



For Immediate Release

PRESS RELEASE

Executive Director's Message on CARDI Day 2019

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our 4th annual CARDI Day celebrations.

CARDI Day is an important event in our outreach calendar. Across the Region, on this symbolic day we open our doors to all stakeholders to experience first-hand the breadth of our research and development activities.

In 2019, the Institute conducted/initiated research in a range of exciting areas including climate resilience, agro-energy, medical cannabis, industrialisation of Cascarilla and development of the regional coconut industry among other areas. Today, we look forward to updating you on the progress of these and other activities.

Over the last year, we in the Region, saw that climate change is not just an environmental issue. It is a real threat, with devastating consequences on agriculture, food security, health, livelihoods and economic development. CARDI has been at the forefront of building a resilient agriculture sector and we are especially proud of our accomplishments in this area.

- In Jamaica, we completed the expansion and refurbishment of the seed storage facility at Bodles Agricultural Research Station. This modernised facility is now equipped to conserve local and regional biodiversity – a key response to climate change adaptation. There is also an ongoing experiment to evaluate the effect of drought on sweet potato growth and production.

- In the Bahamas, we were part of the Rapid Needs Assessment Team (RNAT) coordinated by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to conduct post disaster assessment for the agriculture sector following Hurricane Dorian. CARDI is working with the Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders on short term and long term responses to rebuild the ravaged agriculture sector.
- In St Lucia together with CARICOM Japan we trained stakeholders from the OECS on Crop Scheduling and Water Use Efficiency for Climate Change, and mapped the location of 100 farms and identified their vulnerability to environmental risks.

The CARDI Day platform also provides an opportunity for us to recognise our existing research collaborators and partners, without whom much of our work will not be possible. In this regard we want to especially thank the Ministries of Agriculture in each member state. As a valued partner, you have worked hand in hand with us on priority setting exercises and the implementation of targeted research and development activities. To all farmers – thank you. Your participation in demonstrating, testing and validating new products and technologies - the results of our research activities is much appreciated.

Another important objective of the CARDI Day is it puts into focus the importance of agriculture and agricultural research to economic development and improved livelihoods. This is critical as we continue to operate in a time when the value of agriculture and of agriculture research in particular is understated. Agriculture development and improved productivity holds the key to overcoming some of the challenges presently facing the Region, foremost, among them are food and nutrition security, climate change, chronic non-communicable diseases and an ever increasing food import bill.

Since the Institute's establishment on this day in 1974, CARDI has been contributing to the development of a sustainable and productive regional agriculture sector. New and improved varieties, improved technologies, strengthened value chains and empowered stakeholders are among some of the Institute's notable achievements.

In this regard, I wish to launch today, CARDI's 45th Anniversary celebrations. Over the next year through a series of activities across the Region CARDI will be highlighting the achievements of

our extensive research and development portfolio under the theme “Celebrating 45 years ...from research to impact.”

I wish to applaud the Board of Governors and Board of Directors for their steadfast support.

To all staff – the people who work every day to build a better institute, thank you for your commitment and selfless service.

On this momentous occasion I wish to reaffirm CARDI’s commitment to improving lives through agricultural research, across the region and beyond.

We look forward to sharing the day with you and invite you to be part of our 45th Anniversary celebrations in 2020.

Thank you!
Barton A. Clarke
Executive Director, CARDI

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About CARDI

CARDI (www.cardi.org) was established in 1974 to serve the agricultural research and development needs of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARDI is positioned to contribute to the sustainable development of the Caribbean by the co-generation, diffusion and application of knowledge, through agricultural research for development. The Institute’s Headquarters is located at the University Campus, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.