

- ❑ MTP aims to deliver efficient agriculture services
- ❑ Action Plan to combat rising food prices
- ❑ USDA/APHIS opens office
- ❑ CARDI launches new website

CARDI Executive Director Conferred by IICA with the title of Personnel “Emeritus” on Agriculture

Dr. H. Arlington D. Chesney, Executive Director of CARDI, has been conferred with the appointment and title of personnel “Emeritus” on Agriculture by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). He is the first Caribbean national to be conferred with this title by IICA.

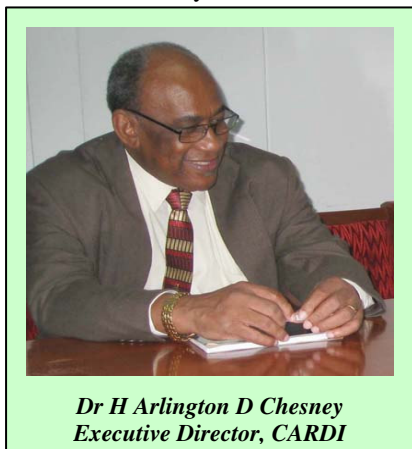
The decision to confer the appointment and title of Emeritus to Dr. Chesney was made by the Executive Committee of IICA at its Twenty-eight Regular Meeting held on 22-24 July, 2008 in San Jose, Costa Rica. The Executive Committee confers appointment and title of Emeritus at its own initiative or by proposal of the Director General to staff members with high professional personnel classification.

The resolution to and appoint the title to Dr. Chesney was proposed by the Office of the Director General, Dr. Chelston Brathwaite, who extended his personal congratulations to Dr. Chesney for achieving this special distinction.

“I wish to take this opportunity to thank you again for your many contributions to the Institute throughout your successful and productive professional career, and, in particular, for those you made during my terms as Director General,” stated Dr. Brathwaite. “I have every assurance that the Institute and the Member States will continue to benefit from your contributions in your new capacity as personnel Emeritus of IICA.”

Dr Chesney, a national of Guyana, has contributed to the development of regional agriculture and has held professional positions with IICA from 1994 to 2007, with the Caribbean Food Corporation (CFC) from 1979 to 1994 and the Ministry of Agriculture, Guyana, from 1963 to 1979 and now Executive Director of CARDI.

CARDI would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Chairman of the Board of Governors, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Senior Management and Staff of the Institute to also extend sincere congratulations to Dr. Chesney on his appointment and title of Emeritus on Agriculture.



*Dr H Arlington D Chesney
Executive Director, CARDI*

CARDI Medium Term Plan (MTP) aims to deliver efficient agriculture services

CARDI in its continued quest to deliver efficient and effective agriculture services to Member Countries of the Institute has developed its Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2008-2010.

The agriculture sector, which represents one of the main economic pillars for many economies in the Region, is a major economic driver in the Development Agenda for economies in the Caribbean Region and the wider Caribbean. The role of CARDI in this regard, is to ensure that agriculture in the Region achieves its goal of increased productivity, diversification, international competitiveness and sustainability.

It is in this context, the MTP is designed to accelerate productivity, ameliorate food prices, cost of living, poverty and hunger. This however requires a “New” Agriculture that:

- Spans the entire value (food and non-food) chains
- Develops direct and indirect linkages with the other productive sectors and, is market oriented
- Requires significant quantum of human capital that is technologically trained
- Is significantly influenced by appropriate technological processes and measures

As expressed in the Jagdeo Initiative in order for the “New” Agriculture to be developed, a properly functional and integrated regional Technology and Innovation Systems (TIS) is needed. Therefore, in fulfilment of its role and in the context of the demand for a “New” Agriculture, CARDI developed the MTP on the basis of three Strategic Axes:

Strategic Axis 1 is centred on the Development of Sustainable Industries. This Axis has two Focal Areas, ‘*Science, Technology Innovation*’ (STI) and Natural Resource Management (NRM). STI involves the application of science, technology and innovation to food production with sole priority area being ‘*Technology Generation and Transfer*’.

The NRM addresses environmental limitations, constraints and opportunities that influence the attainment of sustained and efficient production and productivity. They include *Climate change, Invasive species and Biotechnology*.

(continued on pg 4)

BREAKING NEWS

- ❑ Cayman Islands agrees to join CARDI
- ❑ CARDI gives award to outstanding CXC Agric science student
- ❑ CARDI/Science Research Centre, Jamaica enters MOU
- ❑ CARDI selected to administer UNDP Rural Development Programme in Belize
- ❑ Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers honours CARDI’s Executive Director

Strengthening relations with commodity associations

Globalisation and climate change coupled with the concomitant use of cereals and vegetable oils to produce bio-fuels have led to rising food prices in the Caribbean Region and internationally.

To meet the challenges of the food crisis at the national and regional forums CARDI is strengthening its relations with Commodity Associations in the quest to mitigate the negative impacts.

CARDI is committed to play a greater role in the fight against the high and rising food prices in all Member Countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). As a regional institution, CARDI is uniquely positioned across the landscape of the Caribbean Region, and through its field stations can provide a suite of priority actions that will address the issue of regional food security.

To this effect, CARDI has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and an Agreement with Caribbean Farmers' Network (CaFAN) and the Caribbean Rice Association (CRA) respectively.

CARDI and CRA share a common interest in promoting the development of viable agri-based industries within the Caribbean. CRA has a central purpose to "increase productivity in the cultivation and marketing of regionally produced rice so that rice improves its competitive position in the international market place whilst optimising regional self-sufficiency. CARDI's research capacity and experience will facilitate and catalyse CRA achieving its purpose.

The Memorandum of Understanding between CARDI and CaFAN is aimed to pursue a collaborative effort to increase farm productivity, income and the overall welfare of farmers through the strengthening of individual and organisational capacity. It will also establish a closer collaborative Network in which CARDI is recognised as an agreed/principal-executing arm of selected CaFAN initiatives.

CARDI will provide technical support to CaFAN in the areas of strategic planning, project development and network strengthening, rural community/social surveys, market research, improved commodity production and post harvest systems, business development and access to technology information.

Additionally, CaFAN will collaborate with CARDI in specified CARDI initiatives to validate and transfer its technology products and services, and collaborate with CARDI in specified CARDI initiatives to assemble social/scientific data.

CARDI through partnership and collaboration is committed to provide appropriate technological innovation that will contribute significantly to the development of a competitive sustainable regional agriculture sector.

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Action plan to combat rising food prices

The Heads of Institutions involved in Agriculture and Rural Development in the CARICOM region have met and discussed the issue of "Rising Food Prices in the Region". At the meeting, which was coordinated by Drs Compton Bourne and Arlington Chesney, the President of (CDB) and the Executive Director of Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), respectively, agreed to work together to help the region improve their food supply, so as to impact positively on the escalating food prices.

For the past year, the quantum of food staples traded has decreased and the world food prices have been on the increase as a result of several emerging factors. These include the high price for energy and the switch to biofuels; increased cost of agricultural inputs; increasing demand for food in Asian economies, declining agricultural production; change in consumer demand from traditional staples to non-traditional staples, and higher-valued livestock products; poor weather conditions and the decline in support for the agriculture sector for the last three decades or so.

In a response to the existing food situation and the efforts to transform the agriculture sector in the Region, the Institutional Heads supported the short term actions already taken by Member States, such as, the temporary reduction/removal of the CET.

However, they stressed that the long term solution must be based on increased supply and take into consideration the dietary requirements. Accordingly, they agreed to a cohesive intervention through the implementation of a commodity approach/focus that will contribute to increased production and distribution of food. This would impact on the rising food prices over the next 12 to 24 months. The selected target food commodities include: cereals, especially rice and maize, wheat and livestock products.

It was also agreed that the adoption and implementation of such an approach would require the supporting interventions in several areas and disciplines. They include: identification of individuals or entities (champions) to drive expansion activities, Research and Technology undertaken by, institutions, such as, CARDI and the Universities, including the University of the West Indies (UWI). storage (on and off farm) facilities, transportation within and between Member countries, access to land and credit by investors and the reduction in praedial larceny

The Meeting recognised the need for the increase in collaborative effort by private and public sectors and stakeholders. In this regard, they further recommend the continued support for increased domestic production of short term crops.

The following Institutes attended:

- CARICOM Secretariat
- Caribbean Development Bank(CDB)
- Caribbean Fisheries Mechanism
- Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute(CARDI)
- Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute(CFNI)
- Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations(FAO)
- Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture(IICA)
- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States(OECS)

Exploring sweet potato for convenience foods production industry

A hybrid beta-carotene variety of sweet potato has been identified to have functional food attributes, which reduces night blindness. The vision of CARDI to this end is to play a critical role to improve productivity of sweet potato varieties to position the region's ability to participate in this growing niche market opportunity and improve food security.

In the Caribbean, sweet potato ranks among the top three root crops of importance, it contributes to food security and foreign and combats diseases such as Antidiabetic – carotenoids, Antihypertensive, Anti-inflammatory- asthma, arthritis, Antimicrobial, Antioxidant - cancer preventive.

Constraints of the sweet potato industry include low yields, inconsistent quality, poor market intelligence, poor processing capabilities, pests and diseases.

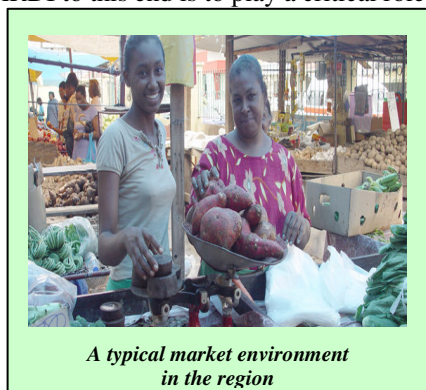
CARDI's R&D activities in this regard have been instrumental in the areas of improving agronomic potential, pest and disease management, new product development, breed new and improved varieties, develop cultivars resistant to diseases, viruses, insects, resistance to sweet potato weevil, DNA fingerprinting, and genetic manipulation to increase food value, productivity and production of sweet potatoes and other root crops.

CARDI, acting through the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), is implementing a project as a result of a Memorandum of Understanding between the CARICOM Secretariat and the Government of Japan under the Japan-CARICOM Friendship and Cooperation. The project is aimed to identify morphological and genetic characters of sweet potato germplasm which have potential for processing into convenience foods; as well as to identify high yielding, pest and disease tolerant varieties that lend themselves to the production of various convenience food products.

The primary activities carried out by the scientists included a scientific survey of the various sweet potato germplasm across the Caribbean to identify and select suitable cultivars for commercial development for processing into convenience food products.

IMPORTANCE OF SWEET POTATO

- High market demand and limited supply
- Crop grown region wide
- Health food
- Small farmer/low input crop
- Grown on marginal lands
- Limited investments in the industry
- Advantages for developing industry
- Adaptable to different growing conditions
- Readily available after natural disasters.
- Good export crop



A typical market environment in the region

exchange, as Antidiabetic –

CARDI participates in Caribbean Trade Expansion Project (C-TEP)

The Caribbean Trade Expansion Project (C-TEP) is a USAID funded project aimed at expanding the range of non-traditional produce entering North American markets.

CARDI's role in the project spanned the gamut of activities from the development of production and postharvest/quality assurance manuals to investment profiles for the selected commodities. The commodities analyzed, were hot peppers (Scotch Bonnet and CARDI Green), dasheen, breadfruit, pumpkins, tannia, eddoes, and ginger.

Since contract farming/exporting is not a common practice in the OECS, this dictated the need for intense training sessions for actors along the supply chain. Dominica and St. Lucia were selected as the islands for the implementation of the project given their previous experience in exporting non-traditional agricultural produce.

Small farmer participation in modern agrifood markets requires them to meet such stipulations as: consistent delivery with regards to quality and quantity, stipulated grades and standards, food safety and traceability regulations and last but not least a competitive price. In an attempt to minimize the risk the farmers and exporters are exposed to Miami importers and offered contracts.

To this effect, workshops were conducted in both islands to ensure stakeholders were cognizant of the cost and range of activities involved in successfully moving a product from the islands to Miami.

Phase 1 of the project is managed and implemented by North-South Institute and Global Strategy Group of Florida, Alcorn State University of Mississippi, and CARDI as the Caribbean counterpart.

USDA/APHIS opens office at CARDI Headquarters

CARDI's Executive Director, Dr Arlington Chesney, has welcomed the opening of the Caribbean satellite-office of the United States Department of Agriculture - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) at the Institute's Headquarters, University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago.

He remarked, the opening of the office at CARDI represents the deepening collaboration between CARDI and USDA-APHIS in support of the agriculture sector to enhance trade competitiveness, and represents the need for all institutions to work together so that the Region's agriculture sector can effectively address the challenges and opportunities arising from the International Trade Agreements and the CSME.

The functions of the office in Trinidad and Tobago are to facilitate safe agricultural trade through effective management of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues, strengthen the safeguarding systems in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean countries and enhancing emergency preparedness and response to emerging agricultural pests and disease. The Officer in Charge is Mr Wayne de Chi.

CARICOM Heads of Institutions form Agricultural Sector Grouping

A recent initiative of CARICOM Secretary General (SG), Edwin Carrington has been the initiation of regular meetings between the SG and Heads of the various CARICOM Community Institutions. The second of these meetings

The Agriculture Cluster is CARDI and this cluster being led by CARDI and this cluster held a meeting on 29 July co chaired by CARDI's Executive Director, Dr Arlington Chesney and Ms Desiree Field-Ridley, Advisor Single Market and Sectoral Programmes, CARICOM Secretariat. The other CARICOM Community Institutions present at this Agriculture Cluster Group meeting were Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL), Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CEDRA), Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI), Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH), Caribbean Meteorological Organisation (CMO), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and University of the West Indies (UWI). Some decisions made by the Agriculture Cluster Grouping included:

- A list of commodities has been identified for priority action in addressing the food crisis situation, in addition to addressing critical constraints to production. The commodities identified are cassava, other roots and tubers including sweet potato, rice, breadfruit, small ruminants, pigs, rabbits, poultry and fish.
- It was agreed that considerations of taste, price, convenience and health have to be incorporated when addressing national and regional strategic plans.
- Further agreement was reached on the contents of agricultural sector strategy and policy and the need for synchronisation and cross sectoral collaboration together with the need to mount public education initiatives to sensitise people to the nutritional content of locally/regionally produced equivalents of imported food.
- The Cluster Grouping has revised a previous matrix which is being used to review the potential synergies of the various Institute's work programmes. CARDI is collecting the information to complete this matrix.

There were also reviews of work currently underway with respect to the repositioning of Regional Agriculture. There are initiatives in fisheries, risk management and transportation as well as studies by IICA, FAO and CARDI. The discussions and agreements were presented to the meeting of Institutional Heads with the SG on 30 and 31 July 2008, at UWI where a major regional project was proposed. UWI and CARDI head the development of this project.



Secretary-General H E Edwin Carrington/Deputy Secretary-General Ambassador Lolita Applewhaite pose with the Heads of Community Institutions

MTP AIMS TO DELIVER EFFICIENT AGRICULTURE SERVICES (from page 1)

Strategic Axis 2: Development of Strategic Linkages addresses relationships of the Institute involving stakeholders, as well as current and potential collaborators, partners and donors. This initiative is facilitated by a promotional/information process designed to demonstrate the Institute's achievements, capabilities and the environment within which it functions.

This Axis comprises of two Focal Areas: *'Partnerships and Collaborative Initiatives'* and *Advocacy*. Partnerships and Collaborative Initiatives have two Priority Areas *'Build and Maintain Relationships'* and *'Establish the Friends of CARDI'*.

The *'Advocacy'* Focal Area seeks to promote/establish CARDI as a credible, lead regional R & D institution. In this regard, there are two Priority Areas: *Re-branding and Promotion of CARDI'* and *'Website Development'*.

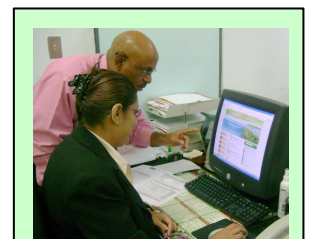
Strategic Axis 3: Institutional Strengthening addresses the building of a strong, organised and capable Institute that, with time, will have recognised regional Centres of Excellence in R&D. There are two Focal Areas: *'Income Generation'*, and *'Capacity Building'*. Priority areas in this Focal Area are *'Resource Mobilisation'* and *'Revenue Generation'* and *'Technical Assistance'*.

It is in this context, CARDI, as the only regional agricultural institution identified in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (Chapter 12), has a key role to play in the implementation and co-ordination of the TIS. Therefore, the approach adopted by CARDI for fulfillment of its vision and mission is based on three pillars; *bottom up/client led, working together, transparency and accountability*.

CARDI launches new website

<http://www.cardi.org>

The new Website is designed to foster greater awareness of the Institute's Research and Development activities with respect to improve food nutrition and security, ameliorate food prices/cost of living, poverty and hunger. It is designed to be interactive for farmers, farmers associations, extension agencies, stakeholders, policy makers, research agencies, and the media etc.



Foster a new vision

It will also demonstrate how CARDI is strategically charting the pathway to build an Institute of Excellence and in particular, to serve the agriculture needs of its Member

Countries and the Region. For instance, the 'new' approach adopted by CARDI in fulfillment of its Vision and Mission is navigated by three pillars; *bottom up/client led, working together, transparency and accountability*.