Ministers’ Brief

Caribbean Week of Agriculture 2016

The 14th Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) was held in Cayman Islands from 24 to 28 October 2016 under the theme “Investing in food and agriculture”. CARDI hosted a Climate Change workshop and a seminar on the Regional Coconut Industry. The Institute also participated in several events including the FAO Seminar on Trade and Transport and the CTA seminar on Sustainable Value Chains. Barton Clarke, CARDI Executive Director, delivered remarks at the Official Opening on 24 October and the Alliance Meeting on 29 October.

The Institute reported to COTED and hosted our 31st Board of Governors meeting.

Ansari Hosein, CARDI Representative to Cayman Islands, facilitated a tour to the CARDI Field Station, Bodden Town on 25 October. Among the visitors were the Premier of the Cayman Islands, Alden McLaughlin and CARICOM Secretary General, Irwin La Roque. Mr Hosein highlighted the Institute’s work in forage production, evaluation and conservation; seasoning pepper seed production; introduction of new varieties of hot and seasoning peppers; and the characterisation of sweet potato germplasm.

CARDI also had a booth at CWA Market Place. The focus of the display was to introduce the Cayman Islands and visitors to the Institute and the work CARDI is are doing in the country as well as across the wider Region.

CARICOM Secretary General, Irwin La Roque (l) and Premier of the Cayman Islands, Alden Mc Laughlin (r) touring the CARDI Field Station. CARDI Representative, Ansari Hosein (m) facilitated the tour.
The Honourable Claude E. S. Hogan, Minister of Agriculture, Trade, Lands, Housing and the Environment, Montserrat has been appointed Chairman, CARDI Board of Governors, for the period October, 2016 to October, 2019. Minister Hogan’s appointment was made at the 31st Board of Governors Meeting held on 27th October, 2016.

CARDI’s Executive Director, Barton Clarke said Minister Hogan’s expertise and experience would no doubt be an asset, and he is looking forward to working with him, to steer the Institute on a more sustainable and productive path. He also thanked Belize, for their outstanding stewardship of the CARDI Board of Governors over the last 3 years.

Mr Hogan holds a B.Sc in Political Science from Kean University, New Jersey, and a Masters in Trade and Economic Law from the University of London. During his 25 years of professional experience Minister Hogan, worked with several high profile organisations including the CARICOM Secretariat, European Union (EU), the United Nations and the Department for International Development, United Kingdom.

CARDI launched the agriculture component of the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR) on opening day of the 14th Caribbean Week of Agriculture in Cayman Islands.

The PPCR is being executed by the Mona Office of Research and Innovation (MORI), University of the West Indies (UWI), Jamaica and will be co-implemented by CARDI and several other regional organizations working on climate change.

The project will assist the Region to improve the acquisition and management of climate data and scale up innovative climate resilient initiatives in the project countries - Jamaica, Haiti, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The wider Region is expected to benefit from improved capacity and improved climate information services.

CARDI will lead the implementation of the agriculture component, which will focus on germplasm management and conservation, supporting the development of the protected agriculture industry, climate modelling for priority crops, refurbished weaning and hardening facilities, the establishment of seed storage rooms and seed banks.

CARDI and the International Trade Centre hosted a seminar during the 14th Caribbean Week of Agriculture to share the results of the ongoing regional project ‘Coconut Industry Development for the Caribbean’ and to chart a way for moving the industry towards a more sustainable and globally competitive path.

Regional project manager, Dr. Compton Paul, presented some of the successful interventions of the project, to date. The interventions include the development of national stakeholders platform, mapping and characterisation of plantations, training of industry stakeholders in quality planting material, germplasm management and the launch of the project website (http://ccidp.cardi.org/en/).

In moving the coconut industry forward, experts agreed that attention would have to be focused on addressing production and marketing challenges, in particular, pests and disease management, availability of quality planting material, market intelligence, access to financing and the adoption of Good Manufacturing Practices and value addition technologies.