversity and traditional knowledge.

The United Nations estimate that there are 16.5 million family farms throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The Caribbean is estimated to have 1.5 million of them. They further indicated that between 80%-90% of all agricultural holdings in Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Suriname, Dominican Republic, Grenada and St Lucia are family farms. Sixty million women and men work in family farming in Latin America and the Caribbean, which means that the life of about 1 in every 11 people in the region is intimately linked to this sector.

The Global Action Plan provides detailed guidance for the international community on the collective, coherent and comprehensive actions that are to be taken during 2019-2028 to support family farmers. Some of the pillars of the plan are: an enabling policy environment, supporting youth, gender equity and leadership of rural women and strengthening farmers organizations.

The plan can be downloaded @ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca4672en/ca4672en.pdf>