

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

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

St. Vincent and the Grenadines





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Development of Agriculture and Rural
Communities**

2009 Annual Report

February 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	3
1. <i>Introduction</i>	4
2. <i>Executive Summary</i>	5
3. <i>The State of Agriculture and Rural Life in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2009</i>	7
<i>a. The Context for Agriculture and Rural Life</i>	7
<i>b. Changes in Agri-food Production</i>	9
<i>c. Changes in the Institutional Framework for Agriculture and Rural Life</i>	11
<i>d. Major Developments in the Thematic Areas that Affected the Performance of Agriculture and Rural Life</i>	11
4. <i>Results of the Implementation of the National Technical Cooperation Agenda in St. Vincent and the Grenadines during 2009</i>	15
<i>a. IICA's Contribution to the Repositioning of Agriculture and Rural Life</i>	15
<i>b. Promotion of Trade and the Competitiveness of Agribusiness</i>	16
<i>c. Strengthening Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems</i>	17
<i>d. Strengthening Rural Communities based on the Territorial Approach</i>	17
<i>e. Introducing Technology and Innovation for the Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Life</i>	19
5. <i>Results of Inter-Agency Cooperation</i>	19
6. <i>New Opportunities for Technical Cooperation</i>	20
7. <i>Main Activities Organized by IICA</i>	21
8. <i>List of Acronyms</i>	22

FOREWARD

The IICA Office in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is pleased to present its 2009 Annual Report. This marks the 17th year of existence of the office. At this juncture the office is once again in transition, with the exit of Mr. Philmore Isaacs, Consultant, after two (2) years. As the new Technical Specialist, I have had five (5) months to make the transition. For me this transitional phase required a quick reassessment of the challenges we face in agriculture and rural development from the perspective of IICA, our Medium Term Plan and the National Technical Cooperation Agenda. Having just departed from the Ministry of Agriculture however, the important issues related to sectoral development were not strange to me. In fact, my main challenge was making the adjustment to new institutional rules and culture after 23 years in the civil service.

Nonetheless, the office was able to accomplish many of the results that were targeted within the planned period. These were accomplished working alongside and in concert with other institutions and agencies with the same objectives of agricultural development and the development of rural communities. The office takes this opportunity to thank all collaborating institutions for any part they would have played in making 2009 a successful year of implementation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is part of the Eastern Caribbean States (ECS) located in the southern region of the Caribbean archipelago 61° 23' West Longitude and 13° 16' North Latitude. This is a multi-island state of 150 sq. miles with St. Vincent being the largest (133 sq. miles), the centre of economic activity and governance and with over 30 other islands and cays to the south comprising the Grenadines. An estimated 110, 000 people make up the population of this multi-island state.

Traditionally, agriculture has been overwhelmingly concentrated on mainland St. Vincent, with the Grenadines economy being service oriented and playing a central role in the tourism sector of the state. Apart from agriculture, other key sectors include: construction; transportation; light manufacturing and the provision of financial services.

With a small population, tiny geographic space and the openness of the economy, St. Vincent and the Grenadines is vulnerable to the challenges of the international economic climate. This has been clearly reflected in the domestic economic situation with two consecutive years of negative economic growth which has impacted all sectors within the economy.

Agriculture has been particularly impacted over the last two years (2008/2009). Faced with escalating input prices, concomitant with a deteriorating trading regime for banana, the major crop, the sector has been particularly stressed. These challenges continue to drive transition in the sector which increasing has been seeking alternative areas for investment in crop agriculture, livestock production and fisheries.

IICA, working within the framework of the National Technical Cooperation Agenda continued to provide support services to the sector in 2009. This effort included:

1. The provision of technical services to support and enhance the efforts of government agencies;
2. Direct support to producers involved in the sector, particularly women and youth; and
3. Training and capacity development for personnel in state and private enterprises.

This report reflects the results that were obtained in 2009.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Repositioning of Agriculture and Rural Life

- The integration of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the decision making processes for sustainable agricultural and rural development was further enhanced through the participation of the Ministers within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in the 5th Hemispheric Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture in Jamaica, the SACMI Meetings and the Executive Committee Meeting.
- The technical capacities of senior management of the Ministry of Agriculture were further enhanced through the participation of a senior technical officer of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries at a CARICOM Common Agricultural Policy Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Leadership skills of two young leaders from St. Vincent and the Grenadines were strengthened through their participation in the Young Leaders of the 21st Century Workshop in Costa Rica.

Promoting Trade and the Competitiveness of Agribusinesses

Stakeholders in the livestock industry are better informed of developments in the livestock industry and proposals for industry takeoff through the execution of the first agribusiness conference on livestock industry development which was hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, IICA and FAO.

Promoting Agricultural Health and Food Safety

- The technical capabilities of the Plant Protection and Quarantine Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture were further strengthened through the participation of their representative in a regional workshop on the Identification of Coleopteran Pests in Grenada.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is now better placed to make decision on agricultural health and food safety issues after the submission of a report on the application of the PVS, under project IICA-STDF in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the country agenda containing the recommendation from the Common Vision Session.
- The VEP project has been sustained through the provision of support from the IICA Office to personnel at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries with responsibility for the project.

Promoting the Development of Rural Communities based on a Territorial Approach

- The Ministries of Agriculture and Tourism are better positioned to undertake agro-tourism initiatives in 2010 through IICA's participation in workshops and consultative meetings with consultants from the Ministry of Tourism working on agro-tourism development.

- The Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWP) was strengthened through the provision of technical and material support from the IICA office, hosting of meetings of the executive and provision of secretariat facilities and the establishment of linkages with collaborating agencies such as Mission Taiwan and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines Agricultural Forum for Youth (SVGAFY) is now better placed to successfully implement its 2010 Work Plan through support provided to the executive to strengthen the internal structures of the organization and the continued provision of secretarial facilities.

Promoting the Introduction of Technology and Innovation for the Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Life

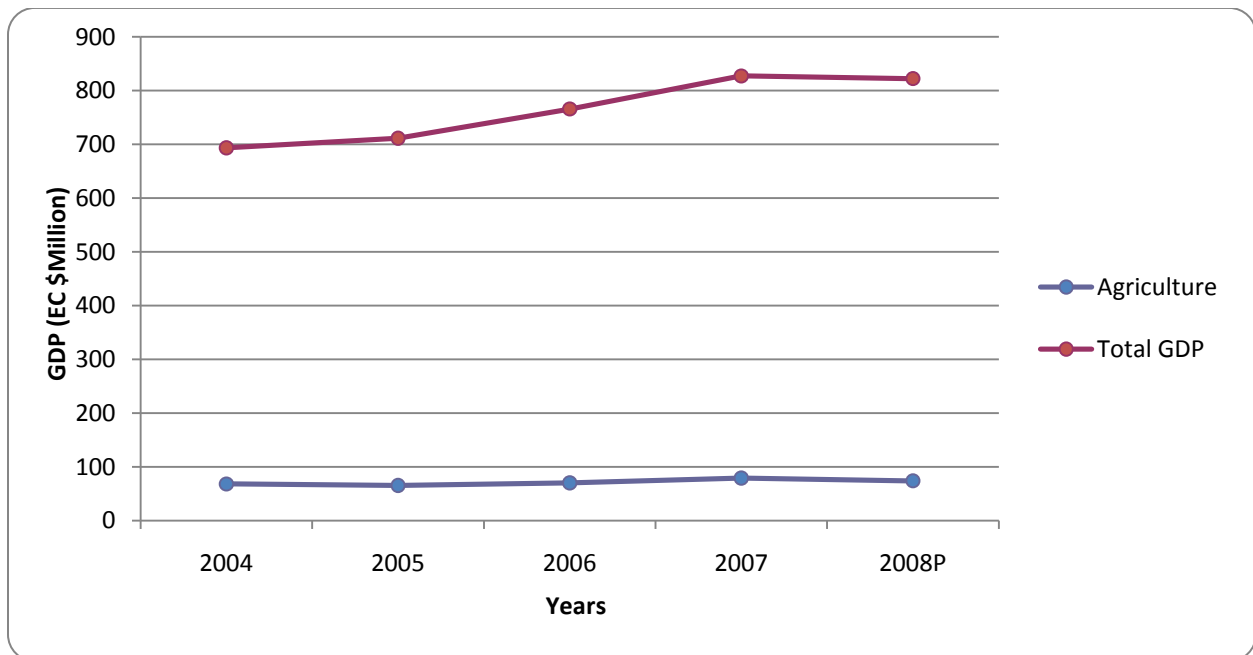
Decision makers within CARICOM have been better positioned to network and develop a common regional agenda as a result of an IICA hosted workshop promoting ***Biotechnology and Biosafety Issues***.

3.0 The State of Agriculture and Rural Life in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2009

a. The Context for Agriculture and Rural Life

The global financial crisis, in the third quarter of 2008, has had profound and lasting impact on economies all over the world. The economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been likewise affected reflected in two consecutive years of GDP contraction. Preliminary data indicates a contraction in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 2.76%¹ in 2009 following on negative growth of 0.5%² in 2008. Indicative of shrinkage within the general economy, the rate of inflation has also declined sharply from the highs experienced in 2008 as food prices soared with the increases in energy prices.

Figure 1: GDP at Factor Cost in Constant (1990) Prices 2004 – 2008(EC \$Million)



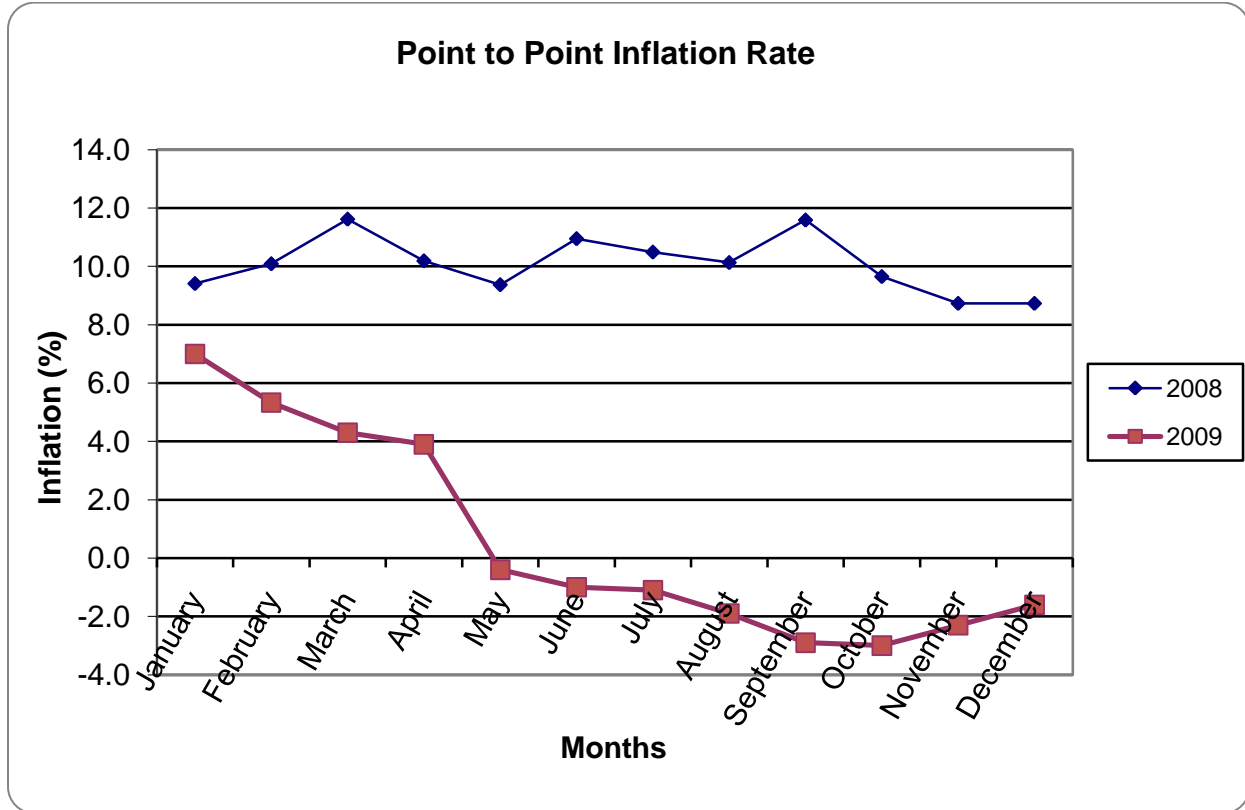
P - Preliminary

Source: Statistical Office, Central Planning Division, Ministry of Finance & Economic Planning

1. *The News newspaper article of January 22, 2010 p. 25 authored by Dr. The Hon. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines.*

2. *Data provided by the Statistical Office, Central Planning Division, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.*

Figure 2: Point to Point Rate of Inflation – January-December: 2008 and 2009



Source: Statistical Office, Central Planning Division, Ministry of Finance & Economic Planning

The contraction within the economy has been generalized with many major sectors – agriculture, banking and insurance, tourism and transportation showing decline in 2008 as compared to 2007. Within the agricultural sector comparative figures indicate a slight decline in GDP contribution in 2008 as compared to 2007 of \$5.18 Million. This decline was as a direct result of the decline in banana production and export and a significant contraction in the fisheries sub-sector. The decline ended two consecutive years of sectoral growth.

On the increasing side of economic activity Construction, Communications and Government Services showed some level of growth in 2008 over 2007 offsetting somewhat the general negative economic outlook.

Given the challenges posed by the global economic situation the Government, through its lead agency the MAFF, has taken a proactive approach involving direct intervention and support to the agricultural sector. This included inter alia:

1. Continuing the implementation of the Food Production Plan (FPP) aimed at stimulating the production of specific vegetables, root crops, fruits and livestock to increase overall domestic production, reduce dependence on imports and reduce the price levels for some food items available to consumers.

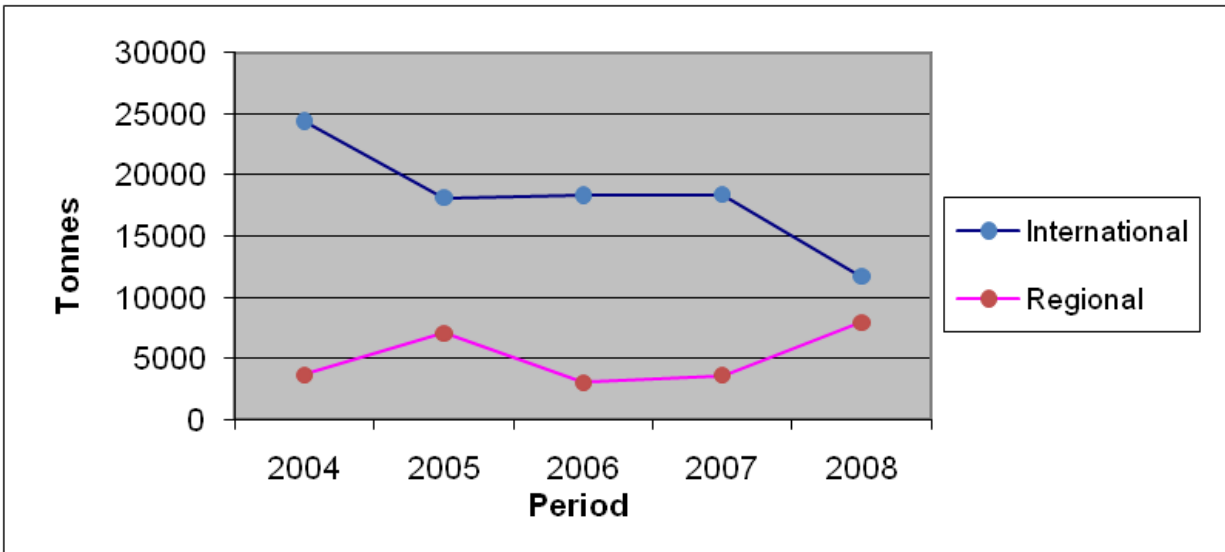
2. The Government continued to implement the FAO Funded Project: ***Input Supply to Vulnerable Populations*** (valued at USD \$250,000), under the ***Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP)*** which provided direct input support - as grants or at concessionary prices - to producers involved in activities identified in the FPP.
3. Under the Special Framework of Assistance (2006), a programme of four projects, was implemented in 2009. The projects which are continuing into 2010 include: (a) The Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development; (b) The Annual Agricultural Review involving a broad based review of the sector in 2008 from the perspective of all major stakeholders and setting the framework for this activity to be a permanent fixture; (c) Plant Protection and Quarantine Development to enhance capacities in this area; and (d) Environmental Livelihoods Project which is elaborated on further in this report.
4. The implementation of a major project under the ALBA-Alimentos framework intended to provide support to primary production (elaborated later in this report).
5. The Government also included in its capital programme a cluster of three projects valued at over 4.8 million dollars geared towards the transitioning of the banana industry consequent on the dissolution of the St. Vincent Banana Growers Association.

While these series of intervention undoubtedly brought some relief to producers and other stakeholders their full impact can only be assessed later on in 2010.

b. Changes in Agri-food Production

Crop production remains the dominant feature within the agricultural economy. Crop production in 2008 represented 73% of agriculture's \$74.07 million contribution to GDP. Banana remains the most dominant crop accounting for over 1.04% of total GDP (12% of agriculture's contribution), down slightly from 1.16% of 2007. The Banana sub-sector continues to decline but remains of significant importance to the sector and the economy as a whole. Banana export was 22,657 tonnes and 19,669 tonnes in 2007 and 2008, respectively. This decline has been largely due to the continued uncertainties and threats posed by international trading regimes and also by the ravages of diseases such as Moko Disease and Yellow Segatoka. Significantly banana export to the regional markets has expanded over the last two years.

Figure 3: Banana Exports to Regional and International Markets 2004-2008



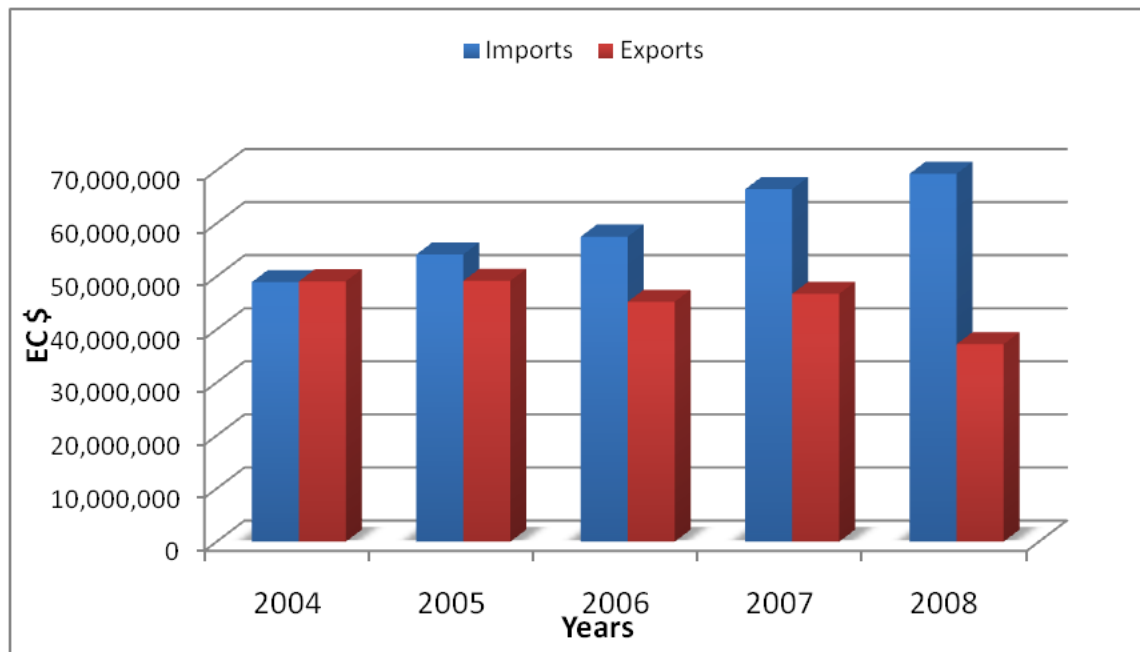
Source: Statistical Unit – Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

The production of most primary agricultural produce declined in 2008 as compared with 2007. This fall off was due in part to escalating input prices in 2008 coupled with unavailability or insufficiency of certain critical inputs at critical points during the course of the year. Root crop production remained strong in 2008 though experiencing some decline. In 2008 this subsector increased its contribution to GDP contributing 5.58% against 5.45% in 2007¹. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, however, reported an increase in production of most commodities in the first half of 2009 as compared to 2008.

In 2008 there has been a continuing trend of widening in the export/import gap both in absolute quantity and in value. In 2008 agriculture export declined to \$35.8 Million from \$46.9 Million of the year before. Imports of primary agricultural products – including meat - have continued to increase (2004-2008). At the same time overall food imports increased to 198.5 Million dollars from 157.5 Million of 2007. Significant increases were noted in all the major areas including: meat and meat products; dairy products; cereal and cereal preparations; vegetables and fruits.

1. Ministry of Agriculture Advance proposal 2010-2012 p 8.

Figure 4: Agricultural Exports vs. Agricultural Imports 2004-2005¹



Source: Statistical Unit – Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Quite notably export of Arrowroot Starch more than doubled in 2008 with 27.3 tonnes produced compared to 13.7 tonnes produced in 2007. Arrowroot starch production and export is of high socio-economic importance to communities in the north-east of mainland St. Vincent. St Vincent and the Grenadines is a leading global producer of this commodity.

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

Early in 2009 the Banana Industry Act (2009) was passed in the House of Parliament. The passage of this Act resulted in the dissolution of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Banana Growers Association (SVBGA) which controlled banana production and research and acted as agents for registered banana growers. Several of the functions previously conducted by the SVBGA are now executed by the MAFF including:

1. Extension: a new division was created in the MAFF to provide agricultural extension services to farmers and to manage chemical leaf spot control activities.
2. The new act also allows for the formation of a consultative committee on the Banana Industry consisting of representatives from the Windward Islands Farmers Association (WINFA), SVG Fair Trade Organization, WINFRESH (formerly WIBDECO), MAFF and a representative from any other trader or producer organization existing in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

1. The figures stated for Exports vs. Imports do not include value added products.

3. A new company (WINFARM Investments Ltd.) has been incorporated. This private company will be responsible for the purchase of banana from farmers.

d. Major Developments in the Thematic Areas that affected the Performance of Agriculture and Rural Life

- Agricultural Health and Food Safety

On December 15, MAFF convened a meeting of stakeholders to announce the presence of Black Segatoka (*Mycosphaerella fijiensis*) Leaf Spot Disease on the island. This disease, which is of primary economic significance to the banana and plantain industries, has been discovered in many localities in the major banana growing belt along the eastern coast where over 60% of the bananas currently cultivated for export are grown.

The MAFF, together with some domestic and international stakeholders, convened a strategy meeting which, inter alia discussed:

- Information dissemination to stakeholders and the wider public;
- Strengthening of the surveillance systems; and
- Implementation of chemical control measures

This programme on control of this disease is expected to gain momentum early in 2010.

The Moko Disease continues to adversely affect the production of Bananas. This impact is felt not only in the Banana Industry but generally across primary agriculture as the areas affected by Moko Disease must remain fallow for at least 18 months. The MAFF reports that from 2007 to 2009 over 327 acres of Banana and approximately 27 acres of Plantain have been destroyed as a consequence of the presence of this disease. The approximate area reported to have been destroyed by the MAFF as a consequence of Moko Disease in 2009 was 66 acres of Bananas and 4.5 acres of Plantain down from the 94 acres of Bananas and 7 acres of Plantains recorded in 2008. In 2009 the MAFF began a process of assessment of fallow fields which have been left uncultivated since 2007. The analyses are geared toward determining the presence or absence of the bacterium on these fallow lands and hence possibility for re-entry of these lands to production.

In 2009 the MAFF continued the implementation of the project “***Strengthening Plant Health Quarantine and Phytosanitary Capability***” in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The overall objective of the project is to strengthen and modernize the Plant Protection and Quarantine Unit of the MAFF to enable it to deliver modern, up-to-date services to its clientele as well as to comply with all the obligations under the International Plant Protection Convention and the WTO SPS Agreement to which St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a signatory.

- Trade

The trading disputes on Bananas which have persisted for over two decades have finally been resolved. This agreement will see the European Union (EU) cut its MFN tariff on Bananas in

eight stages from the current rate of €176/tonne to €114/tonne by 2017, at the earliest. The first cut, which is also the largest of €28/tonne, will take effect once all parties have signed the deal. Latin American Countries in return will not demand further cuts in the framework of the Doha round of talks on global trade once it resumes. This agreement effectively settles all legal disputes at the WTO pending against the EU on Bananas.

This dispute settlement represents a very serious challenge to the continued viability of the Windward Island Banana Trade to the United Kingdom market.

- Natural Resources and the Environment

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, through its Ministry of Health and the Environment, UNDP and the GEF, on October 4, launched a new project entitled *Capacity Building and Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management in St. Vincent and the Grenadines*. The project is intended to promote sustainable land management issues through institutional, individual and systemic capacity building. The project will therefore seek to strengthen SLM capacities within Ministries, the private sector and civil society organizations and mainstream sustainable land management in national development planning.

In 2009 the MAFF commenced the implementation of the Environmental Watershed Management Project to facilitate forest based livelihood opportunities. The main objective of this project is to increase the local capacity for improved utilization and management of forest resources in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

- Investment and Financing

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, through the MAFF, submitted 10 projects for consideration by the Petro Alimentos Secretariat under the Petro Alimentos Trust Fund/ALBA Food Initiatives. In 2009 the Secretariat agreed in the interim to provide US two million dollars (\$2,000,000) to fund priority projects in the agricultural sector. In June 2009 the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines received the first tranche of this allocation. The monies received have been used to inter alia:

- Provide relief to primary producers through the provision of fertilizer at subsidized price of approximately 50% of the regular price. This has been available to farmers since October 2009 with over 1,700 farmers benefitting.
- A total of 86 black belly sheep (ewes) were imported from Barbados in December. These are to be allocated to farmers to improve the quality of their flocks.
- Livestock farmers have benefitted from a feed subsidization programme supplying feed to them at half of the normal price.

Additionally, under a component of the project looking at the development of sustainable livelihoods in the sector, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries collected

applications from individuals for micro-project development. This area of the project is intended to promote the development of sustainable livelihoods among producers and potential producers.

- Agro-tourism

In 2009 the Government, through the Ministry of Tourism and with funding from Commonwealth Secretariat, undertook a study of the potential for agro-tourism development.

The objectives outlined in the study were:

- Conduct an assessment of the farm tourism product, quality of service, marketing and promotional programmes and accessibility to the product and skills required for successful farm tourism operations.
- Identification of opportunities for business development and business support services required.
- Competitor analysis and identification of relevant good practice lessons from destinations that have been successful in developing farm tourism.
- Assessment of policy and institutional support required to foster an enabling environment for farm tourism operators.
- Identification of opportunities for collaboration/linkages between farm tourism operators and mainstream tourism operators.
- Consultation with stakeholders and facilitation of stakeholder workshops.
- Design of a strategy and implementation plan recommending actions for the development of farm tourism.

The consultants are expected to submit their final report on the courses of action that the State should take to develop this subsector early in 2010.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines has received approval for the funding of a project titled “***Development and Strengthening of Agro-tourism Linkages***” from the OAS. This project (valued at US \$110,000) is scheduled for implementation over a thirteen month period beginning in May 2010. The main goal of the project is to improve and modernize agro-tourism facilities as well as the training of farmers to conduct guided visitor tours at the farm level.

4.0 Results of the Implementation of the National Technical Cooperation Agenda in St. Vincent and the Grenadines during 2009

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

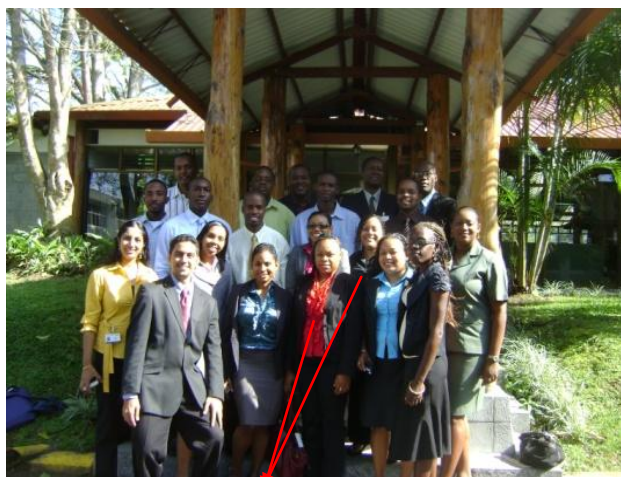
(i) Participation of policy makers in decision making processes

During 2009 IICA facilitated the participation of the most senior decision makers of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in meetings of the governing organs of the Institution. The Honourable Montgomery Daniel, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, participated in the SACMI Meeting, April 1-2. The Minister also participated in a meeting of the Executive Committee, July 14-16. The Honourable Minister of State, Honourable Saboto Caesar, participated in the 5th Hemispheric Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture in Jamaica, October 2009 and in the Meeting of the IABA at which the new Director General was elected.

(ii) IICA facilitated the participation of an Agricultural Officer from the MAFF at the CARICOM Common Agricultural Policy (CCAP) Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago, April 30 – May 1. This meeting was designed to provide consensus on the implementation of the CARICOM Community Agricultural Policy.

(iii) Second Hemispheric Forum for Young Leaders

IICA contributed to the development of young professionals in agriculture by arranging for the participation of two young persons to participate in the Second Hemispheric Forum of Young Leaders, Costa Rica. Dr. Monica Davis and Ms. Abigail Laborde, both from the Department of Agriculture, participated in this two week youth forum over the period September 7-11.



St. Vincent and the Grenadines' participants at the 2nd Hemispheric Forum of Young Leaders.

(iv) Annual Accountability Seminar

IICA hosted its National Accountability Seminar on April 16 to report on its contribution to Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Honourable Montgomery Daniel accepted the 2008 Annual Report that was presented by Una May Gordon, IICA Representative in the ECS. The seminar was attended by twenty-three (23) participants representing stakeholder agencies within the agricultural sector.



Members of the Head Table. L-R: Mr. Allan Alexander – Permanent Secretary MAFF, Ms. Una May Gordon, -IICA Representative in the ECS, Hon. Montgomery Daniel – Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Mr. Reuben Robertson – Chief Agricultural Officer, MAFF



Ms. Una May Gordon, IICA Representative in the ECS, presenting the 2008 Annual Report to Hon. Montgomery Daniel, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

b. Promotion of Trade and the Competitiveness of Agribusiness

(i) The IICA office worked in close association with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Food and Agriculture Organization in the hosting of the First Agribusiness Conference, October 23, which included sixty (60) stakeholders and was a part of a series of conferences held in October as part of ‘Vincy Home Coming’ activities of the Government. IICA provided both technical support through participation on the planning committee as well as some material support for the successful execution of the conference.



L-R - Members of the Planning Committee: Mr. Michael Dalton – Technical Specialist, Dr. Kathian Hackshaw – Chief Veterinary Officer and Mr. Winston George – Agricultural Officer, MAFF



Cross Section of participants attending the First Agribusiness Conference

c. Strengthening Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems

(i) The report on the application of the PVS, under project IICA-STDF in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the country agenda which contains recommendations from the Common Vision Session held in November 2008, were completed and forwarded to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in April 2008. This report is intended to inform the development of a manual of structures and operational procedures for establishing and maintaining a National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Authority (NAHFSA) Committee in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.



L-R: Consultant at the IICA Office in St. Vincent and the Grenadines – Mr. Philmore Isaacs, making presentation of the Laptop to the Permanent Secretary MAFF – Mr. Allan Alexander, VEP Representative – Dr. Malaika Glasgow and Chief Veterinary Officer – Dr. Kathian Hackshaw

(ii) VEP Project

The IICA Office continues to support the implementation and administration of the VEP Project in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. On June 8 a laptop computer was handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for the continued implementation of the project. The Office also facilitated the purchase of laboratory supplies in December.

IICA also facilitated the participation of Drs. Kathian Hackshaw and Malaika Glasgow at ICS/GIS Training in Trinidad and Tobago May 11-16. Dr. Malaika Glasgow also benefitted from training in Live Bird Marketing Systems (LBMS), Athens, GA – USA, August 18-20 and Epidemiology Project Workshop, Fort Collins, Colorado, USA, September 21-31.

(iii) Mr. Basil Nash of the Plant Protection and Quarantine Division of MAFF benefitted from an IICA organized workshop in Grenada that focused on the identification of coleopteran pests of economic importance. This workshop was held from September 21-25 and included 18 participants from across CARICOM.

d. Strengthening Rural Communities based on the Territorial Approach

(i) Support to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Agricultural Forum for Youth (SVGAFY)

The office continues to function as the secretariat for SVGAFY. The highlight of the group's activities during 2009 was the completion of phase one of the Fancy Windblow Project started in 2008. This activity was a collaborative effort involving SVGAFY, forty-seven (47) students from the St. Vincent Technical College and technocrats from the MAFF. Vertivere grass was planted by the youths along the Windward Highway to reduce the impact of soil erosion and the hazard posed by loose soil on the roadway.

The SVGAFY also engaged in a fund raising drive in December which was intended to provide capital for activities in 2010. The 2010 Work Plan was also agreed on. IICA hosted several planning meeting in December in preparation for the hosting of the CAFY Executive Meeting in early 2010.

(ii) Support to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Network of Rural Women Producers (SVGNRWP)

The chapter continues to benefit from the secretarial support provided by the office. In the implementation of the 2009 Work Programme and with the active support of IICA the group undertook two field tours to the western side (November 3) and eastern side (December 8) of St. Vincent. The first included six (6) members who visited farms on the leeward side of the island looking at farming systems employed by women involved in agriculture. The second field trip with twenty (20) members of the group visited a mixture of farms and agro processing initiatives in Agricultural Region 3.

The SVGNRWP also undertook training in the production of vegetable seedling with technocrats of Mission Taiwan on November

23. The SVGNRWP, IICA and Mission Taiwan have also held several meetings to discuss and plan a vegetable seedling production project to support the vegetable production initiatives of members.

The SVGRWP has outlined a work programme for implementation in 2010.

IICA facilitated the preparation and participation of four (4) members of SVGNRWP in a regional workshop on Organic Farming, Eco-Tourism and Climate Change held in Dominica, December 11-15.



Members of the Youth Forum involved in the planting of Vertivere grass along the Windward Highway



Members of the SVGNRWP observing hardening of tissue culture plantlets at the Taiwan technical Mission's farm at Orange Hill



Members of the SVGNRWP undergoing training in vegetable seedling production

(iii) Caribbean Agricultural Business Association (CABA)

The St Vincent and the Grenadines chapter of CABA is dormant. IICA attended a meeting of external CABA officials hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, held on September 16. This meeting also included proposals for revival of the local chapter of CABA through broadening of involvement of agri-businesses.

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

IICA hosted a workshop for top decision makers within CARICOM in the areas of Biotechnology and Biosafety. This workshop was held September 28-29 and focused on technological development and advancement and opportunities for networking within CARICOM to maximize synergies and reduce duplication in biotechnology laboratory across the region. Thirty (30) participants from CARICOM, the United States and Latin America participated in this workshop.



Cross section of participants at the Biotechnology and Biosafety Workshop

5.0 Results of Inter-Agency Cooperation

(i) The office collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, CARDI and other members of the National Coordinating Community on Agricultural Research and Development (NCCARD) in addressing the development of the Cassava/Farine Industry of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Acting under the mandate of the Chief Agricultural Officer, Chairman of NCCARD, a ten (10) member taskforce was established to conduct an assessment of the cassava processing facility at Orange Hill owned by the Arrowroot Industry Association and secondly to conduct a demand survey for cassava and farine in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The taskforce assessed survey questionnaires executed by the statistical unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and presented findings to the Ministry of Agriculture including a list of recommendations. Similarly, an assessment of the deficiencies of the factory was done and the findings presented to the Chief Agricultural Officer.

(ii) World Food Day Walk-A-Thon

IICA collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Sports and the Police Department in the hosting of the Second World Food Day Walk-A-Thon. Over one hundred and fifty (150) persons participated in the 11 km Walk-A-Thon which was designed to highlight the linkages between food, nutrition and exercise. This activity reflects a growing appreciation among institutions of the linkages between

agriculture, food, nutrition and exercise for overall wellness and is to become an annual fixture on the calendar of world food day activities.

6.0 New Opportunities for Technical Cooperation

(i) The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has received funding from the Organization of American States (OAS) for a new agro-tourism project to be implemented in 2010. This provides an opportunity for IICA with its considerable expertise in this field within the region to partner with the Ministry and the agro-tourism committee to ensure that the project is successfully implemented.

(ii) St. Vincent and the Grenadines has declared the presence of the Black Sigatoka Disease, December. This represents a serious threat to the viability of the Windward Island Banana Industry. The islands of St. Lucia and Dominica are yet to be affected. IICA with its hemispheric and regional reach can create the forum for sub-regional cooperation on this issue and the development of a joint response strategy to the problem in the sub-region.

7.0 Main Activities Organized by IICA

Official Name of the Event	Date held	Site of event	Number of participants
National technical Cooperation Accountability Seminar	April 16	Fisheries Division Conference Facility	24
Official opening of UD Plantain Chips facility	April 16	UD's Agro-processing facility	30
Biotechnology & Biosafety Workshop	September 28-29	Sunset Shores Hotel	30
Field tour of NRWP to observe farming systems on the western part of St Vincent	November 3	Three Farms	7
Completion of phase 1 the Windblow stabilization initiative	November 26	Fancy to Georgetown Highway	55

8.0 List of Acronyms

CAFY	Caribbean Agricultural Forum for Youth
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCAP	CARICOM Common Agricultural Policy
EC	Eastern Caribbean
ECS	Eastern Caribbean States
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FPP	Food Production Plan
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IABA	Inter-American Board of Agriculture
ICS/GIS	Incident Command System / Geographic Information System
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
STDF	Standard and Trade Development Facility
ISFP	Initiative on Soaring Food Prices
LBMS	Live Bird Marketing Systems
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MFN	Most Favoured Nation
NAHFSA	National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Authority
NCCARD	National Coordinating Committee on Agricultural Research and Development
OAS	Organization of American States
PVS	Performance Vision Strategy
SFA	Special Framework of Assistance
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
SVGAFY	St. Vincent and the Grenadines Agricultural Forum for Youth
SVBGA	St. Vincent and the Grenadines Banana Growers Association
SVGNRWP	St. Vincent and the Grenadines Network of Rural Women Producers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United States of America
VEP	Veterinary Epidemiology and Para-epidemiology
WIBDECO	Windward Islands Banana Development and Exporting Company
WINFA	Windward Island Farmers Association
WTO	World Trade Organization