



Project proposal...aim to restore food production and nutrition security in Grenada

“THIS project will be completed within six months of start date,” emphasised the Executive Director of CARDI Dr Wendel Parham. “It is aimed to restore food and nutrition security to Grenada in the shortest possible time, and to re-establish 60 hectares of vegetable and food crops.”

A visit to Grenada on 22 – 23 November 2004 allowed the opportunity for the Executive Director to highlight CARDI’s project proposal entitled “Restoring Food Production in Grenada after Hurricane Ivan.”

Dr Parham met and held discussions

with officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and of the Grenada Nutmeg Control Board (GNCB). He was accompanied by Acting Manager for Research and Development Mr Bruce Lauckner and CARDI’s Country Representative in Grenada, Mr Reginald Andall. Following the aftermath of hurricane Ivan CARDI Country Representatives in the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) affected by the hurricane were involved in the process of ascertaining damage assessment in the agricultural sector along with the ministries of agriculture and other agencies and institutions.

Thus, in collaboration with the Ministry

of Agriculture in Grenada CARDI has identified a range of crops that can be rapidly grown by farmers to address the immediate requirements for food and nutrition security. Specific cultivars (seeds) of the identified crops have been selected and quantities to establish a total of 60 hectares have been determined. Direct seeding will be done for those crops that are amenable to this method. Seedlings will be propagated in private and public sector nurseries for distribution to farmers. Sixty farmers will be targeted in this project.

Dr Parham pointed out that CARDI’s

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Marketing Unit conducts Convenience Foods survey for HILO Foodstores

A report entitled “A Market Assessment for Convenience Foods (pre-packaged vegetables) in Trinidad” was produced by the Marketing Unit of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) for HILO Foodstores, Trinidad and Tobago. In March 2004, the Unit conducted a survey at six HILO outlets. Over 1200 customers were interviewed to determine the purchasing patterns and demand for pre-packaged vegetables this included callaloo, patchoi, chow mein and assorted vegetables.

The results indicated that as a result of the changing lifestyle of the consumer there has been an increase in the demand for convenience foods. Similar changes have also been noted in the North American and European Markets. It is envisioned that the market information would also assist HILO to further enhance their understanding of the convenience food industry as well as to assess



CARDI’s Marketing Research Assistant, Ms Lisa Perez presents survey report to Advertising and Promotions Manager of HILO foodstores, Mr Anthony Choo Quan.

the viability of current and future convenience food products.

The study was funded in part by the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA) through the CARDI/IICA agreement.



FROM LEFT: CARDI’s Executive Director Dr Wendel Parham, Chairman for Caribbean Standards Board and Chief Executive Officer of Jamaica Bureau of Standards, Dr Omer Thomas, and Country Representative, CARDI Jamaica, Dr Francis Asiedu

Standards meeting

Dr Thomas delivered a presentation regarding the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) to the Institute’s scientists and technicians during their one-week forum in October 2004 in Trinidad and Tobago. In reciprocating, Dr Parham was invited to address the Meeting of Standards Boards held in T&T on the following day.



CARDI scientists and staff at the recently concluded Planning Meeting.

CARDI scientists discuss regional agricultural competitiveness

Issues relating to regional agricultural competitiveness were the center of discussions by the Institute's scientists and technicians at a one-week forum held on 25 – 29 October 2004 in Trinidad and Tobago. Topics of critical importance with respect to the development of the agriculture sector as well as to equip and empower Member States of the Community to face and withstand the challenges of a changing global economic environment were highlighted.

They included Food Security and Food Safety, Integrated Pest Management, Germplasm, Biotechnology, Biosafety, Genetically Modified Organisms, Hot Pepper, Small Ruminants, Sweet Potato and Natural Resources Management among others. CARDI is the lead agency for Research and Development in the agriculture sector for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Arising out of the deliberations CARDI management will prepare a draft Medium-term Plan for the Institute, which is aimed to enhance both production efficiencies and regional trade competitiveness for Member States of CARICOM. It will be submitted for consideration and deliberation at a meeting of the Board of Directors of CARDI on 9 – 10 December 2004 in Trinidad and Tobago.

Executive Director of CARDI, Dr Wendel Parham, in his address to the Country Representatives and other staff of the Institute stated "the challenge is the delivery of Research and Development products and services to farmers and stakeholder across the Community."

He further added, "it is within this context that the Institute must be more aggressive and supportive to farmers, agro-processors, agri-entrepreneurs, investors, credit providers and policy-makers."

CARDI is responsible under the CARICOM Regional Transformation Programme for Technology Generation, Validation and Transfer, Market Development and Integrated Production

Hot peppers in the global economy

CARDI's hot pepper breeder and Biotechnologist, Dr Cyril Roberts and Head, Marketing, Dr Don Iton, participated in the 17th International Pepper Conference in Florida on 14 – 16 November 2004.

The Conference was designed for practitioners working in pepper research and extension to discuss common concerns, and to provide numerous opportunities to share up-to-date information on cutting-edge technology. One of the outputs, among others, was the advancement and continued improvement of peppers within the global economy.

Hot peppers of the Caribbean have acquired international fame for their use as exotic condiments owing to their unique and excellent tastes, flavours, aromas, pungency and overall superior organoleptic qualities. It has been established that the Region is well known for producing some of the hottest peppers on the world market.

Because of these attributes, the hot pepper industry which generates employment and incomes, is securing new mar-

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Agronomist, and CARDI Representative in Grenada, Mr Andall, will manage the project. Additional technical support will be provided from the CARDI Offices in Trinidad, Dominica, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The project is estimated to cost US\$370,450; and includes in kind contributions of CARDI's services and technology, which the Institute will provide for the project. Agriculture in Grenada was completely devastated by hurricane Ivan on 7 September 2004. Food and nutrition security has been severely compromised as well as economic activity. The current situation is one of crisis proportions, requiring immediate and sustained interventions to restore food production and to generate employment and foreign exchange earnings. The environment has also been affected by denudation and flooding, putting a further strain on the country's ability to produce adequate supplies of food. Prior to the hurricane, agriculture contributed nearly eight percent to Grenada's GDP and agricultural export earnings netted some US\$21 million.

ket access and is becoming increasingly more internationally competitive for many economies within CARICOM.

CARDI's active role in hot pepper dates back to the 1980s when the Institute's hot pepper sub-programme focused on increasing the efficiency in hot pepper production primarily in the Eastern Caribbean to meet export market demands. The first efforts resulted in the release of selections made in Antigua and Barbuda.

The selections were named West Indies Red and West Indies Yellow and both had Scotch Bonnet genes in their parentage. CARDI has provided and continues to provide research and development support to the regional hot pepper industry particularly in the areas of IPM, post-harvest handling, genetic and agronomic improvement, marketing, technology transfer and seed technology.

CARDI supplies the industry with quality seed and seedlings of hot pepper. Please visit www.cardi.org for more information on CARDI's hot pepper breeding programme.

Safeguarding the small ruminant industry in T&T and the Region

As is the case in other Member States the small ruminant industry in Trinidad and Tobago represents an important socio-economic asset that has a strategic role in the efforts towards the diversification from traditional export-crop agriculture. It has contributed significantly to growth and development, enhanced and fostered economic and employment opportunities, provided for domestic staples needs, and addressed poverty alleviation and rural development among others.

However, the potential of the industry to maximise its propitious benefits for farmers and stakeholders in the agriculture sector can be severely constrained by the deadly disease known as Johne's disease.

The disease, which is pronounced (yo-knees) and is also known as paratuberculosis represents the most significant constraint that can hamper the optimum achievement of this industry. It is infectious and contagious, and negatively impacts on all ruminant animals, including cattle, sheep and goats.

The potential for spreading this debilitating disease is enormous.

CARDI in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR), the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA), and the University of the West Indies (UWI) embarked on a project to address the problem.

The aim is to determine the prevalence of Johne's in Trinidad and Tobago as well as to develop an appropriate control strategy and a model for regional technology transfer.

The research revealed that Johne's disease was not as widespread in Trinidad and Tobago as first envisioned. To this effect, a strategy to mitigate the spread of the disease has been developed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources.

Biotechnology in agriculture

Stakeholders in the agriculture industry have been informed that biosafety issues must be addressed as the use of biotechnology increases in the Region. The call, for greater understanding of modern biotechnology in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was made by CARDI's Biotechnologist Dr Cyril Roberts. He was the guest speaker at the 15th Annual Conference of the Jamaican Society for Agricultural Sciences (JSAS) which was held under the theme "Biotechnology in Agriculture" in Jamaica on 29 September 2004

"Biotechnology refers to techniques where living organisms or substances from living organisms are utilised to make products for a practical use," cited Dr Roberts. "These techniques can be applied to medicine, industry, food production and agriculture.



Agriculture research applications of biotechnology include characterization of genetic resources, breeding/multiplication of crops, trees, fish and livestock, plus areas such as disease diagnosis and vaccine development."

He added, the CARDI Unit in Barbados is the home to a Biotechnology Lab, the only one of its kind for the Institute. It specialises in the micropropagation of planting materials including pineapple, cassava, banana, sweetpotato, anthuriums and ferns, all of which are used locally or exported to CARICOM countries.

The CARDI Biotechnologist reminded the audience that biotechnology is only a tool, which allows for increased efficiency and effectiveness when compared to conventional methods.

In relation to the development of policies as they relate to GM products in CARICOM countries, a decision to establish a Working Group on Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) was mandated at the Thirteenth Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) in May 2002 in Georgetown, Guyana.

CARDI was contacted by the CARICOM Secretariat and the Institute selected Dr Roberts to co-ordinate the activities of this Working Group.



DR CYRIL ROBERTS



Guadeloupe Farmers

CARDI Executive Director, Dr Wendel Parham (left) presents President of the Chambre d'agriculture of Guadeloupe, Mr Maurice Ramassamy with an information package on CARDI's work during a meeting with Guadeloupean farmers on their visit to the Institute's Headquarters in Trinidad and Tobago on 29 October 2004.

Agricultural excellence

In its continued quest to boldly advance the cutting edge of science in Research and Development technology the Institute over the years is committed to recognise achievers of the Community.



UWI Agricultural student, Varuna V Maharaj, is presented with the TP Lecky Award by Latcher Brathwaite, CARDI, IT Support Analyst.



UWI Agricultural student, Nicola M Henry is presented with the Agribusiness Management Community prize, awarded to the Best All-round Student (Year II) by Ms Brathwaite.

Strengthened regional fisherfolk organisations

A REGIONAL workshop to validate the findings of an Organizational Needs Assessment of Caribbean Regional Fisherfolk Organisations was held in Belize on 12-14 October 2004.

Fisherfolk participants attended were from Belize, Jamaica, St Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The objectives of the workshop were to introduce the participatory elements into research and project implementation; provide participants with the opportunity to review the report and validate the findings of the Needs Assessment Study, generate dialogue and exchange of ideas among Regional Fisherfolk and strengthen the possibilities of future networking among national Fisherfolk

Organizations in the Region.

In addition, it would also seek to further enhance the management and development of fisheries for the benefit of the people of the Region.



CARDI Public Relations Manager, Selwyn King and a workshop participant view the CARDI/CTA book exhibit.

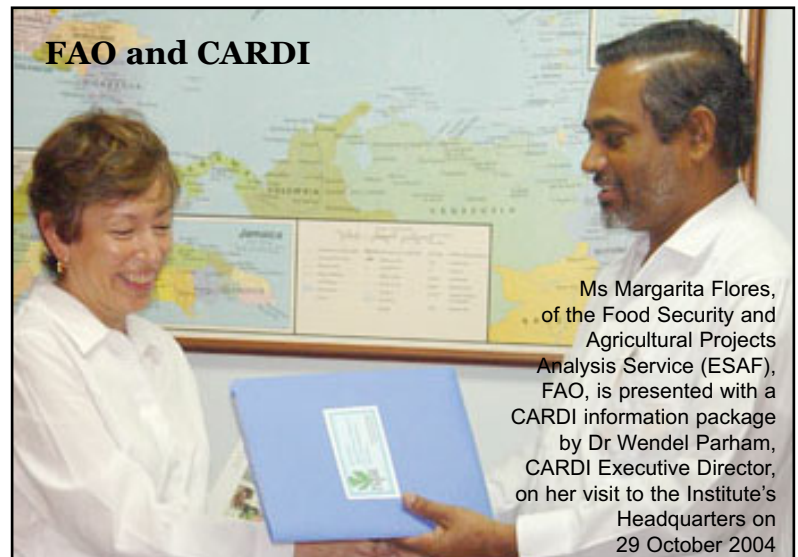
The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), which is based in the Netherlands and has its Regional Branch Office at the headquarters of CARDI in Trinidad and Tobago, provided funding for the

four-day meeting.

It was executed by the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat, which is headquartered in Belize City, Belize, in collaboration with the Fisheries Department, Ministry of Fisheries, Cooperatives, Commerce and Industry, Belize.



UNION GREETING: CARDI, Executive Director, Dr Wendel Parham (right) welcomes President, Banking Insurance and General Workers Union, Vincent Cabrera and General Secretary, Trevor Johnson, during a courtesy call at the Institute on 29 October 2004.



Ms Margarita Flores, of the Food Security and Agricultural Projects Analysis Service (ESAF), FAO, is presented with a CARDI information package by Dr Wendel Parham, CARDI Executive Director, on her visit to the Institute's Headquarters on 29 October 2004.

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