

FIRST DRAFT  
OF PRELIMINARY  
VERSION

INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

DESCRIPTION AND OPERATIONAL SCHEME  
FOR THE  
CARIBBEAN FOOD CORPORATION'S  
MARKETING INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Report prepared for the CFC  
by:

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PORT-OF-SPAIN  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
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## I. OBJECTIVES

The Caribbean Food Corporation (CFC) needs to establish an efficient, dependable, and timely information service in order to carry out the following specific objectives:

- a. Identifying, planning, and implementing all stages of agricultural production schemes and any schemes relating thereto.
- b. Mobilizing funds, technical and managerial skills (from within and without the region) to promote, finance and implement agricultural production plans.
- c. Organizing and facilitating the bulk purchase of agricultural inputs, as well as marketing and other services associated with agricultural production programmes in the following countries:

Antigua, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts/Nevis/Anguilla, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Trinidad & Tobago.

## II. TYPES OF INFORMATION

For the sake of convenience information needed by the Corporation can be divided into two distinct types - primary information and secondary information.

- A. Primary information is collected directly by the Corporation from the Member States and includes:
  1. Weekly market price quotations on food products of CARICOM origin and Non-CARICOM origin.
  2. Weekly statement on supply and demand of food products of CARICOM origin.
  3. Twice yearly food crop production estimates.
  4. Twice yearly indication of actual food crop production.
  5. Twice yearly forecast of cost of food crop production

6. Twice yearly indication of actual cost of food crop production.

- B. Secondary information or documentary information is information published in various formats such as books, pamphlets, microfiche, films, etc., by individuals, public and private institutions, governmental agencies, publishing houses, etc.

Secondary information of special interest to the Caribbean Food Corporation will include:

1. Vital and agricultural statistics.
2. Trade statistics.
3. Directories of importers/exporters of agricultural products.
4. Financial information published by banks and other financial institutions.
5. Directories of shipping and forwarding companies with their rates and schedules.

### III. ELEMENTS OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Such information is traditionally stored in an institutional library or information centre.

- A. The total information system will consist of five aspects:

1. Marketing Intelligence Service which includes collecting, storing and analysing price information, supply and demand of agricultural products of both CARICOM origin and Non-CARICOM origin,
2. Information system for crop production estimates,
3. Information system for cost of food crop production,
4. Human resource inventory of marketing specialists, and
5. Small documentary collection.

- B. As a first step in developing the total information service it was decided to develop a Marketing Intelligence Service covering initially only the GMS food products but substituting sweet

potatoes for oranges:

Carrots  
Onions  
Peanuts  
Pineapples  
Plantains  
Sweet potatoes.

Of these six commodities special attention will be paid to carrots and onions. In the future as necessities arise, the Service can easily be expanded to include any number of food products required.

C. The quantitative and qualitative information elements needed for each agricultural product would be:

1. Price: Weekly high and low price paid

Non-CARICOM origin (wholesale price  
(retail price)

CARICOM origin (wholesale price  
(retail price)

2. Quantity:

CARICOM origin (offered  
(sold)

3. Market Condition Indicator:

demand greater than supply,  
demand equals supply or  
supply greater than demand.

#### IV. OPERATIONAL SCHEME

A. Information Collection:

The successful functioning of the Marketing Intelligence Service is based on the full cooperation of the respective national marketing board or equivalent institution in each one of the twelve member states listed on page one.

Each central marketing agency will, on a daily basis, complete one "Daily Price Quotation Sheet" (annex 1). These Central Marketing Agencies will receive a block of pre-printed forms and the designated surveyor only needs to fill in the appropriate columns. It should be noted that grades for each product have been indicated on the form. However, it is recognised that the CARICOM approved grading system has not been widely applied; and consequently, it is not expected that much information will be collected in regards to

graded products. The indication of grades does indicate CFC's concern with the introduction and acceptance of a uniform grading system.

1. The Daily Price Quotation Sheets will be accumulated by each Marketing Agency and on Friday afternoon each national marketing agency will prepare the Weekly Cumulative Price and Supply Information Sheet (annex 2). On the sheet will be indicated the highest and lowest paid wholesale and retail price for CARICOM and Non-CARICOM origin products during the week.
2. In addition the quantity offered and sold of CARICOM origin products will be noted.
3. Finally, an overall assessment of the general market conditions will be indicated product by product. The completed sheet will be mailed immediately to the Caribbean Food Corporation for processing, analysis and storage.
4. When the weekly sheet has been received at CFC, it will be checked in and registered, using "Check List-Weekly Price Quotation Sheet" (annex 3).
5. If a weekly sheet has not been received on time (on time will of course be a factor of the reliability of the intra-regional mail service) a claim letter will be sent to the Central Marketing Agency in question using a form claim letter (annex 4).

B. Information Storage

In order to have easy access to collected information it is suggested to create for each participating Central Marketing Agency one folder. Each folder will contain:

1. Identification sheet indicating mailing address, telephone



and telex of CMA.

2. Names of Agency Officers and post titles.
3. Chronological file of "Weekly Cumulative Price and Supply Information Sheet".
4. Graph of weekly wholesale price for carrots (CARICOM origin with high and low price graph lines.  
(To be able to make easy price comparisons week by week, month by month, and year by year, as well as identify seasonal price patterns, etc., it is recommended to have only twelve (12) monthly divisions on the X axis with each month subdivided into four (4) weekly divisions (annex 5).)
5. Graph of weekly wholesale price for onions (CARICOM origin) with high and low price graph lines.
6. A list of cumulative totals for quantities of carrots (CARICOM origin) offered and sold.
7. A list of cumulative totals for quantities of onions (CARICOM origin) offered and sold.

C. Analysis of Information

1. Analysis and presentation of information will depend on the identified needs of the Corporation. Initially, it was decided to concentrate on information about carrots and onions, and it is expected that the graphs will suffice to give a clear presentation of price information. For the present time the information will provide a historical record and appropriate time series of information.
2. Personnel  
It is expected that one full-time secretary/record keeper will be needed to maintain data collection and up-date graphs.

D. Promotion of System

Before the Intelligence Service can be introduced to and accepted by the Central Marketing Agencies, a promotional campaign must be carried out by CFC. It should be explained to the respective agencies what the Marketing Intelligence Service objectives are. It must be pointed out that the present proposal is only one element of the overall Intelligence Service, the other components being crop forecasting and cost of production information.

E. Documentary Information Centre

1. Office Space

The establishment of a documentary information centre will almost certainly be of immediate use. A 30-40 m<sup>2</sup> area should be set aside for such use. The Corporation has a need now to store, file and retrieve the various reports and proposals originated by CFC and CARICOM.

2. A simple filing and indexing system must be established. It is recommended to type a 3" x 5" card for each document indicating:

- Title of Report
- Author(s)
- Date carried out or published
- Executing Agency or institution

Cards could be filed alphabetically by author. All documents should be stored on a shelf or filing cabinet arranged alphabetically by title.

3. It is difficult at this early stage in the life of CFC to clearly identify documentary needs. However, it seems to be clear that a great deal of statistical information published in the region will be needed. Depending on the final decision regarding emphasis of CFC activities, a selection can be made. The content of the collection should be developed with the cooperation of all specialists working in CFC.

4. Personnel:

A person with a background in library procedures (not necessarily a librarian) should be hired full-time to carry out the clerical aspects of the collection such as producing, ordering tools and catalogues as well as arranging the documents on the shelves. Any experienced librarian can offer technical assistance on a part-time basis (2 - 3 hours per week) to establish the appropriate document arrangement and easy classification.

5. Equipment:

Special equipment needs for both Marketing Intelligence Service and Documentation Unit would be 50' of shelving and 5 legal size filing cabinets.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIONS

- A. In regard to establishing the Information System for Crop Production Estimates the easiest approach will be to identify in each participating country the three or four major producers of the crops listed in the GMS. A list of these major producers should be kept up to date and whenever general crop production estimates or specific crop estimates are needed a series of telephone calls will very quickly produce the necessary information at a low cost. The collected information must, of course, be stored in order to establish time series of information.
- B. In order to establish cost of production information the same general procedure could be followed. However, in this case the necessary information elements should be identified and a standard form should be developed and distributed. Again the collected information should be stored by CFC. It is realized that in both the above cases national statistical institutions are collecting such information but the publication is generally too slow to serve the CFC purposes. Also CFC's information gathering can serve as a verification of official data.



- C. At some time in the future it will probably be advantageous for CFC to convert to computerized information storage and analysis. The National Computer Agency in Trinidad and Tobago has just purchased a new computer and it would be possible to buy processing time from this agency.
  
- D. There are several statistical software packages commercially available such as SAS, SPSS and others. The Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences could, if requested, offer technical assistance in this regard.
  
- E. Some interest has been expressed by CFC to create an inventory of human resources in marketing in the Caribbean region. IICA already has a fully operational computerized system available to carry out such a task. If required they could provide technical cooperation to establish such an inventory.

Marketing Intelligence Service

DAILY PRICE QUOTATION SHEET

Central Marketing Agency \_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_  
 country place

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
 day month year

Carrots- Grade A pr. bag  
 Carrots- Grade B pr. bag  
 Carrots- ungraded pr. bag  
 Onions - standard pr. bag  
 Peanuts in shell - standard pr. bag  
 Peanuts-shelled - standard pr. bag  
 Pineapple - Grade A pr. lbs  
 Pineapple - Grade B pr. lbs  
 Pineapple - ungraded pr. lbs  
 Plantains - Grade A pr. lbs  
 Plantains - Grade B pr. lbs  
 Plantains - ungraded pr. lbs  
 Sweet potatoes- standard pr. bag

NON-CARICOM ORIGIN		CARICOM ORIGIN						*
P R I C E		W H O L E S A L E			R E T A I L			
Wholesale	Retail	Price	Quantity		Price	Quantity		
			offered	sold		offered	sold	

Indicate in this column \* your assessment of the overall market condition product by product.

- demand is greater than supply - use 1
- demand equals supply - use 2
- supply is greater than demand - use 3





CARIBBEAN FOOD CORPORATION

Marketing Intelligence Service

(date)

To: Central Marketing Agency  
(address).

Unfortunately we have not yet received your "Weekly Cumulative Price and Supply Information Sheet" for the week of \_\_\_\_\_

In our efforts to establish a reliable and efficient marketing intelligence service for the benefit of the region as a whole, it is of the utmost importance that we regularly receive your marketing information.

Thanking you for your cooperation,

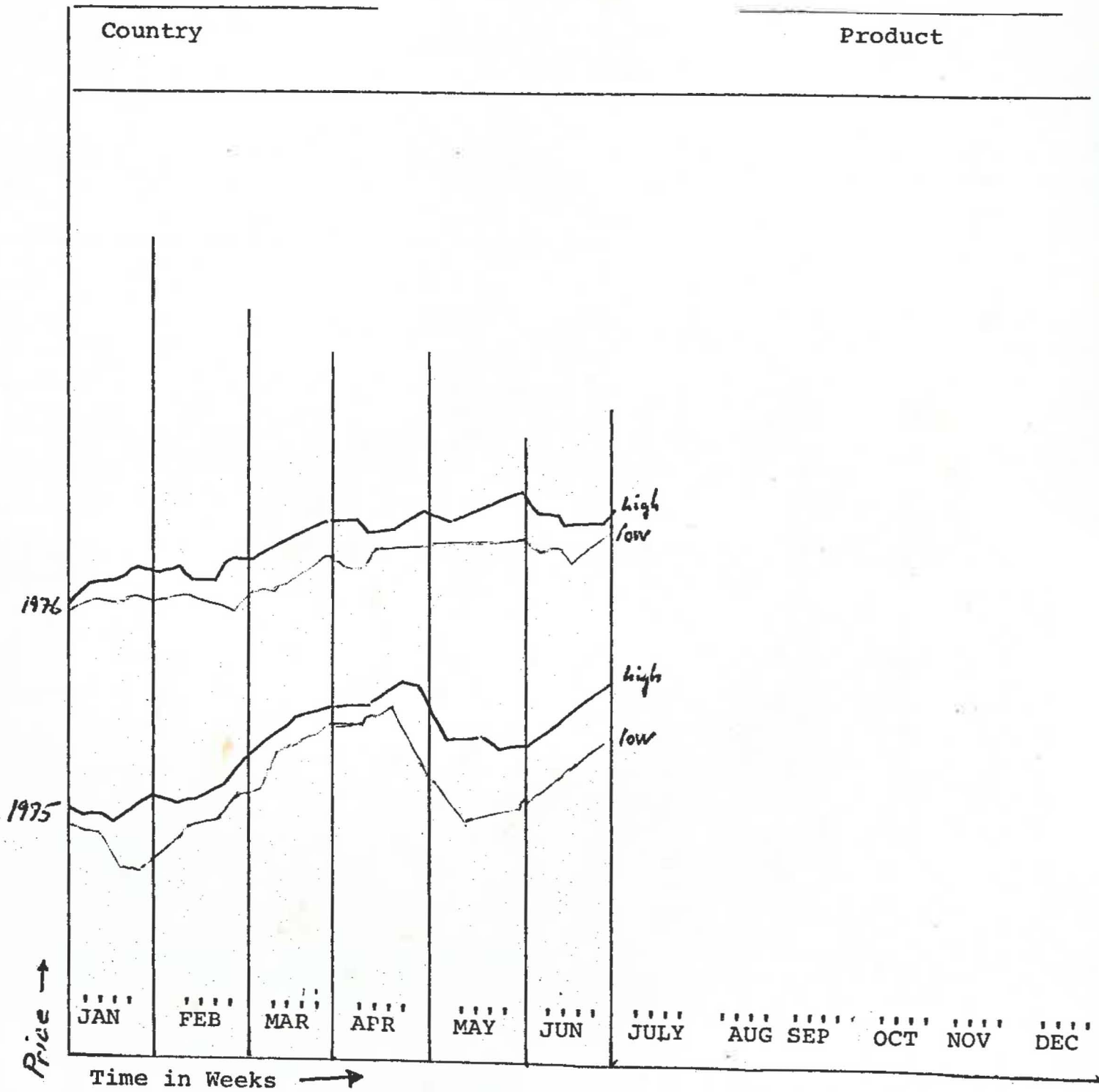
We remain,

(signature)

CARIBBEAN FOOD CORPORATION

MARKETING INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

WEEKLY PRICE FLUCTUATION GRAPH  
-WHOLESALE-





Marketing Intelligence Service

(date)

To: Central Marketing Agencies  
(address)

RE: Short explanation of Marketing Intelligence Service and instructions for completing Daily and Weekly Sheets.

The Marketing Intelligence Service is designed to collect and store marketing information about a few selected products of great importance to intra-regional trade.

The Information collected and stored about each product are the daily price paid wholesale, and retail. In addition, supply and demand will be indicated and finally an assessment of the general market condition.

As an initial step in creating a regional marketing service, the Caribbean Food Corporation is requesting the aid of each of the Central Marketing Agencies to collect on a daily basis the above information about the following products:

Carrots  
Onions  
Peanuts  
Pineapples  
Plantains  
Sweet potatoes

Enclosed you will find a sample copy of the form to be used for the daily price quotation.

Where applicable the recognized grades for each product have been indicated and the unit in which the product is stated.

Please indicate in the price column the respective price paid, wholesale and retail, for each product. Indicate as well for each product the quantity offered for sale and the quantity sold.

Finally, it is important to have your assessment of the overall market situation, product by product. For this reason you are requested to cooperate in indicating in the column marked \* one of three possibilities for each product:

1. demand is greater than supply
2. demand equals supply
3. supply is greater than demand

On a weekly basis it would be appreciated if you could summarize the daily transactions on the "Weekly Cumulative Price and Supply Information Sheet". Enclosed you will find a sample copy to be used. Please indicate by product the highest price paid as well as the lowest price paid during the week, quantity offered and sold and finally, the overall assessment of the market condition during the week.

The Weekly Cumulative Price and Supply Information Sheet should be sent promptly by air mail to:

Caribbean Food Corporation  
Marketing Intelligence Service  
P.O. Box 154  
Port-of-Spain  
Trinidad & Tobago