CTA team visits CARDI Headquarters

CTA Director, Michael Hailu and Senior Programme Director, Juan Cheaz met with a CARDI team headed by Executive Director, Barton Clarke on 27 July 2016 to discuss areas of collaboration and the future direction of both organisations. The Directors underscored the importance of measuring impact on the ground for implemented activities. Mr Hailu spoke of the Regional Business Plan for the Caribbean which will guide the activities CTA will support in the Region. Similarly, Mr Clarke spoke on CARDI the Future We Want and the priority focal areas for the Institute. Jointly, both organisations agreed to work on activities aimed at strengthening sustainable value chains and building climate resilient agriculture food systems. This visit was part of CTA’s learning journey to the Caribbean, where they are seeking to build and widen the partnerships of Caribbean organisations.

Youth representation at CFCS Meeting

CARDI was represented at the 52nd Caribbean Food Crops Society (CFCS) meeting in Guadeloupe by graduate assistant Lawrence Mahabir where he presented a paper on the “Preliminary assessment of local cassava varieties for tolerance to low watering regimes in Trinidad and Tobago”.

This study assessed and compared five popular local cassava varieties in Trinidad and Tobago grown in pots over an eight-month period under two watering regimes. Watering regimes consisted of 4 L of water per plant every other day (regime 1) and 2 L of water per plant every other day (regime 2). Varieties assessed were the Butterstick, Maracas Blackstick, Bluestick, Mmex 59 and Pickney Muma. Based on the performance of Bluestick under water regime 2, it was concluded that the variety has the potential for good production in areas prone to drought. This study was part of the EU funded 10th EDF project being implemented by CARDI. The next step is to assess the varieties under field conditions.

Drought conditions across the Region are expected to be exacerbated as a result of climate change. It is therefore important that these countries enhance their capabilities to deal with the challenge of food and nutrition security that drought and other extreme weather related challenges would pose.
Making seasoning pepper cultivation profitable in the Cayman Islands

An 8-month field experiment, aimed at identifying the optimum planting density for seasoning peppers has produced promising results in the Cayman Islands. The peppers were established at between row (BR) spacings of 2, 3 and 4 feet and within row spacings (WR) of 1 and 2 feet. After five pickings, preliminary analysis indicate that yields and therefore income will be, on average, 5 times higher when plants are spaced at 2 ft BR x 1 ft WR as opposed to the traditional farmer practice of 4 ft BR x 2 ft WR. Results also suggest that spacing plants 1 ft along the row results in higher yields, regardless of the BR spacing. An additional output from this trial was the production of 0.5 lb of seed (S1), extracted from berries of the more robust plants. Elite lines will now be produced as part of the efforts to produce clean and genetically pure seeds. This trial is a collaboration between CARDI and the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Cayman Islands.

Training of trainers in the use of the walk-behind tractor held in Tobago

Under the Intra-ACP Agriculture Policy Programme (APP), CARDI offices across the Region have procured hand-held tractors. They are to be used to demonstrate to farming groups in the respective countries the benefits of mechanisation for land preparation and harvesting to increase productivity. Staff at the CARDI offices receiving the tractors were trained in the use and maintenance of these tractors at the Goldsborough Demonstration and Training Centre, Tobago on 28 July 2016. The session was facilitated by experts from Massy Distribution Limited, who are the distributors of these machines in the Caribbean. The CARDI offices would host similar training sessions with the beneficiaries on the tractor’s use and maintenance.

CWA preparations underway

Preparations are moving full steam ahead for the hosting the Region’s premiere agricultural event, the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA). Cayman Islands will be hosting the 14th edition of the CWA from 24 to 28 October under the theme ‘Investing in Food and Agriculture’. The Local Organising Committee has been working with CARICOM chaired Alliance Steering Committee to finalise arrangements for the week. Some activities scheduled to take place during the 5 days include a Workshop on the status of the Region coconut industry, an Agribusiness Development Forum and the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience. The CWA Market Place which will take place on October 26 and 27 will provide exhibitors the opportunity to meet and network with potential customers, prospects and partners, while showcasing their products and services. For further information on the planned activities for the week, check out the website / www.cwa2016cayman.com