

# Ministers' Brief



CARDI staff with the winning animals in the sheep and goat competition

## CARDI participates at Denbigh 2017

CARDI Jamaica joined other stakeholders from the public and private sectors to participate in Jamaica's premiere agriculture event the Denbigh Agricultural Food and Industrial Show. The Denbigh Show which is one of the oldest agriculture events in the Caribbean, offers stakeholders the opportunity to showcase their achievements in the agriculture and related sectors.

CARDI, a key partner in the development of Jamaica's agricultural sector, showcased the Institute's work on the development of the coconut industry, vermicomposting, hot pepper, seed production, roots and tubers and livestock. Several side events were also hosted during the 3-day event including a farmers' market, a health and wellness village and several competitions. CARDI entered the

small ruminants' competition and was adjudged winners in six of the categories. All the animals were from the sheep and goat herds at the Sam Motta Demonstration and Training Centre.

The Denbigh show was held from 5-7 August, 2017 in Clarendon under the theme "Grow what we eat ... Eat what we grow."

## Coconut industry stakeholders receive training in coconut planting material and nursery management



CARDI Agronomist, George Emmanuel presenting on the establishment and management of coconut nurseries

Farmers, investors and technicians working in Barbados' coconut industry benefitted from a training seminar on the selection of quality planting material and nursery management on 10 August 2017 at the CARDI office, Graeme Hall. The workshop jointly hosted by CARDI, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries, and Water Resource Management (MAFFW) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) covered topics such as selection of mother palms, seed nut selection and harvesting, seed bed preparation, record keeping and pest and disease identification. Facilitators, Dionne Clarke-Harris (entomologist) and George Emmanuel (agronomist) used a mix of classroom and practical sessions to introduce and reinforce best practices in these areas.

The lack of quality planting material has been identified as one of the critical factors hindering the development of the regional coconut industry. This activity is one in a series aimed at improving the access and availability of quality materials to revitalise production, under the regional CARDI/ITC Regional Coconut Development Project. In addition to this training, germplasm banks of local high yielding varieties will

be established by the MAFFW in Barbados to provide farmers with planting material. Consideration is also being given to the importation of dwarf varieties from Brazil and other countries to boost production on the island. Barbados and eight other countries are benefitting from this regional project which is being funded by the European Union.

## Weather outlook for the regional agricultural communities

CARDI has teamed up with the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) to produce the Agro Climatic bulletin. This is a monthly publication which summarises past weather conditions and provides a three month weather outlook for countries in the Region. A summary of weather/climate related initiatives relevant to the agricultural sector is also presented. Based on the expected weather conditions, climate advisories are provided for agriculturalists in these territories. The publication is intended to provide the farming community with reliable user friendly information, so they can better plan and manage their on-farm activities. The region is already experiencing an increase in the intensity and frequency of natural disasters which many experts say is linked to a changing climate. Information products such as this will enable all stakeholders to be better positioned to mitigate the risks.



Reliable, user friendly weather information is critical to informing and planning on-farm activities

## Squash seeds now available at CARDI Antigua



Extracted Table Squash seeds will be supplied to farmers as planting material in Antigua and Barbuda

The use of quality seeds in agricultural production systems that represent trueness of the variety, gives a high germination percentage, are free of seed borne pests and diseases and debris will almost certainly guarantee good yields. The production of Table Squash seeds continue to be a major focus of the Antigua and Barbuda Unit's annual work programme. The seed production programme for squash has a dual function: to produce seeds for the farming community and to preserve the genetic diversity of the crop. In May, CARDI established a ¼ acre at the Betty's Hope field station. To guarantee the production of high quality, genetically pure seeds, the fields were isolated and judicious care practiced throughout the life of the crop, paying particular attention to rouging and weed control. In August 721 kg (1590 lbs) of seeds were extracted. The seeds were cleaned, dried, sorted, graded, labelled and stored at the Unit's newly refurbished seed storage room. Table squash is an integral part of the Antiguan diet and an important vegetable in the country's school feeding programme.