



Annual Report **2008**

# Saint Lucia

IICA's Contribution to  
the Development of Agriculture  
and Rural Communities

**ANNUAL REPORT 2008**

**IICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO AGRICULTURE AND  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RURAL  
COMMUNITIES IN SAINT LUCIA**



*In Memory of  
Hector Munoz*

**OFFICE IN SAINT LUCIA**

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## Forward



Throughout the 25 years of operation in Saint Lucia, IICA has worked with the Government and People to enhance prosperity in the rural communities and so in this 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of our Annual Report, we once again set out to highlight some of the work and partnership activities we engaged in during 2008. In doing so, we are acutely aware that the interventions and strategies we have crafted and employed over the years have met with varying levels of success. It is with this realization that we have continuously re-examined our role in the agriculture development process and modified our strategies and actions to ensure that we remain relevant to our many and varied stakeholders.

As an international development institution, financed with resources from our Member States, IICA is limited in its financial capacity to respond to and support all who place demands at our doors. So, in 2008, we actively increased our efforts to collaborate with partner institutions to ensure greater impact and sustainability of our programmes. We take this opportunity to thank all those institutions who continue to respond to our call for partnership in the process of development and look forward to working not harder but smarter with you in 2009.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the small but committed staff of the Office in Saint Lucia and throughout the ECS Representation, other stakeholders in agriculture and related sectors without whose willing cooperation it would not be possible to account in this way.

Finally, I wish to use this additional medium to congratulate the Government and People of Saint Lucia as they prepare to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence. We thank you for giving us at IICA the opportunity to serve you for the past 25 years and look forward to serving you in the future.

Una May Gordon  
Representative in the ECS

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

Historically, domestic food prices have not been tightly linked to international food or energy prices but, in 2008, the rising fuel prices saw food prices in Saint Lucia being driven by rising energy prices on the world market. Recognizing the possible threats to food security, increasingly the issue and the uncertainty regarding future food supply in Saint Lucia were being debated.

Ambitious plans were made to reposition the agriculture sector in 2007. However, in 2008, the challenges to the sector remained high and were severely compounded by the rising fuel prices which resulted in skyrocketing input costs, with parallel increases in basic food prices. In 2008 also the U.S. economic contraction in the fourth quarter was deeper than first estimated, with current reports signaling little prospect of relief until at least the middle of 2009. This we believe will have a significant impact on Government's ability to plan and position the critical economic sectors of agriculture, tourism and manufacturing.

For agriculture, the unexpected developments in 2008 hindered clear focus to be placed on a sustainable planning process and the streamlining of actions towards a strategy for long term development in the sector. Short term solutions had to be found and employed to help cushion the effect on investments and support actions to immediately increase the supply of food.

In 2008, the Office completed the requested Institutional review of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries (MALFF) and presented to the Cabinet of Ministers a set of recommendations with an action plan for implementation for 2008. The Office in Saint Lucia stands ready to continue its assistance to the MALFF in the implementation of the recommendations and actions.

Notwithstanding the challenges of 2008 and throughout the 25 years of our operation, IICA has worked with the Government and People of Saint Lucia to enhance prosperity in the rural communities. The interventions and strategies that we have employed over the years have met with varying levels of success which meant that we have had to continuously re-examine our role in the agriculture development process, modify our strategies and actions to ensure that we remain relevant to our many and varied stakeholders.

We continued to adopt a participatory approach to our interventions and also sought out new partnerships in an effort to decrease overlap and increase impact and efficiency in the systems of production.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of our Annual Report we set out to highlight some of the work and partnership activities we undertook in 2008. Throughout the 25 years, IICA Saint Lucia has worked with the Government and People of Saint Lucia to enhance prosperity in the rural communities. The interventions and strategies that we have employed over the years have met with varying levels of success which meant that we have had to continuously re-examine our role in the agriculture development process and modify our strategies and actions to ensure that we remain relevant to our many and varied stakeholders.

Through a national agriculture symposium convened with the MALFF, stakeholders in the agriculture and related sectors increased their understanding of the challenges facing the MALFF and its capacity or lack thereof to advance development of the sector. The report on the "*Institutional Review of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries*" was presented to the Cabinet of Ministers who endorsed the report and urged the MALFF to move towards implementing the recommendations.

Stakeholders' understanding of the provisions of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), the process of its negotiation, its potential impact on the development and sustainability of the agriculture sector was enhanced through presentations delivered by two experts. These two experts, one regional and one national, participated actively in the EPA negotiations on behalf of the Eastern Caribbean States (ECS) Countries.

Following broad consultation across the ECS, the Inter-Agency agenda was strengthened with the formal signing of the Consortium Agreement and the launch of the activities to develop an Information Observatory. Eleven (11) agencies, whose work impact on agriculture development in the ECS signed the Agreement.

In collaboration with the Regional Policy and Trade Negotiation Specialist, entrepreneurs from across the region were supported to expand their dialogue on entrepreneurship in the first of a three part workshop series, aimed at building entrepreneurship in agriculture in the Caribbean region.

At the individual level, two (2) women entrepreneurs' income streams were strengthened and their capacity to diversify their product range was increased, through direct injection of capital coupled with technical and managerial support.

At the group level, thirty-nine (39) women from the rural community of Babonneau were assisted to build their capacity and enhance their creative and marketing skills,

to add value to fresh fruits and vegetables, through a series of workshops on preservation and processing of fruits and vegetables.

Saint Lucia's capacity to modernize its Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) mechanism was strengthened through the development and implementation of a study of the National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems (NAHFSS) and the making of recommendations for improving same.

The capability to provide safe food to consumers was also strengthened through the re-appointment of the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board and its representation at the meeting of the Coordinating Group of Pesticides Control Boards of the Caribbean held in Belize.

The capacity of the stakeholders in the banana industry to identify Moko and Black Sigatoka diseases was strengthened, through participation and presentation at training workshops to initiate the survey for the presence of the diseases in Saint Lucia.

Throughout the year, the focus has been to consolidate the achievements of national initiatives related to enhancing the participation of Youth and Women in agriculture development.

In 2008, membership of the St Lucia Agriculture Forum for Youth (SLAFY) increased and governance was strengthened with the holding of constitutional elections and the installation of a new executive committee.

Coordination and cooperation within the St Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers (SLNRWP) were strengthened through a series of meetings held in various communities across the island. The formation of a number of active clusters has increased the membership of the group to approximately 90.

The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) Project continued to increase the income earning capacity of approximately 38 women and 35 youth, through the provision of seedlings, fertilizer, agro chemicals and small farm equipment.

The effort to introduce and incorporate low cost technology into the agriculture sector was advanced, through a smart partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Bank of Saint Lucia (BOSL). The partnership coordinated and financed a mission to Costa Rica for ten (10) persons including farmers, executives of the Pig Farmers Cooperative and Officers of the MALFF to be trained in the construction and installation of biogas digesters.

### **3. THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE IN SAINT LUCIA IN 2008**

#### **a. The context for agriculture and rural life**

The carry over effect of Hurricane Dean coupled with the high petroleum prices continued to have significant negative impact on the economic and social development of Saint Lucia. There was significant downturn in tourism arrivals and the impact of the loss of preferential treatment for bananas is being felt throughout the rural communities.

Knowingly the agriculture sector is characterized by many small holdings/farmers who continue to struggle to keep up with the new trends on the market. The high petroleum prices sent input cost skyrocketing and producers were faced with an ongoing dilemma. Inadequate quality and quantity of labour and input resulted in missed application cycles and low production and productivity levels. Plagued also with high transaction cost and low bargaining power, the farmers found themselves at a disadvantage and there is now some evidence of disillusionment.

Under the Special Framework of Assistance (SFA), the European Commission has allocated millions of Euros targeting development in the agriculture sector. The SFA programme promotes the development of an efficient, fully commercialised banana industry that is able to compete in a liberalised world market on a sustainable and competitive basis, as well as promoting growth in non-banana agriculture, economic diversification and to provide social support for retired farmers and farm workers.

The ten year strategy for the implementation of the SFA aims to develop a more competitive agricultural sector, including the maintenance of the banana industry while emphasising the need to diversify rural income generation and the provision of social recovery for displaced farmers. The strategy is being implemented within the context of national, sub-regional and international policy frameworks in coordination with existing development programmes.

The global realities require the Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems to operate with an extended international vision and broader mandate. The traditional agricultural health services of the MALFF must forge stronger alliances and integration with the Ministries of Health, Trade and Consumer Affairs adopting a systems approach linking the producers, agribusiness operators and the food industry.



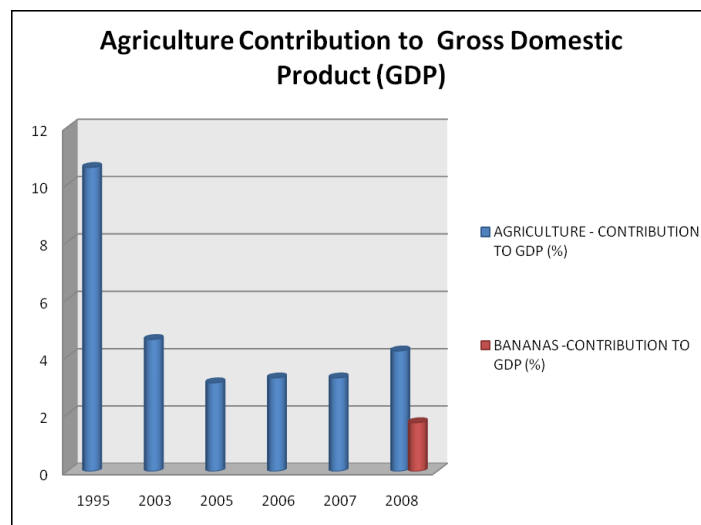
Currently in Saint Lucia, a number of public sector agencies have implemented collaborative activities on specific initiatives identified by an individual agency and as the need arose. The objectives of such collaboration have been mainly to optimize use of resources. Notwithstanding, there remains duplication of efforts and overlapping of functions. There is also the lack of coordination and the efforts of individual agencies do not always have the desired impact on the system and so are not always recognized. There is also the lack of capacity within particular agencies to meet the requirements of a desired service.

The National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Standards Committee (NAHFSC) has not undertaken the required coordination to ensure the presence of an Agricultural Health and Food Safety System. The required interaction with the private sector is also limited. Recognizing the deficiencies and the need for structure and coordination, the MALFF commissioned a study of the situation complete with recommendations for the development of a suitable coordinating mechanism.

With increasing public concern for environmental and public health issues, the importance of a chemical regulatory system continues to be recognized, albeit only for the importation of chemicals. There is still the need for monitoring the use of these chemicals after they have been permitted entry. There are increased investments in food safety and quality as a result of public influence.

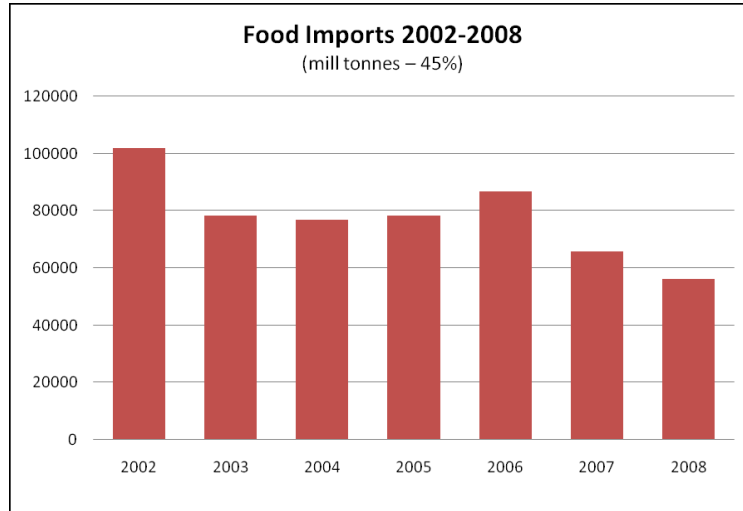
## **b. Changes in agri-food production**

Banana continued to be the major contributor to agriculture Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as indicated in the graph below, but the global situation coupled with the erosion of preferential treatment meant that greater effort at diversification was needed throughout the sector.

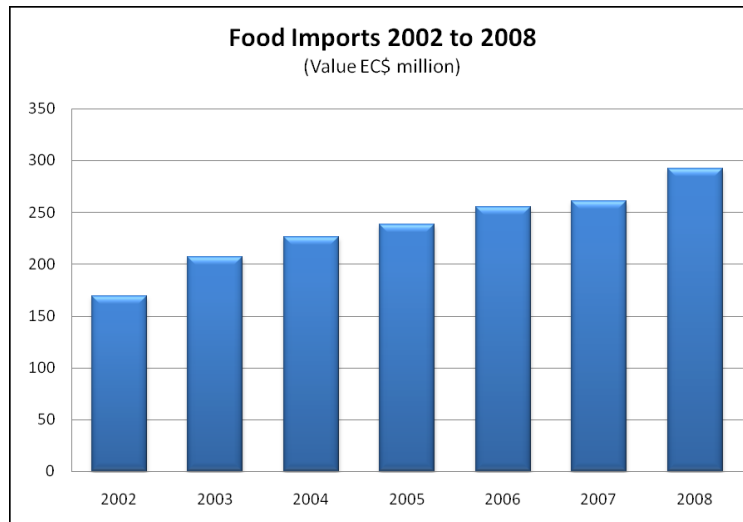


Source: MALFF

The MALFF increased activity to streamline production and advanced implementation of their Green House Vegetable Production Project. Throughout the year selected farmers were targeted and focus was placed on 22 major crops in both green house and open field production. However, while there was a noticeable reduction in the volume of food import primarily as a result of these efforts, the cost of food increased significantly as shown in the graphs below.



**Source: MALFF**



**Source: MALFF**

While the efforts at diversification continued, there was noticeable lack of attention to the scheduling of production often resulting in demand being at variance with

supply of some major crops. Most noticeable was the evident glut of tomatoes on the market and early in the year prices ranged from EC\$2.00 to EC\$3.00 per five pounds. In the latter part of the year, supplies disappeared and prices rose in some retail outlets to approximately EC\$8.00 per pound by the end of November.

In December, the MALFF imported sixty (60) pigs from Canada as part of efforts to expand the livestock subsector. After the requisite quarantine period, the animals became part of the upgraded national breeding programme to provide adequate breeding stock in anticipation of the proposed meat processing facility to be built in 2009/2010. The facility is expected to be a catalyst for growth and development in the livestock subsector.

### **c. Changes in policies that affect agriculture and rural life**

Recognizing that small countries like Saint Lucia would be the ones hardest hit by the rising food prices the GOSL took the decision to bring relief to the general population. The MALFF convened a multi-sectoral food security committee tasked with articulating a short, medium and long term plan of action to assist with mitigating the negative effects of the rising food prices and possibilities of food shortages. The committee developed a ten point plan which was presented by the Minister for Agriculture, Lands Forestry and Fisheries to the Cabinet of Ministers towards endorsement for implementation.

Late in the year the GOSL/MALFF commissioned a review of the agriculture incentive regime. The result of the review and implementation of recommendations, may lead to reform and the boosting of confidence among stakeholders in the administration of the system.

The Windward Island Banana Developing and Exporting Company (WIBDECO) a major player in the marketing of bananas from Saint Lucia embarked on a programme of diversifying its product base from the Windward Islands, in response to the fallout in the banana regime. The company will seek to use its tremendous strength in banana export to assist the countries to break into the markets for selected non-traditional crops.

### **d. Changes in the institutional framework for agriculture and rural life**

The MALFF, under the 2001 SFA Programme, implemented a pilot project designed to evaluate the operational viability of a rural constabulary in mitigating praedial larceny in the three (3) agricultural regions. It is intended that the findings will be used to ascertain the potential of establishing a permanent rural constabulary. The

Praedial Larceny Pilot Project is expected to curb the high incidence of theft of agricultural produce, as well as deter the persons who encourage such practices.

The Banana Production and Management Unit (BPMU) was established in an effort to drive significant increase in banana quality and production. The Unit replaces the Banana Emergency Recovery Unit (BERU) whose functional life ended in 2008.

A new Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board (PCB) was appointed to replace the old one whose term had expired. These appointments should increase the efficiencies in regulating entry of pesticides into Saint Lucia.

**e. Major developments in the thematic areas that affected the performance of agriculture and rural life**

▪ ***Agricultural Health Food Safety***

Recognizing the deficiencies in the system and the need for structure and coordination, the agencies responsible for Agricultural Health and Food Safety made recommendations and a study was commissioned to:

- i) review the current measures in place for Agricultural Health and Food Safety in Saint Lucia, with a view to identifying the gaps and recommend required improvements;
- ii) evaluate the current arrangements based on trade requirements, ensuring that food safety and exotic disease prevention issues were addressed;
- iii) recommend an achievable and appropriate coordinating mechanism, considering the human and financial limitations.

The study, complete with recommendations was finalized and included assessments of the plant health, animal health and food safety services in Saint Lucia.

▪ **Trade**

Saint Lucia along with its Caribbean neighbours initialed a full EPA with the European Commission in December 2008. The agreement guarantees and extends access for the Caribbean countries export to Europe.

Key points in the Caribbean EPA initialed in December were:

- CARIFORUM liberalized 86.9% of trade with 82.7% within the first 15 years. The Agreement will result in the liberalization of 92% of CARIFORUM-EU trade;
- A general moratorium of three years on all tariff lines except motor vehicles, parts and gasoline that will benefit from a 10 year grace period;
- Award of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) treatment to major trading partner defined as countries garnering 1% and 1.5% of world merchandise exports and services;
- CARIFORUM members in entertainment services will enjoy access without any restrictions to all EU Member States with the exception of Austria and Germany;
- In addition to the Sugar Protocol quotas, a transitional Tariff Rate Quota of 60,000 tonnes split evenly between CARIFORUM System of Preference (SP) members and the Dominican Republic. Shortfalls of any CARIFORUM SP member will be reallocated to another CARIFORUM SP member;
- In services, CARIFORUM More Developed Countries (MDCs) and Lesser Developed Countries (LDCs) have committed 65% and 75% sectoral coverage respectively with a standstill clause and provisions for future liberalization.

The GOSL has been assisting all sectors of the economy to understand the provisions of the EPA and for stakeholders to position themselves to capitalize on the benefits that may accrue or to cushion from the fallout that may arise.

The St Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS) is being supported through the SFA programme towards the development of quality standards and a certification system for major agricultural products.

#### ▪ **Agribusiness**

IICA facilitated and supported Saint Lucia to become a member of the Marketing Information Organization of the Americas (MIOA). This is a cooperation network comprised of government institutions or institutions delegated by government and whose principal functions and aims are the collection, processing, analyzing and dissemination of information relative to markets and agriculture commodities.

There was renewed effort to highlight the role and relevance of promoting the development of agri-businesses, with a view to increasing rural income. To this end, the MALFF has strengthened the Corporate Planning Unit and an Agri-business Unit was added. Centres around the island have been designated for improvement to advance the development of value addition in the sector.

- **Natural Resources and the Environment**

A draft Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Bill, to provide legislation to help Saint Lucia meet its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and to otherwise conserve biodiversity, was drafted. The MALFF is working with the OECS-ESDU under the project Protecting the Eastern Caribbean Biodiversity (PERB), to get regulations for this bill.

Saint Lucia has also completed the drafting of its second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) to assist the country to continue to implement its priority biological conservation need.

The Forestry Department advanced preparation of a New Forest Policy towards enacting Forest Legislation and amend wildlife legislation. A Forest Resources Inventory has also been commissioned. The Forest Strategic Business Plan being developed will articulate clearly how the forest products can be utilized to optimize revenue from private sector/community partnership.

- **Investment and Financing**

The date has been set for the launch and official opening of the Saint Lucia Development Bank. It is hoped that the constraint of access to credit for investment in agriculture will be adequately addressed within the portfolio of the bank.

## Our Current Focus



# Leadership and Accountability





# Support to Institutions



# Partnerships



# Support to Industry



# Education and Training



# Youth Engagement



# Support to Women in Development



# Introducing Technology



# Support to Civil Society Organizations





## **4. RESULTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGENDA IN 2008**

### **a. IICA's Contribution to the repositioning of agriculture and rural life**

In 2008, the Office continued to advance efforts for recognition of the use of the Agro Matrix as a tool that can aid in the policy development and implementation processes. Through a national agriculture symposium convened with the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries Stakeholders in the agriculture and related sectors increased their understanding of the Agro Matrix tool, the challenges facing the MALFF and its capacity or lack thereof to advance the development of the sector.

The broad objectives of the national symposium were to foster national consensus that agriculture was central to sustained development of Saint Lucia, gain greater understanding from stakeholders as to what was required to move the sector forward and solicit genuine commitment on the part of all the partners to get the job done. The redefinition of the policy framework and the reshaping of the MALFF as Government's key instrument for managing the process were also discussed.

Following up on the results of the symposium, the Office continued throughout the year to support the MALFF in its efforts to fine tune the Policy Framework for Agriculture Development and it is hoped that the final draft will be available for stakeholders' review in early 2009.

The institutional review of the MALFF which started in 2007 was completed and presentation of the report on the "***Institutional Review of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries***" was made to the Cabinet of Ministers. Further, the MALFF received endorsement for implementation of the recommendations.

The report was presented separately to the senior staff of the MALFF, and the presentation was penned with a presentation on the use of the result based management framework.

Stakeholders in the sector understanding of the provisions of the EPA, the process of its negotiation and its potential impact on the development and sustainability of the agriculture sector was enhanced through a presentation delivered by two experts. These two experts, one regional and one national, participated actively in the negotiation of the agreement on behalf of the OECS countries. Saint Lucia along with its Caribbean neighbours initialed the full EPA with the European Commission on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

The MALFF endorsed the National Technical Cooperation Agenda (NTCA) and accepted the 2007 Annual Report as IICA's framework for action and accountability in Saint Lucia. The report was presented to the Honorable Minister and other stakeholders in the agriculture and related sectors in the Annual Accountability Seminar held on April 16, 2008.

Efforts continued with the MALFF and the Department of Statistics to finalize the work started to determine the true contribution of agriculture to economic development in Saint Lucia. To date however, the results of such efforts remain disappointing.

The Forum for Young Leaders in Agriculture was held from May 24 to 29 at IICA Headquarters. It was attended by 91 youth from IICA's 34 Member Countries. Three persons (3) from Saint Lucia participated in this ground breaking forum and their networking and leadership skills were significantly enhanced.

For the third year, the Office held its *Issues on the Agenda* open forum and feedback session. This session was initiated in 2006 with the aim of bringing a wide cross section of stakeholders in agriculture and related sectors to discussion in a non-formal setting.

The results of the discussions continued to inform the staff of the Office of the issues of concern to the wider society and also provided meaningful interactions and feedback between the entire staff and the client they serve at all levels.

The 2008 Forum attracted 52 persons and was attended by the Minister for Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries and the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office. The issue on the agenda for 2008 was **The Role of Women in Development**.

The Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) has been taking place under the aegis of The Alliance for Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu in the Caribbean (The Alliance). In 2008, the CWA was held in St Vincent and the Grenadines and, as such, the Office in Saint Lucia became the centre of planning and coordination for executing IICA's action and collaboration in the event. To date, eight (8) CWA have been hosted and 2008 marked the second time that the event was held in the ECS.

#### **b. Promotion of trade and the development of agribusiness**

The focus of the work of the Office in 2008 was on building entrepreneurship and increasing the knowledge capacities of stakeholders in the sector, to pursue a coordinated approach to agribusiness development.

In collaboration with the Regional Policy and Trade Negotiation Specialist, entrepreneurs from across the region were supported to expand their dialogue on entrepreneurship in the first of a three part workshop series aimed at building entrepreneurship in agriculture in the Caribbean region.

At the group level, thirty-nine (39) women from the rural community of Babonneau were assisted to build their capacity and enhance their creative and marketing skills to add value to fresh fruits and vegetables. This was achieved through a series of workshops on the preservation and processing of fruits and vegetables and culminated in a graduation exercise with the presentation of certificates to participants.

At the individual level, two (2) women entrepreneurs' income streams were strengthened and their capacity to diversify their product range increased. The direct injection of capital into their operations coupled with technical, managerial and mentoring support, have empowered the entrepreneurs to seek out new markets for their products.

Throughout the year support continued in development of the pig and pork industries. In July, the Office participated in the successful Annual General Meeting of the St Lucia Pig Farmers Cooperative where the up-to-date (2007) audited financial statements were presented to the membership.

### **c. Strengthening agricultural health and food safety systems**

Saint Lucia's capacity to modernize its Agricultural Health and Food Safety coordinating mechanism was strengthened through the development and implementation of a study of the National Agricultural Health and Food Safety System (NAHFSS) and the making of recommendations for improving same. Further, assessments of the plant health, animal health and food safety services and the Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS) measures were undertaken. The assessment of the SPS measures was undertaken in collaboration with the Directorate of Agricultural Health and Food Safety at IICA Headquarters and through the financial provisions made under the Standard Trade Development Facility (STDF) Project.

The capability to provide safe food to consumers was also strengthened through the re-appointment of the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board and its subsequent representation at the meeting of the Coordinating Group of Pesticides Control Boards of the Caribbean, held in Belize. The Board held three (3) meetings during the year and IICA continued to support its activities.

Efforts at early detection of Black Sigatoka and Moko diseases continued during the year and the capacity of the stakeholders in the banana industry to identify Moko

and Black Sigatoka diseases was strengthened through participation and presentation at training workshops to initiate the survey for the presence of the diseases in Saint Lucia. The survey was conducted and no symptoms of the diseases were observed in the country.

The Office provided support and facilitated the attendance of the country's delegate to the two (2) World Trade Organization/Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (WTO/SPS) meetings held in Geneva. Attendance at these meetings provided the country with the opportunity to articulate its position on the various issues being discussed at the international level.

In an effort to create awareness among stakeholders affected by CODEX norms, standards and guidelines to educate them on the need to actively participate in the process that establishes such norms, standards and guidelines, the Office collaborated with the Units at IICA Headquarters and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to conduct a training workshop on the CODEX Alimentarius standard setting process. The workshop was conducted via internet and participants included representatives from the St Lucia Bureau of Standards, the Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Trade and individual agro-processors.

#### **d. Promoting the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment**

In the ongoing drive to support and strengthen the economic diversification efforts being undertaken by the MALFF, the Office continued to advocate for the sustainable use of non-timber forest products and submitted a project proposal to the contracting authority of the EU SFA 2005. This proposal was for financing for IICA to provide institutional support for Latanye/Maubay Producers in Saint Lucia. The proposal was accepted and the Office received a grant contract from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Economic Planning and National Development to implement the project in 2009.

The main goal of the Project is the conservation of the latanye species by increasing the number of plants produced in *ex situ* conditions, while at the same time ensuring income generation opportunities and the sustainability of livelihoods.

The Institute participated in the review of the New Forest Policy and Forest legislation for Saint Lucia and continued to support the Caribbean Natural Resource Institute (CANARI) in the implementation of the Regional Forest and Livelihood project through participation in the Action Learning Group (ALG) of the project. Two ALG were convened in 2008.

#### **e. Strengthening rural communities based on territorial approach**

The focus has been to consolidate the achievements of national initiatives related to enhancing the participation of youth and women in agriculture development.

Throughout the year, the CFLI Project continued to increase the income earning capacity of approximately 38 women and 35 youth through the provision of seedlings, fertilizer, chemicals and small farm equipment.

The Project was designed to provide support to the rehabilitation/revitalization of non-banana agriculture and agri-businesses in the four (4) most vulnerable communities of Saint Lucia in the aftermath of Hurricane Dean, focusing on women and youth. These communities included Babonneau, Roseau/Anse La Raye, Dennery and Micoud. Two nurseries (North and South) were maintained to provide seedlings to the project beneficiaries. The operators of the nurseries are members of the Youth Forum.

A Project Committee, comprising the MALFF, Saint Lucia Agriculture Forum for Youth (SLAFY), the Saint Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers (SLNRWP) and IICA, was organized to advance the implementation of the project. IICA served as its facilitator and the MALFF, through its Extension Service and Marketing Unit, assisted in the verification and implementation processes.

The selection process was done in conjunction with the Extension Service and the Agriculture Youth Officer of the MALFF. Thirty-eight (38) farmers from the Saint Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers (SLNRWP) and thirty-five (35) farmers from the Saint Lucia Agriculture Forum for Youth (SLAFY) were identified to benefit from this initiative.

A database with beneficiary profiles has been created through information collected from the administration of questionnaires to beneficiaries. The profile makes determination of name, age, sex, land tenure, number of persons employed on the farm, farm acreage, family size, topography, water access, crops grown, total acreage under cultivation, years dedicated to farming, educational background, type of labour available and availability of water for irrigation and support received from the Project.

In 2008, membership of the St Lucia Agriculture Forum for Youth (SLAFY) increased and governance was strengthened with the holding of constitutional elections and the installation of a new Executive Committee.

The Office provided support to SLAFY and RISE to host a two days conference to finalize the proposal for the establishment of a National Youth Service (NYS) in Saint Lucia. The NYS is a programme aimed to develop youth into conscious citizens who can effectively and positively contribute to society. Approximately 200 youth from

secondary schools, youth groups and youth focus organizations attended the conference.

Once again, the Caribbean Agriculture Forum for Youth (CAFY) Executive Secretariat, maintained through the Office in Saint Lucia, assisted with the development of the regional work plan and the implementation of their annual development workshop, held during the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) in St Vincent and the Grenadines. This year the workshop focused on *Strengthening Proactive Leaders in Agriculture* and *Identifying, Planning and Implementing Successful Projects*. Six (6) countries participated with twenty-five (25) persons in attendance. The workshop was facilitated by the Regional Project Specialist.

The constitutional elections of officers were held and a new Regional Executive installed. Saint Lucia was one of the two Vice Presidents elected to serve on the new Executive Council. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines now holds the Presidency.

Coordination and cooperation within the St Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers (SLNRWP) were strengthened through a series of meetings held in various communities across the island. The formation of a number of active clusters has increased the membership of the group to approximately 90.

Throughout the month of November, training workshops in fruit and vegetables preservation and processing were held for 38 women from the Babonneau community and its environs. The activity arose from the need to improve employment generation and income earning capacity of the community and to build sustainability in the ongoing CFLI Vegetable Production Project, being implemented in the community while introducing the basic concepts of value addition and agro-processing techniques.

**f. Introducing technology and innovation for the modernization of agriculture and rural life**

The effort to introduce and incorporate low cost technology into the agriculture sector was advanced, through a smart partnership with the UNDP and the BOSL. The partnership coordinated and financed a mission to Costa Rica for ten (10) persons including farmers, executive of the Pig Farmers Cooperative and officers of the MALFF to be trained in construction and installation of biogas digesters.

Since their return, the farmers have started the transformation on their farms with one unit already installed and plans in place for the installation of an additional six before the end of the first quarter in 2009.

Saturday, 20 DECEMBER, 2008      **FEATURE**      PAGE 25  
The Weekend VOICE

**Agriculture For All - Your Forum**

Ministry Of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries & Forestry.

### ***Saint Lucian Farmers are being Exposed to Low-cost Biogas Technology in Costa Rica***

Seven Farmers and three agricultural officers from the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry & Fisheries in Saint Lucia left the island on Sunday the 14th instant to participate in a one week training Programme in Costa Rica, aimed at enhancing their knowledge in building biogas digesters. The initiative is a joint collaboration between the IICA Office in Saint Lucia, The UNDP office in Barbados and the Bank of Saint Lucia and is in response to a specific request from the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Ezechiel Joseph, to find solutions of low cost technology to aid development and increase productivity in the agriculture sector. The minister spoke eloquently about the role of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) for realizing that all-important training initiative.

IICA representative for St. Lucia and other OECS countries, Una May Gordon, says that the hemispheric body continues to assist developing countries such as St. Lucia in strengthening their agriculture sector through the introduction of low-cost biogas technology.

The Farmers were presented with their packages of support and their airline tickets at a Press Briefing to discuss the background and future of the agricultural initiative on Friday, December 12, 2008. Mr. Emmanuel Haynes and Mr. Andy Lake represented the Bank of Saint Lucia Limited (BOSL), having contributed ECS\$13, 000 to the agricultural initiative.

Another co-sponsor is the Barbados-based UNDP Office, represented by the Programme Manager, Leisa Perch, who expressed UNDP's commitment to poverty reduction and the improvement of the farming community in St. Lucia through building capacity and sustainable agriculture.

During their stay in Costa Rica members of the St. Lucia Team will be supported by officers from IICA regional Headquarters. The St. Lucia team is headed by Horace Walters of the Pig Farmers Association. Other team members are : Joseph Mathurin of Dennerly; Marius Smith of Laborie; Bertheline O'Brian of La Pointe, Mon Repos; Raphael Cornibert of Babonneau; Anna Clercent of Micoud and Francis Hogarth of Desruisseaux. Three agricultural officers are also included on the St. Lucia Team; namely : Laurentina Jocelyn Elie, Pare Francis Melchoir & Quint Unrau Odum. It is expected, that upon their return to the island, the Saint Lucia Team would engage other pig farmers to become familiar with the new technology of biogas digesters.



## 5. RESULTS OF INTER AGENCY COOPERATION

An important part of the mandate of IICA is building partnerships and Inter Agency collaboration. We believe strongly that together we can achieve greater. This philosophy led to contacts and collaboration with a number of our development partners in 2008.

Following broad consultation across the ECS, the Inter Agency agenda was strengthened with the formal signing of the Consortium Agreement and the launch of the activities to develop an Information Observatory. Eleven (11) agencies whose work impact agriculture development in the ECS signed the Agreement.







***IICA/CIRAD:*** Throughout the year IICA and CIRAD continued to lead efforts in advancing the development of the proposal for the establishment of the Information Observatory. CIRAD provided financial resources to IICA to engage professional consulting services to gather primary and secondary data and facilitate the design and preparation of a project proposal to enable the establishment of a network of information observatories in the ECS. This proposal will be further elaborated for presentation to funding agencies in 2009.

***IICA/CIDA/CFLI Partnership:*** The implementation of the rehabilitation programme, though hampered by adverse weather conditions, continued with excellent results being achieved. The programme continued to supply seeds, fertilizer and small equipment to women and youth in agriculture. An extension of the programme into mid 2009 for support to the four (4) targeted communities was granted by CIDA.



***IICA/BIT/EU:*** The Office formed a partnership with the Banana Industry Trust (BIT) and submitted a project proposal to the EU for financing under the SFA 2005. The proposal was accepted and the partnership has been allocated a grant of approximately Euro 2.6 million to support the Banana Commercialization and Agricultural Diversification Programme over 24 months. Implementation will commence in January 2009.



**IICA/CARDI:** IICA and CARDI continue to collaborate to enhance the research and development agenda in Saint Lucia. Through the IICA/CARDI cooperation agreement financing was received for the implementation of three projects.

During the year, the second phase of the coconut water revitalization project which started in 2007 was completed. The objective of the project was to establish 300 acres of dwarf coconuts.

For the period December 2007 to November 2008, 7000 dwarf nuts were sourced from selected farmers for seedling production, 1,690 coconut seedlings were distributed to farmers. A "Coconut Production Guide" was also produced for farmers

New project proposals were developed and submitted for funding under the 2008/2009 cooperation agreement. For Saint Lucia, two (2) projects were approved and implementation commenced in late 2008. Project activities are being conducted on the CARDI field station at La Ressource, Dennery.

The first project, ***Production of Root Crop Planting Material***, is being undertaken with a view to increasing the production of root crops (yams, dasheen, tannia, sweet potato and sweet cassava) for local consumption and export. The project began in September 2008.



The second project, ***Open Air vs. Shade House Vegetable Production Systems***, will seek to evaluate and provide data for decision making on Protected Agriculture ("Green House") against an Open-Air Vegetable Production System. Various crops (cucumber, sweet

pepper, tomato, etc) will be grown and economic analyses conducted at the end of each cropping cycle to compare the two systems during the year. The project began in November 2008.





***IICA/BOSL/UNDP:*** The partnership between the BOSL and the UNDP resulted in the training of seven (7) farmers and three (3) technicians from the MALFF in the construction and operation of low cost biogas digesters in Costa Rica.

Further, the Office and the UNDP deepened its collaboration with the development of a programme aimed at strengthening the Babonneau cluster of the SNRWP through the provision of training and access to credit. The UNDP has made significant financial contribution towards implementation to this programme.



***IICA/FCIB/KCDI:*** The Office collaborated with the First Caribbean International Bank (FCIB) to assist the Keyoy Community Development Institute (KCDI) of Jamaica to convene two (2) stakeholders' consultations including a one day sensitization seminar to introduce their rural farm management training programme to 30 farmers and extension personnel in Saint Lucia.



The farm management training programme is designed to help farmers appreciate the global context within which they operate and empower them with the knowledge and requisite skills to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

***IICA/FAO Partnership:*** The Letter of Agreement (LOA) signed between IICA and FAO in December 2007 was successfully executed throughout 2008.

Six (6) entrepreneurs from the Eastern Caribbean States (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St Kitts/Nevis and St Vincent and the Grenadines) benefited from the project aimed at strengthening and expanding their income stream.





The project provided the necessary technical, financial, managerial and input support to the selected entrepreneurs in each country, to expand/strengthen their businesses.

In Saint Lucia, Studio Kreativity Inc a small business operating since 2002 was the beneficiary. The business manufactures paper by hand from banana pseudostems and leaves. Cotton and linen rag are mixed with shredded paper and the banana fiber to create a variety of paper products which range from stationery, individual sheets of paper, gift bags and tags, wine bags, boxes, jewelry, journals and greeting cards.

In December a two-day workshop was held in Grenada for all beneficiaries from the six (6) countries. They had the opportunity to share their experiences and challenges in the development of their respective agribusinesses.

## **6. RESULTS OF HORIZONTAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

***Support from the Leadership Centre:*** The Centre supported the Office in Saint Lucia in organizing the visit/training for seven (7) farmers and three (3) technicians from the MALFF to Costa Rica to be trained in the construction and operation of low cost biogas technology. The training was conducted by Armonia Natural Farm.

## **7. NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

Looking to the future, it appears reasonable to assume that IICA Saint Lucia and its varied partners will continue to pursue programmes of mutual interest that will redound to the benefit of the rural population.

Strengthening the relationship with the Embassy of Mexico to expand opportunities for training, capacity building and trade will be pursued. The partnership with the UNDP Sub Regional Office for Barbados and the OECS will also be nurtured.

The implementation of the actions under the EU/SFA 2005 Programme also presents opportunities for increasing technical cooperation with other EU partners and programme implementers. The Office will seek to capitalize on this opportunity in 2009.

## 8. MAIN ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY IICA



*National Dialogue on Agriculture  
February 2008  
150 Participants*

*RISE /Youth Consultation  
February 2008  
200 Participants*



*Workshop on Stimulating  
Entrepreneurship in Agriculture  
March 2008  
65 Participants*

*Presentation of the Report  
on the Institutional Review of the  
Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry  
and Fisheries  
March 2008  
18 Participants*





*Presentation of 2007 Annual Report to the Hon Minister for Agriculture, Lands Forestry and Fisheries and Stakeholders  
April 2008  
70 Participants*

*IICA/CIRAD Workshop, Signing of Consortium Agreement and Launch of Information Observatory Project  
May 2008  
60 Participants*



*Workshops for Developing a National Coordinating Mechanisms for Agricultural Health and Food Safety  
July 2008  
27 Participants*

*MALFF National Action and Strategic Plan Consultation  
August 2008  
150 Participants*





*Meeting with the Babonneau Cluster  
of the St Lucia Network of Women  
Producers  
August 2008  
60 Participants*

*Farm Management Training Programme/  
Stakeholders Meeting  
September 2008  
40 Participants*



*Training Workshop and Graduation  
Ceremony of the Babonneau Cluster  
of the St Lucia Network of Rural  
Women Producers  
November 2008  
60 Participants*



## **9. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS**

IICA's Contribution to Agriculture and the Development of the Rural Communities in Saint Lucia (2007, Castries, Saint Lucia). 2007 Annual Report. 38p



## 10. ACRONYMS

AHFS	Agricultural Health and Food Safety
ALG	Action Learning Group
BERU	Banana Emergency Recovery Unit
BIT	Banana Industry Trust
BOSL	Bank of Saint Lucia
BPMU	Banana Production and Management Unit
CAFY	Caribbean Agriculture Forum for Youth
CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resource Institute
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CFLI	Canada Fund for Local Initiatives
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIRAD	International Centre for Cooperation in Agricultural Research and Development
CWA	Caribbean Week of Agriculture
ECS	Eastern Caribbean States
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
ESDU	Environmental and Sustainable Development Unit
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCIB	First Caribbean International Bank
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOSL	Government of Saint Lucia
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
KCDI	Kevo Community Development Institute
LDCs	Lesser Developed Countries
LOA	Letter of Agreement
MALFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries
MDCs	More Developed Countries
MFN	Most Favoured Nation
MIOA	Marketing Information Organization of the Americas

NAHFSC	National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Standards Committee
NAHFSS	National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NYS	National Youth Service
NTCA	National Technical Cooperation Agenda
PERB	Protecting the Eastern Caribbean Biodiversity
PCB	Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board
SLAFY	St Lucia Agriculture Forum for Youth
SLBS	St Lucia Bureau of Standards
SFA	Special Framework of Assistance
SLAFY	St Lucia Agriculture Forum for Youth
SLNRWP	St Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers
SP	System of Preference
SPS	Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary
STDF	Standard Trade development Facility
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WIBDECO	Windward Island Banana Developing and Exporting Company
WTO	World Trade Organization