CARDI supported the production of tissue culture cassava plantlets under the CARICOM/Japan and IICA/CARDI Technical Cooperation projects at the St Vincent laboratory. These plantlets were exported to other OECS countries and also to Jamaica and Barbados.

News >>>

CARDI and the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines provide technical assistance to OECS

Following expansion and upgrading in 2012, the tissue culture laboratory in St Vincent and the Grenadines has been involved in micro propagating, multiplying and distributing roots and tubers planting material. Plantlets for cassava, sweet potato and dasheen have been successfully distributed to other OECS countries as well as Barbados and Jamaica. There were challenges in shipping the plantlets to the other Windward Islands and Barbados but CARDI has overcome these and good quality material is now being received. To make good use of this material, CARDI sought assistance from the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines through the skills of Biotechnologist Rohan Mc Donald who conducted training with the Ministry of Agriculture and local CARDI staff in Grenada and St Lucia on the weaning and hardening roots and tuber tissue culture plantlets. Training was conducted during December 2013. CARDI through the CARICOM/Japan and IICA/CARDI partnership programme provided funding for the micro propagation of sweet potato, cassava and dasheen plantlets. The CARDI Barbados laboratory provides technical support for disease diagnostics.

Stepping up the battle against Black Sigatoka

Black Sigatoka is a devastating disease which is reported to be affecting banana and plantain production in the Windward Islands, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Some territories are not affected yet, but it is probably only a matter of time before they are. Black Sigatoka originated in the Pacific and has spread to many parts of the World. The only effective control course of action is to use varieties of banana and plantain which have proved to resist or tolerate the disease. A number of these have been developed by FHIA in Honduras and germplasm from eight of these FHIA accessions have been supplied to CARDI by Biodiversity International. These arrived at the CARDI St Vincent Unit in good condition on 14 January. The material was later taken to the St Vincent Tissue Culture laboratory for multiplication before distribution to the affected countries.

Farmer training modules now available on FARMD website

The farmer training modules for risk management developed by CARDI have been uploaded on the Forum for Agricultural Risk Management in Development (FARMD) website. The modules were developed for CaFAN by a CARDI team with funds provided by World Bank as part of the EU/ACP All Agricultural Commodities Programme. The CARDI team was led by Soil Scientist Dr. Leslie Simpson, other members were Entomologist Dionne Clarke and UWI Food Safety Specialist Dr. Gail Bacchus – Taylor. Post-harvest Scientist Ronald Pilgrim assisted the team. There are three modules 1) Managing Weather/Climate Risks 2) Pest and Disease Risks and 3) Food Safety Risks. The modules can be downloaded from https://www.agriskmanagementforum.org/content/world-bank-agricultural-risk-management-team-training-materials.
Christmas rains wreak havoc across the Windward Islands

Heavy rain and winds brought disaster to St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica between 23 and 25 December 2013. Rainfall accumulations over 24 hour periods were as high as 406 mm in St. Lucia, 156 mm in Dominica and 109 mm in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In St. Lucia this tremendous deluge was directly responsible for six deaths. Damages in the three countries totaled several million EC dollars. The situation was discussed at a meeting, held on 7 January, of the OECs Ad-hoc Task Force established as an outcome of the OECs Ministers of Agriculture and Technical Officers Meeting on “Governance for Agricultural Development and Food and Nutrition Scientists”. The meeting agreed that missions would be sent to the most affected countries to work with nationals to review the preliminary damage assessments for the agricultural sectors and generate additional information needed for emergency and development project preparation. The missions will also prepare project documents for funding consideration. The missions were led by FAO with representatives from CARDI, IICA and the OECs.

New Publications >>>

Cultivation under greenhouse structures offers farmers the ability to manage the growing environment in order to increase control over quality and productivity of their crop. Commercially viable and sustainable vegetable production using greenhouses is now a priority for several Caribbean countries for the improvement of livelihood systems, food and nutrition security and, regional food production and trade. This manual produced under the CFC/EU funded project “Increased production of vegetables and herbs through the use of Protected Agriculture in the Caribbean” consists of seven chapters dealing with Greenhouse Structures and Equipment; Tropical Greenhouse Production Systems and Plant Troubles; General Pests, Diseases and Physiological Disorders of Tropical Greenhouse Vegetables and their Management; Crop Culture of Tomato, Sweet pepper, Cucumber and Lettuce; Marketing Considerations; and, Economic Considerations.

Download the publication @ http://www.cardi.org/cfc/ve/files/downloads/2013/08/Publ-S-Black-et-al-for-PSC-review.pdf

OBITUARY >>>

Dr. Donald Walmsley

Dr. Donald Walmsley, who worked with CARDI from its inception until his retirement in 1991, died on 24 January after a short illness. Dr Walmsley was respected throughout the Caribbean as an eminent soil scientist. He was also a knowledgeable editor and wrote the CARDI Style Guides. His colleagues recall how he worked “in the trenches”. He used to assist technicians collecting soils samples by actually digging himself. And in Barbados, Marcia Niles remembers him going into the screen – house and working alongside the casual workers to give them encouragement. May he rest in peace.

Upcoming Events >>>

World Wetlands Day – “Wetlands and agriculture”
2nd February 2014
http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-wwds-wwd2014index/main/ramsar/1-63-78-%5E26287_4000_0_

Tropical Forage Establishment, Production and Utilisation
12th February 2014, Centeno Livestock Station, Trinidad

Workshop on Advancing Dairy Cattle Genetics and Beyond
17-19 February 2014, Tempe, Arizona, USA
http://www.ans.iastate.edu/events/dairygenomics/?pg=registration

Expo Jamaica
3-6 April 2014, Kingston, Jamaica
http://www.expojamaica.com.jm/

Regional Workshop- CTA/CARDI Analysis of Value Chains
April- May 2014, Port of Spain, Trinidad

Renewable Energy as a Catalyst for Regional Development
12-27 May 2014, MASHAV Israel
Contact blauckner@cardi.org for further details.

Media Strategies for Social Change
19 May – 13 June 2014, MASHAV Israel
Contact blauckner@cardi.org for further details.

European Association for Potato Research (EAPR) -19th Triennial Conference
6-11 July 2014, Brussels, Belgium

The CARDI Bi-weekly is a fortnightly electronic publication, published on the 15th and 30th of each month. The aim is to keep you informed of the latest news, publications, upcoming events on CARDI and our partners. We encourage you to contribute to the CARDI Bi-weekly by sending relevant information that can be included in the upcoming issue to Denise Besai.