



Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute

Media Release

4th Meeting of CARICOM Cluster of Agricultural Institutes ... discussing the needs of Regional agriculture

June 14, 2014:- The Technical Working Group (TWG) of the CARICOM Cluster of Agricultural Institutes met in Suriname on June 10; the second 'face-to-face' meeting of the Cluster since the Inception Meeting in early 2014. This Meeting of senior agricultural experts agreed on the Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Cluster which outlines the membership, number of meetings, type of meetings (virtual and face-to-face) and defined the Technical Working Group (TWG) within the wider Cluster. The Draft TOR will be taken for ratification at the next meeting of COTED, which is scheduled to be held in Suriname during the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) in October.

Sub-groups of the TWG are currently working on the three priority commodities identified by the Cluster, namely Herbs and Spices, Cassava and Small Ruminants. The meeting was brought up to date on deliberations of these sub-groups, as they develop industry plans to be used to assist the Institutes to prepare and execute activities to improve production of these commodities.

These three priorities were chosen from a longer CARICOM Priority List, **as commodities which had maximum potential to earn incomes for stakeholders and contribute to import substitution.** The commodities on the longer list are still of strategic importance and work on these is ongoing on the Work Programmes of the Cluster members.

The TWG also received a report on preparations for the CWA from CARICOM Representatives, who attended a recent CWA Planning Meeting.

The TWG comprises of key Regional Agriculture agencies, including CARDI as Chair, CARICOM Secretariat, FAO, IICA, UWI, CaFAN, CDB, OECS Secretariat and CABA. All these agencies were present at the meeting, except CDB and OECS Secretariat. The full Cluster also includes representatives of CRFM, CARPHA, University of Guyana, CIMH, CDEMA, IMPACS, CCCCC and CXC.

The 4th Monthly Meeting was chaired by CARDI's Mr. Bruce Lauckner; and follows closely on the heels of the 3rd Meeting held virtually on April 24th.

This Cluster of Agricultural Institutes was set up to assist CARICOM with agricultural policy and to ensure collaboration and synergy amongst agricultural agencies.

CARDI ... presenting the 'facts on agriculture and research for development'.

Photo captions: Regional agriculture experts in discussions

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