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AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

CARDI

Bi-Weekly



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Special Issue

This special issue of the CARDI Bi-weekly is dedicated to Jamaica's former Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Roger Clarke.

The Region has lost a true visionary whose focus was not just on advancing Jamaica's agricultural sector but the Region's. Minister Clarke was instrumental in the establishment of the Alliance and in recognition of his sterling contribution to agriculture the members of the Steering Committee have recommended that this year's Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) be held in his honour.

The breadth and depth of Minister Clarke's knowledge and experience on Agriculture was invaluable to the Region's agriculture sector. CARDI has lost a true friend.

Roger Clarke a noble Caribbean son

I take this opportunity to express profound condolences to the family of the bereaved Roger Clarke; former Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Jamaica. I also express my sympathies to the Government and people of Jamaica and the entire farming community in the region on the passing of a noble Caribbean son of the soil.

Over the last three years, I had the opportunity to work with Roger Clarke in addressing several issues affecting the agricultural sector in the Region, notably, the issue of intra-regional trade of agricultural commodities and the control of the Black Sigatoka disease affecting our banana industry.

Mr. Clarke dedicated his entire life to political work among the working class people of the region and particularly farmers. His contributions to Agriculture touched every country in CARICOM. He was truly a loving citizen of the Region. He will be missed, particularly at the upcoming Caribbean Week of Agriculture to be held in Suriname this October.

I pray for his family at this time and the Government and people of Jamaica as they mourn his passing.

May he rest in peace!

The Honorable Saboto Caesar, Chairman of the Alliance of Agricultural Ministers in CARICOM, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry, Fisheries and Industry, St Vincent and the Grenadines



Roger Clarke an outstanding Minister of Agriculture

I recently received the sad news of the passing of Minister Roger Clarke, former Minister of Agriculture of Jamaica. Through CARDI, I wish to express my sincere condolences and sympathy to his wife, family and friends. Roger Clarke was an outstanding Minister of Agriculture. When I arrived in Jamaica as IICA Representative there in 1998, Minister Clarke and his Permanent Secretary Aaron Parke provided an environment of cooperation and trust between IICA and the Ministry that resulted in the achievement of significant results in the agricultural sector and the implementation of some important projects such as the recovery of mined out bauxite soils for goat production in Clarendon, the development of the window of sustainability in the Rio Cobre region and the support to microenterprise development for youth and rural women among others. Minister Clarke fostered good working relations between IICA and CARDI and between the institutions of the sector by supporting our proposals for more dialogue among the institutions and the promotion of a national agenda for cooperation in the agricultural sector.

When in 2001, I was declared a candidate for Director General of IICA, Minister Clarke canvassed Caribbean support for my candidacy and during my tenure as Director General, he was always a voice of reason always seeking to advance Caribbean interests and Caribbean participation in the Institute. His sense of humour and his political insights will be missed. For these and many other reasons, I in particular and the Caribbean agricultural sector in general owe him a debt of gratitude. May he rest in eternal peace.

Chelston WD Brathwaite, Director General Emeritus of IICA and Barbados Ambassador to China

Roger Clarke a Regional visionary

It was a major surprise when I heard of the death of Roger Clarke, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Jamaica. It was not a state of being that I had ever previously associated with Roger. Then reality, along with the naturally accompanying sadness, seeped in. The Region has lost a stalwart. Someone, who was sincere, visionary, humorous and humble. Someone who made you feel very important even though you were positive that you had never met him before. That was the nature of the man. He subtly encouraged you to accomplish things that did not at first seem possible.

However, this sadness turned to pride for having had the opportunity to share moments, thoughts and vision with someone who had committed his private, business and political life to the development of agriculture in Jamaica and the Region. He recognised that a sustainable agricultural sector was critical to the Region having a vibrant economy and further, that the Region's agriculture could best be served if each nation were to support and/or harmonise with each other's actions.

It is that belief in the importance of regional unity that made him by far the Minister that has contributed the most to governance of the sector in the Region and its major activities. He recognised the need to fill the void when the Standing Committee of Ministers of Agriculture was disbanded. He moved to support the creation of the Forum of Ministers. Subsequently, in acceptance of the need for Ministers to be supported by ALL actors in the repositioning of the sector, he enjoined academia, business, youth and women to become Constituent Members of the Alliance for Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu (The Alliance). He served as Chairman of this group for many years and nurtured it from strength to strength. During that period, he also fully endorsed the initiation and development of the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA). Both the Alliance and CWA are now the major events in the agricultural calendar of the Caribbean.

As part of his vision for a vibrant agricultural sector in the Region, he believed in the supporting role of a strong regional agricultural research for development institution. In that context, Minister Clarke gave many years of unflinching and dedicated support to CARDI, both as member and Chairman of the Institute's Board of Governors.

As we celebrate the life of this ultimate friend of regional agriculture, on behalf of the Directors, Management and Staff of CARDI and on my own behalf, I convey our deepest condolences to the wife, children, relatives and numerous friends of our beloved Minister, Roger Clarke.

May he Rest in Peace.

Dr. H. Arlington D. Chesney, Executive Director, Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)



The Honourable Roger Clarke

11 June 1940–28 August 2014

The Hon. Roger Clarke, Minister of Agriculture and Member of Parliament for Central Westmoreland, was a name synonymous in Jamaica's political and social spheres with agriculture. He had a rich upbringing in agriculture and its practices. Minister Clarke grew up in Glen Islay, Westmoreland, where he helped his parents and grandparents on their farm, which produced root crops and vegetables. He attended the Mannings High School and later went on to pursue extensive management training at the now defunct Jamaica Industrial Development Corporation and Harbridge House in the United States in the 1960's.

He worked extensively with several sugar estates in Jamaica for almost 30 years, which allowed him to interface with various members of the farming community. On his own farm, in St. Elizabeth a myriad of crops was produced. Minister Clarke had a successful political career, having won eight elections comprising two Local Government and six General Elections. In 1986 he was elected Councillor for the Balaclava division in St. Elizabeth, and was nominated Mayor of Black River and Chairman of the St. Elizabeth Parish Council. He was subsequently re-elected in the 1990 Local Government Election where he continued as Mayor. Mr. Clarke also served a four year period as President of the Local Government Authorities from 1988 to 1991. He went on to a bigger political stage in 1991 when he was elected Member of Parliament for North East St. Elizabeth in a by-election.

Three months into the job, he was promoted in early 1992 to State Minister for Agriculture; a position he held for three years and by 1995 he was appointed Minister of Local Government and Works. By 1998, he was back in familiar territory serving as Minister of Agriculture. He served as Minister of Agriculture for some ten years and during that period was one of the founding members of the Alliance of Ministers of Agriculture for CARICOM, and served as its chairman for many years. On January 6, 2012, Mr. Clarke was re-appointed Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. He identified as his top priorities enhancing Jamaica's food security, to make farming profitable and rural development as areas of particular interest. He served in several capacities in the People's National Party and is currently Vice President Emeritus since 2003. He is the father of two children.

Source: Jamaica Information Service. <http://jis.gov.jm/ministers/roger-clarke/>



CARDI *Bi-Weekly*

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.

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