Ministers’ Brief

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The Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Honorable Creston C. Buffonge, Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and the Environment, Montserrat is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Ansari Hosein as the Executive Director, CARDI with effect from 01 March 2022.

During his tenure Mr. Hosein will be responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the Institute’s programme of work, inclusive of donor-funded projects, resource mobilization and the development of market revenue generating initiatives throughout the Caribbean region.

Mr. Hosein, a Trinbagonian national, has served the Institute for more than 17 years, beginning at the entry level position of a Technician, moving up the organizational structure to a Research Assistant and then a Scientist. Mr. Hosein has also served in various other capacities including the Head of Trinidad and Tobago Unit, CARDI Representative in the Cayman Islands, CARDI Representative in Barbados and most recently as the Manager, Science, Technology and Innovation (MSTI). As a Scientist, Mr. Hosein has managed and implemented several research and development projects aimed to further the development of value chains for commodities such as cassava and sweet potato, hot peppers, small ruminants and coconuts. Besides operating in these base countries, he has also done work in several others, including Dominica, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines through various projects. As the MSTI, he managed a team of professionals across CARDI’s 14 member countries and was responsible for providing technical and manageral leadership for the Institute’s diverse STI programme. Mr. Hosein also sits on the Board of Directors of the Caribbean Agricultural Commercial Services Hub Limited (CACHS), CARDI’s commercial subsidiary and is the Chairman of the Regional Small Ruminants Commodity Group.

Mr. Hosein has represented the Institute on various committees, conferences and other high level meetings at the national, regional and international levels. He is also the author/co-author of more than 30 publications which all seek to share knowledge to improve incomes and livelihoods of stakeholders in the regional agricultural landscape.

Over the years, Mr. Hosein has also developed good working relationships with various Diplomatic Missions, national, regional and international research and development agencies, including other CARICOM Institutions and also private sector entities seeking to commercialize various products. Through Mr. Hosein’s efforts, CARDI was accepted as a partner in the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases (GRA), an alliance of 56 member countries and led the charge for CARDI joining CaribVET, a collaborative network involving official veterinary services from 34 Caribbean countries/territories. Other recent involvement in the international arena includes interactions with the World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg), Taiwan; Bioversity International, International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) Alliance and La Fundación Centro Interactivo de Ciencia y Tecnología del Sector Agropecuario (Fundapanaca), Colombia and Rural Development Administration (RDA), Korea.

In terms of resource mobilization, Mr. Hosein has been involved with several successes, contributing to the Institute receiving grant funding to implement projects from several sources such as the New Zealand Government, the European Union, the Common Fund for Commodities, WorldVeg, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and the Caribbean Development Bank. Mr. Hosein holds an MSc in Tropical Animal Science and Production and a BSc General Agriculture from the University of the West Indies, St Augustine and a Diploma in the Practice and Science of Agriculture from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and Forestry. He is presently pursuing a PhD in Livestock Science.

CARDI takes this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Hosein in his new role and wish him the best during his tenure.

Facilitating cross border partnerships to advance agriculture development

CARDI was pleased to facilitate a visit by Mr. Mahmood Patel, owner of Coco Hill Forest and the current Chairman of the Barbados Coconut National Stakeholders Platform in Guyana. Mr. Patel was part of the Government of Barbados’ delegation led by Prime Minister, Mia Mottley, which visited the country from 14-17 February 2022, to explore business and investment opportunities. Cooperation and development of the two countries’ agriculture sector were high on the agenda.

Mr. Patel, a coconut farmer, has a keen interest in processing and nursery production. While in Guyana, CARDI organized and facilitated meetings with leading coconut processors: Guyana Ideal-Life Inc. and Amy’s Pomeroon Foods Ltd and Mr. Patel. Representatives at the meeting included Mr. Beni Sankar, CEO of Guyana Ideal-Life Inc., Mrs. May Cheung, Director of Guyana Ideal-Life Inc., Mr. Louis Holder, CEO of Amy’s Pomeroon Foods Ltd and Mr. Raymond Trotz, Chairman of Guyana’s Coconut National. CARDI was represented by Mr. Jhaman Kundun, Officer-in-Charge CARDI Guyana and Mr. Mitchroy Thom, Technician.

Guyana Ideal-Life Inc. produces cold pressed extra virgin coconut oil, coconut flour, handmade coconut soaps while Amy’s Pomeroon Foods Ltd specializes in the production of premium coffee. Both companies are teaming up to produce innovative coconut and coffee value added products for the tourism industry. Mr. Patel who is also the Chairman, Intimate Hotels of Barbados explored these linkages and committed his support to these products.

Barbados is interested in establishing a coconut cooperative. Mr. Sankar and Mr. Trotz used the opportunity to share Guyana’s experiences in forming the Guyana Coconut Industry Developers Cooperative Society Limited (GCIDCO). Mr Patel noted that Barbados would like to establish a cooperative to further develop its coconut value chain.

Mr. Patel also visited Hope Coconut Industries Ltd (HCL), Rayo Trading Inc. and young coconut lead farmer Robert Fraser, all beneficiaries of the Alliances for Coconut Industry Development for the Caribbean project. Hope Estate and lead farmer Fraser have emerged as leading coconut seedling producers in Guyana.

CARDI was delighted to be part of this initiative. The Institute remains committed to widening our partnerships and facilitating cross border linkages to advance agriculture development.
CARDI extends congratulations to Rajay Reid, a former student of the Guy's Hill High School in Jamaica for being awarded the top Agriculture Science student for 2021 at the CSEC level. This was announced by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) in January. Since 2008, CARDI and CXC have been honouring the Region’s top achieving Agricultural Science student, at the CSEC level.

Rajay is presently at the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean pursuing a Bachelor in Business Administration and Financial Management. In the future, Rajay hopes to invest in agriculture as his goal is to become a Financial Consultant. While the support of his family, teachers and friends were pivotal in his success, he believes that participation and engagement were responsible for his success in the exam. Rajay also believes that this renewed investment in agriculture is not just a matter of survival but for the betterment of lives. Many people, both male and female, young and old, are now leaning on small-scale farming as a means of reducing their shortage of food, expenditure and increasing their consumption of quality produce.

He is of the firm belief that while funds are being budgeted towards agriculture every year by governments and organisations, agriculture in the Caribbean region will attract more youth if technology is incorporated. “I believe making agriculture attractive to youth is dependent on the integration of technology in the field as youths are invested in the manipulation and creation of any form of technology.”

This is the second time Guy’s Hill High School has produced the top CSEC Agriculture Science student. The Institute takes the opportunity to congratulate the school’s management and staff for their commitment, support and excellence in teaching.

Dry spells predicted across Caribbean

According to the Caribbean Society for Agricultural Meteorology (CariSAM) Bulletin, produced by CARDI and the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH), by the end of April 2022, impacts from short-term drought may be of a concern across some countries including Antigua and Martinique and possibly across Barbados, western Belize, Dominica, northern Haiti, and St Vincent and the Grenadines. Long-term drought that can impact large reservoirs, large rivers or groundwater would likely present a challenge in farming across countries like Dominica, Martinique and possibly across Antigua, southern Belize, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines by the end of May 2022.

Rainfall totals (from February through April) could possibly be the usual or higher across the Lesser Antilles, the ABC Islands and the Guianas, but likely to be the usual or drier across Cuba and The Bahamas. Marginal increase of flooding and soil erosion potential is likely across Guyana through April because of an increase in wet spells.

The depletion of water availability in soils causes significant declines in crops and livestock productivity and jeopardizes the livelihoods of farmers. To adapt, farmers are advised to consider planting plots that can be satisfactorily irrigated with their limited water resources as well as select planting varieties that can tolerate dry spells and drought conditions. It is also a good practice to identify alternate water sources for irrigation and if possible store water for use during these drier periods. Employing on-farm strategies such as mulching and irrigation scheduling with the accompanying water saving devices (drip lines and timers) are useful.

For livestock, farmers are encouraged to ensure animals have access to clean water and shade is provided in pastures. The implementation of rotational grazing on pastures also promotes regrowth and increases the fields’ water absorption capacity.
CARDI was delighted to donate fresh sorrel from our fields to Meals On Wheels. The sorrel will be brewed and bottled into a delicious drink and served to seniors, the homebound and differently abled.

CARDI and IICA have teamed up to establish 3 composting bins at CARDI’s Field Station. This model composting site will be used to train farmers and community members in the making of compost.

CARDI together with national partners National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) and Hope Coconut Industries Ltd (HCIL) conducted a training seminar for over 60 coconut producers in Albion and Hogg Island on 8 and 9 February 2022.

CARDI participated in the “Knowledge Fair of Successful Experiences of Colombia for Caribbean Countries” hosted by the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation, APC-Colombia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 26 and 27 January 2022. Areas of mutual interest for South – South cooperation included climate change and agriculture and rural development.

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