

Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA)

Runaway Bay, Jamaica – October 8, 2007 - “Given the symbiotic relationship between the tourism and agricultural sectors, the burgeoning expansion in hotel accommodation and visitor arrivals throughout the region, has the potential to open up lucrative market opportunities for our primary producers,” Dr. the Honorable Christopher Tufton, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Jamaica said as he spoke during the IICA – OAS Agro-tourism Workshop at the 7th Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA).

In his address, Minister Tufton stressed the importance of strategic partnerships between the two sectors in working towards agricultural and rural development in the Hemisphere by focusing on adding value to traditional agricultural pursuits to support economic progress. According to the Minister, increasing production through new technologies is not enough. It is critical to provide all the allied services such as packaging, sorting and cold storage facilities so that farmers have an outlet for their produce. In addition, new technologies such as a green house technology, hydroponics and tissue cultures are critically important to increase productivity and market access.

Also high on today's agenda was the twenty third Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) on Agriculture. Key topics discussed among participants included the Summary report of the Member States' actions with respect to the Jagdeo Initiative (JI) 'Strengthening Agriculture for Sustainable Growth and Development' and Bio-Energy.

During the week, regional Ministers of Agriculture, government officials, representatives from the private sector and other stakeholders will have an opportunity to interact and continue dialogue on how best to address competitiveness in the face of the challenges of globalization. The theme for CWA 2007 is “Agriculture – Harvesting Wealth Through Tourism.”



The conference, which is intended to serve as a facility for increasing the prominence of agriculture and rural life, begins today at the Gran Bahia – Principe Hotel and ends on Saturday, October 13. It is sponsored by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), FAO, CARICOM, CTA, CARDI and hosted by the Government of Jamaica