Evaluating tolerance to Black Sigatoka

Black Sigatoka Disease (BSD) is one of the dreaded diseases affecting the already challenged banana industry in the Region. Since its discovery in the Region, in the early 1990s this fungal borne disease has gravely affected exports from some of the major banana producing countries. CARDI is collaborating with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) to implement a 3 year project entitled “Development of an Integrated Disease Management Programme for Black Sigatoka Disease in Guyana, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia”. The only effective control course of action is to use varieties of banana and plantain which have proved to resist or tolerate the disease. A number of these have been developed by FHIA in Honduras and germplasm from eight of these FHIA accessions have been supplied to CARDI by Biodiversity International. In August 2014, CARDI and the Banana Unit in St Vincent and the Grenadines selected approximately half an acre of land on the farm of Denzil Bacchus in Montreal Gardens; for evaluating the tolerance of selected FHIA varieties to BSD. Land preparation took place in September and the crop was planted in mid-October. Since establishment the project has maintained a strict fertilisation and weed control programme. Data collection has begun and will continue for the duration of the 3 year project.

Update on INEA’s taro breeding project in the Caribbean

CARDI Country Representative and Project Manager for the International Network for Edible Aroids (INEA) Dr. Greg Robin attended the 3rd Annual Meeting for the Network from February 4-6 in Santo, Vanuatu. At the meeting Dr. Robin presented a status report on the project “Adapting clonally propagated crops to climatic and commercial change” that is currently being implemented by CARDI in St Vincent and the Grenadines and St Lucia. The project is seeking to broaden the narrow genetic base of taro (dasheen), a major export crop, so that it can adapt to the changing climatic conditions. Also varieties are being developed that have outstanding agronomic, yield and nutritional potential. To date CARDI has micro propagated 50 elite Taro genotypes it has obtained from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) at the Tissue Culture Laboratory in Orange Hill, St Vincent. These have been morphologically characterised and planted in different agro ecological zones across the island. Genotypes were then selected based on the priority characteristics of weight, shape, number of suckers and taste. Results have indicated that two of the introduced genotypes have consistently satisfied the good eating quality and overall marketability criteria. It also showed that both these genotypes performed best in higher rainfall zones. In 2015 the evaluations will continue by crossing these two genotypes. The genotypes are also being evaluated for drought tolerance: this is ongoing over several different seasons. This project is part funded by the European Union (EU) with technical coordination being provided by CIRAD.
CARDI participates at the Cayman Islands Agricultural Show

The Cayman Islands Agricultural Society in association with the Department of Agriculture hosted their 48th Annual Agricultural Show on 18 February 2015 at the Stacey Walter Pavilion in Lower Valley, Bodden Town. The show touted as a family event aims to promote a greater interest in farming. It offers subsistence and commercial farmers an opportunity to display and sell their products. It also features kid friendly activities, local arts and craft and culinary competitions. This is the fifth year running that CARDI has participated in the show. CARDI’s participation was extra special this year as the Institute is set to commence its work programme on the islands in 2015. The CARDI representatives Ansari Hosein and Joan Petersen used the opportunity to highlight CARDI’s achievements and some potential areas, that CARDI and Department of Agriculture have identified as priority. The Cayman Islands is keen to develop its agricultural sector as it will contribute significantly to food and nutrition security and agro tourism. “Through our science and technologies we are able to generate farmer friendly technologies and user friendly technologies to enhance agricultural production and productivity for the farming community, across the Region and we hope to bring the same level of success to the Cayman Islands” said Ansari Hosein.

Corn Futures January 2015 >>>

Corn future prices maintained a higher price in the first two weeks of January before declining sharply. The lowest price was recorded at the end of January.

Training Course >>>

International Fertilizer Development Center
International Training and Study Tour on Technology Advances in Agricultural Production, Water and Nutrient Management

Venue: USA (Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee and Washington, D.C.)
Dates: August 24 – September 4, 2015
For more information:

Upcoming Events >>>

Barbados Agrofest 2015
28 February – 1 March 2015, Queen’s Park, St. Michael
http://www.basonevoice.org/

Global Forum for Innovations in Agriculture
9-10 March 2015, Abu Dhabi
http://www.innovationsinagriculture.com/

3rd Global Science Conference “Climate Smart Agriculture”
15 – 17 March 2015, Le Corum, Montpellier, France

World Water Day
(Theme: Water and sustainable development)
22 March 2015
http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday

Conference: New pathways to strengthen resilience and underpin sustainable development in the Caribbean
30 April – 1 May, 2015, UWI Campus, St. Augustine

51st Annual CFCS Meeting
19 -25 July 2015, Paramaribo, Suriname
http://cfcs.eea.uprm.edu/article/join-us-51st-cfcs-annual-meeting-suriname

World Congress on Root and Tuber Crops
5 -10 October, 2015, Nanning, Guangxi, China

CARDI Bi-Weekly

The CARDI Bi-weekly is a fortnightly electronic publication, published on the 15th and 30th of each month. The aim is to keep you informed of the latest news, publications, upcoming events on CARDI and our partners. We encourage you to contribute to the CARDI Bi-weekly by sending relevant information that can be included in the upcoming issues to Denise Besai.

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