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Contents

Agri-Food Systems progress in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. pp. 2
Coconut Industry pp. 2
Green Economy pp. 3
Drones4Rice Project pp. 3
Sargassum Products for Climate Resilience Project pp. 3
2023 Agriculture Census – Grenada pp. 4
Urban Farming – Dominica – pp. 4
Agriculture Development Project – Jamaica pp. 4
Invasive Plants of the Caribbean pp. 5
Agricultural Research pp. 5
Plant Health pp. 5
Watermelon Irrigation pp. 6
CGIAR Foresight Partnership Forum and Training pp. 6
Events pp. 6
**Agri Food Systems progress in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals**

FAO warns: We have crossed the halfway mark for the 2030 Agenda, and the need to accelerate our progress is urgent

FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
April 18th, 2024


FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative Mario Lubetkin participated in the United Nations' "Review of Progress in the Transformation of Food Systems" event to evaluate countries' progress in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

... In his speech, Mario Lubetkin stated: "We have analyzed how the region has made some progress in reducing hunger and food insecurity figures. Our latest estimates show that three million people no longer suffer from hunger. However, we still face important challenges and gaps linked to agrifood systems, which could hamper our ability to respond.

He added: "In this context, the transformation of agrifood systems becomes an immediate and critical need, a process in which investments and political and development agendas must be aligned to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. We have crossed the halfway mark for the 2030 Agenda, so the need to accelerate our progress is urgent." ....

**Coconut Industry**

**Agriculture Minister Jose Mai discusses coconut exports with coconut producers**

Belize Breaking News
April 12, 2024


“The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise continues facilitating discussions where local producers get to find out more about accessing markets for Belizean products,” MAFSE said.

“The Ministry continues its efforts to secure regional market access to surrounding countries in Central America, the Caribbean and the USA.”

**Belize's coconut industry set to flourish with new FAO global initiative**

Belize Channel 5 News
April 16, 2024


The FAO’s One Country, One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative has kicked off its inception workshop, marking the beginning of a comprehensive project aimed at bolstering Belize’s coconut value chain. This global endeavor will facilitate the formulation of a thorough value chain analysis and a three-year sector development plan specifically tailored for coconuts in Belize.
**Green Economy**

Antigua and Barbuda highlights plans and urges other vulnerable islands to move to a more inclusive, green economy.

Antigua and Barbuda Government Information Services
April 19, 2024

Globally, the clean energy sector is growing exponentially with clean energy employment surpassing that of fossil fuels in 2021, according to the IEA World Energy Report 2023. This presents significant opportunities for small island developing states, and climate policy experts are calling for the Caribbean region to get ahead of the curve on a just transition. Antigua and Barbuda in particular is taking a cogent approach and laid out a clear just transition pathway in its national climate change plans.

**Drones4Rice Project**

IRRI, PhilRice launch drone protocols to boost rice farming in the Philippines

International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)
17 April 2024

Aimed at leveraging the power of drone technology to boost farmers’ productivity and sustainability, the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Department of Agriculture - Philippine Rice Research Institute (DA-PhilRice) have launched the Drones4Rice Project during the Inception Workshop held at the IRRI Headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna on 16-17 April 2024.

The Drones4Rice Project will craft standardized protocols for drone applications of seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides for rice production in the Philippines. Implementing optimized protocols and streamlined regulations will enable the private sector to scale affordable drone services to farmers. The initiative holds significant potential for elevating farmers’ productivity, income, and resilience by advocating precision agriculture and sustainable rice farming practices.

**Sargassum Products for Climate Resilience Project**

Field trials on the horizon for Sargassum-derived fertilizer

Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM)
April 12, 2024
https://crfm.int/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=805%3Afield-trials-on-the-horizon-for-sargassum-derived-fertilizer&Itemid=179

A multi-country mission to monitor progress with the regional Sargassum Products for Climate Resilience Project, funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, has recently concluded. Representatives from the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the New Zealand Institute for Plant and Food Research Limited (PFR) met with key partners in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica in February and March 2024, to review progress and plan future activities. Based on the successful outcome of recent scientific studies and greenhouse trials for a Sargassum-derived liquid fertilizer, the partners will commence field trials within the next few weeks. These efforts, which will be advanced in collaboration with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and regional private sector partners, signal promising progress towards valorization of Sargassum and strengthening the Caribbean’s food security and climate resilience.
2023 Agricultural Census. – Grenada
Census Coordinator, Laverne Mapp, appeals for continued cooperation in the rolling out of the 2023 Agricultural Census.
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Forestry, Marine Resources and Cooperatives – Grenada
April 16, 2024
https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=732985192334035
(Video)

Urban Farming – Dominica
Urban agriculture training session: a gateway to sustainable living
Dominica News Online
April 17, 2024
https://dominicanewsonline.com/news/homepage/news/urban-agriculture-training-session-a-gateway-to-sustainable-living/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1qUwMPr4WIC4G11r8nfqItTXpvHb0AkTB4HCtkCe2qyreta-h5UXq56g_am_AeiQsKzVYP36XLo0y8iT_M3jzR9sl0qWYq14-B4_iA2iq1BzWD2vjl6O2osl8_ijz98X8KsI4zIPl3z4z3ZS9J

Some Roseau residents are now equipped with innovative techniques and knowledge to do some urban farming after participating in a training session in urban agriculture that was held in Roseau last Saturday.

The session, which saw enthusiastic participation from individuals of all ages, focused particularly on hydroponic systems and vertical farming techniques.

The training, initiated by Roseau Central MP, Melissa Poponne-Skerrit, was a collaborative effort with the Chinese Agricultural Technical Mission in One Mile, Portsmouth, and three esteemed presenters – Mr. Vince Morgan, Dominica’s largest hydroponics farmer, Mr. Kian Winston, the assistant principal of the Castle Bruce Secondary School and an agricultural science teacher, and Mr. Batilla Bethel James, an avid farmer and agricultural development officer at the Aid Bank.

Agriculture Development Project – Jamaica
Essex Valley Project to Transform Agriculture, Rural Development –Witter
Jamaica Information Services
April 12, 2024
https://www.moa.gov.jm/content/essex-valley-project-transform-agriculture-rural-development-%E2%80%93-witter

Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, Hon. Franklin Witter, says the Essex Valley Agriculture Development Project (EVADP) will revolutionise farming and rural development in South St. Elizabeth and its environs.

The project, which is slated for completion in early 2025, will deliver 1,700 cubic metres of water per hour, benefitting more than 700 farmers operating on 810 hectares of land in the Essex Valley region of the parish.

By increasing access to irrigation, the project is expected to boost agricultural production and productivity, increase food security, and create a more vibrant and resilient local economy.
Invasive Plants of the Caribbean
CABI publishes the first guide to the naturalized and invasive plants of the Caribbean
CABI
April 15, 2024
CABI has published the first ‘Guide to the Naturalized and Invasive Plants of the Caribbean’ which includes aquatics, climbers, grasses, herbs, shrubs, succulents, and trees that threaten biodiversity, livelihoods and economic development.

The 384-page guide, by Dr Arne Witt, CABI’s Invasives Coordinator, South, details 100 of the more than 880 naturalized and invasive alien plant species that have been recorded in the Caribbean – providing information on key characteristics to assist in identification. It is supported by ca 5,000 colour images, and information on origin, uses, impacts (gleaned from the international literature), and management options.

Agricultural Research
Agricultural research adds billions of dollars to the economy
CIMMYT
April 12, 2024 By: Sarah McLaughlin
As the world searches for effective solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change while navigating the cost-of-living crisis, delivering food security goals alongside robust economic value is more imperative than ever in agricultural research.
CGIAR plays a vital role in this mission, aiming to transform food, land, and water systems in collaboration with its 15 Research Centers, such as CIMMYT. Now, a new study published in World Development comprehensively analyzes CGIAR’s fiscal impact on global agricultural over nearly 60 years.

Plant Health
Plant health governing body meets on further measures to curb pests and diseases
FAO
April 15, 2024
The FAO Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), a key body aimed at curbing the risks posed by plant pests and diseases that threaten agriculture and livelihoods and damage our ecosystems, convened today to discuss further measures to stop their spread.

“The consequences of unchecked pest and disease outbreaks are far-reaching and can inflict irreversible damage on ecosystems, trade, and the global food supply,” QU Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), said in his opening address to the 18th Session of the Commission.

The CPM is the governing body of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), convening annually to assess the global state of plant health and review progress towards achieving the Convention’s objectives. In 2023, IPPC welcomed the Federal Republic of Somalia as the 185th contracting party to the multilateral treaty.
Watermelon Irrigation
Maximizing Watermelon Irrigation Efficiency
University of Florida
April 17, 2024 By: Jay Capasso and Bob Hochmuth
https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/nfrecsv/2024/04/17/maximizing-watermelon-irrigation-efficiency/

Watermelon production relies on precise irrigation management for optimal growth. Getting the duration and frequency of irrigation right is crucial for using water efficiently and achieving a successful harvest.

Understanding Irrigation Duration
Based on our experience, utilizing drip tape with a flow rate of 0.4 gallons per 100 feet per minute, it’s important not to irrigate longer than a duration of 1 – 1.5 hours in any single irrigation event (do not count the time it takes to pressurize the drip irrigation system in the total run time). Since watermelon roots typically extend to depths of 12 – 15 inches, irrigating longer than 1.5 hours at this flow rate leads to water leaching below the root zone in our sandy Suwannee Valley soils. When water leaches below the root zone, it is no longer useful to the watermelon crop and risks leaching nutrients.

CGIAR Initiative on Foresight
CGIAR Foresight Partnership Forum and Training: Informing Choices Today to Improve the Food Systems of Tomorrow
CGIAR Initiative on Foresight
April 16, 2024

The Foresight Partnership Forum and Training, organized by the CGIAR Initiative on Foresight and the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS), kicked off today in Kathmandu, Nepal. The four-day event brings together key Initiative partners from across Asia, Africa, and Latin America to share insights on the multifaceted challenges affecting food, land, and water systems and strengthen local foresight and policy modeling capacity.

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/pfbid02LLSvnt9Vxgauqzzpx3aoAHld3qLPjqqwr8Z7mWH8adPywDgdhE52gZQLB6hSTR4I

April 22, 2024 IICA host Making Climate Action Self-Financing Through Viable EbA/NbS Livelihood & Green Business Discussion via zoom
Title: Making Climate Action Self-Financing Through Viable EbA/NbS Livelihood & Green Business
Time: 08:00 Belize, 09:00 Jamaica, 10:00 EST, 11:00 Suriname
Location: Virtual via ZOOM
Registration: https://iica.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAcyoq28g9G9M3AgvKABPAWkp2XQ65iyyO#/registration

In celebration of World International Mother Earth Day (IMED) on Monday, April 22, 2024, the Caribbean Climate Responsive Agriculture Forum (CCRAF) is excited to be collaborating with the IICA Trinidad and Tobago Delegation to bring you an inspiring and practical session on Making Climate Action Self-Financing Through Viable EbA/NbS Livelihood & Green Business to discuss the real and relative costs of community-based green
livelihoods and businesses as viable tools to drive, mainstream, and sustain nature-based and ecosystem-based adaptation and geoengineering solutions for climate action.

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