

Annual Report 2009

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

IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago

March 2010

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Foreword



The IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to present its annual report for 2009 to our stakeholders and partners in the agriculture sector. This report is a key publication in highlighting the impact of IICA's work in Trinidad and in Tobago through 2009. It also provides a general look at the status of agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago during the period under review.

The work year 2009 was a very busy one for the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago. The office made significant strides in the delivery of its technical programme and established linkages with new strategic partners in the delivery of the programme.

One of the most significant changes made in 2009 was the relocation of our office from Port of Spain to St. Augustine. IICA is already reaping the benefits of being in the new venue. The move to a larger, more strategically located property has brought us closer to our main collaborators and beneficiaries. It has also allowed us to position ourselves as a venue of choice for meetings and events organized and hosted by stakeholders and other agencies. We hope to continue to provide our facilities for use by stakeholders throughout 2010.

The Staff of the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago has worked tirelessly over the past

year in executing the programme of work and implementing a number of events and activities. I would like to commend them for their hard work, especially during the disruptions associated with moving such a large office.

We at IICA in Trinidad and Tobago remain committed to supporting the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR) in its thrust to transform the agriculture sector from "agriculture to agribusiness". Additionally, we feel privileged to be able to collaborate so closely with all of our community, national and regional partners and stakeholders in this regard.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregg C.E. Rawlins', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gregg C.E. Rawlins
Representative



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Executive Summary

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

The IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago supported the implementation of the transformation plan of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR) with the renewed focus on agriculture to agribusiness. In support of this and under the framework of the Centre of Leadership, based at IICA Headquarters in Costa Rica, the Office organized and participated in a one-week visit headed by the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources to Costa Rica to visit centres of excellence in the areas of agribusiness and extension services in particular. Representatives of the private sector and several other stakeholder agencies also participated in the visit.

In its efforts to strengthen the institutional capacity of the MALMR in the area of extension delivery, the Office collaborated with the MALMR and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in delivering a week-long sensitization workshop in excellence in extension service delivery benefitting approximately 150 extension officers of the MALMR. This was the first step in a process towards their being able to deliver

more integrated and coordinated service to agribusiness entrepreneurs.

The Office played a key role in supporting IICA's delegation to the Vth Summit of the Americas held in April in Port of Spain, by providing secretarial and administrative support during the process. Additionally, the Office assisted the MALMR in its preparations for the 5th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas, held in Montego Bay, Jamaica in October 2009.

Two young nationals were selected to participate in the second annual Forum for Young Leaders in Costa Rica and will subsequently be engaged by the Office to assist with further activities in this area.

As part of its efforts to improve food security through fostering more interaction between the agriculture sector and the media, IICA, in collaboration with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), launched an agricultural journalism award competition. Additionally, the office launched 2 promotional food security products: a notebook for school children and a poster, aimed at gaining an understanding and appreciation of food security among the general public of Trinidad and Tobago.

Promotion of Trade and the Competitiveness of Agribusiness

In February 2009, the IICA Office entered into a technical cooperation programme with the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Company (NAMDEVCO) to build its capacity in developing export and domestic food chains. This programme, primarily involved the training of four NAMDEVCO staff members in the application of the CADIAC methodology for commodity chain analysis. The building of actor-led dialogue platforms for competitive export and domestic market penetration was another very important part of the agreed programme.

Another component of IICA's technical cooperation programme, involved the application and validation of an electronic cost of production system developed by the IICA. This programme is currently being implemented to allow for transparent determination of commodity production cost and equitable producer/buyer prices.

Through its support to the development of the small ruminant industry in Trinidad and Tobago, the Office provided technical, administrative and support to the Trinidad and Tobago Goat and Sheep Society (TTGSS) in a number of areas with particular emphasis on accessing market opportunities for products being developed by the small ruminant industry.

A workshop, involving major stakeholders in the organic agricultural industry, was also convened by IICA, to chart a way forward for the industry.

Strengthening Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems

Several agencies, among them IICA, USDA/APHIS, CIRAD and the French Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Livestock and Livestock Products Board (LLPB) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources

(MALMR) collaborated to host a regional workshop for veterinary epidemiologists from the Caribbean. The workshop, aimed at strengthening animal health surveillance systems in the region, included training in Global Positioning System (GPS) and Incident Command System. An important part of the exercise was the execution of a major field simulation exercise of an Avian Influenza outbreak - the first of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago.

Strengthening Rural Communities

In collaboration with a new strategic partner the Ministry of Tourism, IICA supported activities to further develop the agro-tourism ventures of the Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee (TAC). The Office facilitated an exploratory mission and briefing session in Brasso Seco Paria in August as well as a training and sensitization mission to Grenada for members of the TAC, the Ministry of Tourism and IICA.

The Office provided technical and administrative assistance to the Network of Rural Women Producers in the areas of capacity building and outreach. The Office supported the Network in the organization and hosting of the first ever Trinidad and Tobago Mango Festival.

Relocation of the IICA Office

The IICA Office was relocated from Port of Spain to St. Augustine in mid-2009. The move to a larger building with more spacious premises has allowed the office to be closer to most of its partners and beneficiaries and has opened up the way for increased collaboration with new partners, etc, etc. As a result of the new space, several major events were held on the grounds of the office in 2009.

3 The State of Agriculture and Rural Life in Trinidad and Tobago



Pepper farm in east Trinidad

a. The Context for Agriculture and Rural Life

The fallout from the collapse of the US sub-prime mortgage market dominated financial markets in 2008. A series of domestic events in the United States including bankruptcy filings, forced acquisitions and the insolvency of major financial institutions led to a lowering of investor confidence and a drying up of credit worldwide. These developments contributed to a reduction in world output in 2008.

In the international commodities market, the prices of agricultural commodities rose steeply for most of 2008, but tumbled in the last four months of the year. Early in the year, agricultural commodity prices were extremely buoyant because of rising demand, particularly from emerging China and India. Also, with rising uncertainty in the stock markets due to the financial crisis, investors increasingly turned to the agricultural commodity futures. This situation tended to push world market prices upward.

Also in 2008, world agricultural output struggled to keep pace with demand, owing to poor harvest and the diversion of agricultural production to alternative uses. Global supplies were further curtailed when some producing countries imposed export bans and reduced import tariffs in order to secure supplies for their home markets.



Aerial shot of Petrotrin Oil Company

During 2008, the crude oil market displayed unprecedented volatility. Over the year, crude oil prices averaged US\$99.63 per barrel, an increase of 37.9% from the previous year. Oil prices, however, started to decline by August 2008, and plummeted to an average of US \$57.12 per barrel by November, a fall of almost US \$100 per barrel. A relatively volatile natural gas market prevailed in the US in 2008. Fertilizer prices also shot up sharply for most of 2008. During the first half of the year, high crop and energy prices kept fertilizer prices high: both urea and ammonia which had begun the year at around US\$400 per tonne, reached in excess of US \$800 per tonne by August of that year.

In 2008, developments in the local and international arenas continued to influence the domestic inflationary environment. The constant liquidity in the financial system was a catalyst to movements in the domestic price index, while on the supply side, adverse weather conditions and flooding in several key agricultural regions led to shortfalls in locally produced food supplies. In addition, the steady rise in global food prices in the first half of the year was an important source of inflationary pressure. Though internationally food commodity prices began softening in the third quarter, price corrections were slow in filtering into domestic prices.

Headline inflation averaged 12% in 2008 when compared to 7.9% in the previous year. In January 2009, headline inflation measured 10% and increased gradually to a high of 15.4%

by October 2009. Throughout 2008, escalating food prices were mainly responsible for the volatility of prices, accounting for almost two-thirds of the changes observed in headline inflation.

Following the global financial crisis, fiscal policy in Trinidad and Tobago in 2008/2009 was pursued within the context of reduced international energy prices, declines in the local production of crude oil, natural gas and petrochemicals.

In the last three months of the fiscal year 2008/2009, total revenue declined by 41.4% when compared with the final quarter of the fiscal year 2007/2008. Real GDP growth declined from 4.6% in 2007 to 2.3% in 2008, to -3.0 % by January 2009.

In addition, by fiscal year 2007/2008, there were other signs that the economy was slowing down: the unemployment rate moved from 4.6% in 2008 to 5.7% by January 2009 (due principally to the closure and or scaling down of many projects in the construction and services sub sectors). Debt service increased from 28.7% in 2007 to 31.1% in 2008 and gross reserves fell from \$ 9.4 billion in 2007 to \$8.7 billion in 2008.

The government of Trinidad and Tobago therefore had to adjust its fiscal operations in the wake of reduced revenues generated from its main revenue earner, the petroleum sector which generates more than 40% of the country's revenue. In 2008/2009, monetary policy management primarily focussed on tempering inflation while moderating the effects of the global recession.

Shortages of food from traditional sources brought to national consciousness the need to improve food security measures and to rely less on food imports. As a consequence, there are now several public and private sector organizations which recognize and support initiatives to promote and develop the sector.



Cut back in government's revenues affected the ability of the state to fund many of its development programmes, including those in the agricultural sector. All Ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources were consequently requested by the Cabinet to reduce expenditure on development programme in 2009. Many of the planned development programmes within the sector were either scaled down or shelved.

Notwithstanding this in 2009, the government continued to support initiatives it had taken in previous years to improve the food security situation and to reduce the price of food and cost of inputs used in agricultural production. Funding continued for the operation of one of the large existing state farms which was established for the purpose of increasing the supply of food on the local market and for making food more affordable for the population.

b. Changes in Agrifood Production

The aforementioned global and domestic economic developments impacted significantly on the performance of the local agrifood sector

during 2008/9. As a consequence, there were changes in agricultural production levels, employment in the sector, levels of imports and exports of agricultural produce, levels of investment in the sector and on food price inflation.

Output of Crops

There were increases in production of a wide of food crops and vegetables in 2008, when compared with production levels of the previous year. Increases in production were recorded for cabbage, bodi, ochro, lettuce, pumpkin, patchoi, watermelon, sweet pepper, hot peppers and pigeon peas. Production levels of all the major root crops grown, principally cassava and sweet potatoes were also greater than output levels of those commodities in the previous year.

Increases in production were also recorded for cocoa, coffee, and citrus. There were, however, decreases in production of tomatoes; cucumbers; melongene and green corn. Favourable weather conditions which prevailed in 2008 also facilitated crop production in many areas.

Production from former employees of Caroni Ltd, who were given land by the state for agricultural production, also had an impact on food production.

Available data, from the Central Statistical Office, for the first two quarters of 2009, however, indicate that production levels for the majority of food crops and vegetables were less than the first two quarters of 2008, due to shortfalls in rainfall. Data collected from the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation, however, indicated that agricultural output may have strengthened in the third quarter of 2009: there were sizeable increases in the amount of produce traded at the market such as cabbages (32.7%), pumpkin (20.6%), tomatoes (13.2%) and dasheen (14.4%).

The Central Statistical Office also indicated that, in general, the amount of land cultivated with green vegetables in 2008, had increased to 8,613.5 hectares, an increase of 136% over the area cultivated in those commodities the previous year. The area of land cultivated with root crops in 2008 was also estimated to have increased by 72% to 3183 hectares over the previous year.

Contracts given by the Trinidad and Tobago Agribusiness Association to farmers for producing cassava and sweet potatoes might have accounted for the substantial increase in the production of those root crops.

Output of Livestock

The output from the livestock sector was mixed in 2008 when compared to the previous year. There were increases in the production of broilers (1.5%); table eggs (14.2%); and mutton (14.2%). Decreases in production were however recorded for milk (27.8%); pigs (3.4 %) and beef (56.5%). Decreasing output from the livestock industry, in general, was largely a result

of competition from more competitively priced imported meats and low level of investments and research in livestock production.

Food Imports

Shortfalls in local production are largely compensated by food imports which are steadily increasing in value due to increasing prices for food on the world market. The food import bill continued its upward trend, moving from TT\$ 2.8 billion in 2006; TT \$3.4 billion in 2007 and to TT\$ 4.2 billion in 2008. The value of the food import bill in 2008 represented a 23.5% increase over the previous year's bill. Available food import records for the first six months of 2009 indicated that the country had imported TT\$1.8 billion in food. Major categories of food imported in 2008 included: cereals and cereal preparation which accounted for 22.7% of the food import bill. The categories of fruits and vegetables and dairy products both accounted for 16.9%.

Food Exports

The country exported an estimated TT1.2 billion of food in 2008. This value of food exports was 1.5% more than the value of food exported the previous year. The major categories of food exported in 2008 were cereals and cereal preparations which accounted for 36.4% of the value of food exports. Fruits and vegetables accounted for 21.9%.

Food Trade balance

In 2007, there was a negative food trade balance of TT\$2.3 billion. The deficit in the food trade increased by 34.2 % in 2008. The widening trend of the food trade gap suggests that the country still faces a major challenge in addressing its food security situation.

Prices

In 2009, the retail price index for food and alcoholic beverages increased by 12.4% over the retail price index for 2007. Food prices were identified, by the Central Bank, as one of the major push factors of inflation which negatively impacted on the economy during the fiscal year 2008/2009. The Central Bank reported that throughout 2008, escalating food prices accounted for almost two-thirds of the changes observed in headline inflation.

The food and non-alcoholic beverage sub-index rose on average 25.6% in 2008, when compared with 17.5% in 2007 (the highest average annual increase since 1974). Prices of fruits rose, on average by 33.3% and vegetables by 27.9% in 2008 over the previous year. Inflationary pressures, however, eased during the first six months of 2009, with year-on-year headline inflation falling to 5.9% in July of that year.

Employment

The agricultural sector, up to the first quarter of 2009, accounted for 3.3% of the total national labour force. The number of persons working in the sector, in that quarter, was 28% more than the number of persons in the sector in 2008. The slow down in the economy and subsequent job losses in the construction, manufacturing and services sectors might have directed the unemployed to resort to the agricultural sector for employment. Farmers, however, have reported that it is still difficult to attract the increasing pool of unemployed from other sectors to work on farms.

Investments

Loans disbursed by the Agricultural Development Bank to the sector in 2008 were TT\$63.2 million, which was 8.6% more than the amount of loans disbursed by the bank in the previous year. Loans disbursed by commercial

banks, in 2008, for the agribusiness sector (mainly for agroprocessing) amounted to TT\$141 million which represented a 67.8% increase over loans provided in 2007.

Total subsidies provided by the state to the farming sector decreased from TT\$23.7 million in 2007 to TT\$16.8 million in 2008.

Allocations for development programme works in the agricultural sector were also affected by shortfalls in government revenue and slowing down of the economy during the fiscal year 2008/2009. Government departments of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources were initially allocated TT\$198.2 million in 2009, but were restricted to spend TT\$154.1 million as a result of continued shortfalls in revenues.

c. Changes in the Policies that Affect Agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture Land and Marine Resources has enunciated that it will be pursuing a programme to accelerate the transformation of the agricultural sector “from Agriculture to Agribusiness”. A Transformation Plan for attainment of that goal was prepared in 2008. A major objective of the Plan is to enable the sector to meet at least 25% of the national demand for 6 food groups (staples, pulses/legumes; vegetables; fruits; animal products; fats and oils).

The strategies of the Plan include, *inter alia*, making more land available for production; building marketing and processing capacity; expanding entrepreneurship and commercialization of agricultural operations; lowering input costs; adoption of new technologies; improving marketing information and marketing infrastructure; increasing access to labour and restructuring research and development.

An Operational Plan is now being prepared, with the assistance of IICA and CARDI, to give effect to the proposals outlined in the Transformation Plan.

The major policy decisions and programme initiatives taken by the State that would have some impact on developments in the agricultural sector included:

- Acceleration of the regularization process for ownership of state lands, especially for those farmers with expired leases awaiting renewal; and for farmers who have occupied state lands, without official permission, for over 10 years and who have already applied for regularization. This policy measure implies that farmers will be in a position to use their land as collateral for accessing loans for investing in the sector.
- Distribution of two acre plots to former employees of the state-operated sugar company Caroni Ltd. which was closed three years ago.
- Introduction by the state-run Agricultural Development Bank of a micro-credit facility to assist farmers who lack the collateral and proper land tenure to access loans. A provision of TT\$75 million was identified by the state, in the budget of 2009/2010 for that purpose. The National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation and the Trinidad and Tobago Agribusiness Company will provide support to the ADB in that venture.
- Importation of fertilizer by the State, through YARA Trinidad Ltd., a local holding of a global fertilizer company. Some \$7 million was spent on importing the first shipment of fertilizer. The fertilizer is to be resold to registered farmers at cost. The intension of this measure is to reduce the cost of producing food.
- Proposals to increase the number of farmers' markets and small scale pack houses to facilitate farmers wishing to export.
- Establishment of a Water management and flood control project in 2009 to reduce flooding.
- Establishment of an Agricultural Ranger Squad to provide 24 hours security in designated areas to reduce high incidence of theft of agricultural produce.
- A proposal for reforming property taxes, now being debated in the Parliament. The bill seeks to increase taxes on residential, industrial, commercial and agricultural properties on the basis of their annual taxable values (ATV): For agricultural properties the proposed ATV will be 2 % of the open market capital value.
- Expansion of the seedling production units of the Ministry.
- Grant, by the State, of provisional leases to four companies to operate separate farms on state lands. Each farm is over 50 hectares and will be producing a range of vegetables, root crops, rice, fruits and small ruminants. Most are awaiting a certificate of environmental clearance from the Environmental Management Agency before proceeding.
- Development of proposals for the establishment of a labour supply scheme for agriculture (Farm Pep), to be administered by the Ministry of Labour, to supply labour for the sector which is currently experiencing difficulty in sourcing workers.

d. Changes in the Institutional Structure for Agriculture and Rural Life

- The Estate Management and Business Development Company (EMBDC) has been assigned new responsibilities with an allocation of TT\$100,000M in the 2009/2010 budget for construction of agricultural access roads and infrastructure. The Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago (ASTT) was selected by the State to support the EMBDC by providing labour and security for materials purchased for construction of the roads. Construction of agricultural access roads was formerly the prime responsibility of the Land and Water Division of the MALMR.
- Greater emphasis by the Extension Division of the MALMR in promoting agri-business management practices to the farming community
- Installation of a new management team on the board of the ASTT which over the last two years has succeeded in increasing membership nationally, from a few hundred persons, two years ago, to over 4000 members at present.
- Establishment of a National Agricultural Advisory Commission to advise the Minister of Agriculture on matters pertaining to the preparation and implementation of the National Food and Nutrition Security and Agribusiness competitiveness Plan.
- Establishment of a Ministerial Committee on Food Prices and Inflation.

e. Major Events in Thematic areas

Trade

- Development of a programme to embrace market opportunities in the European Union (EU) for exporters, especially those created by the CARIFORUM/EPA Agreement.
- Establishment of an Office of Trade Negotiations (OTN) in the CARICOM Secretariat. The OTN will have responsibility for the coordination, development and negotiating strategies for all Community external trade negotiations, including the CARICOM/Canada Trade and Development Agreement. Negotiations for a new Agreement with

Agribusiness

- Hosting of an annual National Agricultural Entrepreneurs' competition, by the MALMR, to promote the sector. In 2009, TT\$ 2 million in prizes were awarded to winners in 11 areas of crop, livestock, agro-forestry and aquaculture.
- Production of value-added products (cassava; sweet potato chips and bottled coconut water) by the state-supported Trinidad and Tobago Agribusiness Association which has contracted farmers to supply those commodities.
- Establishment of a dialogue platform among value chain actors for selected commodities (hot pepper and pumpkin) as part of the development of an export promotion programme
- - IICA/NAMDEVCO.
Convening of an International Cocoa Conference (2nd Round Table for a Sustainable Cocoa Economy), which examined, *inter alia*, establishment of a cocoa sustainability fund).

Agricultural Health and Food Safety

The following were the major developments in agricultural health and food Safety:

- Conduct of an Avian Influenza field simulation exercise in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Development of programmes to control the spread of the Giant African Snail, which entered the country in 2008.
- Establishment of the Technical Management Advisory Committee (TMAC) in this area, under the leadership of Senator the Honourable Arnold Piggott, in support of the Jagdeo Initiative.

Natural Resources and the Environment

- Initiation, by the government, of a carbon neutral strategy that will focus on carbon reduction, beginning with a pilot project in several sectors of the economy. The results of the pilot study will be the basis for development of the country's climate change policy.
- Establishment of a Cabinet-Appointed Working Group on Climate Change.
- Undertaking by the National Reforestation and Watershed Management Programme to increase the forest cover over the land mass to sequester or trap green house emissions. The project will cover 33,000 acres of land over a 10 year period.
- Amendment of the Environment Management Act in 2008. The Amended Legislation incorporates conditions under which a CFC will be required for removal of forest cover as well as for clearing, grading and excavating land.



Market scene in Tobago

4 Results of the Implementation of the National Technical Cooperation Agenda in Trinidad and Tobago during 2009



I. - r. Costa Rican farmer; Senator the Honourable Arnold Piggott, Minister of Agriculture, Land & Marine Resources; Charmaine Lewis, MALMR and Gregg C.E. Rawlins, IICA Representative visiting a dasheen farm in Costa Rica

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

Supporting the Ministry of Agriculture

As part of the participation in the Forum for Leaders of Agriculture, the Honourable Arnold Piggott, Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, accompanied by a team of officials from the Ministry and a group of agricultural entrepreneurs visited Costa Rica in June 2009 to view centres of excellence in that country and to discuss the establishment of partnerships with the Ministry of Agriculture of Costa Rica, Corporación Hortícola Nacional, PROGROAIN and B & C Exportadores. Mr. Gregg C.E. Rawlins, IICA Representative, accompanied the delegation on what was a successful mission to Costa Rica.

IICA partnered with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in strengthening the capacity of extension services of the MALMR to provide a better quality service to farmers and stakeholders in the agricultural sector. The sensitization programme entitled "Excellence in Extension Services Delivery" seeks to build an extension services transformation vision aligned with the Ministry's transformation programme and the National Vision 2020. In 2009, the programme trained approximately 150 extension officers of the MALMR.

The visit by the team of officials to Costa Rica and the delivery of the extension programme are linked as two of the resource persons: Mr. Giovanni Masis Masis and Mr. Nils Solorzano who were met on the Costa Rica trip were

also part of a delegation of resource persons at the extension workshop in November in Trinidad.

IICA provided human resource support to the programme through Mr. Gregg C.E Rawlins, Ms. Diana Francis, Regional Specialist, Policies and Trade Negotiations and Mr. Edric Harry, Policy Analysis and Planning Specialist. Additionally, the Office facilitated the participation of Mr. Masis Masis, President of the CORPOHORTI who made a presentation during the workshop and who visited a number of farms and shared his expertise on soil and crop management.



Diane Francis making a presentation at the extension workshop

Participation in hemispheric meetings

A delegation from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) participated in the Vth Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad from April 17 – 19, 2009. The Summit, which had as its theme “Securing Our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability” was the first to be hosted by a CARICOM Member State. The IICA delegation was headed by Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, Director General and included Mr. Trevor W. Murray, Director of Operations and Integration, Caribbean Region; Mr. Bernardo Badani, Director of Follow up to the Summit of the Americas Process; Mr. Gregg C.E. Rawlins,

IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago and Mrs. Rosanna Brathwaite.

Mr. Christopher Hansen, Deputy Director General and Ms. Melania Portilla, Rural Development Specialist, participated in the Private Sector and Civil Society Fora respectively. The office played a key role in supporting the participation of the delegation and provided administrative and secretarial support during the process.



I. - r. Geselle Edwards-Hodge, IICA providing support to Dr. Bernardo Badani and Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite at the Vth Summit of the Americas

The 5th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica in October of 2009. Thirty-three Ministers of Agriculture of the Hemisphere gathered at that meeting where they signed the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement - Jamaica 2009, which seeks to build capacity for enhancing food security and rural life in the hemisphere. The week-long meeting ended with the election of the Director General elect, Dr. Victor Villalobos, who would serve the Institute for the period 2010-2014. The IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago assisted the delegation from the MALMR in preparing the country report for Trinidad and Tobago at this meeting. The Office also assisted the IICA office in Barbados in preparations for and participated in IICA’s “Agrotourism Global Village”, which was mounted at the exhibition during that Week of Agriculture in Jamaica.

Young leaders

The office supported the participation of Lorraine Waldropt-Ferguson from Trinidad and Jean-Robert Richard from Tobago, as representatives at the Forum for Young Leaders involved in the Sustainable Development of Agriculture in the Americas in the 21st Century, held in September 2009 in San José, Costa Rica.

The week-long forum is organized annually by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in an effort to promote the development of leaders with a global vision. 70 young people from 34 countries across the hemisphere participated and received training in areas such as value-based leadership, teamwork, systemic thinking, conflict resolution, agro-energy, project design and preparation. They also had the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences and engage in rich interchange on visions for the future of agriculture and rural life.



I. - r. Gregg C.E. Rawlins, Lorraine Waldropt-Ferguson and Jean-Robert Richard

Promoting food security

As part of its efforts to improve food security through fostering more interaction between the agriculture sector and the media, IICA, in collaboration with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), launched an agricultural journalism award competition - the first of its kind in Trinidad and

Tobago. The competition was aimed at fostering greater understanding of food security and related issues among the media in Trinidad and Tobago and creating new partnerships between the agriculture sector and the media.

In an effort to encourage awareness of food security issues among citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, the office launched 2 promotional food security products: a notebook for school children entitled ***Food security begins with me*** and a poster, ***The Agriculture Treasure Chest***, under the IICA/CARDI project “Enhancing Information and Communications for Food Security in Trinidad and Tobago”. The products, which were created inhouse, were widely distributed by IICA and CARDI in Trinidad and through the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) in Tobago.



Gregg C.E. Rawlins presenting a framed copy of the food security poster to Honourable Hilton Sandy, Secretary of Agriculture, Tobago House of Assembly.

Accounting to our stakeholders

IICA's annual accountability seminar held in April of 2009, brought together several agencies within the agriculture sector in Trinidad and Tobago to discuss effective ways in which collaboration among agencies can drive the development of agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago. The seminar generated a high spirit of cooperation and commitment towards collectively supporting the Ministry of Agriculture in achieving the goals identified in its new transformation plan for the sector.

Promotion of Trade and the Competitiveness of Agribusiness

Value Chain

A solid collaborative relationship between IICA and the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) has been the basis of the successes in a technical cooperation programme between the two agencies, which began in February 2009. The IICA Office entered into a technical cooperation programme with NAMDEVCO to build its capacity in developing export and domestic food chains.

The programme, primarily involved the training of four NAMDEVCO staff members in the application of the CADIAC methodology for commodity chain analysis. The building of actor-led dialogue platforms for competitive export and domestic market penetration was another very important part of the agreed programme. Three persons from the Trinidad and Tobago Agribusiness Association (TTABA) were also trained in the use of the CADIAC Methodology.



Robert Reid, Regional Agribusiness Specialist, moderating a working group at the hot pepper value chain workshop.

Delivery of the training was done through IICA's Regional Specialist in Agribusiness and successfully concluded in November 2009. On

the basis of the analytical work undertaken by the participating trainees, NAMDEVCO has been able to develop more defined and participatory export programmes for hot pepper and pumpkin. These export programmes and their associated actor-led dialogue platforms will commence in the first quarter of 2010.

Mission to Jamaica

A team of four officials from the National Agricultural Marketing Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) and two members of the Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation (BAIC) participated in a mission to Jamaica to observe food production technologies for horticultural crops (greenhouse), in-land fishing (aquaculture), root crops, and pig. The mission was part of a collaborative effort of three IICA Offices in The Bahamas, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, to support these stakeholders in their efforts to develop similar sub-sectors in The Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago.

The mission was successful in facilitating meaningful exchanges of information on technology transfer. Robert Reid, Regional Agribusiness Specialist accompanied the team on the tour.

Cost of Production Models

A cost of production model which will allow users to determine the profitability of cultivating a particular crop was developed and promoted by IICA in 2009. The model also allows one to determine the impact of changes in costs, prices, input levels and output levels on profitability. To complement this model, a farm record keeping system was developed to guide farmers on the specific types of information to collect for input into the model. The model will be a useful tool for making business decisions on the farm as well as for making investment decisions for supporting proposals for loans from financial institutions.

Six out of 8 country offices of the MALMR received training in the use of the model, as well as staff of TTABA, NAMDEVCO, the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) and the Agricultural Planning Division of the MALMR. Training in the use of the model was delivered by Edric Harry, Policy Analyst and Planning Specialist, IICA.

IICA collaborated with NAMDEVCO in sharing information on the cost of production model by contributing a four-part technical series on the subject, which was published by NAMDEVCO in issues of its GreenVine newsletter in 2009.



Edric Harry delivering training to a group from the MALMR

Supporting the development of the small ruminant sector

In early 2009, members of the Trinidad and Tobago Goat and Sheep Society (TTGSS) approached IICA seeking assistance in selected areas of organizational development. Based on the outcomes of the meeting, a close working relationship developed between IICA and the TTGSS. The Institute provided technical and administrative support to the Society in a number of areas, including:

- development of databases and cost of production work
- outreach and promotion
- branding for goat milk and meat products that are scheduled to be on the market in 2010.

IICA also provided the Society with office space for meetings and training sessions.



I.- r. Dr. Anthony Griffith, TTGSS; Carl Khan, Chairman, Livestock & Livestock Products Board; Gregg C.E. Rawlins at the handover ceremony (below) of imported goats to local farmers under a breeding programme organized by the Agricultural Society of Trinidad & Tobago (ASTT) for the TTGSS



Developing an organic industry

A workshop, involving major stakeholders in the organic agricultural industry, including primary producers, processors, suppliers, retailers and support agencies was convened by the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago with the support of IICA's Regional Projects Specialist, Kervin Stephenson. The workshop was geared towards developing a strategy for formalizing the organic agriculture sector in Trinidad and Tobago. Discussions were initiated on developing a plan of action to move the organic agriculture sector forward; to foster linkages within the sector to enable great sharing of information and partnerships and in this regard encouraged participants to use the opportunity created by this meeting to

establish contacts as a way of infusing life into the industry.

The workshop also benefitted from results of a presentation of a survey on the policy and regulatory framework relating to organic agriculture.

Agrotourism Stakeholder seminar

The Office held a seminar for stakeholders within the agro-tourism sub-sector. The seminar presented results obtained under the IICA/OAS project “Strengthening of the Tourism Sector through Linkages with the Agriculture Sector in the Caribbean”, which ended in March 2009. The seminar was also an occasion for stakeholders to network, share experiences and discuss some ideas for growth in this area of work.



Agrotourism stakeholders at the seminar

Strengthening Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems

Several agencies, among them IICA, USDA/ APHIS, CIRAD and the French Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Livestock and Livestock Products Board (LLPB) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR) collaborated to host a regional workshop for veterinary epidemiologists from the Caribbean.

The workshop was aimed at strengthening the animal health surveillance and rapid response systems of National Veterinary Services in the Caribbean Region. It was held under the auspices of the regional VEP project to support activities related to the implementation and reinforcement of harmonized and sustainable epidemiological surveillance for Tropical Bont Tick (TBT), Tick Borne Diseases (TBD), Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) and other priority/emerging diseases.

Participants included veterinary epidemiologists and para-epidemiologists from all the beneficiary countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, St. Kitts, Nevis, St. Lucia, Grenada, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines; as well as representatives from the MALMR; the instructors from the USDA-APHIS and representatives from the partner organizations.

A key component of the workshop was the staging of an Avian Influenza simulation exercise - the first of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Office played a pivotal role in the organization of activities for the workshop, under the guidance of Carol Thomas, Regional Specialist in Agricultural Health and Food Safety, IICA.



National Avian Influenza simulation exercise carried out during the VEP workshop

Strengthening Rural Communities

During 2009, the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago and the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) developed a new partnership in support of the Brasso Seco Paria Tourism Action Committee (TAC), a rural community group, which is currently expanding their tourism product. With the support of the IICA Office in Barbados, an exploratory mission and visit to the community by members of IICA and the MOT was led by Ms. Roxanne Waithe, Agrotourism Specialist, IICA Office in Barbados.

Subsequent briefing sessions with the relevant stakeholders resulted in the design of a way forward including recommendations for follow-up action by IICA, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources.



Members of the Brasso Seco Paria TAC, the Ministry of Tourism and IICA participating in a guided tour of the coffee processing facility at Belmont Estate in Grenada

One of the key, tangible follow-up activities proposed was a trip to Grenada to view the experience of the Belmont Estate, which is marketed as Grenada's finest agri-tourism experience. In November 2009, a team from IICA, the MOT and three members of the Brasso Seco Paria TAC participated in a sensitization and training mission to Belmont Estate with a

view to seeing best practices and identifying ways in which the operations at Brasso Seco could be enhanced.

The process of linking Brasso and Belmont provided both groups with a timely opportunity to share experiences and exchange technical knowledge.

Resource mobilization

IICA's strength in working with community groups to support project preparation and resource mobilization came to fruition in late 2009, when the community of Fishing Pond was successful in acquiring a new tractor. IICA has been working with the group for the past three years and assisted them in developing the project proposal that was submitted to the Community Development Fund for grant funding. The much-needed tractor was presented to the community at a formal ceremony organized by the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs. The Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago also presented the group with implements which will be used with the tractor.



David Thomas, President of the Fishing Pond Farmers' Association poses with Edric Harry of IICA at the official handing over ceremony of the new tractor.

Supporting rural women

As part of its programme to support capacity building activities of the Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWP), IICA delivered a short training course in Project Preparation for members of the network. The main aim of the training was to increase the network's capacity to mobilize resources for the implementation of special projects. Eleven women successfully completed the training.



Members of the Network of Rural Women Producers participating in a training exercise on Project Preparation at the IICA Office

IICA supported the rural women in hosting the first ever Trinidad and Tobago Mango Festival, which was held on the grounds of the IICA Office on August 15, 2009. The Mango Festival: a day of fun, education, community, and good tastes, celebrated the short season of mango abundance. The event was also supported by other agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture Land and Marine Resources, the Trinidad and Tobago Goat and Sheep Society (TTGSS), the Federation of Women and the University of the West Indies, as well as the print and electronic media. The Mango Festival will be an annual event hosted by the NRWP.



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Above:

1. Gregg C.E. Rawlins speaking at the opening ceremony of the Mango Festival
2. Patrons enjoying mango products on display
3. Technicians from the MALMR educating the patrons on different mango varieties and grafting of mango

Relocation of the IICA Office

The relocation of the IICA Office in mid-2009 was a major activity that has impacted significantly on the technical programme of the office and has helped to build new relationships and strengthen of ties with collaborators and partners in the sector.

The opportunity has afforded IICA to extend its services and open its doors to more collaborators and clients for technical meetings or workshops and other events.

Five major events held during the second half of the year were the first Trinidad and Tobago Mango Festival and Suriname Day Celebrations in August; IICA Day celebrations and an event hosted by the NRWP in celebration of World Rural Women's Day in October and the reception in honour of the outgoing Director General in December.

An annex to the building is currently being renovated by the NRWP and the TTGSS for use as their new office space.



 The IICA Office in Trinidad & Tobago



The Media Roundtable launch of the IICA/CARDI Excellence in Agricultural Journalism Award.
 (Above) Members of the Head Table
 (Below) Gregg C.E. Rawlins addressing the gathering of media practitioners and agri-sector stakeholders



5

Results of Inter-Agency Cooperation



(l. - r.) Florita Kentish, FAO Representative; Senator the Honourable Arnold Piggott, Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and Gregg C.E. Rawlins, IICA Representative at the opening ceremony of the Programme on excellence in extension service delivery.

One of the key strengths of IICA's work in Trinidad and Tobago is the collaboration with other agencies in the agricultural sector. Several initiatives were completed in collaboration with other agencies:

IICA/CARDI

Under the project "Enhancing Information and Communications for Food Security in Trinidad and Tobago", IICA and CARDI launched food security promotional materials that educated the general public on the issue of food security. An agricultural journalism competition was also launched at a roundtable session that brought together members of the media and the agricultural sector.

As a result of the recommendations made at the roundtable, IICA convened a group of communications specialists from agencies within the agricultural sector, who will seek to collaborate to provide information and communications support and build more effective relationships with the media.

Both IICA and CARDI continued to collaborate on another project under the IICA/CARDI Agreement that is looking at the commercialization of the Shadow Beni (*Eryngium foetidum*).

IICA/NAMDEVCO

IICA continued to support institutional strengthening of the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation with emphasis on the hot pepper value chain development.

IICA/FAO/MALMR

IICA and the FAO partnered to support the training programme on extension services delivery of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. The programme continues in 2010.

IICA/UWI

IICA continued its commitment to the development of students of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture at the University of the West Indies, through its support to the Agribusiness Internship programme. Two students of the BSc. in Agribusiness Management, Trevyn Devonish and Mark Alvarez, spent two months as interns under the guidance of IICA specialists Edric Harry and Robert Reid. The students engaged in a number of technical activities both in the office and out on the field and also played a key supporting role to the NRWP in the development and marketing of the Mango Festival.



(l. - r.) Mark Alvarez, Gregg C.E. Rawlins and Trevyn Devonish.

IICA also collaborated with the Faculty of Science and Agriculture in recognizing and awarding excellence in agribusiness and presented three awards to outstanding students at the Faculty's prize-giving ceremony in October. Subsequent to this, the students also visited the IICA Office.



IICA Prize for the best final year project demonstrating excellence in Human Nutrition and Dietetics – Denise Riley-Mitchell



IICA Prize for the best final year project demonstrating excellence in Agribusiness Management – Brandon Jhagroo



IICA Prize for the best final year project demonstrating excellence in Commodity Utilization and Product Development – Donna-Marie Alexander

6

Results of Horizontal Technical Cooperation



Resource persons from Costa Rica sharing knowledge and expertise on crop management with officials at one of the mega farms.

The IICA offices in Costa Rica and Trinidad & Tobago collaborated on two missions - the first to Costa Rica - under the framework of the Centre for Leadership - which included the visit of a team of officials from the agricultural sector in Trinidad and Tobago. In November, key resource personnel who were met on the Costa Rica tour, were brought to Trinidad and served as resource persons in the sensitization session on extension service delivery.

The IICA offices in Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados and Grenada collaborated to support a training and sensitization mission to Belmont Estate in Grenada in November. The group comprised three members of the Brasso Seco Paria Tourism Action Committee (TAC); Research Officer from the Ministry of Tourism, Deborah Joseph; Kathryn Duncan, Information and Communications Specialist, IICA Trinidad and Tobago and Roxanne Waithe, IICA Barbados.

The IICA Offices in Jamaica, The Bahamas and Trinidad & Tobago collaborated to support a mission to Jamaica to view agriculture in that country with specific reference to food production technologies for horticultural crops (greenhouse), in-land fishing (aquaculture), root crops, and pig. Participants on the mission included members of NAMDEVCO and the BAIC.

7

New Opportunities for Technical Cooperation



Mrs. Elaine Francois-Phillip of the Brasso Seco Paria Tourism Action Committee presenting Gregg C.E. Rawlins with a token of appreciation for support given by IICA to the TAC in 2009

Through collaborative efforts with the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, increased technical cooperation support will be provided to the Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee in the development of agribusiness for community tourism activities.

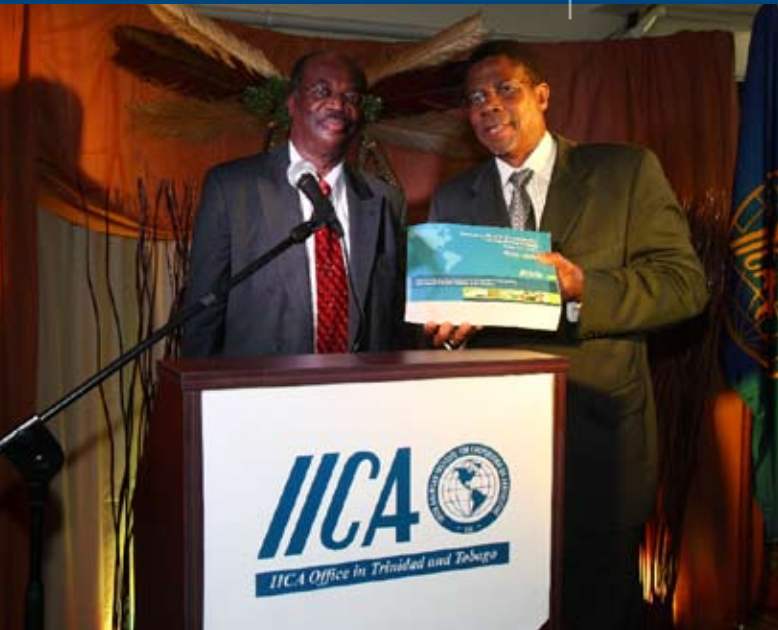
The renovation of the annex on the premises of the IICA office - at the expense of the NRWP and the TTGSS - as office space for these two groups, brings opportunities for increased technical cooperation with IICA in agribusiness development and institutional strengthening.

Increased collaboration with stakeholder agencies under a programme of work to partner with media in the dissemination of agricultural news and public information. This strategic partnership will see IICA collaborating more closely in the area of communications with other key partners in the sector such as the ADB, ASTT, FAO, MALMR, NAMDEVCO, THA and TTABA in this area, as well as with the Media itself.

Establishment of a programme of work to support research and project work of undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, UWI.

8

Main Activities organized by IICA



Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, outgoing Director General, IICA presenting a copy of IICA's management report for 2002-2008 to Senator the Honourable Arnold Piggott, Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources

December 16

Christmas Cocktail Reception to honour the outgoing Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite and inauguration of the new office building by Dr. Brathwaite and Senator the Honourable Arlonold Piggot Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources.

November 19

Stakeholder Workshop on Organic Agriculture.

October 7

IICA Day celebrations and launch of Food Security promotional products under the IICA/CARDI project "Enhancing information and communications for food security in Trinidad and Tobago".

October 6

Roundtable launch of the Agricultural Journalism Awards.

April 28

IICA Accountability Seminar.

March 17

Agrotourism Stakeholder Workshop.

9

Acronyms

ADB	Agricultural Development Bank
ASTT	Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
BAIC	Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation
CADIAC	Commodity-chain analysis and action-oriented dialogue
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CIRAD	French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
CORPOHORTI	Corporación Hortícola Nacional (Costa Rica)
EMBDC	Estate Management Business Development Company
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IABA	Inter-American Board of Agriculture
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
LLPB	Livestock and Livestock Products Board
MALMR	Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources
MOT	Ministry of Tourism
NAMDEVCO	National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation
NRWP	Network of Rural Women Producers
OTN	Office of Trade Negotiations
TAC	Tourism Action Committee
THA	Tobago House of Assembly
TMAC	Technical Management Advisory Committee
TTABA	Trinidad and Tobago Agribusiness Association
TTGSS	Trinidad and Tobago Goat and Sheep Society
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
UWI	University of the West Indies
VEP	Veterinary Epidemiologist Programme



IICA DAY CELEBRATIONS & LAUNCH OF FOOD SECURITY COPYBOOK AND POSTER



WORLD RURAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS



IICA BOOTH AT WORLD FOOD DAY EXHIBITION



SURINAME DAY CELEBRATIONS



LAUNCHING THE MANGO FESTIVAL WITH THE "MANGO BITE"



INAUGURATION OF THE OFFICE

Our Staff

TECHNICAL STAFF



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3



4



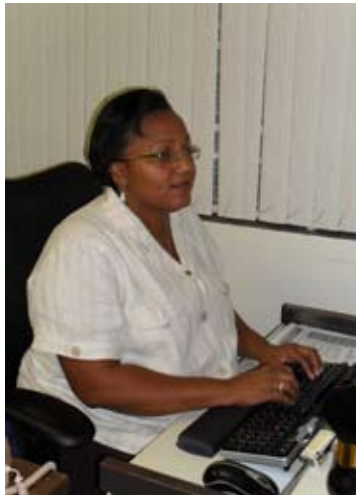
5

1. GREGG C.E. RAWLINS - Representative
2. DIANE FRANCIS -Regional Specialist, Policy and Trade Negotiations
3. ROBERT REID - Regional Specialist in Agribusiness
4. EDRIC HARRY - Policy Analyst and Planning Specialist
5. KATHRYN DUNCAN - Information and Communications Specialist

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF



6



7



8



9



10

- 6. FRANCILLA STEWART - Accounting Technician
- 7. GRACE PAJOTTE-GREENE - Administrative Assistance & Secretary to the Representative
- 8. GESELLE EDWARDS-HODGE - Secretary
- 9. EDWIN FRANCO - Driver/Messenger
- 10. GLENDA CHARLES-ASH - Office Attendant

LET'S LEARN!

1. Can you name the foods below?
2. Match each one with the correct food group on the chart.
3. Now quiz your friends!





Name: _____
 Subject: _____
 Class: _____
 School: _____

This copybook was produced under the project "Enhancing Information and Communications for Food Security in Trinidad and Tobago", funded and implemented by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI).




**Food is our treasure...
...Agriculture is its chest**



**Support
OUR
AGRICULTURE!**



This Food Security message is promoted under the project "Enhancing Information and Communications for Food Security in Trinidad and Tobago", funded and implemented by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), 2009.



The 'Agriculture Treasure Chest' - IICA/CARDI poster promoting food security.

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