Joint effort to improve CARIFORUM coconut processors’ access to international markets

New information products for cassava stakeholders in Dominica

Strengthening the Korea-Caribbean partnership

Introducing project beneficiaries to sustainable agricultural practices
The Caribbean region has enormous potential to become an important player in the global coconut market. However, challenges such as lack of quality planting materials and financial and technological constraints have hindered its progress. The recent signing of a Letter of Intent by the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has given stakeholders in the regional coconut industry the much-needed capacity to capitalize on this growing demand.

IICA, the executing agency for the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures Project supported under the 11th EDF Programme, will facilitate processors to improve their market access by complying with Europe’s SPS measures and help CARIFORUM states better develop their own regionally harmonized SPS measures. Support will be provided to train and guide private sector entities in key areas of food safety standards. Additionally, resources will be allocated towards the upgrading of laboratories to undertake tests that are required for the marketing and trade of coconut and coconut products.

Acting Head of the Agricultural Health, Food Safety and Food Quality Program at IICA, Ana Marisa Cordero stated, “These interventions will contribute to an increased capacity for exports, increased trade and economic development, increased compliance with international obligations and improved market access and a reduction in food safety-related incidents.”

Knowledge management and information dissemination will also be key components of this initiative.

This intervention rationalizes the resources and finds synergies between the SPS project and the Alliances for Coconut Industry Development Expansion and Enhanced Support for the Caribbean project currently being implemented by CARDI, ITC and partners. This collaboration maximizes the use of resources while transforming the regional coconut supply chain for improved trade and economic development.

This partnership supports the scaling up of the project’s interventions and allows the implementers to reach a larger number of stakeholders.

Farmers and industry stakeholders in Dominica now have access to a series of new publications on cassava production. A technical manual, a video series and an 8 part factsheet series were produced by CARDI, under the “Cassava Industry Development – Market Assessment and Technology Validation and Dissemination” project. On 3rd December, CARDI Representative in Dominica, Dorian Etenne, handed over the publications to officials at the Ministry of Blue and Green Economy, Agriculture and National Food Security, for distribution to farmers.

Cassava has always been an important crop among the indigenous Kalinago people of Dominica - primarily used for farine and cassava bread. However, a growing migrant population and industrial applications for cassava derived products are giving small farmers and processors an opportunity to tap into new markets and increase their incomes.

The Technical Manual – Small scale cassava production in Dominica - is designed to enhance producer’s knowledge and capacity to sustainably and profitably produce cassava. The publication is organized into ten chapters. The first two chapters provide an overview of cassava and the scope for producing the crop in Dominica. The next seven chapters focus on the best agronomic practices for producing cassava and the good agricultural practices involved in harvesting and post-harvest handling of the crop. The final chapter provides insights into the scope for value added product development on the island.

The factsheet and video series specifically target farmers and processors. They summarise the best practices involved in growing, harvesting and post handling of cassava. To increase adoption of the best practices recommended in the factsheets, effort was made to present the information in a non-technical, user friendly format.

These information products were funded by Caribbean Development Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. CARDI managed the production of the communication products.

All publications are available for download from www.cardi.org.
CARDI participated in the 11th High-Level Forum on the Korea-Caribbean Partnership hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 01 December 2021. Ansari Hosein, Manager, Science, Technology and Innovation represented the Institute at the meeting, which was convened under the theme “Comprehensive Digital and Green Partnership.”

At the meeting, CARDI presented on “Promoting cooperation towards building a Resilient Agriculture Sector.” Following an overview of the Caribbean’s agriculture sector, emphasis was placed on the need for strategic partnerships and collaboration with international partners to propel the regional sector forward. Additionally, recommendations were made on possible areas of focus for agricultural projects in the Region. Some of the areas for consideration under the Korea-Caribbean agenda were harnessing the use of digital technologies in crop and livestock agriculture, plant genetic resource management, integrated pest management, hybridization of hot peppers and big data technologies and capacity.

Following the event, fruitful meetings were also held between CARDI and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Rural Development Administration (RDA) to further explore recommendations and develop partnerships. Mr Hosein offered CARDI’s technical support and expertise to KOICA and RDA’s projects in Latin America and the Spanish speaking Caribbean territories.

CARDI will explore further, RDA’s offer to conserve duplicates of CARDI’s germplasm in Korea, developing salt-tolerant plants, managing saline soils and hybridisation of hot peppers.

All institutions are committed to developing an enduring partnership towards developing Caribbean Agriculture.

CARDI Jamaica commemorated CARDI Day 2021 by inviting the project management team and some female beneficiaries of the Sustainable Agriculture in the Caribbean (SAC) project to tour the Unit’s operations at the Sam Motta Goat and Sheep Demonstration and Training Centre (SMDTC) in Manchester, on 13th December. The group was led by Country Coordinator for the project, Nelsa English Johnson.

The visit to the SMDTC served to introduce the project’s executives and beneficiaries to sustainable practices used in integrated farming systems. The visiting team saw first-hand how mined out bauxite land can be brought into productive use. Guests were taken on a tour of the facility by Animal Productionist, Albert Fearon, who was assisted by Technicians, Bruce Thomas and Mario Jackson. Here they saw various goat and sheep breeds; different types of forages, rainwater harvesting systems, protected agriculture structures, small ruminant housing, various aspects of silage preparation and composting techniques.

SAC is a 5-year project being implemented in the Caribbean by the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) with funding (CAN $20 m) from Global Affairs Canada (GAC). The project seeks to promote climate-resilient agriculture for equitable economic growth to increase the economic prosperity of women and youth (female & male) in more sustainable agricultural markets in the Caribbean. The participating countries are Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Suriname.

CARDI Representative (Ag.) in Jamaica, Dionne Clarke-Harris, in welcoming the group to SMDTC, expressed that a partnership between CARDI and SAC was a perfect opportunity, given the congruence of SAC’s work programme with components of CARDI’s current strategic plan.
From the field

**Dominica**

Newly launched publication on cassava production in Dominica is available for download @www.cardi.org

**Barbados**

The Plantation Cut & Dry was launched in January 2022. Farmer Anthony Nicholls supplies the coconut raw material for this beverage, under an arrangement that was facilitated by the Alliances for Coconut Industry Development Expansion and Enhanced Support for the Caribbean project.

**Guyana**

Part of the 15 acres soursop field established by CARDI’s subsidiary, Caribbean Agricultural Commercial Services Hub Limited (CACSH). This is part of the Ebini Integrated Agribusiness Project

**Tobago**

CARDI staff paid a courtesy visit to Tobago House of Assembly (THA) Chief Secretary the Honourable Farley Augustine and the Secretary for Food Security, Natural Resources, the Environment and Sustainable Development, Mrs Nathisha Charles-Pantin on 20 January 2022.