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AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

REPRINTED: MAY 1992
ORDER NO.: CP-F / 17-90

Factsheet

ONION PRODUCTION FOR ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

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Onions represent a large proportion of the total imports of vegetables into St. Kitts and Nevis. Considerable potential therefore exists for the production and marketing of locally grown onions.

The following is a summary of recommendations derived from onion research done by institutions in Barbados, Montserrat, St. Kitts, Nevis and St. Vincent and is intended as a guideline for growers and extension officers in St. Kitts and Nevis.

Site Selection

Onions should be planted on flat or gently sloping land which is prone neither to erosion nor flooding. A plot where weeds can be easily controlled should be selected – nutgrass infested areas should be avoided.

Land Preparation

Onions require good drainage, so flat-topped, slightly raised beds should be prepared. The beds should follow the contours to reduce erosion on sloping land. The soil should be free of trash and stones and have a fine tilth to prevent clogging of the planter and to ensure good seed-soil contact which will improve germination.

Beds of 50 - 66 in (1.27 - 1.68 m), depending on the width

of the tractor in use, can be made by harrowing and rotovating the land.

On slopes, where the soil is highly erodible, the land should be banked after harrowing using a 'cane'-banker. Banks can be flattened manually with a rake or with a rotovator. The first (basal) fertilizer application can be incorporated at this time.

Storm/diversion drains should be made to protect the plot from runoff during heavy rain.



An onion field in St. Kitts

*This publication was produced with assistance from
The Barclays Development Fund in the Caribbean.*



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