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COMMUNITY & KNOWLEDGE: WHAT CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES NEED TO GET AHEAD

KNOWLEDGE SHARING IS THE END GOAL OF THREE-DAY APP WORKSHOP

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent & The Grenadines, April 21st, 2016 - Small farms and agricultural businesses in the Caribbean can have a big impact on their communities. They provide jobs and training which means income and opportunity. Making one of these businesses work however, is no small task.

That is why the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) have, once more, joined together as part of the Intra-ACP Agricultural Policy Programme (APP) to present a three-day workshop designed to link Caribbean small and medium size agriculture enterprises and producer groups with business development, agricultural technology and financing experts to share knowledge. They are employing the wisdom of the age old adages, 'knowledge is power' and 'each one, help one'.

The **Producer, Enterprise Group & Network Governance and Dynamics Workshop** will host fifty participants from local agricultural groups around the Caribbean. Not every farmer or business owner can travel to Kingstown to attend the workshop so, after participating in sessions on governance, production, marketing, new farming technologies and how to access financing in a difficult sector, these small enterprise managers and representatives of producer groups will be tasked with going back home and sharing what they have learned.

"It is necessary to have leaders strengthened", says Richard Rampersaud, the Technical Co-ordinator of the CARDI APP Component, "so that they can return to their respective countries and groups and provide their members with the same training to enable them to be strengthened with knowledge and help the overall group benefit."

Robert Reid, an Agribusiness and Commercialization Specialist with the IICA, sites three major challenges facing agricultural businesses in the Caribbean today.

"In the CARIFORUM region they face the common challenges of access to information for business and operational decision making access to finance for supporting production operations and trade and access to equipment and technologies to improve efficiency and marketability of products."

Each of these difficult areas will be addressed at the workshop. Expert-led sessions will be aimed at empowering groups through governance and organization to deliver better services to their members. The Financial Alliance for Sustainable Trade (FAST), a Canadian-based entity, will provide capacity building tools in the areas of credit-readiness, investment profiling, and engagement with banks. And, practical hands-on advice will be provided on good agricultural practices and farm mechanization in Roots and Tubers and Small Ruminant production.

There is a lot to cover at the three-day workshop which will take place at the Beachcomber Hotel, in Kingstown, starting on Monday April 25th but all of it is valuable in supporting the important work of agri-businesses in the Caribbean.

Richard Rampersaud knows that this knowledge will be well used by its target audience. "These groups are farming groups that require help at all levels. Several may have no formal education, but they are very wise and innovative," he said.

All workshop costs are covered by APP which is funded under the 10th European Development Fund Intra-ACP Agriculture Policy Programme project. **For More Information** please contact Kathleen Blackman, APP Component 3 Technical Coordinator, IICA at 868-645-4555, ext. 5020/8886 or by email at kathleen.blackman@iica.int. Or, Richard Rampersaud, APP Component 2 Technical Coordinator, CARDI at rrampersaud@cardi.org.