Agriculture in the News
Issues Affecting Caribbean Agriculture

11th to 17th May 2024 Issue, compiled by CARDI

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International Day of Plant Health

International Day of Plant Health
CARDIcaribbean
12 May 2024
https://www.facebook.com/CARDIcaribbean/posts/pfbid02824bEWbZRHsvbeiQtNQnp4wzNYKHRC9WexQ2xBe8LqeGoKD9PUb2aJmYFKzw3btl

Today, we’re sharing insights into one of our projects that is deploying never before used technology to monitor the South American Palm Weevil (SAPW) on coconut trees - a major pest which carries the nematode for the dreaded Red Ring Disease. Sensors will be installed on coconut trees in study sites along coastal communities in Trinidad and Tobago, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines to monitor in real time, the presence of the larval stage of the SAPW. Monitoring will help inform timely mitigation and control strategies. Presently, the pest is only detected when infestation is advanced and symptoms such as browning of the leaves and premature nut fall are visible. Directly, early detection, supports plant health, reduces tree loss and protects some of the Region’s most vulnerable coastal communities. Indirectly, farmers’ livelihoods and resilience are promoted. This is one of the HIT Reset Caribbean projects funded by the ACP Innovation Fund, OACPS Research and Innovation Programme, a programme implemented by the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States with the financial contribution of the European Union. It is jointly implemented by the University of the West Indies, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency and Anton de Kom University of Suriname.

International Day of Plant Health, 12 May
FAO
https://www.fao.org/plant-health-day/en
International Day of Plant Health 2024: Plant health, safe trade and digital technology

Potato: Late Blight Disease

A portable decision support tool cuts fungicide use in Kenya, keeping potato harvests and environmental health high
International Potato Centre (CIP)
12 May 2024
https://cipotato.org/blog/portable-decision-support-tool-cuts-fungicide-use-in-kenya/

Late blight presents a double-edged challenge for potato farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa: not only does it cause significant yield losses and production costs but it also poses health and environmental risks. Picture this: in peak rainy seasons, farmers in Kenya, a typical scenario in Sub-Saharan Africa, spray fungicides as frequently as 14 times a season—essentially 2-3 times a week. Now, think about the labor, time and financial burden, and the chemicals seeping into the environment, potentially affecting animal, aquatic and human health.

To tackle this challenge, CIP introduced a simple yet effective solution: a decision support tool (DST) crafted from simple card paper to assist farmers in their spraying decisions. This tool is a game-changer, requiring basic record-keeping, like noting past rainfall days and the days since the last spray. And for those who prefer smartphones, a user-friendly Android version is available, making tracking and managing spray records even more effortless.
Africa Integrated Climate Risk Management Programme
Senegal launches Africa Integrated Climate Risk Management Programme to support smallholder farmers
IFAD
May 17, 2024
The Government of Senegal, in partnership with several international organizations including the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), officially launched the Africa Integrated Climate Risk Management Programme (AIRCM) today. The programme aims to strengthen the resilience of smallholder farmers to the impacts of climate change in seven Sahelian countries participating in the Great Green Wall: Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal.

Other partners in the initiative include the Green Climate Fund, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Group, the World Food Programme (WFP). The Government of Senegal is working through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Livestock.

Science-based Transformation of Agriculture
Country’s government and productive sector
IICA
May 14, 2024
The Deputy Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Lloyd Day, paid a working visit to Canada, a country that continually expresses its support for the agency’s work in the principal international forums, and for a science-based transformation of agriculture that places farmers at center stage.
Lloyd met with representatives of the government, the productive sector and academia, and was informed of the policies that Canada is implementing to promote innovation and the sustainability and competitiveness of agriculture. The participants in the meeting included Stefanie Beck, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Assistant Deputy Minister Tom Rosser, and Deputy Director Daryl Nearing.

Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) agriculture at COP29
Azerbaijan and IICA open a channel for dialogue to facilitate the informed participation and positioning of Latin American and Caribbean agriculture at COP29
IICA
May 15, 2024
The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) are to establish a channel for dialogue and information sharing to facilitate the informed participation and positioning of Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) agriculture at COP29, due to be held in November in the Azerbaijani capital, Baku.

The decision was agreed at a meeting in Brasilia between the Azeri ambassador to Brazil, Rashad Novruz, and the Special Advisor to the General Directorate and the Director of Technical Cooperation of IICA, Jorge Werthein and Muhammad Ibrahim, respectively. Acting on behalf of Director General Manuel Otero, the Institute officials informed the representative of the Government of Azerbaijan of
the inter-American agency’s initiatives designed to boost the presence of the agriculture sector in the world’s most important forum for negotiations on climate issues.

At the meeting, Ibrahim and Werthein provided Ambassador Novruz with details of IICA’s work at COP27 (Sharm El Sheik, Egypt) and COP28 (Dubai, United Arab Emirates), where the agency specializing in agricultural and rural development and its 34 Member States and public and private sector partners set up a pavilion called The Home of Sustainable Agriculture of the Americas.

**Digital Technology – Mitigate Impact of Droughts on Agriculture**

Digital technology provides tools to predict and mitigate the impact of droughts on agriculture, says study presented by IICA

IICA
May 17, 2024

Digital technology provides extremely useful tools to diagnose and mitigate the impacts of droughts, reveals a study presented by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in preparation for the third edition of Digital Agriculture Week (DAW 2024), which will take place next September.

The document gives details of a cross-section of digital resources produced by public and private entities in Latin America and the Caribbean that help forecast and tackle water crises, which are increasing in number and severity due to climate change.

DAW 2024, whose official launch took the form of a series of webinars in which the topics to be discussed were announced, will bring together AgTechs, investment funds, large companies, farmer organizations, research institutes, ministries, public entities, and multilateral organizations to discuss digitalization in the agrifood sector and promote collaboration. IICA has spearheaded the initiative since 2022, and this year’s edition is again being organized jointly with strategic partners of the Institute such as CAF-Development Bank of Latin America, ECLAC, and CIMMYT.

... The document: *La sequía en la agricultura: recursos digitales disponibles para diagnosticar su ocurrencia y reducir sus impactos en América Latina y el Caribe* is available at: [https://repositorio.iica.int/handle/11324/22502](https://repositorio.iica.int/handle/11324/22502)

**FAO highlights the potential of AI and the digital revolution to transform the world’s agrifood systems**

FAO
May 17, 2024

Artificial Intelligence and the ongoing digital revolution will inevitably transform the world and its agrifood systems, making it all the more urgent that the transformations they drive benefit everyone and contribute to solving global challenges, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), QU Dongyu, said Friday at the Business Federations of the G7 (B7) meeting in Rome.

Artificial Intelligence is not just a technological shift but is driving a fundamental economic and social transformation at the broadest level, Qu said, noting that FAO recognizes its power to bring potential benefits to a wide range of populations and to contribute to improved efficiency and sustainability.
Cassava Value Chain
From staple to solution: Cassava Chat Friday promotes cassava value chain
CGIAR
May 13, 2024
Cassava, known for its versatility and resilience, offers numerous opportunities for value addition, transforming it from a basic staple into a valuable commodity. Value addition in cassava involves processing it into various products, increasing its economic value and marketability.

The IITA-Malawi Cassava Unit organized Cassava Chat every Friday to educate and enrich staff’s knowledge of cassava. Given the changing climate and the impact of inflation on maize production in Malawi, cassava is emerging as a potential solution. Highlighting the importance and resilience of cassava for food security, IITA Cassava Breeder Elizabeth Parkes said, “When all the crops disappear, cassava remains.”

Cultivating growth and competitiveness: Insights from Tanzania’s Cassava Business and Investment Forum
CGIAR
May 13, 2024
The Ministry of Agriculture of Tanzania, in collaboration with the Tanzania Cassava Producers and Processors Association (TACAPPA), IITA, and AGRA – Sustainably Growing Africa’s Food Systems, organized a cassava business and investment forum in Dodoma on 29 April. The event aimed to engage stakeholders, especially private-sector cassava producers, seed producers, researchers, and policymakers, to foster insightful discussions on promoting cassava in food systems diversification, commercialization, and trade at national, regional, and international levels.

Dr Hussein M. Ommar, the Deputy Permanent Secretary—representing the Minister of Agriculture, Honourable Hussein Mohamed Bashe (MP), who presided over the event as the Chief Guest of Honor—expressed gratitude to the delegates for their commitment to improving the cassava subsector in Tanzania. Ommar highlighted the contributions of development partners, especially the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Cornell University, in supporting projects (BASICS II, Muhogo Bora, and Next-Gen) on the development of a sustainable cassava seed system in the country.

Corn
New High-Yield Corn Variety Boosts Agricultural Productivity in Peru
CIMMYT
May 15, 2024
The introduction of the new high-yield corn variety, INIA 608 – ALLIMASARA, in Peru represents a significant collaboration between CIMMYT and the National Institute of Agricultural Innovation (INIA). This variety, developed through advanced crossbreeding techniques at the El Porvenir Agricultural Experimental Station, showcases CIMMYT’s pivotal role in enhancing agricultural productivity globally. By boosting yield capacities significantly up to 40% per hectare, this initiative not only supports the livelihoods of local farmers but also advances sustainable agricultural practices in challenging environmental conditions.
Poultry Industry - Caribbean
Address by Mr. Joseph Cox, CARICOM Assistant Secretary-General, on the occasion of the Caribbean Poultry Association’s 7th Annual International Technical Symposium
CARICOM Secretariat
May 14, 2024
“… As we gather here in the vibrant city of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, I remind you of Vision 25 by 2025 which was created to support the transformation of the Region’s food system to one that is sustainable and resilient, ensuring food security and improved livelihoods to the people of the Region. The poultry industry, encompassing the production of chicken, eggs, and other poultry products, holds immense promise as a catalyst for sustainable agriculture in the Caribbean. It is therefore worthy of note that sustainable poultry production is key to the attainment of Vision 25 by 2025.”

MALF participated in the Seventh International Symposium and Exhibition hosted by the Caribbean Poultry Association
Ministry of Agriculture, land and Fisheries – Trinidad and Tobago
https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=952189846376405&ref=sharing
In delivering remarks, Senator the Honourable Kazim Hosein, Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, commended CARICOM’s efforts to foster a sustainable poultry sector.

The Exhibition also featured the Livestock and Livestock Products Board and the Agricultural Development Bank, showcasing their services to the public.

The Caribbean Poultry Association's 7th International Technical Symposium - Video
The Caribbean Poultry Association’s 7th International Technical Symposium streamed live on May 14, 2024
TTT Live Online
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CPDU0KJTw0

Small Ruminant Sector – Jamaica
Small Ruminant Sector to Be Strengthened
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining - Jamaica
May 14, 2024
https://www.moa.gov.jm/content/small-ruminant-sector-be-strengthened
The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining aims to strengthen small ruminant farming on the island to increase farmers’ income and profitability, says Minister of State in the Ministry, Hon. Franklin Witter.

He was addressing the closing ceremony for the Sustainable Agriculture in the Caribbean (SAC) Livestock Technical Services Providers’ Small Ruminant Production Training programme, which was held at the Eltham Training Centre in Ocho Rios, St. Ann, on May 10.
Sugar and Cattle Export – Belize
Minister of Agriculture and Mexican officials discuss sugar and cattle exports
Belize Breaking News
May 14, 2024
https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/2024/05/14/minister-of-agriculture-and-mexican-officials-discuss-sugar-and-cattle-exports/

Minister of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise Jose Abelardo Mai also accompanied Prime Minister John Briceno on his visit to Mexico over the weekend.

During their visit, they engaged in discussions with Mexican government officials covering various topics, including cattle exports and the issue of Belizean sugar being smuggled into Mexico.

“A lot of our sugar is being contraband into the Chetumal region and it creates shortages for us. The president agreed that he’ll talk with the Minister of Economy for us to look at the tariff regime to be able to expect to reduce it and also then to give us a certain quota to be able to export sugar into Mexico,” the Prime Minister said.

Reproductive Technology in Cattle Production
AMEXCID and Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise initiate Reproductive Technology in Cattle Production Project
Belize breaking News
May 13, 2024

The project includes a diagnosis of the cattle industry that is scheduled to take place from 13th to 17th May 2024 and is being facilitated by Dr. Jorge Quintal Franco and MSc. Jose Eduardo Cabrera Torres of INIFAP. The project’s training is expected to deliver a complete and functional diagnosis of the MAFSE’s capabilities to enhance its services to farmers in respect to reproductive technologies and its benefits. This project is expected to deliver real time results as to how the MAFSE will proceed with Artificial Insemination and Embryo Transfer in Belize

Climate Change
Building a climate-smarter Tanzania
IRRI
May 13, 2024

In a climate change scenario, a team of researchers and scholars from SUA, UCPH, IRRI, TARI, and KALRO are working to ensure East and Southern Africa’s food security through spatiotemporal mapping, identifying eligible rice lines, and developing climate-smart rice varieties.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected that climate change is the leading cause of the increase in the frequency and intensity of not only rainfall but also droughts in Tanzania. This has become an issue for rice farmers in Tanzania since current varieties are not yet fully capable of surviving flooding and extended submergence.

The IMF also reported that the sea level in the coastal zone of Tanzania is expected to rise as a result of global warming so on top of the heavy rainfall for the past months, crops will be more vulnerable to increased salinity in water and soil. This can greatly affect rice production as increased salt stress decreases yields, leading to less income for farmers, and consequently, higher food prices for rice
consumers. Despite achieving self-sufficiency in rice production, the demand from Tanzania’s population of over 65 million is still increasing annually, currently reaching 36.9 kilograms per capita.

**Events**

**MAY 2024**

4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4, 27 to 30 May 2024)
St John’s, Antigua and Barbuda.
[https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/sids2024](https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/sids2024)

World Seed Congress, 27 to 29 May 2024
hosted by the International Seed Federation (ISF). Rotterdam, the Netherlands
[https://congress.worldseed.org](https://congress.worldseed.org)

**ICTforAg 2024, May 28-30th**
[https://www.ictforag.com/](https://www.ictforag.com/)
Localizing impact through inclusion, inspiration, and innovation.
Mark your calendars, pack your bags, and prepare to embark on an unforgettable journey as ICTforAg 2024 unfolds from May 28-30th across five vibrant locations (+ online).

**Advancing Data Management in the Caribbean for a Climate Resilient Future**
Thursday 30th May 2024, 10:00-11:30
Room 10: American University of Antigua
St. Johns, Antigua and Barbuda

**JULY 2024**

57th Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Food Crops Society, July 15 to 19, 2024
Dominican Republic

**AUGUST 2024**

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