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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Executive summary.....	2
3.	The state of agriculture and rural life in Dominica in 2007.....	4
3.1	Macro economic conditions	5
3.2	Factors Impacting On Agricultural Performance	6
3.3	Changes in policies on agriculture and rural life Challenges	7
3.4	Agri-food trade and the development of agribusinesses	8
3.5	Agricultural health and food safety	9
3.6	Agricultural innovation, science and technology.....	10
3.7	Land tenure	10
4.	Summary of the implementation of the National Technical Cooperation Agenda during 2007	11
4.1	IICA's contribution to the repositioning of agriculture and rural life ...	11
4.2	Promoting trade and the competitiveness of agribusiness	12
4.3	Strengthening agricultural health and food safety systems	14
4.4	Promoting the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment	15
4.5	Strengthening rural communities.	15
4.6	Introducing technology and innovation for the modernization of agriculture and rural life	17
5.	Results of inter-agency cooperation	19
6.	Future opportunities for technical cooperation	21
Appendix I:		
-	Five most important events organized by the Dominica Office in 2007	22

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IICA's Contribution to the Development of Agriculture and Rural Communities in the Commonwealth of DOMINICA for 2007

□ Introduction

The IICA Office in Dominica completed in 2007 its 23 years of collaboration with Dominica's agricultural sector and rural communities.

In an effort to evaluate the progress made in executing the National Agenda and to report to national authorities, key stakeholders in agriculture and tourism, the private sector and civil society, a national report entitled IICA's Contribution to the Development of Agriculture and Rural Communities in Dominica is presented in the following sections:

- ❖ The state of agriculture and rural life in the Commonwealth of Dominica
- ❖ Results of the implementation of the National Technical Cooperation Agenda in the Commonwealth of Dominica during 2007
 - IICA's contribution to the repositioning of agriculture and rural life.
 - Promoting trade and the competitiveness of agribusiness.
 - Strengthening agricultural health and food safety systems
 - Promoting the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment
 - Strengthening rural communities
 - Introducing technology and innovation for the modernization of agriculture and rural life.
- ❖ Inter-Agency Cooperation
- ❖ New opportunities for technical cooperation
- ❖ Main activities organized by IICA

The IICA Office in the Commonwealth of Dominica accomplished another successful year of collaboration with the public institutions and private institutions within the agricultural and tourism sector despite the many challenges confronting the sector as a result of the passage of Hurricane Dean in August, 2007.

Executive Summary

In 2007, the IICA Office in Dominica continued to promote the repositioning of agriculture to guarantee a positive contribution towards rural prosperity, empowerment of women and youth, and improved rural incomes.

IICA's Contribution to the Repositioning of Agriculture and Rural Life

The IICA Office facilitated and supported the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment in preparing the State of and Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Life in Dominica Report. Final draft policy frame or entitled Invest in Dominica Secure Agriculture National Policy for the Agriculture Environment (Agric Eco) System, 2007 submitted to the national authorities in June 2007 for discussion, refinement and submission to cabinet for national approval. The Regional Specialist in Trade and Policy Development formulated the policy framework in line with the Hemispheric Agro Plan 2003 2015 to enhance the technical capacities and capabilities of technicians in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment to facilitate the modernization process of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The impact of Hurricane Dean on the agricultural sector of Dominica was widespread and significant. Hurricane force winds, torrential rain and high sea swells resulting from the Hurricane severely affected all subsectors including crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and farm infrastructure. IICA facilitated and collaborated with UNECLAC in the analysis of the impact of Hurricane Dean on the agricultural sector utilizing the UNECLAC Macro-Economic Methodology for Estimating Socio-Economic and Environmental Effects of Disasters in general and in particular the methodological frame or related to Estimating the Effects of Disasters on the Agricultural Sector. Within this context, the damage to the sector was categorized under two (2) broad headings, direct damage and indirect damage/loss.

Promoting Trade and the Competitiveness of Agribusiness

IICA Office supported mechanisms to strengthen the Agri Business Association of Dominica (ABAD) to develop and promote competitive agri businesses. In pursuing the mandate of the OECS Ministers of Agriculture, the OECS Secretariat supported by the French Embassy in collaboration with IICA Dominica, met with the ABAD in September 2007 to further discuss the establishment of a national chapter of a Chamber of Agribusiness in Dominica and the development of a Strategic Agri-business Framework for development. The meeting reviewed the St. Lucia Chamber of Agriculture Constitution, and after much discussion it was agreed that the ABAD constitution be revised and adjusted to guide the establishment and effective operation of the Dominica Chamber of Agribusiness (DCAB). The draft constitution for the establishment and operation of the DCAB will be submitted to members and technicians for comments to facilitate adoption in 2008.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & the Environment, in collaboration with IICA hosted a two-day National Symposium on Agriculture to review the current status of

agriculture in Dominica and to identify and consolidate investment opportunities for successful interventions in the sector. The event was well attended by one hundred and seven (107) key stakeholders including private and public sector officials. The Honourable Prime Minister and his cabinet were on hand to formally endorse this initiative and reiterate government's continued commitment to the development of the sector. A number of national, regional (CARDI, CARICOM and OECS) and international institutions (FAO and IICA) were represented.

The Office continued the partnership with OAS in successfully implementing the A IICA project *Strengthening of the Tourism Sector through the Development of Linkages with the Agriculture Sector in the Caribbean* in collaboration with the Agro-Tourism Centre in the IICA Barbados Office. A national symposium was conducted and organized to develop a national Agro Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for 2008-2012.

Strengthening Agricultural Health and Food Safety Standards

Financial and administrative support was provided to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment to ensure technicians attend and actively participate at the 38th and 39th WTO/SPS Committee Meetings in Geneva under the Initiative of the Americas Programme. As a result of such an initiative, stakeholders in the agriculture and related sectors in Dominica have a forum to analyse decisions and obtain national positions on relevant Sanitary and Phytosanitary issues.

Strengthening Rural Cooperatives

IICA's regional specialist for sustainable rural development has provided technical support and guidance in improving the organizational and entrepreneurial capabilities of the Dominica National Council of Women (DNCW) in the conduct of a national seminar entitled *Opportunities for the Development of Rural Business for Women in Dominica*. A Steering Committee from DNCW representing all seven regions of the DNCW will formally establish the National chapter of CANROP in 2008.

Introducing Technology and Innovation for the Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Life

Administrative and technical support to undertake project entitled *Evaluation of Green House Technology in Crop Production in the Commonwealth of Dominica* implemented by IICA Office in Barbados in collaboration with FAO and CDB. The objective of the project is to thoroughly research the problems being faced by greenhouse producers in the Region leading to the development of a package of technological and management options for the production of vegetable crops. IICA/OAS in collaboration with Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) and Texaco/Chevron provided *Emergency Response* to the Giraudel Flower Producer Group (GFPG) after the passage of Hurricane Dean in Dominica, by providing a Shade House and associated materials to the village to ensure the supply of healthy seedlings to encourage the effective and sustainable rehabilitation of both vegetables and flowers in the village of Giraudel.

1 The State of Agriculture and Rural Life in Dominica In

The Commonwealth of Dominica is the most northerly of the sub-regional Windward Islands grouping, with a total land area of 750.6 km² or approximately 185,000 acres and a population of 71,079¹. The topography of the island is characterized by very rugged and steep terrain, with the land rising steeply from the sea and reaching the highest peak of over 4,500 feet no more than four miles from the coast. The mountainous topography has made it difficult to clear lush vegetation and this has contributed considerably to the island's scenic beauty and the conservation of its national resources. About two percent (2%) of the total surface area has a slope of less than five percent (5%), 13 percent of the area is between five percent (5%) and thirty percent (30%) slope and the remainder is steeper than 30%.

The country experienced average, but relatively stable economic growth during the mid-eighties to early nineties. Between the periods 1986 to 1993 real growth averaged 3.67% per annum, mainly as a result of the banana industry, the main source of the country's exports and the largest contributor to agricultural employment. However, with the advent of the phased elimination of preferential access to the European Union (EU) for banana exports, the positive growth experienced during this period was not sustained and the annual growth rate decreased to 0.52% per annum² over the 1994-2003 periods. Decline and/or stagnation characterized the major productive sectors, agriculture, manufacturing and tourism, and Dominica suffered from a cumulative output loss of 10 % from 2001-2003. In an effort to halt this economic decline the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica (GoCD) embarked on an Economic Stabilization and Adjustment Programme (ESAP) supported by a Stand-by Arrangement with the IMF in 2003. In 2004, real GDP grew by 3.5 % as the unused capacity in the economy was reactivated. Output growth in 2004 was broad-based, with transportation, agriculture, manufacturing and construction all showing signs of a robust recovery from the 2001-03 collapse. In 2005, real GDP grew by 3 %, and in 2006, real GDP grew by 4.1 percent, to yield the third straight year of average growth.

However, in 2007, real GDP grew by only 1.63 percent, while the agriculture sector experienced negative growth of 4.1 percent, with the crop sub sector declining by 5 percent, the livestock and forestry subsector declining by 1 percent, and the fisheries subsector declining by 2 percent mainly as a result of the impact on agriculture by the passage of hurricane Dean in August, 2007. The decline in real growth from 4 percent in 2006 to 1.63 percent in 2007 can be directly attributed to the performance of the agriculture sector. The agricultural sector is still a dominant sector in the economy of Dominica, and although its contribution to GDP has been steadily declining over the last ten years it continues to play a significant role in the country's socio-economic development. The sector plays a multi-functional role in earning foreign exchange, generating employment and contributing towards economic growth and food security.

1 CSO 2001 Population Census

2 CSO 2004 Economic Indicators

This is in light of the fact that the rural communities in Dominica (estimated at 60% of the total population) are largely agrarian in nature with a high dependence on agriculture for employment, income, food, energy (charcoal) and medicine.

3.1 Macroeconomic conditions - The Agriculture sector continued in 2007 to make significant contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (16.1 % of GDP) as seen in table 1. However, the performance of the sector has undergone considerable decline in the period of the 1990s to the present after experiencing impressive growth in the late 1980s. In 1997, for instance, the sector accounted for 20.04% of total GDP, compared with 16.1% in 2007 as indicated in Table 1. This decline is attributed to declines in the crop subsector linked to natural disasters, erosion of the preferential treatment for banana in the European Market and inherent structural and institutional constraints affecting crop production in the country. Crop production is still the primary foreign exchange earner in agriculture for 2007, accounting for 70.9 % of all agricultural production. The contribution of livestock production to overall agricultural production was slightly increased from 10% in 2006 to 11% in 2007. While forestry and fishing contributed 4.6% and 13.5% respectively to overall agricultural production in 2007. Given the importance of the crop subsector, the economic performance of primary agriculture and value-adding, rests on performance in crop production. The livestock, fisheries and forestry sub-sectors contribute very little to foreign exchange earnings, their economic significance mainly in the areas of food security, employment in rural communities, and in the case of fisheries and livestock, a vital source of meat for home consumption (protein).

Sub-Sector	1997	1999	2000	2001	2003	2005	2006	2007
Agriculture	20.04	18.4	17.96	17.51	17.69	17.09	16.71	16.1
Crops	15.3	14.1	13.76	13.08	12.90	12.48	12.21	11.4
Livestock	1.83	1.72	1.63	1.71	1.84	1.76	1.71	1.77
Forestry	0.81	0.78	0.75	0.79	0.84	0.79	0.76	0.74
Fishing	1.65	1.73	1.83	1.93	2.11	2.05	2.03	2.17

The overall performance of the crop subsector in the Commonwealth of Dominica continued to be influenced by the performance of the banana industry despite the many efforts by the Government to diversify the sector. Export production volume of 2007 to the UK was 7,097 tonnes representing a significant decline of 55 % from 2006 of 12,827 tonnes. In addition to bananas a wide range of non banana crops are produced for both local consumption and export, these include: roots and tubers; citrus fruit; coconuts; and vegetables. The totals of the main non-banana crops exported and the value of these exports in 2007 was approximately US\$7 million, which is higher than the US\$4.1 million earned from banana exports in 2007. The performance recorded for the non banana subsector partly as a result of the passage of hurricane Dean, is still a long way off in bridging the gap created by the decline in the banana industry. In many ways, this

category of crops represents a mix of challenges and opportunities and remained an important agricultural development issue for Dominica.

The livestock subsector, which is dominated by the poultry industry and to a lesser degree, the pork industry, improved marginally (1.1%) over the period under review. The subsector has demonstrated an upward tendency over the last three (3) years, with an overall improvement of 7.1% for the last three years.

Still a major current concern is the fate of the banana industry. Since the announcement that preferential access to the EU (and particularly the UK) markets will be lost, acreage under bananas and output per acre have both fallen. Employment has followed downwards, as reflected by the reduction in the number of farmers from 1,050 in 2004 to 790 at the end of 2006 to 725 at the end of 2007.

The Government of Dominica has adopted the stance of other banana producing countries of the Windward Islands and reaffirmed its position that the banana industry was of extreme importance in the economy and the welfare of rural communities. As such, the industry continued to be seen as critical in the economic development process of Dominica. Accordingly, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Banana Emergency Recovery Unit continued to implement measures to enhance the viability and sustainability of the industry.

3.2 Factors Impacting On Agricultural Performance

The impact of Hurricane Dean on the agricultural sector of Dominica was widespread and significant. Hurricane force winds, torrential rain and high sea swells resulting from the Hurricane severely affected all subsectors including crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and farm infrastructure. Widespread damage was reported in the entire productive sector and with the worst affected areas were the northwest, central, east and southeast. Three thousand two hundred (3,200) farmers reported some level of damage to their productive enterprises and over 3,100 fishers and related fish vendors were impacted. The damage was most severe in the crops subsector and in particular with bananas, fruit trees and plantains.

Flat areas for agricultural production are restricted primarily to the river valleys, the coastal areas of the northeast and an area in the centre of the island known as Belles or et Area 'leau ommier. In this regard 7% of Dominica's land resources (132,744 acres) have been classified as unsuitable for agriculture because of erosion risks, water saturation due to heavy rainfall, or poor soils. Data obtained from the Dominica's Agricultural Census of 2007 indicate that only 52,256 acres (28.2%) of the total land area is in farms.

Dominica's climate is classified as humid tropical marine with average temperatures of 27°C. (80°F). Because of the island's rugged topography micro-climate variability exists within very short distances, influenced by the high moisture content of air masses that enter the region from the Atlantic Ocean. This makes Dominica a high rainfall country, with an average rainfall of 175 inches per year during the wet season.

Dominica has seven major watersheds found mainly in the central region of the island on both the Windward and Leeward sides. The northern area of Morne Trois Piton National Park is headwaters for four (4) major watersheds (Belle Fille/Castle Bruce, Layou, Belfast and Rosalie). There are also three smaller watersheds located in the north of the island. Water is provided for domestic consumption, export to other Caribbean countries, generating hydro-electric power, agriculture and other activities.

Almost all of the forty-three (43) water catchments areas in Dominica are located on privately owned lands where there are no effective controls or land use activities. Most of these catchment areas are under cultivation and in some cases inappropriate land use activities such as deforestation and banana cultivation on steep slopes have caused soil erosion and landslides. This has resulted in changes to the landscapes of the eco-systems (e.g. siltation of rivers and streams) but because of the fast growth of ground cover (vegetation), the impact has been considerably lessened.

3.3 Changes in policies on agriculture and rural life.

In 2006 the Government of Dominica presented the Growth and Social Protection Strategy Paper (GSPSP) to provide the macroeconomic framework, growth and sectoral strategies and poverty reduction and social protection programs for Dominica over the medium term for the period 2006 - 2010. The GSPSP asserts that the public debt has been managed by structural adjustment program (SAP). However, it recognizes that structural weaknesses that constrain the emergence of private enterprise and competitive industries remain. In a changing international environment, this poses a significant challenge to achieving national development objectives.

In 2007, the priority of national growth strategies was to maintain the gains made in macroeconomic stabilization while laying the foundation for higher growth. This higher growth, projected at between 2.5% and 3%, over the near to medium term, is premised largely on the implementation of large, public sector driven construction projects. Unfortunately, the passage of hurricane Dean realised real growth rate of 1.6 percent below the projected growth rate to be realised on implementation of the GSPSP. The Government's growth strategies are being promoted in order to alleviate un/under-employment levels mostly in rural areas and reduce the number of 'or ing poor' mostly in urban areas. The need to maintain and enhance the natural environment is also a key pillar for sustainable development.

The draft National Agricultural Development Policy developed in 2005/6 for Dominica was officially presented to national authorities for adoption and implementation. The policy submitted, strongly advocates the need for a multi-sectoral, inter-Ministerial approach to the policy dialogue and consultation process for achieving consensus with regards to an official state policy for agriculture that defines the goals, priorities, responsibilities and functions among multiple stakeholders.

Policies adopted to foster agricultural exports:

Direct production subsidies in the form of fertilizer and cash entitlements were provided in 2007 following the passage of Hurricane Dean in August. Price subsidies have never been popular due to budgetary constraints. Trade concessions in the form of export duty waivers and the lifting of import duty on supplies, materials and equipment, meant for use in agricultural production, were also frequently adopted in 2007.

Privatization of functions and services/Producer Organizations: While the number of active farmer groups operating in the industry has declined tremendously, the more resilient groups have remained, including the Essential Oils and Spices Cooperative and Nature Isle Pineapple Producers Association (NIPPA). Within recent times, new groupings, such as, the Fair Trade District groups, National Fair Trade groups, Windward Island Farmers Association (WINFA), Agro Processors Association of Dominica (APAD), Dominica Green House Association, National Association for Youth in Agriculture (NAYA) and Poultry and Pig Producers Association have emerged to meet the specific needs of farmers. The banana industry has undergone some reorganization over the last 7 years. The more significant have been the replacement of the Dominica Banana Marketing Corporation (DBMC - a statutory board) by a private limited company, the Dominica Banana Producers Ltd. (DBPL) mandated to operate in a purely commercial manner

Human Resources:

One of the main human resource issue affected the agricultural sector in Dominica is the decline in the number of young persons involved in agricultural and related activities. This is reflected in data from the 1995 Agricultural Census, which indicated that only four percent (4%) of all farmers at that time were under the age of twenty-five (25) years, while thirty-six (36%) were over the age of fifty-five (55) years. The data also indicates that the majority of farmers have not gone beyond primary education.

It is widely believed that there is a shortage of locally available farm labour for servicing the needs of the agricultural sector. To this end, immigrant workers from Haiti are employed on Dominican farms in both crop and livestock production. The issue of productivity of the local farm labour, its reliability and cost continues to plague the industry.

Agri-food trade and the development of agribusiness

Total agricultural exports decreased from US\$13 million in 2006 to US\$11 million in 2007 as a direct result of the decrease in banana production from 12,827 tonnes in 2006 to 7,097 tonnes in 2007 due to the passage of hurricane Dean in August 2007.

The food import bill has increased significantly over the years, climbing from US\$10M in 1990 to US\$19.2M in 1994, to US\$31m in 2007, an increase of 310% over the period. In 2006, Dominica total import bill was US\$166M, while for 2007, an increase in imports to US\$194 was observed. In 2007, Food and live animal imports accounted for 16 % (US\$31M) of total imports, and increased from US\$26M in 2006 to US\$31M in 2007.

The major imported items being poultry products, mainly broiler parts, beef, cereal and cereal products. In 2007, Meat and meat preparations valued at US\$6.7Million, cereals and cereal preparations US\$5.6, fish products valued at US\$1.8M, beverages valued at US\$5.4M and Dairy Products US\$4.6 million respectively.

The absence of an international airport in Dominica has seriously constraint the country's ability to access the external mar ets regional and international via air transport. The air service provided by LIAT airline, the regional carrier, is inadequate in terms of space and facilities and the freight rates offered are prohibitive. Ocean shipping to Europe is available weekly through the Geest Lines, but this service is very much underutilized. Shipping to the regional market is done through open hull, un-refrigerated schooners, with produce packed in bags, overweight crates, or in the case of bananas and plantains shipped on the bunch. This unsatisfactory means of transport accounts for almost all of ominica's produce exported to the regional mar et. The provision of upgraded, refrigerated shipping/transport for the regional trade is critical to the maintenance and expansion of output of the agricultural sector.

3.5 Agricultural health and food safety (AHFS)

The regional mar et accounts for 7 of ominica's fresh produce trade. In recent times, increasing competition from regional producers such as Cuba, St. Vincent, Guyana and the Dominican Republic has led to decreased demand for Dominican produce. Additionally, due to the poor quality of Dominican fresh produce, resulting from poor packaging, processing and transportation methods, Dominica has lost significant market share to its competitors. The bulk of trade in such products occurs among hucksters' ho are responsible for moving a significant volume of fresh agricultural produce from Dominica to regional markets. These hucksters are however, facing a widening range of new international regulations and standards governing fresh produce handling and transportation that restrict the smooth flow of such trade.

As a signatory to the CARICOM and OECS harmonized trade instruments Dominica, is not constrained to move both fresh and processed products into regional markets, except in instanced governed phyto sanitary restrictions. Access to extra-regional markets has become more difficult as increasingly entry conditions in the EU and overseas territories markets will require application of licensing requirements. Since 2001, the US has already instituted a zero-tolerance policy with respect to AHFS issues making entry and access conditions more difficult, complicated and expensive for Dominican exporters.

The scope of agro-processed foods has been significantly more extensive than that of the fresh produce. This is evidenced in the diversity of sales, locally as well as regional and extra-regional export destinations. Over 75% of processed products of Bello, the largest food processor on the island, are exported to other Caribbean countries and extra regional mar ets. ther food processors including eno's manufacturer of seamoss beverages, also exhibit a similar pattern of export market diversity. With the advent of agricultural health and food safety (AHFS) issues, Dominican food processors face extreme challenges in exporting products to developed country markets. Some of

the response strategies used have been production relocation to countries that have improved AHFS systems and to facilitate better access to markets.

□□ Agricultural innovation, science and technology □

CARDI as an institute is mandated to carry out research in support of the Division of Agriculture (DOA), thus the DOA does not have a research arm. Nevertheless, some level of adaptive research is undertaken by individual staff members in collaboration with CARDI. The main areas of research being pursued are agronomic (hot peppers/ pineapple/ yams), livestock, plant protection and quarantine. Some research is also undertaken with private seed distributors – varietal trials on a wide range of commercial vegetable varieties.

One of the main challenges affecting the adoption of science and innovation throughout agricultural sector is the decline in the number of young persons involved in agriculture and related activities. At the same time, youth in Dominica are part of a vibrant and creative culture and if engaged can offer innovative strategies and solutions for the sustainable development of the country as a whole. Reinvigorating agricultural development through the creative vision of youth and the development of vibrant leadership in the country is critical for the way forward, if agriculture is going to be perceived by the youth as a innovative and scientific to be prosperous and entrepreneurial profession.

□.7 Land Tenure

The main land tenures according to the 1995 Agricultural Census were ownership with 34,000 acres (65.1%) and family land with 5,700 acres (10.9%) of total land under farms. Rented and communal land had similar relative importance regarding land tenure (5.6% with 2,900 acres per tenure). Farmers squatting on the land represented 1.7% (900 acres) to total acreage under farm. There has been substantial structural change in the land tenure system in Dominica during the period 1961 to 1995 based on the Agricultural Census of those two (2) years. There were only three (3) land tenure classes in the 1961 Census; they were ownership representing 95.5% (72,800 acres) of the total land under farms, land rented for money with 4.2% (3,200 acres) and the remaining 0.3% (200 acres) of the land was rented for free.

□ **Su□ □ ar□ of the i□ ple□ entation of the National Technical Cooperation Agenda during □□□□**

□ The National Agenda of Cooperation is a Planning document that provides the strategic frame or for orienting IICA’s activities in the Commonwealth of Dominica within the agriculture sector during the period 2006 – 2010. □

The major results achieved by IICA in Dominica for 2007 can be highlighted as follows:

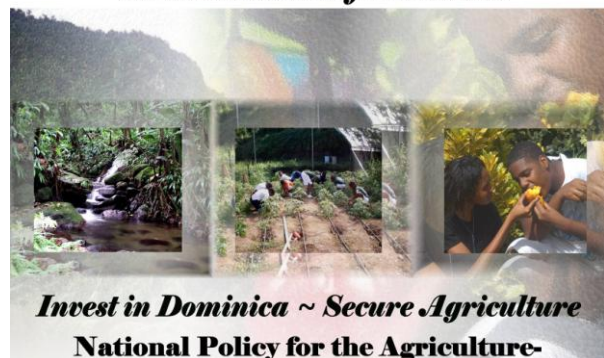
□ □ **IICA’s contribution to the repositioning of agriculture and rural life.**

The IICA Office facilitated and supported the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment in improving the capabilities and capacities of public and private sector technicians to pursue and implement an improved policy framework within a new institutional framework to reposition agriculture. The national policy entitled Invest in Dominica- Secure Agriculture as submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment in June 2007 for submission to cabinet. The office ensured submission of a more concise and reader friendly version from the initial technical working document used in the consultation process in 2005 – 2007. The National policy is based on three policy pillars, i.e. Ecological Sustainability; Competitive Agro-Eco Businesses, and Food and Nutrition Security. □ The importance of the policy

framework to guide the restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to foster modernization of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to meet the demands of the globalized world cannot be understated. The request to the institute was for the preparation of a policy framework document and not a Strategic Plan. The policy acknowledges several strategies for various elements relating to current divisional responsibilities for agriculture (crop and livestock, fisheries, forestry and the environment) that have already been detailed to allow for an accelerated pace in developing the comprehensive Agricultural Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012. To support the implementation process, the policy framework has included a sufficiently detailed section on Implementing the policy- key Operational Issues for guidance and consideration, this section proposes the processes, tools, planning timelines, financing options and operational restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture, fisheries and forestry.. The National Agricultural Development Policy for the Commonwealth of Dominica 2007 – 2025 formulated by the Regional Specialist in Trade and Policy



Commonwealth of Dominica



Invest in Dominica ~ Secure Agriculture
**National Policy for the Agriculture-
 Environment (Agri-Eco) System,
 2007-2025**

**National Agricultural Development Policy
 submitted in June to national authorities for
 Dominica 2007 - 2025**

Development is in line with the Hemispheric Agro Plan 2003 – 2015 and in line with the governments external obligations with regards to trade agreements and multilateral Environmental Agreements. Implementation and evaluation of the national policy and strategic plan will contribute in enhancing performance of the public and private agriculture related sector institutions to the rural communities.

IICA Dominica in collaboration with the Division of Agriculture facilitated the preparation of the analytical document on the state of and outlook of critical issues facing agriculture in Dominica based on information provided from the Agriculture Information Unit within the Division of Agriculture and the Statistical Unit in the Ministry of Finance. Decisions by national Authorities on Agriculture and rural life were informed by the State and Outlook Report, entitled Situational Analysis of the Agricultural Sector Dominica presented to the national authorities in March, 2007.

Office also facilitated the 2007 national consultation with leaders of agriculture and rural life in three categories: 1). rural territories; 2). rural organizations/institutions; and 3). public institutions. Thirty four (34) questionnaires (rural – 14; organizations -10 and public institutions – 10) were administered on the expectations and opinions of leaders vis a vis agriculture and rural life. Questionnaires were placed into IICA’s online system that was placed in a section of the Secretariats Web-site www.iica.int/cumbres for online access to data and the analysis. Complementary analysis can be conducted in the future.

4.2 Promoting trade and the competitiveness of agribusiness.

IICA Office supported mechanisms to strengthen the Agri Business Association of Dominica (ABAD) to develop and promote competitive agric businesses. In pursuing the mandate of the OECS Ministers of Agriculture, the OECS Secretariat supported by the French Embassy in collaboration with IICA Dominica, hosted a two day meeting to establish a Chamber of Agribusiness within the existing membership of ABAD. The structure adopted by the St. Lucia Chamber of Agriculture was unanimously agreed to by members of ABAD present on September 12 and 13, 2007.

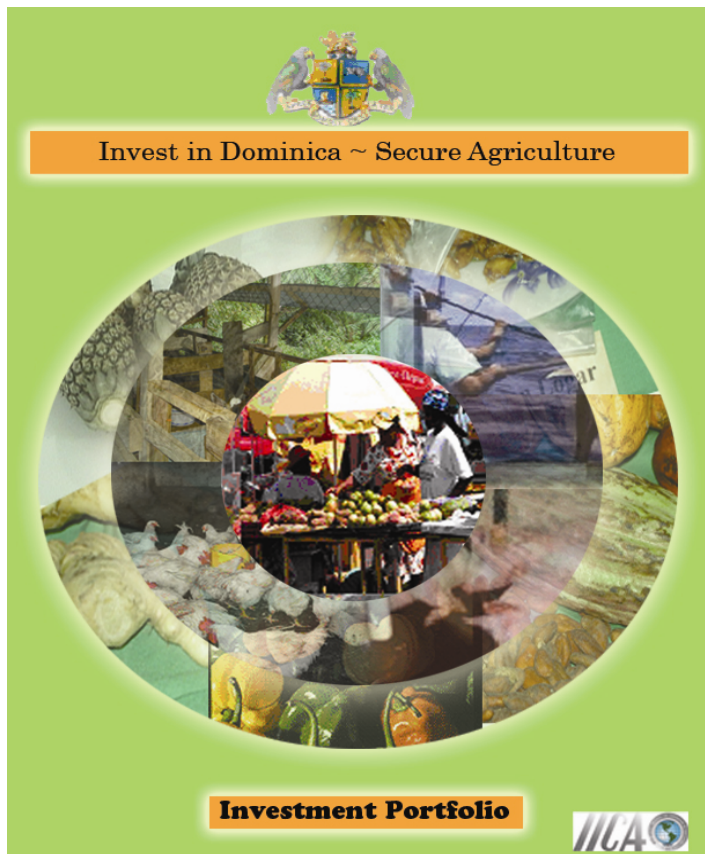


The meeting agreed to further discuss the establishment of a national chapter of a Chamber of Agribusiness in Dominica and the development of a Strategic Agri-business Framework for development. The meeting reviewed the St. Lucia Chamber of Agriculture constitution, and after much discussion it was agreed that the ABAD constitution be revised and adjusted to guide the

establishment and effective operation of the Dominica Chamber of Agribusiness (DCAB) along the structure proposed above. Office also provided ABAD with information to develop and maintain strong relationship with CABA by facilitating implementation of I I project entitled **STRON T NIN AR T ACC SS RTUNITS R S S IN T CARICOM AN A RI D INDUSTRY**". The MIF/IDB project will effectively contribute to the building of agribusiness export capacity amongst CARICOM Members including Dominica. A need assessment conducted in Dominica with DCAB members, have provided sufficient data for the development of training and capacity building programmes for the targeted agribusiness groups in DCAB.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & the Environment, in collaboration with IICA hosted a two-day National Symposium on Agriculture. The objectives of this symposium were:

- To review the current status of agriculture in Dominica.
- To identify investment opportunities in the agricultural sector in Dominica and.
- To consolidate approaches for successful interventions in the sector.



The event was well attended by one hundred and seven (100) key stakeholders including private and public sector officials. The event improved collaboration for investment along the food chain in addition to creating the enabling environment for improved investment to enhance development of micro and small enterprises in the agriculture sector. IICA office in collaboration with the Division of agriculture, prepared and disseminated an Investment Portfolio detailing seven priority challenges confronted by stakeholders preventing them to successfully implement investments in both crop and livestock enterprises. The investment profiles developed will guide government and other stakeholders in identifying priorities for development support

based on select criteria such as potential economic returns, contribution to GDP, employment creation, and trade and foreign exchange earnings. The Honourable Prime Minister and his cabinet were on hand to formally endorse this initiative and reiterate government's continued commitment to the development of the sector. A number of

national, regional (CARDI, CARICOM and OECS) and international institutions (FAO and IICA) were represented.

Recommendations from the symposium with regards to the current status of agriculture highlighted the urgent need for the following:

- ❖ increasing the use of technology by our farmers and fishers
- ❖ Encouraging the emergence of new opportunities through linkages with other sectors, notably tourism, forestry and industry.
- ❖ Rapid mobilization of our human and natural resources to facilitate rapid growth based on under utilized capacity.
- ❖ Improved Coordination of On going investments in agriculture by the GOCD and other donors.

□ □ Strengthening agricultural health and food safety standards

The IICA office in Dominica and Costa Rica provided financial and administrative support to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment to ensure technicians attend and actively participate at the 38th and 39th WTO/SPS Committee Meetings in Geneva under the Initiative of the Americas Programme. As a result of such an initiative, stakeholders in the agriculture and related sectors in Dominica have an official forum for private/public sector interaction to analyse decisions and obtain national positions on relevant agricultural health and food safety issues. Two committees provide the forum to adopt the harmonized international standards developed by the IPPC, OIE and CODEX. The National Sanitary and Phytosanitary (NSPS) committee with secretariat functions performed by the Division of agriculture, applies the WTO agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures guided by the international reference organization (IPPC) and OIE. Decisions of the three NSPS committee meetings held in 2007 provided the forum for obtaining national position on the following issues: Developing a Strategy to Reduce or Replace the Use of Methyl Bromide for Phytosanitary purposes based on risk analysis, harmonization and equivalence as contained in the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on New International Standards for Phytosanitary measures I 's . Of particular importance to Dominica include the standards dealing with the establishment of areas of low prevalence of fruit flies; sampling of consignments and a supplementary standard namely the Clarification of Debarked Wood. National consensus on issues such as: Avian Influenza; Pest of Quarantine Importance; Implementation of Imported Food Procedure; Specific Trade Concerns such as the issue of private and commercial standards were also discussed and analyzed. IICA provided guidance on private standards to facilitate market access and the appropriateness of the forum to discuss commercial standards.

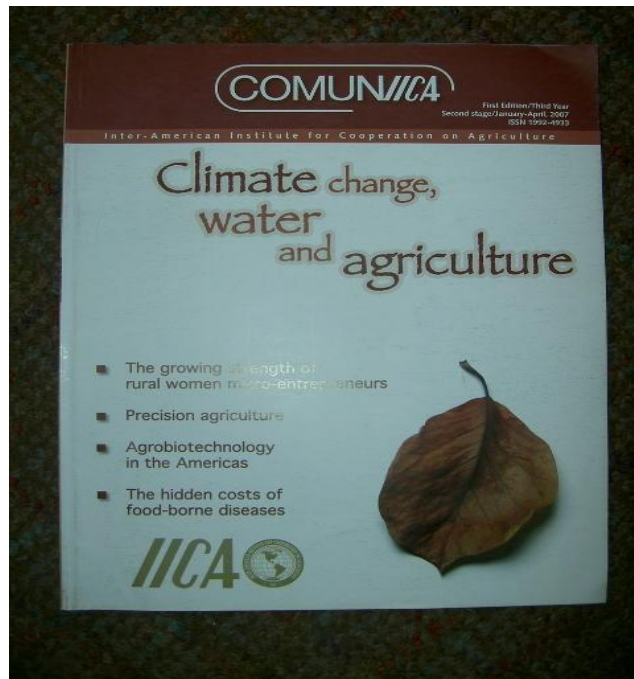
The National CODEX Committee (NCC) with the secretariat based at the Dominica Bureau of Standards (DBOS) applies harmonized international standards developed by the CODEX Alimentarius, or the food code, the global reference point for consumers, food producers, national food control agencies and the international food trade.

IICA office provided technical support for two technical meetings of the Citrus Tristeza Virus Working Group in Dominica for 2007 in close collaboration with CARDI and the

FAO. The meetings enhanced capacities of technicians in the public sector to identify and manage Brown Citrus Aphid the main insect vector responsible for the transmission of the Citrus Tristeza Virus, a pest of tremendous economic importance to the Commonwealth of Dominica. In addition, the office provided technical support for the design and implementation of project entitled **Assistance for the management of citrus dieback** funded by the A .

Promoting the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment

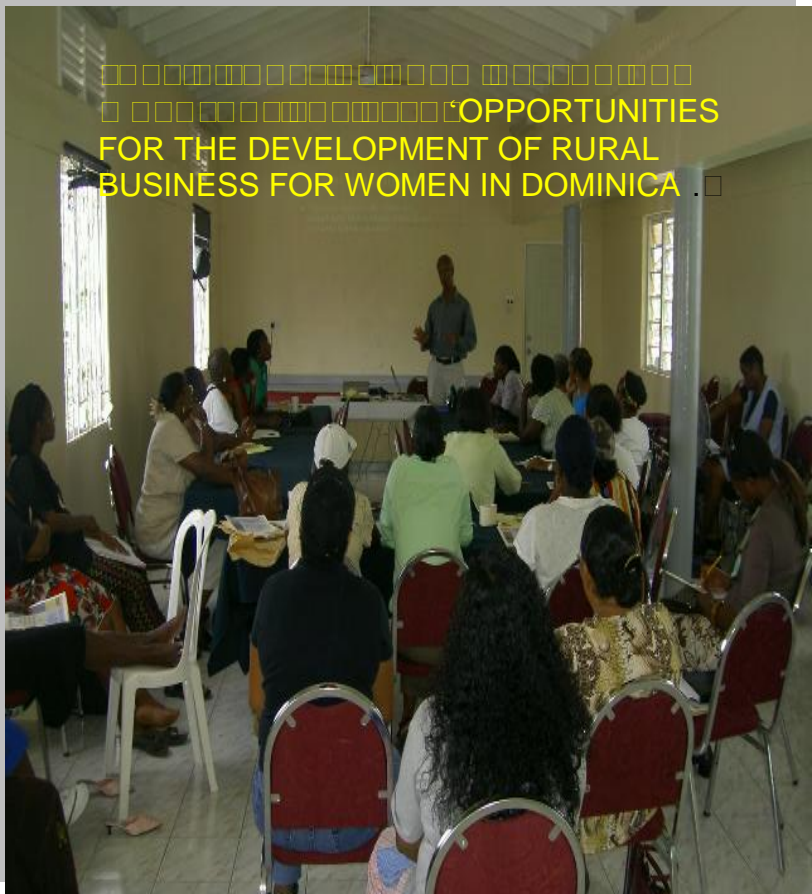
Information on environmental issues with emphasis on impact of land degradation and persistent organic pollutants (pops) on sustainable agriculture, tourism and rural life; were disseminated by the office to improve capacities of technicians in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment; Ministry of Health and Custom Division in the Ministry of Finance for the incorporation of natural resource management principles in operational procedures of the work environment. Demand for Information on Climate change, water and agriculture in COMUNIICA First Edition, Second stage, Jan April, 2007 greatly surpassed supply, particularly for the hard copy, since most of the clients have limited access to printers if access to online.



Strengthening rural communities

IICA office in Dominica in close collaboration with the IICA's regional specialist for Sustainable Rural Development provided technical support and guidance in improving the organizational and entrepreneurial capabilities of the Dominica National Council of Women (DNCW) in the conduct of a national seminar entitled opportunities for the development of rural business for women in Dominica . The technical support provided focused on greenhouse and organic agriculture technologies, both of which enable rural women to increase production of fruits and vegetables and take advantage of emerging niche markets at the regional and international levels. Emerging niche markets highlighted included the business of producing inputs commercially to lower input needs, resulting in lower credit needs, lower financial risks, increased credit access of small- to medium-size farmers and processors which generate employment opportunities for women and young people.

Consultant Ms Monica Williams, operating from Barbados, and working with the Credit Union Movement in Dominica to improve its system of micro-credit management, enhanced the capacities of participants on the importance of micro-finance in small business development in the rural sector. Micro-finance(MF)/micro-credit(MC) was defined as an economic development approach established for the benefit of low-income individuals, through the provision of financial services to micro entrepreneurs (operating micro-enterprises), such as small loans mainly for working capital, and necessary techniques for adequate loan management, as a development tool applied to support poverty reduction as highlighted in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and financial sustainability. Participants of MC/MF include Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs) such as NGOs, NDFDs, Credit Unions and Co-operative Associations. The targeted clients/beneficiaries who can benefit tremendously from the implementation of MF/MC include rural women and youth - low-income earners, self-employed entrepreneurs in both urban and rural areas. Thirty two participants attended the workshop, including women involved in conventional and organic farming, craft making, and agro-processing, mainly jams, jellies and sauces. The urgent need for rural women to understand the challenges of a changing agricultural and product profile in order to reorient their businesses to opportunities in naturaceuticals, processed foods, and other value added products in agriculture and tourism was highlighted at the workshop by technical specialist. Micro Financing is being widely applied globally, particularly in Developing countries, and is growing due to its potential of reaching the poor, to build on traditional systems and for financial sustainability



IICA provided technical support in developing practical hands on guidelines to Backyard gardening and small scale farming to Women in their implementation of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of home and community food security. These guidelines provide an additional instrument to combat hunger and poverty and to accelerate attainment of Independence. The guidelines represent the

first attempt by DNCW to empower its members to actively pursue agribusiness opportunities and to recommend actions to be undertaken for its realization. Moreover, they represent a step towards integrating economic principles and food and nutrition principles into the work of the DNCW towards increased collaboration with agencies like IICA dealing with food and agriculture.

□□ Introducing technolog□ and inno□ation for the □ oderni□ation of agriculture and rural life.

IICA facilitated improving the capacities and capabilities of executive members of the Dominica Herbal Business Association (DHBA) in identifying and prioritizing several key areas for strategic development of the herbal industry. Areas of priority selected for consideration for technical assistance from the FAO are as follows: Development of the Legislative Framework for Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing; conducting an Ethnological Survey and Regional Market Research for Dominican Herbs to support advances in biodiversity.

Office provided administrative and technical support to undertake project entitled Evaluation of reen ouse echnology in Crop roduction in the Common ealth of Dominica implemented by IICA Office in Barbados in collaboration with FAO and CDB. The objective of the project is to thoroughly research the problems being faced by greenhouse producers in the Region particularly after the passage of tropical storms,

leading to the development of a package of technological and management options for the optimum production of vegetable crops. The increased productivity that can be achieved through the proper utilisation of the green house technology can also significantly help lower the cost of labour as compared to open field production. This is an important consideration, given the fact that labour costs are



often highlighted as among the key factors limiting agricultural production and price competitiveness in the Region. Thus, the use of greenhouse technology holds the potential to assist farmers not only in boosting production and improving quality and consistency, but also and, more importantly, in enhancing their competitiveness and their income potential. In some instances, farmers have benefited from improved yields and quality, particularly in the first two cycles of production. However, the general trend is that farmers experience production problems throughout the crop cycle. These

problems include the build up of soil borne diseases as well as other pests and diseases and low fruit set. In many instances, this has led to farmers abandoning their investment while others, cognisant of the experiences of their neighbours are reluctant to invest. To date, technicians have not been able to identify the primary reasons for these problems and consequently, they are unable to provide farmers with reliable recommendations on how to alleviate these problems in a sustainable manner. Part of the problem lies in the fact that some of the greenhouses currently being used in the Region are based on designs used in temperate countries where conditions are very different from those in the Caribbean.

IICA in collaboration with the OAS Representation in Dominica provided *Emergency Response* to the Giraudel Flower Producer Group (GFPG) after the passage of Hurricane Dean in Dominica. The emergency response was funded by Chevron/Texaco via the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF). This programme will be used as a model for current and subsequent hurricane relief programmes in the island. The farmers were largely affected by destruction of plants, particularly with respect to seasoning pepper, flowers, and vegetable crops. The farmers, as well as government extension personnel, have advised that planting material were the most essential input requirements to start replanting at that time. As such the hurricane relief support included the following:

1. Reestablishment of Seedling Nursery to serve approximately 30 farmers and 15 students by purchase and installation of infrastructure, shade cloth and UV resistant plastic to assist in rebuilding the nursery and seedling house of the GFPG.
2. Replanting of damaged flower plots with respect to variety selection- flower seedlings to approximately 20 farmers
3. Replanting of vegetable plots- vegetable seeds to GFPG



All the activities were realized in a period of three months, October to December 2007 to ensure the supply of healthy seedlings to encourage the effective and sustainable rehabilitation of both vegetables and flowers in the village of Giraudel.

Inter-Agency Cooperation

The Office continued the partnership with OAS in successfully implementing the A IICA project *Strengthening of the Tourism Sector through the Development of Linkages with the Agriculture Sector in the Caribbean* in collaboration with the Agro-Tourism Centre in the IICA Barbados Office. IICA office in Dominica hosted a two day National Agrotourism Symposium in Dominica on November, at the Fort Young Hotel in Roseau. The two day Symposium targeted forty eight leading players from the public, private and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Dominica, as part of a joint initiative between IICA and the OAS in promoting agrotourism development across the region. The symposium realized a significant collaborative effort between the Ministries of Agriculture and Tourism in Dominica



The active and participatory discussions at the Dominica event focused primarily on exploring ways and means of creating a more viable and sustainable agrotourism sector for Dominica. It also focused attention on best practices across the five main identified segments of this emerging sub-sector

namely; Agro-trade, Farm Tours, Culinary Events, Agro-Heritage and Health and Wellness. The symposium played a key role in identifying specific, measurable, attainable and realistic opportunities. The practical challenges and ways to explore creating the right enabling environment for fostering greater success and long term viability, was also pursued at the symposium. Consultants were contracted to develop a national Agro Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for 2008 2012 from the views expressed by participants of the symposium.

The impact of Hurricane Dean on the agricultural sector of Dominica was widespread and significant as reported by the UNECLAC team, of which IICA was a member. The high level of precipitation in excess of eight (8) inches over 18 hours and wind gusts of up to 170 km per hour resulted in flash floods, swollen rivers, soil erosion and landslides causing extensive damage to crops, livestock, fisheries, forest vegetation and , wildlife, and infrastructure. Widespread damage was reported in all the productive sector and the worst affected areas were the northwest, central, east and southeast. Three thousand two hundred



(3,200) farmers reported some level of damage to their productive enterprises and over 3,100 fishers and related fish vendors were impacted. The damage was most severe in the crops subsector and in particular with bananas, fruit trees and plantains. □

The analysis of the impact of Hurricane Dean on the agricultural sector was conducted by utilizing the UNECLAC Macro-Economic Methodology for Estimating Socio-Economic and Environmental Effects of Disasters in general and in particular the methodological frame or related to Estimating the Effects of isasters on the Agricultural ector. ithin this context the damage to the sector as categori ed under two (2) broad headings, direct damage and indirect damage/loss. In assessing direct damage of the sector, only damage to assets and stocks at the time of the event was considered. The direct damages were, therefore, identified under four broad headings:

- Damage to farmlands;
- Damage to physical infrastructure and to machinery and equipment;
- Damage/loss of crops that were ready to be harvested; and
- Damage/loss of stock (livestock, inputs, harvested products, etc)

In assessing the direct damage, only production ready to be harvested at the time of the Hurricane was taken into consideration. However, for affected annual crops that were still growing at the onset of the hurricane, losses were based on investment in labour and input. In the case of stocks, when total losses occurred, damages were estimated at farm gate prices and inputs at replacement value. Assessments for partial loss and damage were effected on a prorated basis.

Damages caused by the hurricane that have negative impacts on production and income throughout the recovery period were estimated as indirect damages/losses. In addition, the costs involved in mitigating the impact of the hurricane in order to build back better were included as indirect damage/loss.

Total damage to the agricultural sector was estimated at US\$16.6 million, of which direct damage is estimated at US\$7.3 million and indirect losses put at US\$9.3 million. The crop subsector was severely impacted accounting for 81.5% of total damage, followed by farm infrastructure (7.5%), forestry (5.8%), fisheries (2.6%) and livestock (2.6%) subsectors respectively in terms of level of impact.

□ Future Opportunities for Technical Cooperation

A Steering Committee from Dominica National Council of Women (DNCW) representing all seven regions of the DNCW in the Commonwealth of Dominica will formally establish the National chapter of *Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP)* in 2008

Two investment profiles will be developed for projects identified at the national symposium of Agro Tourism. These projects include:

1. A franchise farming scheme to involve young farmers and existing model farmers. This project will be coordinated by the National Association of Youth in Agriculture (NAYA) in collaboration with green house farmers association. Investment profiles will be developed for promotion of trade on both domestic and export markets.
2. Restoration and/or development of the Macoucherie Estates for inclusion in certified cruise packages of agro heritage/farm tours

Technical assistance to enhance capacity and capability of local health and wellness operators to utilise and market local produce in conjunction with the service, as opposed to the use of imported health and wellness products at the health and beauty salons. Urgent assistance will be sought in building a Dominica Brand around a health and wellness project in collaboration with the DHBA.

The symposium will contribute significantly to the development of a National AgroTourism Strategy for 2008 – 2012 and Action Plan for 2008 – 2010. Ministry of Health and Social Security will be invited in 2008 to form part of a functional multi-stakeholder committee together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Ministry of Tourism and Legal affairs and Ministry of Community Development. The committee will be provided with defined terms of reference to provide adequate direction for the intervention towards sustained development of agriculture, agribusiness and Agro Tourism linkage.

Improved documentation and access to detailed information on best practices in areas of IICA's technical activities more accessible to stakeholders based on the strength of IICA's technical expertise and horizontal cooperation.

ANNEX 1

IMPORTANT EVENTS ORGANIZED BY THE IICA OFFICE IN DOMINICA IN 2007

Official name of the event	Date held	Site of the event	No. of participants	Place and date of publication of the report or proceedings of the event
1. National Symposium on Agriculture Invest in Agriculture Secure Dominica	March 14 & 15,	Fort Young Hotel, Roseau, Commonwealth of Dominica	107	
2. National Agro tourism Symposium Agro tourism A Strategic Plan for Dominica	November 28 & 29,	Fort Young Hotel, Roseau, Commonwealth of Dominica	48	
3. National Seminar Opportunities for the Development of Rural Business for Women in Dominica	September 27,	Methodist Church Hall, Roseau, Commonwealth of Dominica	28	
4. Official Handing over Ceremony/Meeting Emergency Response materials to The Giraudel flower producers group following the passage of Hurricane Dean	Nov 9, 2007	Giraudel Flower Show Site, Giraudel, Commonwealth of Dominica	23	
5. Finalisation of Corporate Structure for Agri Business Association of Dominica A A ... he ay Forward.	September 12 & 13,	Public Service Training Centre, Roseau, Commonwealth of Dominica	15	