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The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture is a specialized agency of the Inter-American System that encourages and supports the efforts of its Member States to achieve agricultural development and well-being for rural populations.

This quarterly publication highlights activities coordinated by the Jamaica office.



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Workers inside the Hounslow Post Harvest and Packaging Facility trim fresh vegetables supplied by local farmers from the St. Elizabeth cluster. The vegetables will be shredded then packaged for sale.

Hounslow Post Harvest Plant Up and Running

The Hounslow Post Harvest and Packaging facility in the St. Elizabeth cluster of the IJAP project was officially handed over to the Government of Jamaica on July 8, 2011.

Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Honourable Bruce Golding was on hand to receive the building from the Canadian International Development Agency, (CIDA) the major funding agency for the project. He was also presented with a sample of the Grace Fresh n' Ready brand of packaged vegetables now being processed at the plant.

The new 8000 plus sq ft facility was constructed by the Improving Jamaica's Agricultural Productivity (IJAP) project, a partnership of the Government, IICA and CIDA.

The facility forms part of a strategic effort to provide increased post harvest management and processing facilities, as well as, guaranteed markets for the growing number of greenhouse and open field farmers who have been organized in farming clusters.

The opening of the facility comes at an opportune time given the recurring incidence of glut in the domestic market of several fresh vegetables.

Through contractual agreements with operators Grace Foods Ltd., the farmers in the St. Elizabeth cluster have a long standing agreement for a

guaranteed market for their produce.

Grace Foods, a subsidiary of the Grace Kennedy Ltd. was awarded a 15 year lease of the facility late last year. They have invested some \$43 million in equipping the plant and have rolled out the 'Fresh n' Ready' brand of a range of pre



A variety of vegetables are now minimally processed, packaged and marketed from Hounslow.

shredded vegetables (including carrots, sweet peppers, callaloo, cabbage and a stir fry mix) that are already in several supermarkets.

Prime Minister Bruce Golding appealed for more private public sector partnerships to strengthen the agriculture sector.

Continued Support for New Minister of Agriculture

Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Bruce Golding, announced on June 28 that effective July 1, 2011 the new Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries will be the Hon. Robert Montague.

Minister Montague was formerly Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, with responsibility for Local Government. Minister Montague is also the Member of Parliament for the constituency of Western St. Mary.

The Representative and staff of the Office for the Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture here in Jamaica wish to extend a very warm IICA welcome to Minister Montague in his new portfolio.

Minister Montague is a trained agriculturalist having received his B.Sc. degree training in the area of agronomy and is a very successful farmer in the parish of St. Mary. He comes to the Ministry with relevant credentials to take on the responsibilities. As the Hon. Prime Minister has said, "... that (decision) was not an error in judgment".

IICA pledges the continued support it agreed to undertake with the national authorities. These activities are in support of the Member States' pursuit of a competitive, sustainable and environmentally sound agriculture sector. We want to as-



IICA Representative in Jamaica Trevor Murray and the newly appointed Minister of Agriculture Hon. Robert Montague.

sure Minister Montague that these support efforts will be vigorously pursued as he seeks to develop on the work, which we started with his predecessor Minister Christopher Tufton.

We take this opportunity to offer Minister Tufton our sincere best wishes in his new endeavors as he takes up his responsibilities as the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce. We thoroughly enjoyed working with and supporting Minister Tufton and we know that he will continue with the vision, enthusiasm and energy that he so aptly demonstrated while he was at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

This IICA office was established in August 1975 and over the last 35 years has provided much needed technical support to the Government and people of Jamaica in the developmental efforts in the agriculture sector and by extension, the economy of Jamaica.

Construction is in progress at the Christiana Pack House in Manchester to retrofit two of six bays and add an administrative block for offices.



Major Upgrade for Second Post Harvest Facility

Construction is in progress at the Christiana Post Harvest and Packaging Facility located in Coleyville, Manchester to restore two of six bays within the facility for sorting, grading and post harvest management.

Ground was broken in April 2011, by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dr. the Hon Christopher Tufton, the Member of Parliament for Manchester North East and Minister of Finance Hon. Audley Shaw and Canada's High Commissioner to Jamaica, His Excellency Stephen Hallihan.

The two bays for rehabilitation will be retrofitted with cooling rooms and ambient storage. A new administrative block inclusive of offices and other staff facilities will be constructed.

When completed the facility will be operated by a joint partnership between Christiana Potato Growers Cooperative and Christiana Pride Limited.

The facility is being modernized to provide guaranteed market through contractual agreements for greenhouse and open field farmers in the Manchester cluster of the IJAP project. It is the second of two such facilities to be rehabilitated by the IJAP project.

The upgrading of the post harvest facilities is intended to help minimise the high incidence of post harvest loss by providing a steady market for produce and by offering some degree of agro-processing.

Proposed Glut Management Strategy

The Government of Jamaica has sought IICA's assistance to develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce the incidence of glut of fresh produce in the domestic market.

In April, Hemispheric Specialist in Agribusiness (Caribbean) Robert Reid visited the island to consult with the local IICA team and representatives of the Agriculture Ministry as well as other agencies who could play a key role in mitigating the problem.

Resulting from those consultations, Reid has recommended a Glut Management Strategy and System that calls for "undertaking actions that will provide the Agriculture Ministry with: (a) a very detailed elaboration of the structure and functioning of specified commodity system, the major chain operators and complexities of their operations, and the immediate environments in which they exist; and (b) mapping critical features of commodity production zones."

According to Reid, this will allow for "the identification of commodity-specific problems, constraints and needs, as well as clarify the supportive/related short-term policy, institutional, infrastructural, financial and capacity building interventions required."

The success of this approach lies in deliberate inter agency collaboration. It was recommended that an inter-projects committee be established to facilitate the synergizing of these activities.

MOAF reports that approximately \$5 million is incurred annually in post harvest losses. Since the start of 2011 the Agriculture Ministry through RADA has introduced and hosted several farmers markets island-wide to provide farmers additional markets for their excess produce items as an interim measure.

Based on anecdotal evidence, the crops most prone to glut in the domestic market are: tomato, cabbage, sweet pepper, pumpkin, white and sweet potatoes.

In May, another team of IICA specialists, Joaquin Arias Segura and Diana Francis met with executives of the MOAF to provide support to the MOAF to identify policy options in support of the domestic agriculture sector and their implications/impacts for the country in respect to its World Trade Organization obligations. Since that meeting and as a starting point, the IICA team has submitted to the MOAF a checklist of policy options available to the government with preliminary analysis of their implications for the country within the a framework of the WTO obligations and the problems the agriculture sector faces in the short and long run.



BBV Among Top Winners at Caribbean Awards

The Buff Bay Valley Agro-tourism project was in June awarded second place in the Contest for Rural Innovative Projects.

The competition was organized by Caribbean Regional Unit for Technical Assistance (CARUTA), which is housed in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Barbados.

The Pomeroun Women's Agro Processors Association (PWAPA) from Guyana placed first.

PWAPA processes a range of value-added products.

Other short listed projects included: the Network of Rural Women Producers of Trinidad and Tobago Mango Festival initiative; Barbados Youth Action Programme, which targets at-risk youth; and research in the use of seaweeds as organic pesticide by the Department of Life Sciences, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.

The BBV walked away with US\$4000 for placing second. Shauna Brandon, Rural Development Specialist at IICA Jamaica, said the funds will assist the BBV with its continuous programme of readiness to receive visitors. "We have already identified a few projects such as the upgrading of the kitchen to health compliance standards, providing water supply back-up and awnings to shade the pavilion," Ms. Brandon indicated.



Top row. L-R: Mr. Jayaraj Jayaraman, UWI St. Augustine; Shauna Brandon, Rural Development Specialist IICA Jamaica; Mr. Alfred "Lumumba" Batson, Chairman, Barbados Youth Action Programme (BYAP); Mr. Nicha Byron, young member BYAP; Mr. Emanuel Beryllia, General Secretary BYAP
Bottom row. L-R: Mrs. Gia Gasparad-Taylor, President, Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago; Ms. Vilma DeSilva, member and past chairperson Pomeroun Women's Agro Processors Association (PWAPA); Ms. Rosamund Benn, Chairperson, PWAPA

New Techniques For Greenhouse Farmers

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture facilitated a three day workshop with greenhouse growers and extension officers of the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) during the period May 31 to June 2, 2011 at the Eltham Training Centre. Farmers received training in Crop Fertility and Management under a Protected Environment. With assistance from Partners of America, three Specialists; Doctors Wallace Phill, Ian McCann and Thomas Evans provided the training.

The twenty seven persons who participated in the training had high praises for the information and new techniques demonstrated by the Specialists in conducting the practice of crop care and management under protected agriculture.

In addition to the class room type lecture sessions, farmers had a field day where they were further exposed to real life scenarios and simulation mitigation strategies to properly manage crops under greenhouse conditions.



Dr. Thomas Evans (3rd from right) Plant Pathologist assists farmers in identifying pests and diseases on sweet pepper plants.



Participants examine sweet peppers growing in a greenhouse during a field trip.

The IICA Jamaica office is committed to assisting capacity building of the local greenhouse farmers and in early May facilitated a week long fact finding mission of seven representatives of the Jamaica Greenhouse Growers' Association to the Dominican Republic. There the farmers were exposed to protected agriculture technology on a much larger scale and had the opportunity to examine the various operational and marketing practices implemented and the type of structures that have facilitated the exponential growth of the sector in the DR over the past seven years.

Low Incidence of AFB

A much less than expected incidence of the American Foulbrood disease is what inspectors have found, having completed the first phase of the all island AFB inspection.

After combing through five parishes, preliminary reports are that far fewer apiaries show any evidence of the American Foulbrood disease.

The Apiculture project reports that of the parishes so far covered, Hanover seems to be the parish most affected by the AFB.

"What we have found is that there are several new apiaries that are unregistered and this exercise has allowed for updating the national registry of apiaries," said Shauna Brandon Rural Development Specialist at IICA Jamaica.

The AFB disease is considered among the most lethal brood diseases affecting apiaries with its propensity to destroy entire apiaries if left unattended. The Apiculture project launched an all-island inspection in March 2011 with the intention of eradicating the disease through inspection and upon detection, destruction of infected hives and equipment.

The second AFB inspection phase is in progress and will cover St. James and St. Ann. The inspec-



Inspectors comb through frames for evidence of the American Foulbrood Disease.

tion of St. Catherine and Manchester will continue from Phase one. Additional teams of inspectors have been added to expedite the process.

The capacity building of bee farmers in the six former banana producing parishes of St. James, Clarendon, St. Catherine, St. Thomas, Portland and St. Mary began with Business Training. A total of 112 beekeepers participated in two workshop modules on Business Management and Business Development in a total of 12 workshops (two per parish).

This component of the project is intended to strengthen the business management capabilities of the beekeepers towards increasing efficiencies, productivity and marketing skills for their apiary business.

2011 Awardees

YOUTH IN AGRI-BUSINESS

Large -scale category



❶ **RODGER RAMPASSARD** - Tom's Hope, Portland 26 yrs.

Rodger manages a seven acre banana farm, producing approximately 78,000 lbs of the fruit per year, as well as a 600 bird poultry unit. Both operations exemplify adherence to good agricultural practices. Rodger ensures that his farming operations are well maintained and is able to consistently market to local green grocers, schools and community members. He has also demonstrated long term vision through the recent propagation of five acres of lumber crop.



❷ **KERVIN RILEY** - Tale District, Clarendon 31 yrs.

Kervin has been a yam farmer almost all his life. He currently produces approximately five acres of yam alongside one acre of dasheen. Energetic and hard-working, Kervin is able to produce and market 10,000 lbs of yam and 12,000 lbs of dasheen per year. Kervin will this year complete his A.Sc. Degree in General Agriculture at the College of Agriculture Science and Education (CASE).



❸ **MILTON HEPBURN**- John Reid District, St. Ann 29 yrs.

Milton operates eight greenhouses with a combined area of 22,000 sq feet. He has built seven of the eight greenhouses utilizing low, but appropriate technology in the construction. The greenhouses have the capacity to produce 56,000 lbs of sweet pepper. Milton has transitioned from a part-time farmer to full-time over the past four years.

Small -scale category



❹ **LYNDELL GOODEN**- Water Wheel, Westmoreland 23 yrs.

Lyndell operates a 45 ft x 15 ft nursery that has the capacity to produce 16,000 seedlings. His nursery is irrigated by overhead misters that are connected to a rainwater harvesting system. Lyndell takes a proactive approach to marketing seedlings through the distribution of fliers at farm stores and agricultural offices. He is currently enrolled in an A.Sc. Degree programme in Agricultural Technology at the Montego Bay Community College.



❺ **OTTIS DILLION**- Waltham Park, Kingston 28 yrs.

Ottis is an entrepreneur with a vision to find greater use for local produce. He manages a small agro-processing enterprise that produces peanut powder, cinnamon powder, asham, mixed spices and herbs. The packaged products are sold to wholesales, bakeries, restaurants, pastry shops and individuals. Ottis, who is currently enrolled at the University of Technology, is undertaking research into new products.

ABOUT THE YIAB AWARDS

The 2011 Youth in Agribusiness Awards were selected from a pool of 18 nominees submitted by a number of agricultural institutions including: the Jamaica 4-H Clubs, Rural Agricultural Development Authority, Jamaica Agricultural Society and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The nominees were shortlisted to determine the top ten before the final winners were selected.

A judging panel drawn from several agricultural institutions visited the farms of the shortlisted candidates to inspect their facilities and operations and interview the shortlisted candidates.

Nominees are judged for their contribution to the sector especially as it concerns enhancing food security, employment generation and /or the development of new markets.

Eligible candidates are within the 17-34 age group who demonstrate excellence in the following areas:

1. Innovation
2. Contribution to employment
3. Knowledge of their industry
4. Potential for developing new markets

The presentation of the awards will be held during the Youth Day Celebrations at the Denbigh Agricultural, Industrial and Food show in Clarendon on July 30.

The YIAB awards were established in 1999 by the IICA Jamaica office in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture to promote entrepreneurship, innovation and employment among youth engaged in agriculture.

Congratulations

The IICA Jamaica office congratulates Tresha Shanece Samuels of William Knibb High School and Ke Vaughn Bernado Bonner of Knox Community College who are the recipients of a full four year scholarship to pursue licenciatura degrees in Agricultural Science at Earth University in Costa Rica.

Ke Vaughn Bonner is also a 2009 recipient of the IICA Youth in Agribusiness Awards. Both students are expected to be in Costa Rica later this year to begin Spanish immersion classes. The scholarships will be funded by the Chris Blackwell Island Outpost organization.