Agriculture in the News
Issues Affecting Caribbean Agriculture

18th to 24th May 2024 Issue, compiled by CARDI
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Sweet Potato Value Chain
CARDiCaribbean was delighted to distribute 2,000 clean sweet potato cuttings to the Sandvoort Farmers Group, West Canje, Berbice
CARDiCaribbean
May 17, 2024
https://www.facebook.com/CARDiCaribbean/posts/pfbiid0LZQZ6cneMA8FLcK3vqkPMKfhnPvvyKP6XsMXpTLRpg7Haj9jkrgtCRCUr3ji7R5GNI
CARDiCaribbean was delighted to distribute 2,000 clean sweet potato cuttings to the Sandvoort Farmers Group, West Canje, Berbice.

Superior varieties such as Strong Man, Vanilla, and Cogle, all with desired traits demanded by the market, were received by the farmers.

Conch Nursery Feasibility
OECS Fisheries Officers Focus on Conch Nursery Feasibility at Study Tour in Puerto Rico
OECS
May 23, 2024
https://pressroom.oecs.int/oecs-fisheries-officers-focus-on-conch-nursery-feasibility-at-study-tour-in-puerto-rico#
Chief fisheries officers from Grenada, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines attended a short knowledge-sharing activity at the Naguabo Aquaculture Center, Puerto Rico where they gained firsthand insight into the architecture and operations of a queen conch hatchery and nursery. The officials participated in the exercise from April 30 to May 1, 2024, and left with an overview of establishing and managing an aquaculture facility and the tools needed.

The OECS Commission is currently executing its ten-year Food and Agriculture Systems Transformation (FAST) Strategy, which responds to the call for increased food security, food self-reliance, and agricultural development across Member States. The FAST Strategy articulates two main tracks to focus on transformation techniques and projects in the blue and green economies.

Hot Pepper Value Chain Workshop
Hot Pepper Value Chain workshop held in SVG
National Broadcasting Cooperation
May 24, 2024
https://www.nbcsvg.com/2024/05/24/hot-pepper-value-chain-workshop-held-in-svg/
A Hot Pepper Value Chain Evaluation and Cost of Production Workshop was held here this week with the aim of developing a five-year Hot Pepper Value Chain Upgrading Strategy.

Public and Private Sector stakeholders were engaged in the workshop on May 22nd and 23rd.

The workshop was convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through a project of its Technical Cooperation Programme on Promoting Windward Islands Food Production and Trade Corridor.

During the opening ceremony, Minister of Agriculture, Saboto Caesar expressed thanks to the FAO for its continued support to St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
Solar-Powered Cooling Systems

Solar-Powered Cooling Systems for Dairy Farmers
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining - Jamaica
May 21, 2024
https://www.moa.gov.jm/content/solar-powered-cooling-systems-dairy-farmers

In a move to reduce energy costs, the Government will soon commence distributing solar-powered cooling systems to dairy farmers, according to Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, Hon. Floyd Green.

“This is to reduce the cost of producing water, to get more water to our farmers, especially in times of drought,” the Minister said, while speaking at the recent commissioning of solar plants for the Caribbean Broilers (CB) Group, at the Peninsula Farms in Banbury, St. Catherine.

Producing Peppers for Export

Govt assisting Crabwood Creek farmers producing peppers for export
Guyana Times
May 20, 2024
https://guyanatimesgy.com/govt-assisting-crabwood-creek-farmers-producing-peppers-for-export/

The Agriculture Ministry through the National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) is assisting 100 farmers in Crabwood Creek to cultivate peppers for a local processing company that exports most of its products.

Being referred to as the pepper shade house project, Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha said it will assist some 100 families initially. The project was officially launched on Saturday at Skeldon Sugar Estate Manager’s Club House and according to the Minister in less than two months from now, farmers could be selling hundreds of pounds of peppers weekly.

Poultry Production

Poultry production in Bonasika Creek expanded through black giant chicken programme – Mustapha
Guyana Times
May 22, 2024

Over 63,000 black giant chickens have been distributed across the country in a bid to expand poultry production, according to Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha. The mining was at the time addressing residents of Bonasika Creek, Essequibo River of which 300 have benefitted from the Black Giant Chicken programme. The distribution forms part of a concerted effort by the Guyana Government to expand the local poultry sector by introducing a resilient breed of chicken, and the black giant chickens provide a sustainable source of high-quality protein.

Additionally, it is a sizable dual-purpose bird that can produce up to 200 eggs annually and roughly 4.5 kilograms of meat. These birds can graze, forage, consume leftover food from the kitchen, and still produce respectably, making it a low-maintenance breed. The distribution of this particular chicken started in Bonasika Creek in late 2022 and has since expanded allowing residents to generate a steady income. Further, residents who are not rearing the black giant chickens have been able to benefit by participating in income-generating activities such as providing transportation, feeding supplies, and engaging in processing.
Let me begin by thanking the Ministry of Agriculture of Grenada for inviting the CARICOM Secretariat to provide the keynote address for this Consultation on the Draft National Poultry Policy 2023. It is an honour for us to be here to provide our support for the development and sustainability of this crucial industry.

We are particularly pleased by the commitment of the Government of Grenada to implementing the Region’s 25 by 2025 Initiative through its various actions. In particular, we commend the Government for prioritizing the Poultry Sector, among others, starting with the development of the National Poultry Policy. The Policy will, undoubtedly, support the advancement and further development of the poultry industry in Grenada, decrease the food import bill, secure the availability of a major food basket item, and create business and employment opportunities for the citizens of Grenada. As you are all aware, Agriculture plays an important role in Grenada, especially in rural communities, accounting for around 5 per cent of GDP. We also note from the information contained in your draft Policy that, according to the 2012 Grenada Agricultural Census, there are around 9,200 farmers of which approximately 450 are poultry farmers directly employing over 750 persons.

**Cassava Production**

*Guyana reaped over 20 million pounds of cassava for 2024*

Department of Public information – Guyana

May 21, 2024


Guyana has reaped more than 20 million pounds of cassava in 2024 in line with its developmental trajectory to increase food productivity.

This announcement was made by President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali during an outreach in Bonasika Creek, Region Three, on Tuesday.

“We introduced a new variety that has moved the yield from 15 tonnes per hectare to 30 tonnes per hectare. And we did not only do that, we know when you have increased production, it can affect the price. We have worked to stabilise the price…and processing the cassava into Farine.

And now, we have the opportunity of taking that Farine into the Brazilian market. It is no longer about producing food. It is how we now translate production into storage, add transportation, create higher value, and access more markets,” the head of state added.

The venture will generate more income for many households, thereby improving their livelihoods.

To boost agriculture production in the Deep South in Region Nine, 500,000 more pounds of cassava, valued at some $20 million, were distributed to various communities there.
Advanced Model Farms

Advanced model farm to be established for differently-able persons
Department of Public Information - Guyana
May 20, 2024
https://dpi.gov.gy/advanced-model-farm-to-be-established-for-differently-able-persons/

The Ministry of Agriculture plans to construct a technologically advanced model farm at Mon Repos along the East Coast of Demerara that will be managed by differently-abled persons.

The announcement was made by Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, during his outreach in Region Six on Saturday last.

He said the undertaking forms part of the government’s strategy to implement initiatives that benefit all sections of society.

“We have already cleared the lands...They will now build out that farm there for [differently abled] persons.... in our country. They will have a profit coming out of that farm and would be able to earn to enhance their livelihoods. That is the kind of advancement that we are making in this sector,” Minister Mustapha explained.

The innovative agricultural venture will provide differently abled people with an opportunity to earn an income and gain access to sustainable and integrated farming practices.

Pepper Cultivation

Crabwood Creek shade house project launched to boost pepper cultivation
Department of Public Information – Guyana
May 19, 2024

The government has launched a shade house project in Crabwood Creek, Region Six (East Berbice Corentyne), to support farmers in cultivating peppers.

This initiative follows President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali’s recent visit to the community where he engaged residents on issues affecting them.

The Ministry of Agriculture will initially assist 100 farmers in constructing shade houses, each designed to accommodate approximately 400 pepper plants.

The project was officially launched by Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha on Saturday at the Skeldon Estate. He said the projects forms part of plans to enhance Guyana’s role as the food hub for the Caribbean.

Rice Cultivation

Rice cultivation to exceed 710,000 tonnes by year-end
Department of Public Information – Guyana
May 22, 2024

Guyana’s rice sector is experiencing a remarkable increase in production with cultivation set to exceed 710,000 tonnes by year-end.

“We planted 206,000 acres. I am hoping that the second crop of 2024, we can increase that to almost 230,000 acres so that at the end of the year we can surpass the figure that was set in this year’s budget of 710,000 tonnes,” Minister Mustapha noted.
Highlighting the sector’s growth trajectory, Minister Mustapha explained that just four years ago, yields averaged approximately 4.5 tonnes per hectare.

**Artificial Insemination Initiative**

**Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Blue and Green Economy and livestock farmers collaborate in Livestock Artificial Insemination Initiative**

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Blue and Green Economy – Dominica
May 24, 2024

https://dominicanewsonline.com/news/homepage/homepage-carousel/ministry-of-agriculture-fisheries-blue-and-green-economy-and-livestock-farmers-collaborate-in-livestock-artificial-insemination-initiative/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR0DFR2gCPO8wQPISbsnIA_z9fKAec6W6xl8SVgTbEflbigTu1UMV7GiPmg_aem_AcjH04q3kBvcaIo6juN3OAIkgDuZcjPfHugMhlD7v7v6-y1uHS5n0_cNJq8ls6nWvI53CN86Y7sYfhzy6sY5

The Livestock Development Unit (LDU) within the Division of Agriculture has embarked on a proactive engagement with farmers who have expressed interest in artificial insemination for their small ruminants. In 2023, a group of 34 farmers collectively opted to import 150 straws of Boer and Nubian goat semen from the United States. This strategic move aims to elevate the genetic potential of local herds and enhance overall productivity within the region.

Since its establishment, the LDU has been rendering technical assistance to farmers, providing insights into the nuances of artificial insemination, and fostering conducive environments for successful conception and pregnancy.

As of April 2024, the initial batch comprising eighteen farmers has initiated the insemination process, with completion anticipated within the next seven weeks. Subsequent sessions will be scheduled based on farmers’ request.

**Pasture Management**

**Ministry of Agriculture hosts Mexican experts in Pasture Management**

Belize Breaking News
May 23, 2024


Thе Міnіѕtrу оf Аgrісulturе, Fооd Ѕесurіtу аnd Еntеrрrіѕе аnd Міnіѕtеr Јоѕе Аbеlаrdо Маі hоѕtеd 3 Мехісаn ехреrtѕ іn раѕturе mаnаgеmеnt. Міnіѕtеr Маі аnd thе tеаm vіѕіtеd а dеmоnѕtrаtіоn рlоt оf fоur hуbrіdѕ: Саmеllо, Сауmаn, Меѕtіzо аnd Таlіѕmán, rерlісаtеd thrее tіmеѕ оn whаt іѕ соnѕіdеrеd mаrgіnаl ѕаndу ѕоіlѕ. Wіth 45 hеіfеrѕ grаzіng іn еасh раrсеl оf 1 hесtаrе fоr оnе dау іn thе реаk оf thе drу ѕеаѕоn.  

**Climate Resilient Agriculture**

**Climate-smart farming boost with $8M project**

Barbados Today
May 18, 2024 By Shanna Moore

https://barbadostoday.bb/2024/05/18/climate-smart-farming-boost-with-8m-project/

Barbados is poised to make strides in climate-resilient agriculture through a US$4 million (BDS$8 million) project spearheaded by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Subregional Office for the Caribbean.
Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the project which aims to enhance climate-resilient technologies and strengthen the country’s agri-food system is set to begin in 2026.

The project is designed to improve various climate-resilient agricultural practices, including protected agriculture, solar-powered irrigation systems, and closed-loop systems for production, said FAO Climate Change Officer Jacinto Buenfil.

**Biological Diversity**
*International Day for Biological Diversity*
Antigua Ministry of Agriculture fisheries and Barbuda Affairs
May 22, 2024 By Shenequa Williams
https://www.facebook.com/MAFBAanu/posts/pfbid0C1NQcWkBTd8QMDtx5W76vUFKKL98ytuWNcsWHRGdfKM8Y8yUXDG9TYdr9o68zQbh/

In Antigua and Barbuda, the celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity on May 22nd reflects a deep appreciation for the coexisting harmony between agriculture and biodiversity. Here, in the middle of our agricultural legacy, biodiversity thrives amid the azure waters and colourful landscapes. Our islands are home to a diverse array of flora, fauna, and marine organisms, all of which are essential for maintaining ecological balance and our food chains.

**Agricultural Transformation Agency**
*The Importance of the Agricultural Transformation Agency in Ethiopia*
IFPRI
May 24, 2024
https://www.ifpri.org/blog/importance-agricultural-transformation-agency-ethiopia

Agriculture is integral to the Ethiopian economy. In recent years, the sector contributed about 35 percent of GDP, employed an estimated 65 percent of the working population, and generated about 75 percent of foreign currency from exports. When Ethiopia’s government established its Growth and Transformation Plan in 2010, it prioritized investments in the agricultural sector to help achieve its goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2025.

In 2009, IFPRI partnered with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to establish the Research for Ethiopia’s Agricultural Policy Program (REAP). In a related review of Ethiopia’s agricultural sector, IFPRI worked with the government to select a range of priority research topics, and conducted eight studies over two years to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the country’s agricultural production. These studies led to a comprehensive review and recommendations for national strategies to achieve agricultural growth, which were then consolidated in a synthesis report. After the report was delivered in 2010, the Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) was created in December of the same year.

**Climate Change**
*Climate expert urges policies to protect vulnerable*
Barbados Today
May 18, 2024 By Shanna Moore
https://barbadostoday.bb/2024/05/18/climate-expert-urges-policies-to-protect-vulnerable/

A senior economist at the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has urged more inclusive policies to address the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable groups. Nicholas Sitko made the call on Friday at the launch of one of the FAO’s latest climate initiatives, The Unjust Climate Report, which measures the effect of climate change on the rural poor, women, youth and the elderly.
The report shows how climate change affects people differently, especially those in remote areas. It is based on over 109,000 households in 24 countries within five regions of the world and 70 years of geo-referenced rainfall and temperature data.

**FAO and UNICEF promote robust social protection systems for climate change adaptation**

May 20-2024

[https://dominicanewsonline.com/news/homepage/news/fao-and-unicef-promote-robust-social-protection-systems-for-climate-change-adaptation/?fbclid=IwZh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1vNYpIFttu9nu74Ts80r0Lb0xLGiEgyT_7WpsGGW1ZSvqUcRJUHtMnHI_aem_AhcCA9mhCZz9LjZ6i4q0f4w5e3kTOlv8bH0l-uStus8tn6Hst2Q4lZoGJn6yRcg2fuHaYL_8fzYTdxsShD](https://dominicanewsonline.com/news/homepage/news/fao-and-unicef-promote-robust-social-protection-systems-for-climate-change-adaptation/?fbclid=IwZh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1vNYpIFttu9nu74Ts80r0Lb0xLGiEgyT_7WpsGGW1ZSvqUcRJUHtMnHI_aem_AhcCA9mhCZz9LjZ6i4q0f4w5e3kTOlv8bH0l-uStus8tn6Hst2Q4lZoGJn6yRcg2fuHaYL_8fzYTdxsShD)

FAO and UNICEF organized a workshop in Bridgetown, Barbados, on strengthening social protection systems in the Caribbean. The event brought together experts and regional leaders to promote better adaptation to climate change through robust social protection systems.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) hosted the regional workshop “Strengthening Social Protection Systems in the Caribbean to Adapt to Climate Change: Opportunities and Challenges” on May 15 and 16 in Bridgetown, Barbados. The event brought together leaders and experts from the Caribbean region to promote cooperation in adapting social protection systems to the challenges of climate change and strengthening resilience to natural disasters.

**Events**

**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