Agriculture in the News
Issues Affecting Caribbean Agriculture

9th to 15th March 2024 Issue, compiled by CARDI

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Banana Sector
FAO urges more cooperation in banana sector, significant for some least developed and low-income food-deficit countries and smallholder farmers
Government of Antigua and Barbuda
March 13, 2024
The 4th Global Conference of The World Banana Forum (WBF), hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), opened at FAO headquarters today to discuss an array of challenges faced by banana producers, including the impacts of the climate crisis, high energy and fertilizer costs, and the spread of the destructive Fusarium wilt Tropical Race 4 (TR4) disease.

In his opening remarks to the WBF, FAO Director-General QU Dongyu highlighted the importance of banana in several aspects: “Bananas are among the most produced, traded and consumed fruits globally, with more than 1000 varieties produced worldwide they provide vital nutrients to many populations.”

Climate Resilience
Belize Receives Green Climate Fund Grant to Support Sustainable Climate Resilience
Belize breaking News
March 14, 2024
https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/2024/03/14/belize-receives-green-climate-fund-grant-to-support-sustainable-climate-resilience/
The Ministry of Economic Development (MED), as Belize’s National Designated Authority (NDA) to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), is pleased to announce the approval of the GCF Readiness Proposal, “Strengthening technical and institutional capacities of Galen University, BLPA, PACT, BNPAS and the Government of Belize to access Climate Finance”. This proposal is valued at BZ$1,359,450 in grant funding. It was developed and will be implemented by the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) in collaboration with the beneficiary stakeholders.

CCCCC successfully Launches New Project in Eco-System Restoration and Costal Protection, Bolstering Caribbean Climate Resilience
CCCCC
March 15, 2024
The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) successfully launched the “Enhancing Eco-systems and Coastal Protection for Climate Change Resilience in the Caribbean” (ECP-Caribbean) project. Held at the ROK Hotel Kingston Tapestry Collection by Hilton, Kingston, Jamaica, yesterday’s event marked a significant milestone in the region’s efforts to increase climate resilience and protect vital coastal ecosystems.

Ms. Patricia Prosser, Senior Development Officer, Caribbean Regional Development Program – NDE, Global Affairs Canada in her remarks declared that the Government of Canada is committed to partnering with CCCCC and organizations throughout the region to advance climate resilience, protect nature, and halt biodiversity loss.
Climate-Resilient Water Management
7 countries develop response strategies for climate-resilient water management
Global Water Partnership
March 14, 2024

Leaders from seven African, Middle Eastern and Asian countries including high-level delegates from UNICEF, the British High Commission in Malawi and the Global Water Partnership are meeting in Lilongwe, Malawi, to assess efforts made in the seven countries towards building more climate-resilient water services under the multi-partner Global Water Leadership (GWL) Programme.

Since launching in April 2021, GWL has been working to strengthen national support for water resource and services management, provide critical information and analysis to identify and resolve barriers, input into water and/or climate policies, and helped governments bolster its climate resilience. At the core of the GWL programme are government-validated Response Strategies for addressing the most critical barriers to climate-resilient water management. Barriers have been identified by national stakeholders, who have prioritized the top 2 to 4 barriers in their respective country.

Food Security
The Food Security Portal (FSP) meets demand for timely information on developments impacting global food security
International Food Policy Research Institute – IFPRI
March 14, 2024

The Great Recession of the late 2000s had a profound effect on global food security. Between 2004 and mid-2008, when the global recession was hitting full force, food grain prices — a key indicator of food security — increased significantly. Corn prices increased 89%, wheat prices 108%, and rice prices 224%. Yet these spikes were not just the product of market disruptions. IFPRI’s 2010 report Reflections on the Global Food Crisis concluded that the 2008 increase in rice prices was mostly due to adverse policy responses such as export restrictions by major rice producers. These caused major importers, such as the Philippines, to buy unusually large amounts of rice in anticipation of price spikes (i.e., panic-buying). Available global supplies fell, and prices rose. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that the resulting price spikes pushed the number of people in hunger worldwide from 923 million in 2007 to 963 million in 2008.

Root Crops
Celebrating the importance of root crops in our Country and promoting consumption for a more resilient future
Ministry of Land, Forestry, Marine Resources and cooperative – Grenada
March 12, 2024
https://www.facebook.com/MOAGrenada/posts/pfbid0FV3Q47fzGnbaF5oCrofaDqqBoBD4KWEmuZgiGoZsXNPDliiF8gPFHqovWxSpzPI

Resilience: In the face of unpredictable weather patterns and climate change, root crops like yams, cassava, dasheen and sweet potatoes are resilient and can withstand adverse conditions, ensuring food security for our communities.

Nutritional Powerhouses: These humble crops are packed with essential nutrients like vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber, contributing to healthier diets and combating malnutrition.
**Greenhouse – Guyana**

GSA receives first-of-its-kind greenhouse to spur climate-smart agriculture  
Department of Public Information – Guyana  
March 14, 2024  
The Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA) has received a first-of-its-kind greenhouse, which houses hydroponics and aquaculture facilities, from Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to empower women and youth through climate-smart agriculture technologies.

The handing-over ceremony was held at the Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA), Mon Repos, East Coast Demerara, on Wednesday.

**Sugar Cane Production**

Mechanised cane production imminent on 5000 hectares of Skeldon land  
March 11, 2024  
With the Government having set aside 5000 hectares of land in Skeldon for reintegration into the sugar industry, the government is also eyeing the mechanization of sugar cane production on these lands and the cultivation of new varieties.

President Ali made these remarks during Saturday’s commissioning of Republic Bank’s new $1.2 Billion branch at Williamsburg on the Corentyn. In fact, President Ali noted that the arrangements to have the 5000 hectares of land return to cultivation were only recently concluded.

**Irish Potato Production – Jamaica**

Growth in Irish potato production for 2024  
March 15, 2024  
https://www.moa.gov.jm/content/growth-irish-potato-production-2024  
There is an upward trend in Irish potato production for 2024. Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, Hon. Floyd Green, made the disclosure yesterday, March 13, during a tour of Irish potato and hot pepper farms in St. Ann.

The increase in production is attributed to the support provided by the Ministry through the Production Incentive Programme (PIP), which is spearheaded by the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA), in which beneficiaries receive assistance with inputs such as planting material and fertilizer.

**Musa Varieties**

CARDI in St Vincent and the Grenadines has nine 9 Musa varieties in its germplasm collection at CARDI Field Station  
CARDI St. Vincent  
March 12, 2024  
https://www.facebook.com/CARDIcaribbean/posts/pfbid0wDbNZaTSAxACBXCFuDSfZEAuxiY2T8N9zZAFlo2r7n6Q5EaT4dNmZemfGHTtHJfl  
There are 2 types of Musa species; the fig type varieties which include F924, F920, F918 and F916; and the Banana type varieties which include: FHIA21, FHIA18, FHIA17, FHIA03 and FHIA01.

These varieties were received from FHIA and CIRAD and have been evaluated for tolerance to Black Sigatoka Disease (BSD). BSD is present on the island and is known to reduce yields by as much as 90%.
**Agri-Food Value Chain**

**Agrifood Value Chains are Complex Transaction-Linked Networks. What Does this Mean for Sampling Methodology?**

International Food Policy Research Institute – IFPRI
March 11, 2024


Agrifood value chains are an integral part of food systems, moving food from farms where it is produced to retailers where it is sold to consumers. Agrifood value chains can be quite simple—consumers can buy directly from farms at farmers’ markets, for example—or they can be quite complex, involving processing steps on multiple continents before products reach retailers. Yet research often sets aside these distinctions and depicts agrifood value chains as highly stylized and simple—typically as a simplified series of steps involving traders, aggregators, processors, and/or wholesalers between farms and retailers. The most common method for studying multiple intermediary actors within agrifood value chains—“stacked surveys” that randomly sample respondents within each of these steps—follows this simplified approach.

**Climate-smart Agriculture**

**Gender responsiveness can make Climate-smart agriculture even smarter!**

IRRI
March 12, 2024


The impact of climate change on agriculture is undeniable, and it poses a significant threat to global food security. While climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is gaining momentum as a solution, its success depends on its ability to ensure inclusivity and not leave anyone behind. By harnessing the engagement of women in agriculture and simultaneously empowering women, we can not only mitigate negative effects of climate change but also foster sustainable, resilient, and equitable food systems through CSA.

**Seed Production**

**Empowering women and improving rice yields and productivity through seed production**

IRRI
March 15, 2024


Gender is intricately woven into various facets of seed systems. Traditionally, women have held pivotal roles as seed custodians and managers, drawing upon their extensive knowledge of seed systems that are crucial for agricultural sustainability. They have excelled in identifying, preserving, and conserving seeds of varieties suitable for various climatic conditions. Women are actively involved in the various intercultural operations involved in seed production. Evidence shows that seed systems not only tend to reach women but have the potential to “benefit” and “empower” them as seed producers. However, women’s agency does not always translate into the formal seed sector and distinctive initiatives to facilitate their participation in formal seed production are essential. The collaboration between the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Access Livelihood Foundation (ALF) is an effort in this direction that seeks to give smallholder, women farmers in Odisha the opportunity to engage in paddy seed production.
Events

APRIL 2024
St. Kitts Agriculture Open Day, 25-26th April 2024
Hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Marine Resources

Belize: 52nd National Agriculture and Trade Show, 26-28 April 2024,
National Agriculture and Trade Show Grounds, Belmopan
https://www.facebook.com/maf.gov.bz/posts/pfbid02LSSvnt9VxgaUqzzpx3aoAHld3qLPjkqqrw8Z7m
WH8adPywDgdhE52gZQLB6hSTR4l

AUGUST 2024
Jamaica: Denbigh Agricultural Industrial Food Show, 4-6 August 2024

38th FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean March 2024:
https://www.fao.org/events/detail/larc38/es
The President of Guyana, Mohamed Irfaan Ali and the Director General of the United Nations Food
and Agriculture Organization (FAO), QU Dongyu will inaugurate the 38 Regional Conference of FAO for
Latin America and the Caribbean.

38th session of the Regional Conference will be held through a Senior Officers meeting in virtual
format from March 11 to 13 and the Ministerial Meeting from March 18 to 21, in Georgetown, Guyana.