Agriculture in the News
Issues Affecting Caribbean Agriculture

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**Conservation Agriculture Research**

**It’s time to scale: Emerging lessons from decades of Conservation Agriculture research in Southern Africa**

CIMMYT

June 7, 2024 By Kudzanai Chimhanda


For decades, smallholder farmers in Southern Africa have battled the whims of a changing climate—from withered crops to yield reductions and looming food insecurity concerns. And the outlook is not improving. Based on the latest available science, the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reaffirms the projected negative impacts of climate change on livelihoods in Southern Africa.

Conservation Agriculture (CA) has been considered as an important step to make smallholder farming systems climate smart and resilient. The principles of CA are simple yet potent: minimal soil disturbance, crop cover, and diverse rotations, which tend to have lasting implications on rebuilding soil health, conserving moisture, and nurturing a thriving ecosystem. A strong evidence base from on-farm and on-station trials show that CA has the potential to build the adaptive capacity and resilience of smallholder farming systems to climate stress.

**Drip Irrigation Kits**

**Ministry of Agriculture procures over 300 Drip Irrigation Kits to combat drought and boost farming efficiency**

St Vincent and the Grenadines. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour


The Ministry of Agriculture has procured more than three hundred Drip Irrigation Kits under the Food Insecurity Project, to address the issue of drought and water scarcity affecting local farmers.

Focal Point for the Food Insecurity Project, Colville King says the kits will revolutionize farming practices by significantly improving production and productivity through efficient water usage.

King emphasized the importance of addressing drought and water supply issues efficiently.

**Seamoss Farming**

**Improving sea-moss farming methods**

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Rural Development – St. Lucia

June 4, 2024

[https://www.facebook.com/MinistryOfAgriculture.SLU/posts/pfbid02mmx6CAmx6x9bX7CYeL2gS6uLRAyonTJ5LMmuwV91NeQqE5QMdhsLxj7Z359GHl](https://www.facebook.com/MinistryOfAgriculture.SLU/posts/pfbid02mmx6CAmx6x9bX7CYeL2gS6uLRAyonTJ5LMmuwV91NeQqE5QMdhsLxj7Z359GHl)

JICA Technical Cooperation “The Project for Strengthening Sustainable Use and Management of Coastal Fisheries Resource in the CARICOM Countries” implements diverse pilot projects in the Caribbean region so that marine resource users receive the bounty of the sea in a sustainable manner with the cooperative management of the aquatic resources by the user groups and the government.
Onion Production

Government Allocates $60 Million to Support Onion Farmers
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining – Jamaica
June 5, 2024
https://www.moa.gov.jm/content/government-allocates-60-million-support-onion-farmers

The Government has allocated $60 million to continue supporting onion farmers and boost local production of the crop.

Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, Hon. Floyd Green, said the allocation will be used to increase the use of technology by installing driers to sustain and enhance onion production.

He was making his contribution to the 2024/25 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives, recently.

Agricultural Production

Gov’t Boosting Agricultural Production in Westmoreland
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining – Jamaica
June 5, 2024
https://www.moa.gov.jm/content/gov%E2%80%99t-boosting-agricultural-production-westmoreland

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining is ramping up crop and livestock production in Westmoreland under the New FACE of Food initiative.

The plans were outlined by State Minister, Hon. Franklin Witter, while addressing the Westmoreland Agricultural Show held at Bay Road Sports Complex in Little London on Sunday (June 2).

He said the Ministry is aiming to establish 50 hectares of new orchards for high-demand “ABM crops” – ackee, banana and mango – engaging 20 farmers who will each cultivate 2.5 hectares.

Region Two farmers get over $7M in farming inputs
Department of Public Information – Guyana
June 7, 2024
https://dpi.gov.gy/region-two-farmers-get-over-7m-in-farming-inputs/#more

Farmers from Region Two received almost 45 farming implements totalling over $7 million in a significant step to empower communities to become more self-sufficient in food production.

The equipment includes tractor-driven pumps, tillers, water pumps, and mist-blowers.

During a recent community engagement in Anna Regina, Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha emphasised the government’s commitment to making substantial investments in the agriculture sector.

CropSustainI Initiative

New innovative crops could significantly reduce agriculture’s climate change impact and environmental footprint
CIMMYT
June 4, 2024

The Novo Nordisk Foundation has awarded a grant of up to USD 21.1 million to CIMMYT for a groundbreaking initiative to mitigate the environmental impact of agriculture, by developing new
wheat varieties that are capable of reducing agriculture’s nitrogen footprint. The CropSustaiN initiative could have sweeping implications for global food security and environmental sustainability.

As the global population approaches the 10 billion mark, the reliance on fertilisers to boost agricultural production has become an essential, yet environmentally challenging, practice. A Century-long dependence on these additives has allowed food production to keep pace with the growth in human population. However, the use of fertilisers across various farming systems is now causing severe ecological stress. The leaching of nitrogen into natural ecosystems, coupled with the release of greenhouse gases, is pushing the Earth’s environmental limits to a critical threshold.

To address this, an ambitious new research initiative aims to shrink the nitrogen footprint of agriculture by developing a breakthrough technology based on nature’s own solutions: a natural process called biological nitrification inhibition (BNI). The Novo Nordisk Foundation has awarded CIMMYT a grant of up to USD 21.1 million to lead an innovation research initiative called CropSustaiN that is designed to reduce the nitrogen footprint of wheat cultivation.

**Dairy Industry**

_Agriculture Ministry Revitalising Dairy Industry_

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining – Jamaica  
June 7, 2024  
[https://www.moa.gov.jm/content/agriculture-ministry-revitalising-dairy-industry](https://www.moa.gov.jm/content/agriculture-ministry-revitalising-dairy-industry)

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining has announced a new programme to revitalise the dairy industry to meet local and international demand for milk and milk products.

Portfolio Minister, Hon. Floyd Green, in his contribution to the 2024/25 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives recently, said that under the Dairy Livestock and Innovation Nutrition Programme, solar-powered cooling systems will be introduced to dairy farmers to improve energy efficiency and reduce the cost of production.

**Coconut Production**

_7000 coconut seedlings for Pomeroon farmers_

Department of Public Information – Guyana  
June 6, 2024  

About 120 Pomeroon farmers from Region Two will improve their coconut production after receiving 3,000 high-yielding Brazilian Green Dwarf seedlings.

This is the first tranche of roughly 7,000 seedlings expected to be distributed to farmers.

This variety is extremely productive, enabling farmers and agro-processors to satisfy the growing demand for coconuts and their by-products locally and regionally.
**Agricultural Education - Robotics**

*Revamp agricultural syllabus with robotics says UWI professor*

Trinidad and Tobago Guardian Newspapers  
June 5, 2024 By Radhica De Silva  

Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of the West Indies Prof Mark Wuddivira believes the Caribbean Examination Council should incorporate lessons on agricultural robotics, precision farming, and biotechnology as it reviews the curriculum for the Agriculture Science syllabus.

In an exclusive interview with Guardian Media, Prof Wuddivira said any move to eliminate the Agricultural Science Double Award from the CXC syllabus will have significant implications for food and nutrition security and sustainable development in the Caribbean.

At a time when global food security remains a pressing concern, Prof Wuddivira said 53 per cent of the Caribbean population remains food insecure.

He said there should be a commitment to fostering the next generation of experts who can develop innovative solutions to ensure sustainable food production. He also called for an agri-food system that was modern, strong, and resilient.

**Citrus Industry**

*Guatemalan Delegation Visits Belize to Study Citrus Industry and Management of Citrus Greening*

Belize. Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise  
June 6, 2024  
[https://www.facebook.com/maf.gov.bz/posts/pfbid02hUjaNd2hLdBxWh5zmLJ2UcvTTT6PZfKACKejc7MLKS8eeFo3BBXLpdnDZuKl](https://www.facebook.com/maf.gov.bz/posts/pfbid02hUjaNd2hLdBxWh5zmLJ2UcvTTT6PZfKACKejc7MLKS8eeFo3BBXLpdnDZuKl)

A delegation from Guatemala is in Belize to gain comprehensive insights into Belize’s citrus industry, from nursery operations and field production to processing facilities. The primary focus of the visit is to understand how Belize has managed citrus greening and to evaluate the performance of new varieties of oranges and grapefruit.

**Heat Tolerant Maize**

*Heat tolerant maize: a solution for climate change-induced 360° water deficits*

CIMMYT  
June 5, 2024  

Millions of smallholders in the Global South depend on maize, largely cultivated under rainfed conditions, for their own food security and livelihoods. Climate change mediated weather extremes, such as heat waves and frequent droughts, pose a major challenge to agricultural production, especially for rainfed crops like maize in the tropics.

“With both effects coming together under heat stress conditions, plants are surrounded, with no relief from the soil or the air,” said Pervez H. Zaidi, maize physiologist with CIMMYT’s Global Maize Program in Asia. “Climate change induced drought and heat stress results in a double-sided water deficit: supply-side drought due to depleted moisture in soils, and demand-side drought with decreased moisture in the surface air.”
Climate Change
Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Systems in the Caribbean
FAO and Canada launch CA$10 million regional project
FAO
June 7, 2024

Farmers and entrepreneurs across eight Caribbean countries stand to benefit from the new CA$10 million Regional Gender-Responsive Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Systems in the Caribbean project which officially launched on June 3 at United Nations House in Barbados. Funded by the Government of Canada, the four-year project (2024-2028) will be implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname. A collaborative effort involving Canada, FAO, and local government and civil society partners, the project will enhance Caribbean farmers’ resilience to climate change and contribute to economic growth in the region.

Mixed Farming Systems
Shattering food, nutrition, and economic security barriers in Bangladesh through mixed farming systems
Rice Today
June 3, 2024 By Sharif Ahmed and Humnath Bhandari

Including mixed farming systems in traditional agricultural systems has potential benefits for farmers, especially for smallholder and marginal farmers. It not only helps farmers diversify from the production of grains to vegetables and the rearing of livestock thus resulting in dietary diversity of the farmers, but also helps increase their net profitability, enhances soil health, and leads to environmental sustainability and improvement in overall biodiversity.

The agricultural sector plays an important role in the overall development of Bangladesh in terms of gross domestic production (GDP) and employment. Most people in the country rely on agriculture for their livelihood directly or indirectly.

Rice, the staple food for Bangladesh, is grown in more than 70% of the total cultivated area with monocropping as the dominant crop production system practiced by smallholder farmers.

Events
JUNE - NOVEMBER 2024
IICA launches a free virtual course on agri-food systems to strengthen capacities and drive their transformation in the Americas
IICA
June 3 to November 30, 2024

The training is directed at decision-makers in the ministries of agriculture and other public institutions in the region, technical experts from agri-food companies and organizations in the agricultural, economic, social, and environmental sectors, technology centers and platforms, as well as researchers, academics, and undergraduate and graduate students.
The course is self-managed, lasts a total of 20 hours, and consists of three learning modules: the functioning of agri-food systems; challenges and foundations for their transformation; and pillars for achieving this transformation.

The course will be available in Spanish from 3 June to 30 November 2024, on the web platform of the Leadership School for the Transformation of Agri-Food Systems of the Americas (ELTSA): https://eltsa.iica.int/.

**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