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Profiles of Farmers Organizations in Saint Lucia

Jerry La Gra
Larry Leighton
Susan Oechsle

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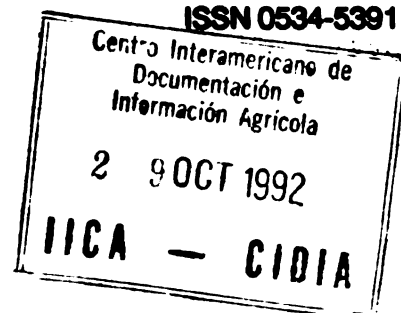
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in Saint Lucia**

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INTERAMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CO-OPERATION ON AGRICULTURE

Office in Saint Lucia

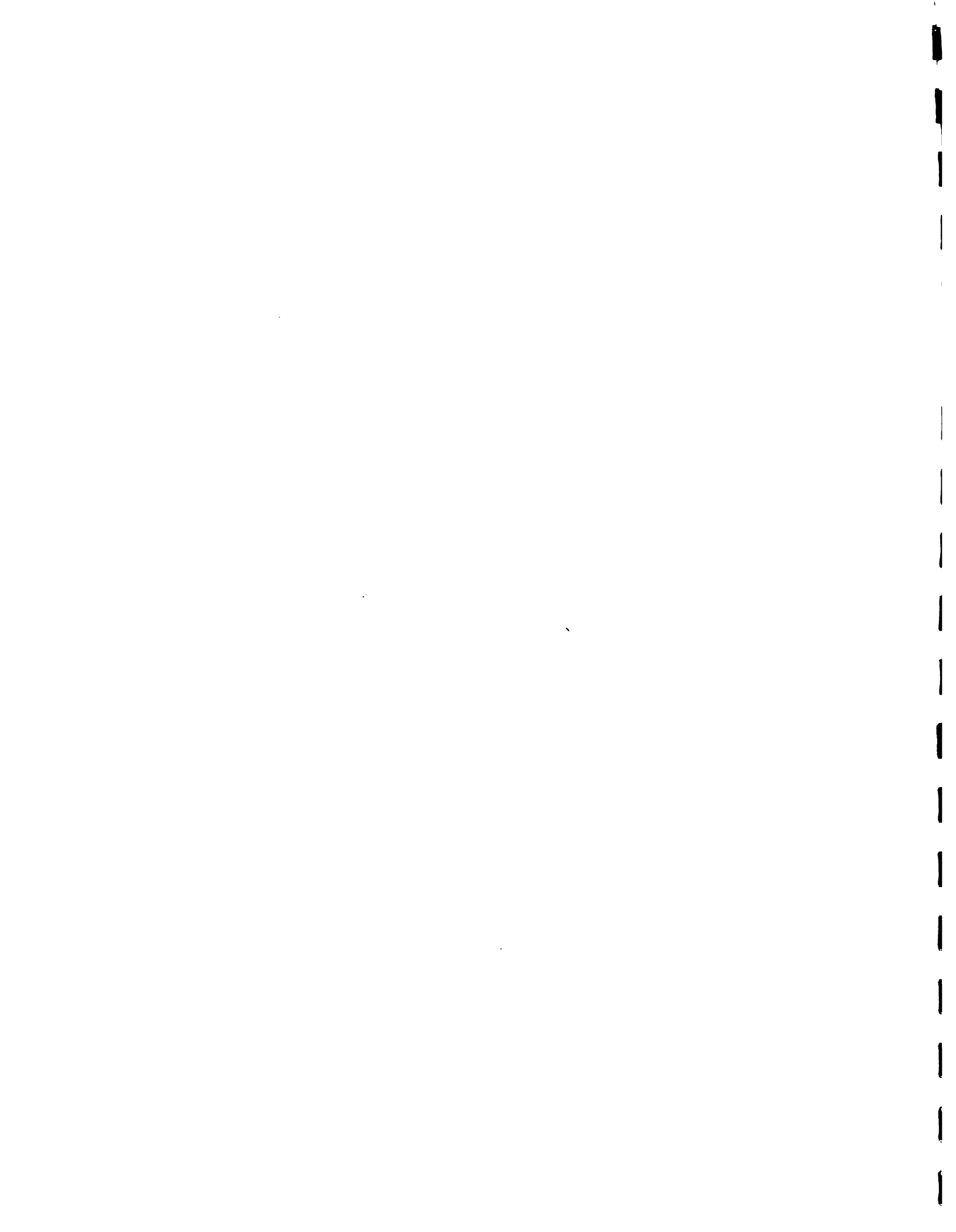
Project: Strengthening farmers organisations

PROFILES OF FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS

IN SAINT LUCIA

**Jerry La Gra
Larry Leighton
Susan Oechsle**

January 1989



**THE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE OPINIONS
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ERRATA*

1. As of October 1988, the National Farmers Welfare Association (NAFWA) changed its name to the National Farmers Association (NFA). This document uses three abbreviations, all referring to this organisation: NAFWA, NAFA and NFA. We apologize for the confusion.
2. In the profile of St Lucia Flower Growers Association, anthurium is misspelled as anthirium.

* Corrections to IICA document: Profiles of Farmers Organizations in St Lucia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A great deal of thanks goes to all the leaders of farmers organizations included in this document who were so willing to share their time and knowledge with the authors. Without their support and interest this study would not have been possible.

Thanks also goes to Angie Husbands for her interest and artistic talents in preparing the art work at the beginning of each profile in this document.

Jerry La Gra
Larry Leighton
Susan Oechsle

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AID	Agricultural Industrial and Development Bank
CARDATS	Caribbean Agricultural Research Development Advisory and Training Service
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CATCO	Caribbean Agricultural Trading Corporation
CCA	Canadian Cooperative Agency
CESO	Canadian Executive Service Overseas
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
FIT	Foundation for International Training
HIAMP	High Impact Agricultural Marketing and Production
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
IVS	International Voluntary Services
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
NRDF	National Research and Development Foundation
SFAD	Small Farmers Agricultural Development Project
WINBAN	Windward Islands Banana Growers Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
Addresses and Contacts for Farmer Organizations.	viii
Location of Farmers Groups	x
Introduction	xii
Executive Summary.	xiii
Table 1: Farmers Organizations in St. Lucia.	xvi
Table 2: Services Offered by Farmers Organizations	xvii
Table 3: Institutions Providing Support to Farmers Organizationsxviii

PROFILES OF FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS

St. Lucia Coconut Growers Association (SLCGA).	1
St. Lucia Agriculturist Association, Ltd (SLAAL)	9
St. Lucia Banana Growers Association (SLBGA)	18
St. Lucia Association of Farmers Co-operatives (STAFCO-OP) .	29
St. Lucia Pig Producers Co-operative	41
St. Lucia Egg Producers Co-operative (SLEPCO).	49
Belle Poule Broilers Co-operative.	57
Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative	65
Mille Fleur Honey Producers Co-operative	74
Belle Vue Farmers Co-operative	81
Sunshine Harvest (pre) Co-operative.	89
Black Bay Vegetable Project.	98
St. Lucia Flower Growers Co-operative.	106
National Farmers Association (NFA)	111
Millet Women Organization.	119
Roots Farm	122
Mabouya Valley Farmers Co-operataive	125

ADDRESSES AND CONTACTS FOR FARMER ORGANISATIONS IN ST LUCIA

Belle Vue Farmers Co-operative
P.O. Victoria
Choiseul
telephone number: 45 43262
contact person: Mr Raphael Felix

Black Bay Vegetable Project
P.O. Box 346
Vieux Fort
telephone number: 45 46254
contact person: Mr Julius Ross

Mabouya Valley Farmers Co-operative
Dennery P.O.
telephone number: 45 33333
contact person: Mr Gille Arthur

Millet Womens Organisation
Millet P.O.
telephone number:
contact person: Mrs Veronica Hippolyte

National Farmers Association
c/o Darnley Lebourne/Secretary
Folk Research Centre
Micoud Street
Castries
telephone number: 45 22279
contact person: Mr Gabriel Goolaman
Micoud P.O.

Roots Farm
LaCaye P.O.
telephone number: 45 33317
contact person: Asiwa

STAFCO-OP
St Lucia Egg Producers Co-operative
St Lucia Pig Producers Co-operative
Belle Poule Broilers Co-operative
Mille Fleur Honey Producers Co-operative
P.O. Box 1086
Castries
telephone number: 45 20241/20388
contact person: General Manager

St Lucia Agriculturist Association, Limited
Mongiraud Street
P.O. Box 153
Castries
telephone number: 45 22494
contact person: Mr R Raveneau

St Lucia Banana Growers Association
7 Manoel Street
Castries
telephone numbers: 45 22251-3/23588
contact person: Mr R Gajadhar

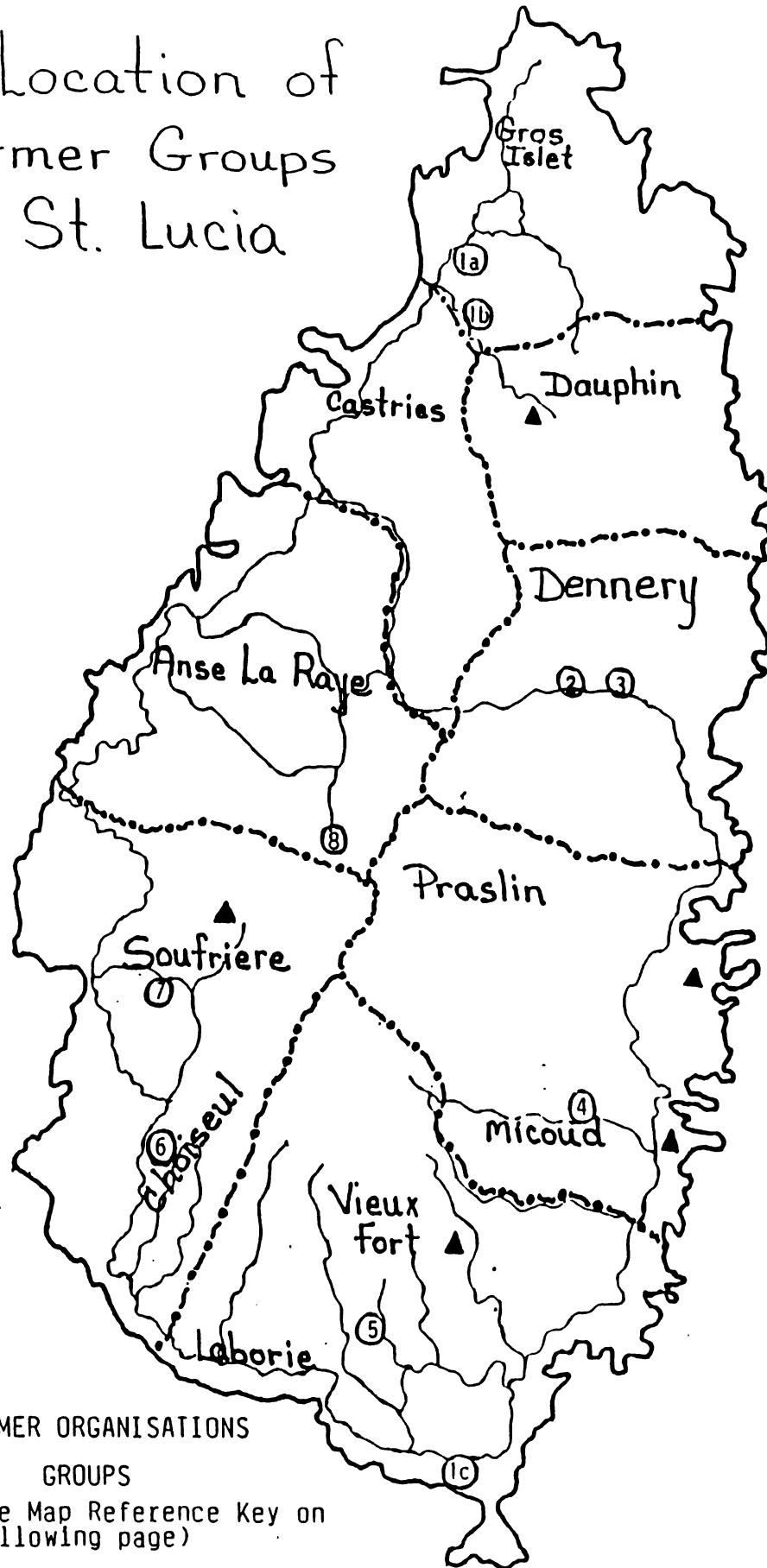
St Lucia Coconut Growers Association
Manoel Street
Castries
telephone number: 45 22360/25464/23230
contact person: Mr T Scheper

St Lucia Flower Growers Co-operative
P.O. Box 1047
Castries
telephone number: 45 28712
contact person: Mr Campbell Alleyne

Sunshine Harvest Co-operative
P.O. Box 783 P.O. Box 301
Castries Soufriere
telephone number: 45 47254
contact person: Dr Jo Rickards

Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative
Moreau P.O. - 1/4 Micoud
telephone number: 45 44388
contact person: Mr Ethelton Serieux

Location of Farmer Groups in St. Lucia



- FARMER ORGANISATIONS
 - ▲ NFA GROUPS
- (See Map Reference Key on following page)

LOCATION OF FARMER GROUPS IN ST LUCIA

MAP REFERENCE KEY

- ①a STAFCO-OP - Retail outlet and office
- ①b STAFCO-OP - Broiler processing plant
- ①c STAFCO-OP - Feed Mill
- ② Mabouya Valley Farmers Co-operative
- ③ Roots Farm
- ④ Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative
- ⑤ Black Bay Vegetable Project
- ⑥ Belle Vue Farmers Co-operative
- ⑦ Sunshine Harvest Co-operative
- ⑧ Millet Women Organisation

- ▲ NFA Groups
 - Fond Assau
 - Mon Repos
 - Micoud
 - Belle Vue/Vieux Fort
 - Fond St Jacques

The following organisations have their headquarters in Castries area but membership is scattered throughout the island:

- St Lucia Coconut Growers Association
- St Lucia Agriculturists Association, Ltd.
- St Lucia Banana Growers Association
- St Lucia Egg Producers Co-operative
- St Lucia Pig Producers Co-operative
- Belle Poule Broilers Co-operative
- Mille Fleur Honey Producers Co-operative
- St Lucia Flower Growers Association



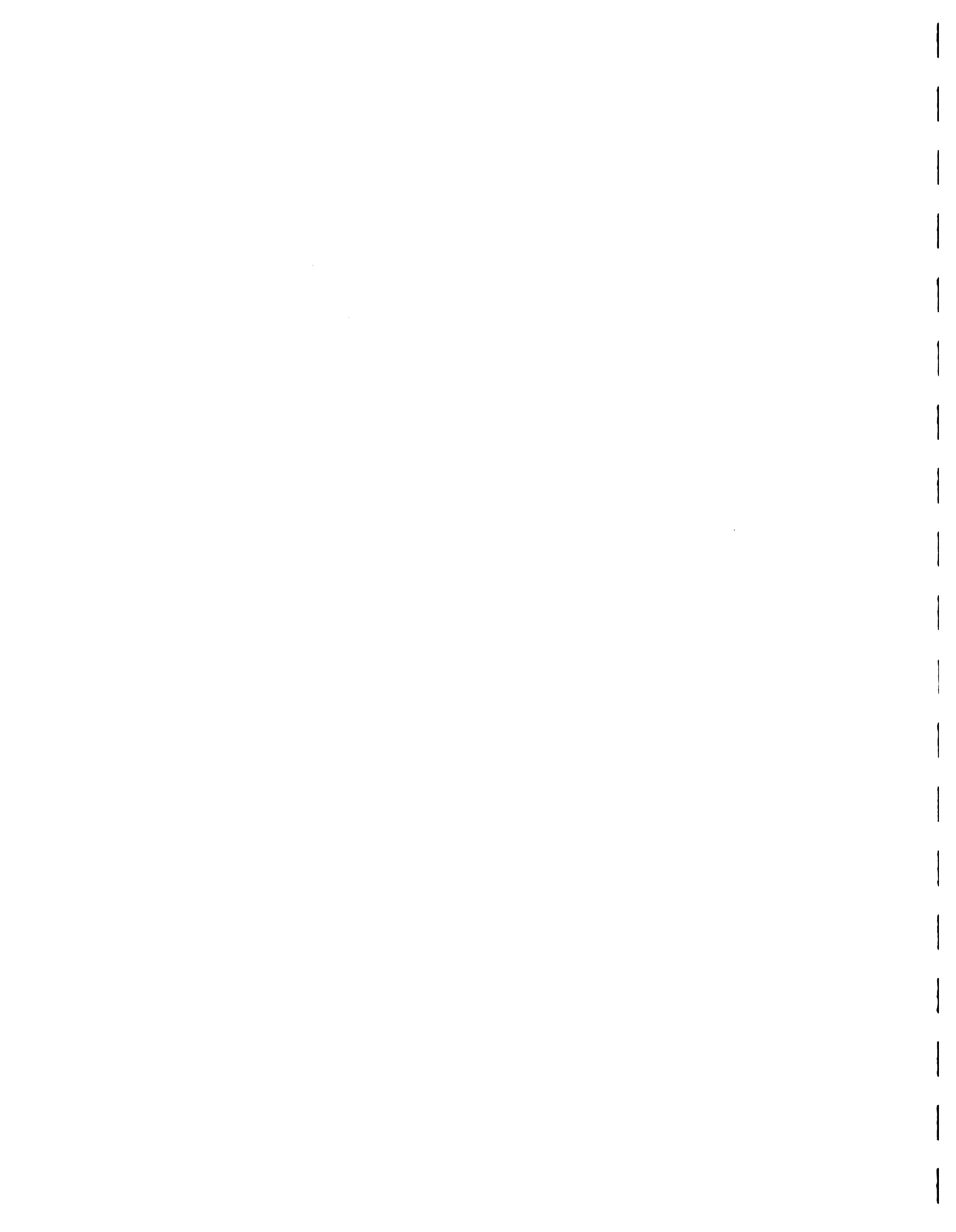
INTRODUCTION

Governments of the four Windward Islands have recognized the important role played by the small farmer in the agricultural sector. All four governments have established as part of their sector development strategy the improvement of conditions and services for small farmers, including the supply of farm inputs, transfer of technology, technical assistance, credit and marketing. Equally well recognized is the fact that both human and financial resources are scarce and that new means must be identified for the supply of necessary services at the farm level. Perhaps the most practical approach for improving the delivery of required services is through a joint effort between public sector institutions and farmers organizations.

In January of 1988, the Interamerican Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture, in close coordination with the five respective Ministries of Agriculture, initiated the project Strengthening of Farmers Organizations in the Windward Islands and Antigua and Barbuda. The first phase of this project called for the development of an information base on farmers organizations in each country to be later used in the design of national strategies to strengthen farmers groups.

Farmers organizations in St. Lucia have evolved over a period of 50 years, since the formation of the St. Lucia Coconut Growers Association in 1939. The purpose of this document is to present basic information on the actual situation and past experiences of the many farmers organizations presently active in St. Lucia, giving priority attention to organization, management, production and marketing.

Farmers organizations tend to develop over time on the basis of trial and error. Mistakes serve as learning experiences and if the organization survives it normally becomes a stronger body. By documenting their experiences, this history becomes a training tool for other organizations and rural leaders.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

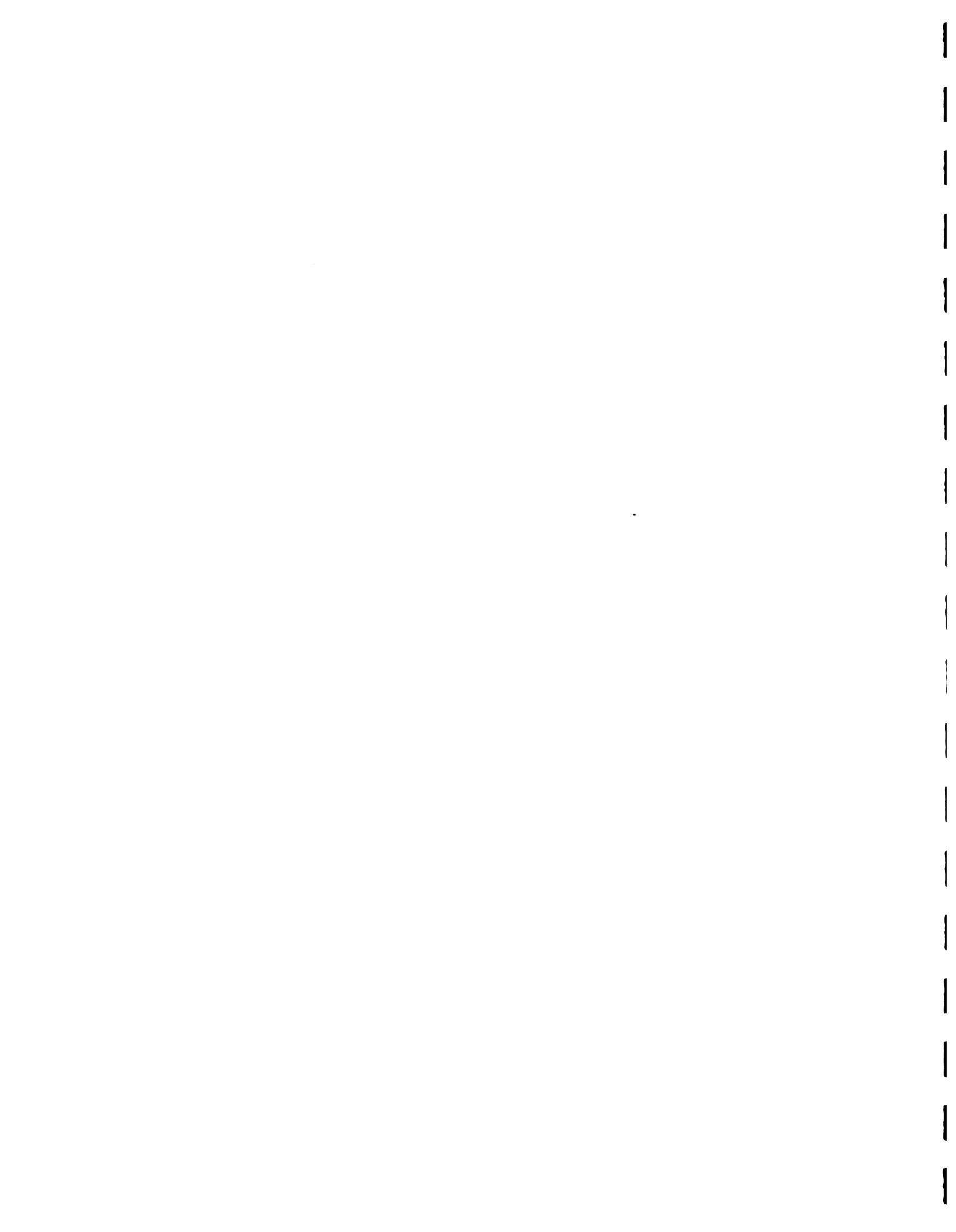
This document contains profiles on 17 farmers organizations active in St. Lucia. These can be grouped into the following categories:

- Commodity associations: SLCGA, SLAAL and SLBGA;
- Livestock associations: Pig & Egg producers and Belle Poule;
- Associations of crop growers: Black Bay Vegetables, Millet Women, Ti Rocher, Roots Farm, Belle Vue and Sunshine Harvest;
- Special commodity groups: Mille Fleur (honey) and Flower Growers;
- Support organizations: STAFCO-OP and NFA, and
- Group in formation: Mabouya Farmers.

As shown in Table 1, the commodity associations are the oldest groups, having been formed between 1939 (SLCGA) and 1953 (SLBGA). They are also the largest in membership with the SLBGA having some 10,000 farmers registered, although perhaps only 60 to 70% of these registered members are significant producers of bananas. Active membership in the SLCGA is also below the number formally registered. Although SLAAL is included here as a farmers organization, some might argue that it is more a commercial enterprise as farmers play an inactive role in its operation and management, simply utilizing it as a supplier of farm inputs and a sure market for their cocoa.

The Pig, Egg and broiler (Belle Poule) Producers have made significant inroads in import substitution, particular in the case of eggs and pork where near national self-sufficiency has been achieved. Broiler production has lagged behind due to the high cost of feed and the difficulty of competing with low cost, and low quality, imported chicken. As consumers become more aware of the better quality of locally produced chicken, national production is likely to grow, even at higher retail prices.

The formation of the Pig and Egg Producers Co-operatives in 1981 led to the formation of the St. Lucian Association of Farmers Co-operatives (STAFCO-OP) in 1982. This federation of farmers co-operatives is a service oriented support group (Table 2) which provides a wide variety of services to its members, including managerial, administrative and meat processing. Three other primary societies have since joined STAFCO-OP: Ti Rocher (1983), Belle Poule (1984), and Mille Fleur (1986). In addition, Sunshine Harvest has been associated with STAFCO-OP since 1985.



Since 1983, a number of small groupings of farmers have been organized. In general they tend to have memberships ranging from 10 to 30 farmers. The exception to this is Belle Vue Co-op which started small but quickly grew to a membership of 120 farmers. The reason for this rapid growth in membership is directly related to the effective services which it provides (Table 2) in training, supply of farm inputs and marketing. The catalyst behind the success of the Belle Vue group of farmers is the personal commitment of the farmers themselves and the broad and continuous support received from the Ministry of Agriculture and the French Technical Assistance Mission (Table 3). In contrast to Belle Vue Co-op, most of the other small groupings of farmers are weak in managerial and administrative capability and consequently provide relatively poor or no services to their members. It can be argued that this situation is due to a lack of well planned support from assistance organizations.

Both Mille Fleur and Flower Growers are new groups, experiencing the customary growing pains characterized by the vicious circle: farmers do not take an active role in the organization because the group cannot offer services, and the group cannot offer services because their membership is small and the farmers do not play an active role. Insufficient resources, and difficulty in developing markets and in the organization of the production of honey and flowers contribute to this problem.

The National Farmers Association (NFA) is an advocacy and development organization which intends to provide representation to the Government of St. Lucia and other organizations on all matters which affect farmers. Although started in 1983, it went through a period of reorganization in 1988.

As identified in Table 2, farmers organizations provide a number of necessary services to their respective members. The organizations whose services can be considered the most effective are the SLBGA, STAFCO-OP and Belle Vue. Services from the other organizations tend to be limited to very specific areas or to be quite ineffective. Sunshine Harvest should be noted for the valuable service it provides to its members, and even members of other farmers organizations, e.g. Ti Rocher, in the marketing of fresh produce.

Table 3 identifies the different national, bilateral, regional and international institutions or organizations providing support to one or more farmers organizations. As one would expect, the Ministry of Agriculture supports nearly all groups of farmers. The other support organizations assist a limited number of groups and to different degrees. In some cases, e.g. Ti Rocher and Sunshine Harvest, although each receives assistance from several organizations the support is ad hoc and lacks continuity, therefore insufficient to help the group reach its level of self-sufficiency.



In respect to problem areas identified by farmers organizations, difficulties in marketing their produce heads the list. Specific problems include the difficulty of communication with farmers to plan harvest and pick-up, the lack of vehicles to transport the produce from farm to market, the lack of storage and packing facilities, competition with low cost imports, inadequate and uncertain cargo space for air shipments, high cost of international transport (both sea and air) and lack of trust in overseas buyers.

The production problems identified by the different groups covered a wide range, including: lack of irrigation facilities, pest and disease problems, poor planning of production and marketing for the domestic markets, seasonality of production, small volumes of produce grown by individual farmers, low quality of many products, and insufficient working capital.

It is evident that farmers organizations are on the increase in number in St. Lucia but the quality of their services and management, with a few exceptions, are too low for these groups to achieve their goals and the goals of the nation. If St. Lucia is to effectively implement a national diversification program, and if it is to become an active member of the OECS diversification effort, it will necessarily have to organize and carry out a systematic program to strengthen farmers organizations. Such an effort must give priority to developing the managerial capability at both the top and lower levels and providing technical assistance and financial resources to permit each farmers organization to reach a managerial and economical level of self-sufficiency.

In the presentation of the document, most of the profiles follow the same format which includes: background, objectives and goals, areas of specialization, description and quantification of operations, experiences in marketing, relationships or linkages with other groups or organizations, major problem areas, felt needs, future actions and summary.

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TABLE 1: Farmer Organisations in St Lucia, Year of Foundation, Number of Members and Principal Products Marketed

Name of Organisation	Year of Foundation	Number of Members	Principal Products Marketed
SLCGA	1939	3,000	Copra
SLAAL	1950	1,500	Cocoa
SLBGA	1953	10,000	Green bananas
Black Bay Vegetable	1974	25	Vegetables, Fruits, Poultry, Sheep, Goats Beef & dairy cattle,
Millet Women	1979	90	Ground provisions, Anthuriums, Fruits, Vegetables
*Pig Producers	1981	90	Pork
*Egg Producers	1981	65	Eggs
STAFCO-OP	1982	Six co-ops with 312 members	Feed, Chicken, Eggs, Pork
*Ti Rocher	1983	32	Ground provisions, Vegetables, Pineapples, other
NFA	1983	650	None
Roots Farm	1983	25	Fruits, Soybeans, Corn, Okra, Rice, other vegetables
*Belle Poule	1984	75	Broilers
Belle Vue	1985	120	Vegetables, Fruits, Food crops
*Sunshine Harvest	1985	25	Vegetables, Fruits, Food crops
*Mille Fleur	1986	25	Honey
Mabouya Farmers	1986	19	None
Flower Growers	1987	11	Anthuriums, Heliconias, Ginger lilies

* Member of STAFCO-OP

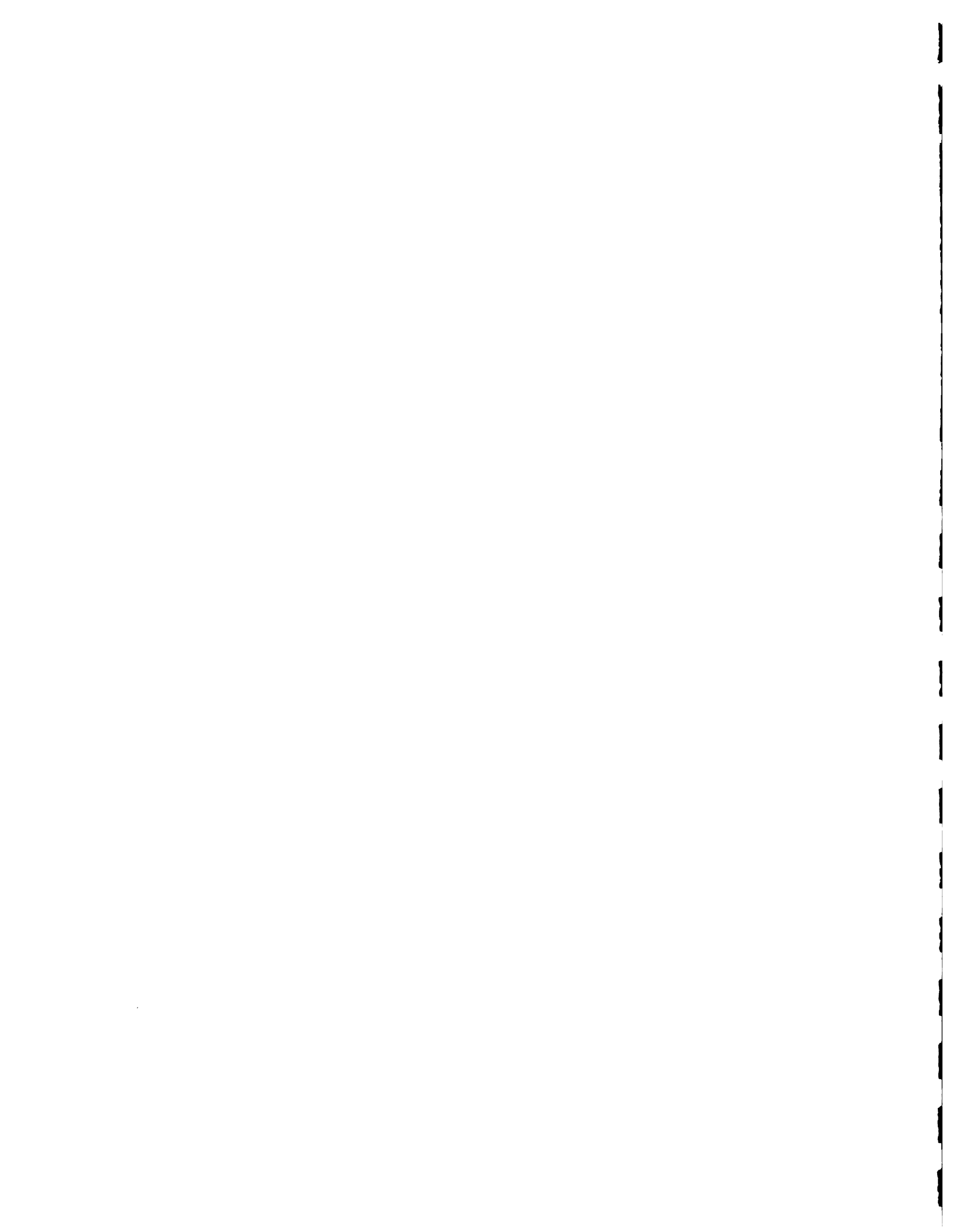


TABLE 2: Services Offered by Farmer Organisations

Name of Organisation	Types of Services Provided to Members					
	Farm Inputs	Information	Training	Technical Assistance	Credit Research	Marketing Activities
SLCGA						X
SLAAL	X		X		X	X
SLBCA	X	X	X	X	X	X
Black Bay Vegetable	X		X	X		X
Millet Women			X			
Pig Producers					X	
Egg Producers						X
STAFCO-OP	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ti Rocher	X		X		X	X
NFA		X				
Roots Farm	X	X	X	X	X	X
Belle Poule					X	
Belle Vue	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sunshine Harvest	X	P	X		X	X
Mille Fleur	X	P	P	P		P
Mabouya Farmers						P
Flower Growers	P	X			X	X

X Services offered as of September 1988

P Planned Services

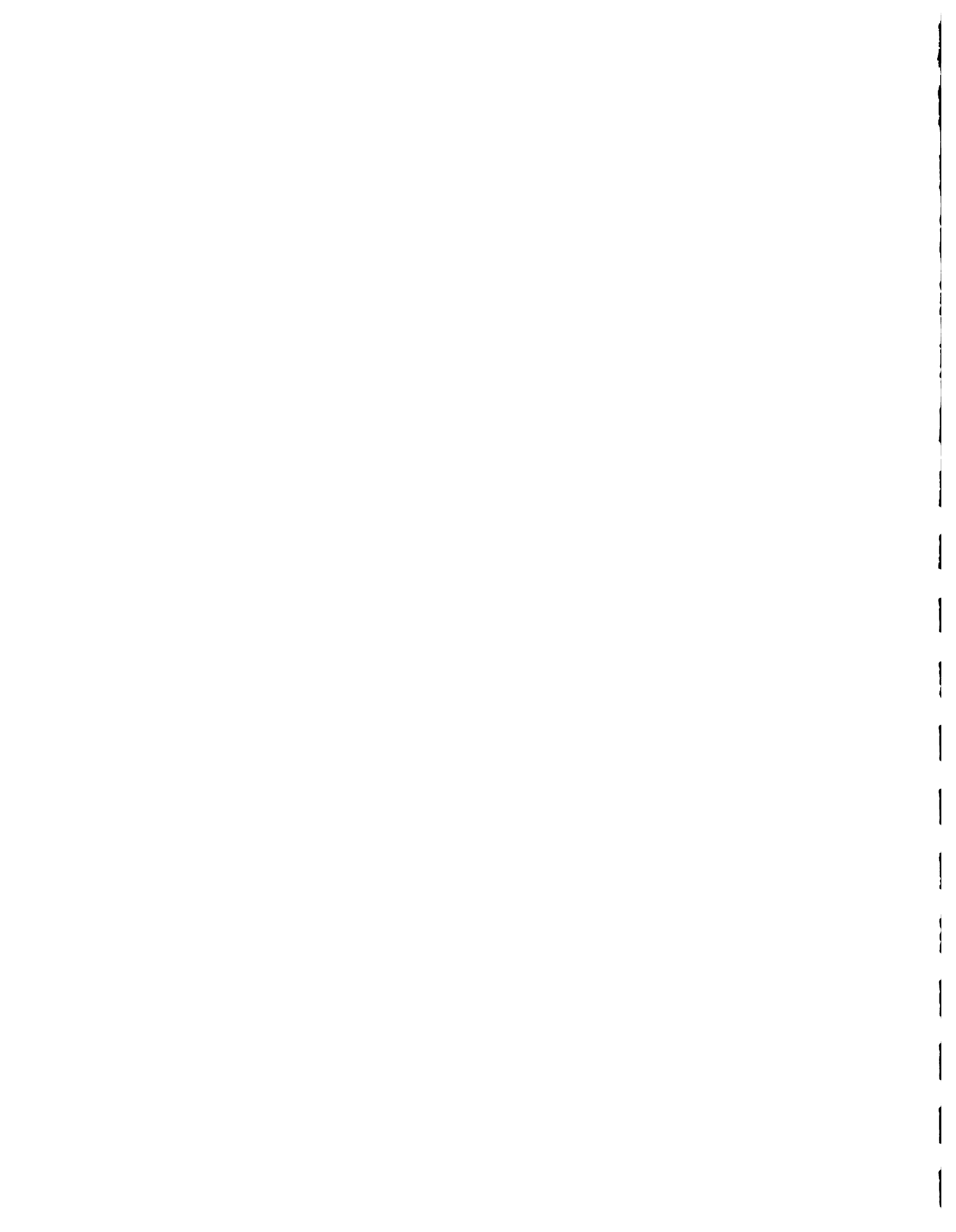
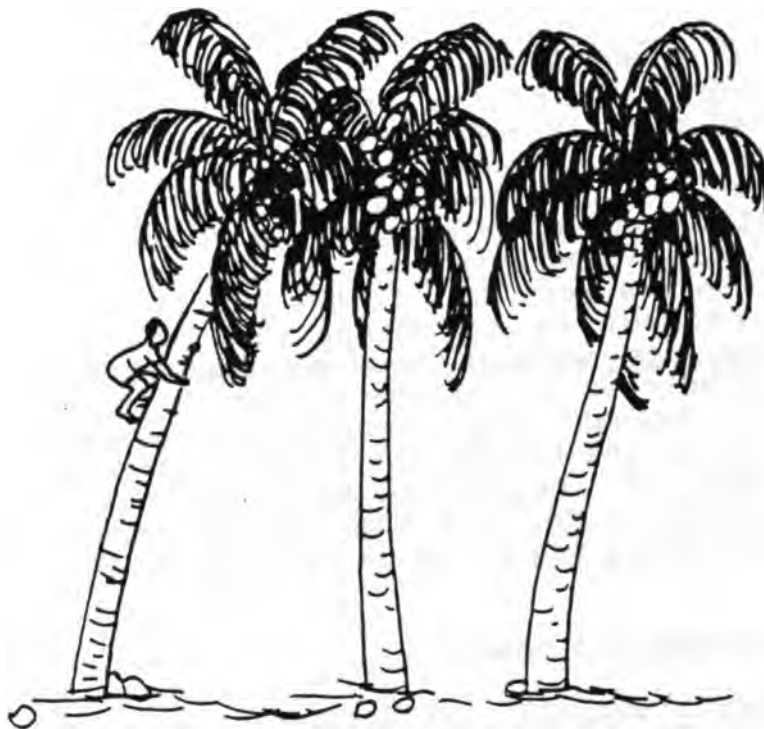


TABLE 3: Institutions Providing Support to Farmer Organisations in St Lucia

Name of Organisation	Support Institution									
	CARDI	CARDATS	FRENCH MISSION	CHINESE MISSION	NRDF	HIAMP	MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE	CO-OP DEPT	IICA	CATCO
SLCGA							X			
SLAAL						X		X		
SLBCA							X			
Black Bay Veg	X	X					X			X
Millet Women										
Pig Producers					X		X			
Egg Producers	X						X			
STAFCO-OP	X				X		X		X	
Ti Rocher						X	X		X	
NFA										X
Roots Farm	X					X		X		
Belle Poule								X		
Belle Vue						X		X		
Sunshine Harvest	X					X		X	X	X
Mille Fleur										
Mabouya Farmers								X		
Flower Growers										X



ST LUCIA COCONUT
GROWERS ASSOCIATION
(SLCGA)



ST LUCIA COCONUT GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

1. Background

The St. Lucia Coconut Growers Association (SLCGA) is formed by approximately 3,000 producers of coconuts in St. Lucia. Registered as a Company limited by guarantee in 1939, it has consistently purchased and marketed the production of its members.

In the 1930's, prior to the formation of the Association, the small scale coconut producer regarded the production of copra and the processing of edible oil as a home industry, while the larger estates exported copra individually to Barbados where it was refined into oil. In 1939, approximately twenty-five of the larger planters formed the Association in order to obtain the marketing and shipping advantages which joint endeavour would provide. From the outset, however, many of the Growers believed that the Association should process the copra to produce edible oil in St. Lucia.

In 1952, using proceeds from the sale of debentures, the Coconut Growers Association erected a small edible oil plant in Soufriere. However, with a local capacity to process only three tons of copra per day, the Association continued to export approximately two-thirds of the national copra production to Barbados and other Caribbean territories.

At about the same time, to expand local edible oil production capacity, the Coconut Growers Association formed Copra Manufacturers Limited (CML), an independent company which would purchase all copra produced by the members of the Association, refine oil, and carry out related manufacturing. To raise funds required to carry out this large scale manufacturing, Copra Manufacturers Ltd. shares were sold to the public. The CGA held minority interest in the Company. However, by purchasing shares the Coconut Growers Association, by 1984, had acquired over 50% of the voting stock of CML. This, once again, brought the controlling interest in both copra marketing and edible oil processing into the hands of the growers of coconuts. Since January 1, 1988, CML is responsible for all the operative and administrative functions of the St Lucia Coconut Growers' Association.

2. Objectives and Goals

The overall objective of the St. Lucia Coconut Growers Association is to market members' coconuts and copra at the best possible price. To maximise

returns to the farmer, the Coconut Growers Association has two sub-objectives:

- a) To carry out, or support, the development of local manufacture of all products which can be made from coconuts or copra, and
- b) To promote the economic production of coconuts and copra in St. Lucia.

3. Areas of Specialisation

3.1 Products handled

- a) Agricultural commodities: coconuts and copra.

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

The Association buys, transports, and sells copra and coconuts. The Association buys copra from members who bring it either to the Castries warehouse or the buying point at Copra Manufacturers in Soufriere. The Association checks copra for moisture content and pays members upon delivery, at a price representing approximately 90% of the expected sale price to Copra Manufacturers.

When the Association is able to obtain a favourable export market for dry coconuts, for which it is the sole licensed exporter, it purchases highly graded and selected nuts from members. Farmers are responsible for husking, grading, packing and transporting nuts to the Association warehouse. The member is paid at a pro-rated price for the equivalent amount of copra.

3.3. Other services offered

The Association provides a marketing service which includes transportation and quality control.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

Nine Board members, serving for three years and elected by the General Body of the Association, hold overall responsibility for the business of the organisation.

4.2 Type and number of members and geographical distribution

The 3,000 farmers forming the membership of the SLCGA reside throughout St. Lucia. Each member owns or leases holdings with at least twenty-five bearing coconut trees.

Ninety-five percent of the members supply ten tons or less of copra to the Association per annum. A member who does not supply copra to the Association for two years consecutively, automatically loses his membership and must re-apply when he is ready to sell copra again.

4.3 Type and number of employees

The Association employs one person, the liason officer, to maintain good relations between the farmer members of SLCGA and the CML. The CML employees all clerical and administrative staff.

4.4 Number of centres of operation and location

The Association has its main centre of operations, including warehouse and administrative offices, in Castries. these are leased to CML. To carry out buying in Soufriere, staff members of the Copra Manufacturers Ltd. receive copra on behalf of the Association, the SLCGA then pays the member.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure: storage, processing, etc.

None

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

All transportation is hired. To cut costs the Coconut Growers Association and Copra Manufacturers collaborate in hiring transportation so that the trucker who carries copra to Soufriere can carry coconut meal and soap to Castries.

4.7 Annual sales of copra and coconuts by CGA members

Year	COPRA		COCONUTS	
	tonnes	EC\$	tonnes	EC\$
1979	6,044	6,843,304	174	198,612
1980				
1981	2,250	3,002,977	404	61,896
1982				
1983	4,741	6,447,423	35	39,968
1984	3,978	5,384,241	1	1,200
1985	3,929	5,323,185		
1986	4,072	5,077,414	9	9,649
1987	4,736	5,304,320		

Source: St. Lucia Coconut Growers Association and CML

4.8 Net assets

On December 31, 1986, the Assets of the SLCGA were EC\$4.6 million. Of this amount approximately \$.72 Million were current, including receivables; \$1.4 Million were investments in CML, and \$1.2 Million were in land and buildings.

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

a) Copra

The marketing of copra and edible oil has had a regional emphasis. A number of Caribbean countries are producers of copra and edible oil, whilst all countries are consumers of oil. Caribbean Governments, working through CARICOM, have set market prices for copra and edible oil and have allocated markets for each net exporter within the region. Under the terms of CARICOM and the related 'Oils and Fats' agreement, St. Lucia is designated as a producer of edible oil, lard, and margarine and is allocated regional markets for them. The CML carries out the processing, sale, and export of these products, the SLCGA sells its copra for processing to CML.

Within the past five years, foreign exchange problems in the region and depressed world market prices for copra and edible oil have severely curtailed foreign sales of CML products and the marketing arrangement is in jeopardy. Nevertheless, until now, the SLCGA sells its copra to the CML at the regionally negotiated price for copra (currently set at EC\$1,120.00 per ton). In addition, the CML has provided the Association with an annual production bonus on sales, subject to financial conditions, which was designated to stimulate investment to encourage increased production and to provide reward for quality.

b) Coconuts

This is a secondary product of the Association. Since SLCGA is linked by ownership and interest with CML, it has as its first obligation the sale of the quantities of copra which enable CML to meet its processing commitments.

The SLCGA is the sole licensed exporter for dried nuts. When the external market is very good, the Association requests selected larger growers to supply the quantities required of large, quality, dried nuts.

This request generally goes well with the grower, who prefers to sell nuts in this form. It allows him to fetch a good market price without having to carry out the processing required to produce copra. (By statute of the Association, a grower can be paid no more than the equivalent price he would obtain for copra).

Given the lower exchange rate for the pound sterling than applied several years ago (England is the traditional market), and the current negotiated price for copra, the Association has not marketed dried nuts since 1986.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

a) Guaranteed market

The local market for edible oil (1,200 tons) and its equivalent for copra (3,500 tons) is what provides SLCGA with much of the cash to keep things going in times of stress. As indicated in paragraph 4.7, sales of copra by SLCGA members has fluctuated in recent years between 3,929 and 4,41 tonnes. Should the regional marketing system not continue, guarantee of the local market is essential to sustain the industry.

b) Control of production, processing and marketing

The SLCGA believes that it is in the farmer's interest to be involved in as many stages of the production, processing, and marketing of coconut products as possible. In the 1950's, when the SLCGA obtained the capacity to process edible oil locally, it increased the return to the farmer and foreign exchange to the country. The expansion of edible oil processing required significant capital, and the CML was incorporated as a separate company to obtain that capital. However, the interests of the shareholders of a processing plant and of the farmer (even though a shareholder) are not always the same. Since 1983, the Coconut Growers Association has obtained a majority interest in the CML, once again moving the balance of control of the overall product to the farmer.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With government

The production and processing of coconuts is one of the main pillars of the agricultural economy of St. Lucia, both in terms of employment generation and its ability to generate foreign exchange. Both Government and the farmer, through his Association, have a strong

interest in maintaining this production and marketing system.

Formal, as well as informal, contact between Government and SLCGA, particularly at the Board of Directors level, is strong. Ministers of Agriculture, from time to time, sit on the Board in their personal capacity as growers. Should a significant problem in marketing or production occur, the Association has good access to Government. It can request Government to intervene in Caribbean marketing problems, or request assistance in disease control, as it has done in the case of coconut mite.

6.2 With farmer organisations

With the exception of the CML, as already noted, SLCGA does not work closely with any other group of farmers. There is informal linkage with the St. Lucia Banana Growers Association and the St. Lucia Agriculturist Association. Often there are Board members who sit on more than one of these organisations.

6.3 With regional or international organisations

The CGA is the only growers' association in the region organised around the production, processing and marketing of coconuts. It has little linkage with regional or international organisations.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

There are two important production problems: The first is the generally poor use of cultural practices which contribute to low yields and susceptibility to pest and disease problems.

The second production problem is the infestation by the coconut mite of large acreages of coconuts in St. Lucia. The mite effectively decreases the output of copra per nut by 30-40% on the average. Much of St. Lucia is now infested, and production has been significantly affected within the past five years. Research carried out to date offers no effective means of control. It suggests good husbandry and fertilizer as a means to reduce the impact of the mite. Obviously this problem poses a significant risk to the industry.

7.2 Marketing

The virtual collapse of the CARICOM Marketing Arrangement poses another threat to the industry. With

CARICOM countries purchasing edible oil from outside the region at 50% of the agreed-upon price, St. Lucia is encountering grave difficulty in selling its oil at an economic price. The world market price for copra has fallen from a high of US\$750/ton in June 1984 to US\$400/ton in February 1988.

In 1985, the CML purchased equipment which will enable it to refine 25,000 tons of edible oil annually. St. Lucia currently produces copra equivalent to only 6% (1,500 tons) of that capacity. However, the equipment is versatile and should be able to process soy, palm, and other oil-seeds, if production of these were developed. As the success of this venture will depend upon world market prices, CARICOM arrangements, and local supply capacity, it is not yet clear how the dynamics of this increased capacity will work out to the benefit of the SLCGA.

7.3 Management

CML has accepted full responsibility for the administration of the SLCGA since January 1, 1988. Their performance determines what price the farmers can be paid. Savings are already reflected in an EC\$.05 per pound increase to the farmer. There are no problems foreseen in the area of management.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural production

There is a need to find a way to control the coconut mite which significantly decreases coconut production.

8.2 Marketing

In order to improve the price of coconuts to the farmer, an integrated operation is needed to enable complete usage of coconuts. Technical assistance is required to implement such a system.

9. Future Actions

9.1 New projects underway

None

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

As noted in 7. (b) the CML will increase its production capacity, thereby challenging the farmer to increase

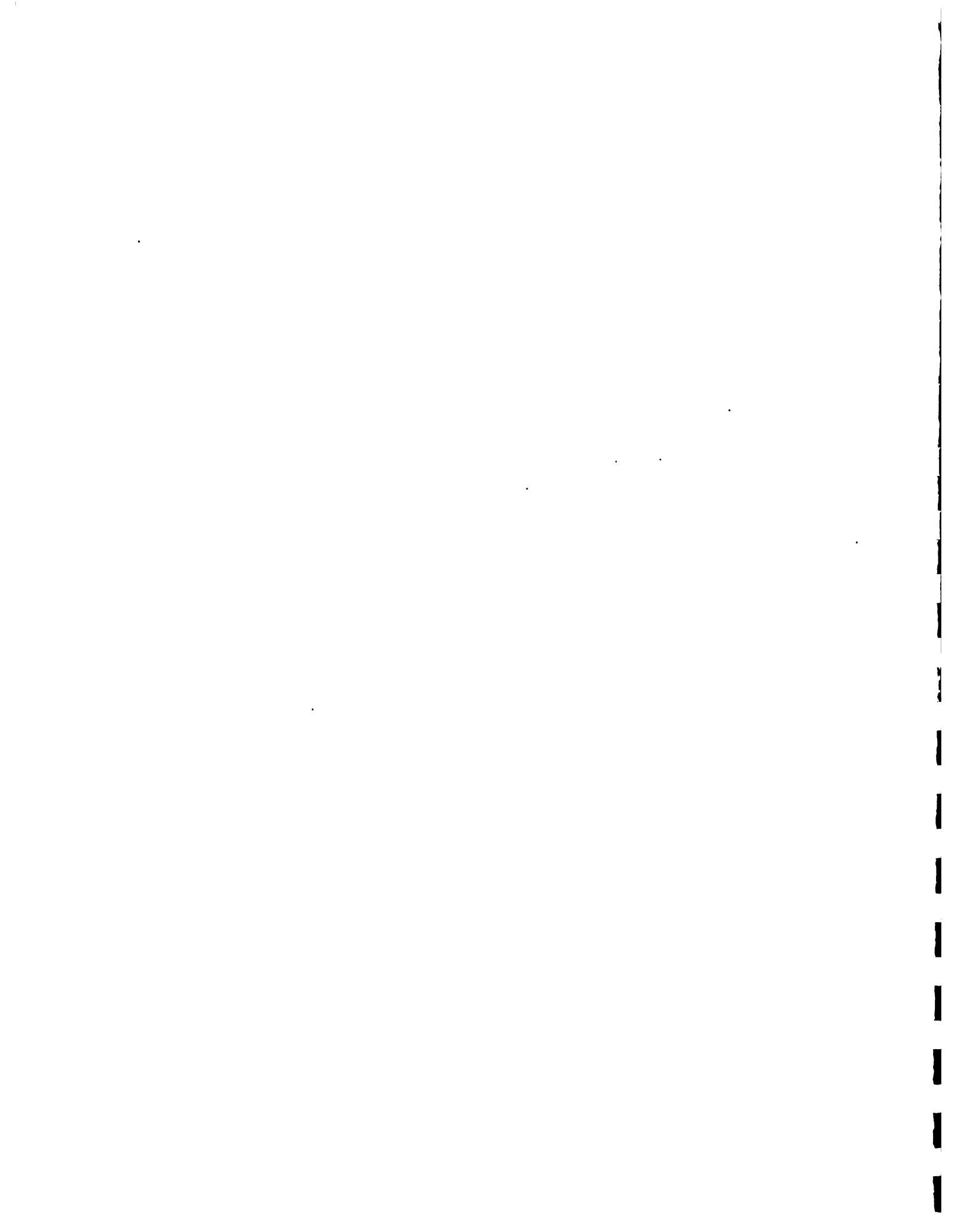
his supply of copra. However, at the moment no concrete production programme is linked to this project.

10. **Summary**

The SLCGA has proven that there are distinct advantages to joint endeavours of farmers and vertical integration. The influence of world markets, high production costs and low prices, have been causing serious constraints for this industry, forcing it to look for new products and cost cutting opportunities.

Research on coconut mite infestation is continuing but no complete effective control means has yet been found. Producers are encouraged to practice good husbandry and fertilization which has demonstrated some means of control of the mite. This will lead to increased production of coconuts and copra which will facilitate eventual movement into new sub-products. SLCGA is seeking technical assistance for expanded usage of coconuts.

The SLCGA is presently under the administration of Copra Manufacturers Association (CML). The CML has improved the management of SLCGA, resulting in savings to SLCGA members.



ST LUCIA AGRICULTURIST

ASSOCIATION LTD

(SLAAL)



ST. LUCIA AGRICULTURISTS' ASSOCIATION LTD

1. Background

The St. Lucia Agriculturists Association Ltd (SLAAL) is a company, limited by guarantee, registered in 1950 under the Companies Act. The founding members were producers of cocoa who sold to local intermediaries at a fraction of the product's value. In 1950, some seven (7) farmers of the larger planters of cocoa formed the SLAAL in order to export cocoa and carry out other business of mutual advantage.

The SLAAL exported cocoa and spices on behalf of its members for a number of years. They also imported and sold large volumes of fertilizer for cocoa and bananas. By the late 1960's cocoa cultivation declined, largely because of the comparative advantage of banana production. By that time banana growers were making their own arrangements for fertilizers, thus forcing SLAAL to diversify its activity.

The SLAAL tried several strategies but eventually determined that it was to their best advantage to import and sell farm inputs and building equipment to members. At present, cocoa export and sales of fertilizer and general merchandise form the backbone of SLAAL activity.

2. Objectives and Goals

The main objective of the SLAAL is to market agricultural products produced by members of the Association. Its Articles of Association allow for a wide range of activity to promote the interests of members and support the economic health of the institution. On the agricultural side, these can be summarized as follows:

- a) To promote, facilitate, and protect the economic production and marketing of agricultural products in St. Lucia;
- b) To order and sell farm inputs required by members, and
- c) To represent members interests with the Government, or with any firm or corporation, on all aspects of production and marketing of members agricultural production.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

- a) **Agricultural commodities: cocoa**
- b) **Other items: production inputs, including fertilizer, seeds, implements, rodenticides, weedicides, spraying machines, chain saws, other wood sawing equipment, building hardware, paints and beekeeping equipment.**

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

a) Cocoa

SLAAL buys, inspects, stores, ships and markets cocoa. It receives, in Castries, cocoa which members have fermented, polished, cleaned, and bagged in packaging supplied by the Association. SLAAL then inspects for infestation, fermentation, and quality, rejecting any cocoa that is not of the standard required for manufacture of fine flavoured chocolate. The Association stores the cocoa at its Castries warehouse until sufficient quantity is obtained to fill a container. The Association then packs the container and delivers it to the shipping agent.

b) Other

SLAAL formerly carried out similar functions for spices, particularly nutmeg, however, after the 1980 hurricane destroyed much of the crop, SLAAL discontinued this activity for lack of supply.

3.3 Other services offered

SLAAL sells inputs, provides limited training and credit, and orders and sells any merchandise requested by a member.

a) Farm inputs

SLAAL stocks and sells all production inputs required by the cocoa farmer to produce quality cocoa. This includes drainage shovels, pruning shears, fertilizers, rodenticides, weedicides, and cocoa seed.

The Association also stocks and sells a complete line of beekeeping equipment, being the only locally available source for same.

b) Training

The SLAAL, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the PanAmerican Development Foundation, has carried out a series of one-day seminars to instruct members in techniques of propagation, pruning, fertilization, and other good husbandry practices of cocoa. The Ministry of Agriculture, Cocoa Officer, collaborates closely with the SLAAL on this and other matters.

c) Credit

The Association provides a limited amount of credit to its members for farm inputs, particularly where such credit can be considered a crop lien. Management and accounting practices are used for careful monitoring.

d) General merchandise

As a service to members, and as a means of generating income, the Association will order most general merchandise required by its membership.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

The overall responsibility for the organisation is vested in a twelve (12) man Board of Directors who serve for a period of two years. Six of the total are elected at each Annual General Meeting and may be drawn from any geographical area or farm size, as long as they are members of the Association. Voting by proxy is allowed. The Board employs a Secretary/Manager who is responsible for the operation of the SLAAL. The current Secretary-Manager has worked in this position since 1962. Much of the current success of the organisation can be attributed to consistent good management.

4.2 Types and number of members and geographical distribution

The St. Lucia Agriculturists Association is an island-wide organization of farmers. Because of the nature of the cocoa crop and the size of the estates, the organisation was dominated by larger producers at the outset. Now, approximately 1,500 farmers, each of whom owns at least one acre of cultivated land, comprise the membership of the organisation.

4.3 Type and number of employees

The SLAAL employs eighteen (18) people including: the manager, accountant and costing officers, stock controllers, and customs and warehouse personnel.

4.4 Number of centres of operation and location

The Association has one main operations centre and two auxiliary warehouses. Its main warehouse and operation centre occupies the bottom two floors of the three storey building it owns on Mongiraud Street, Castries. It leases two warehouses north of Castries to store merchandise prior to sale.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

The Association purchased approximately ten acres of land in the Cul de Sac valley to establish a new centre of operations and to carry out major propagation of tree crops of all kinds. However, the land has proven to be unsuitable, due to flooding and poor drainage, and the Association is presently looking for another site. The Central Planning Unit has requested to purchase this land to build a jail.

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

The SLAAL owns and operates two vehicles which transport goods from warehouse to warehouse and to and from the wharf in Castries. It hires outside transport when necessary.

4.7 Annual sales by type commodity

Year *	COCOA		Fertilizer EC\$	Merchandise EC\$
	tonnes	EC\$		
1978-79	102	1,058,359	28,810	2,350,000
1979-80 **	83	789,172	20,203	2,748,000
1980-81	42	289,284	59,629	3,988,000
1981-82	17	75,842	66,984	3,259,000
1982-83	47	302,833	126,202	3,072,000
1983-84	43	305,845	13,030	3,203,263
1984-85	56	396,223	20,646	3,224,000
1985-86	47	333,554	30,250	3,309,000
1986-87	52	365,593	8,101	3,519,000

* July 1 to June 30

** Hurricane Allen in 1980

The decrease in fertilizer sales is due to lack of adequate storage space.

4.8 Net assets

On June 30, 1987, audited figures showed that the net assets of the SLAAL were EC\$5.4 Million of which EC\$3.8 Million were in current assets of inventory and trade debtors, and EC\$1.6 Million in property and equipment.

4.9 Others

It should be noted that Government has provided the SLAAL with the following special concessions and incentives:

- a) Waiver of all income tax. As a Company limited by Guarantee, with no share capital, no payments are made to members except in respect of produce supplied.
- b) Government charges no duty upon export of cocoa.

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

SLAAL has consistently marketed cocoa since its inception in 1950. Each year there is a major and minor crop, with deliveries from the major crop being made to the Association from November to February and the minor crop from March to May. After delivery and inspection the farmer is paid approximately 60% of the expected price for cocoa. The balance is paid to the farmer after the Annual General Meeting and inspection and acceptance of audited accounts. The SLAAL deducts 5% from the total revenue received from sales to cover its handling charges and all labour associated with cocoa. A 5% cess is also imposed to create a Cocoa Rehabilitation Fund to assist members in the event of a hurricane or other losses.

Until 1983, management sought bids from buyers in the United Kingdom and the United States, and sold to the highest bidder. After purchase of the Union Vale Estate, by the owner of World's Finest Chocolate Inc. of Chicago, the Association signed a five year marketing agreement with World's Finest Chocolate, which purchases all of the cocoa produced.

The agreement stipulated that the Association will sell its entire supply at a guaranteed price. This price is subject to negotiation should it be exceeded by the world price.

The Association loads cocoa in containers which it delivers to wharf. The Company remits payment upon receipt of product.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

a) Guaranteed market

By providing members with a guaranteed price for cocoa, production has been on the up swing. When hurricane Allen destroyed much of the crop in 1980, world prices were very depressed and many farmers experienced difficulty in re-establishing cocoa production. However, in recent years production has picked up significantly; from a low of 17 tons in 1981/1982 to 52 tons in 1986-87. The guaranteed price, negotiated in 1983, made it possible for farmers to take the risk of re-investment.

b) Diversification of activity

Retail sales of general merchandise have enabled the Association to cover most of its operational expenses. Diversification of SLAAL activities has increased returns to the farmer and farmers are able to receive payment from the Association for cocoa they deliver.

c) Improved handling

In the sixties, approximately 800 bags of cocoa were rejected by the United States Department of Agriculture as being worm infested. The Association then improved upon its storage and fumigation procedures, particularly by not allowing the cocoa to remain on-hand longer than is necessary to fill a container. This type of problem has not re-occurred.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With government

There is good liaison between the Association and Government, particularly with respect to cocoa. Prior to any new venture in Agriculture, particularly those which apply to tree crops, Government consults the Association.

At each Annual General Meeting of the Association, the Minister of Agriculture addresses members on relevant Government policy, and this is followed by a question-and-answer period.

6.2 With farmer organisations

The SLAAL has assisted three farmer organisations in beginning operations:

- a) The SLAAL assisted the Pig and Egg producers by providing credit facilities to begin joint operations by importing feed on their behalf.
- b) The SLAAL lent \$25,000 to the Black Bay Vegetable Project to assist in purchasing seeds and fertilizer and meeting part of the costs of land preparation. These monies have since been repaid.

Most members of the SLAAL are members of other producer organizations, particularly the Banana Growers Association and the Coconut Growers Association. There are a number of SLAAL Board members who serve on these other two Boards, so informal liaison is close.

6.3 With regional or international organisations

The SLAAL maintains liaison with a number of organisations in the USA and UK which are involved in the marketing of cocoa. Many international organisations dealing in agricultural development consult with the SLAAL, when developing projects, in respect to its management, its lengthy experience in marketing of cocoa, and its institutional capacity in stocking and selling inputs of many different kinds.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

The previously unstable market price for cocoa resulted in major fluctuations in production; farmers found the economical returns too risky for consistent expenditure for fertilizers, drainage, maintenance, and replacement of crops. Management notes that this has reversed itself and is no longer a problem.

Fermentation is inconsistent. A number of small cocoa producers sell to dealers. Some of these dealers, it is believed, may add fresh cocoa to that already in fermentation. The results are measured in lower quality beans which are then subject to mould.

The solution to this problem may be the establishment of fermentation centres at various points in the island. Farmers could then sell their produce at farm gate, quality would be improved and a more consistent product would be marketed.

7.2 Marketing

Management notes that it has inadequate and inconvenient storage facilities. The area around the depot in downtown Castries is very much more congested than when it was built in 1968.

The risk in cocoa and coffee production is less than with perishable produce due to the storage capability. Timing of placement on the market is critical and the international transportation infrastructure is weak or highly dependent upon one or two carriers.

7.3 Management

No problems were identified related to the area of management.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural production

SLAAL needs to improve and standardize cocoa quality by assuring consistent fermentation.

8.2 Marketing

SLAAL is in need of additional space for storage facilities to improve the marketing capability of cocoa, and to allow them to offer adequate farm inputs for sale to farmer members.

9. Future Actions

9.1 New projects underway

a) Propagation

The Association intended to establish a major propagation station on land which it purchased in the Cul-de-Sac valley. As noted, the land has proven unsuitable and the Association is looking for other lands. In the interim, working with the World's Finest Chocolate Company and the Ministry of Agriculture, the SLAAL negotiates the importation of hybrid seeds for members. The members propagate both for their own needs and for sale to other smaller producers.

b) Training

In addition to that already described above, the Association, on a case-by-case basis, provides scholarships to students in Agriculture and contributes towards the costs of local and overseas exhibitions and conferences.

c) Fermentation

The Association is proposing the establishment of a cocoa fermentry in Soufriere with the assistance of HIAMP and the Agriculture Venture Fund. This would allow for the cocoa to be picked up at the farm gate, eliminating the problem of inconstent fermentation by dealers.

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

There has been some talk about stimulating the local production of coffee and SLAAL would be interested in taking part in such a venture.

The establishment of a multipurpose plant may be considered which could meet the needs of various perishable crops as they come into season. One would need to look at various processing alternatives such as pulping, preserving, and freezing. These processes could make the product less perishable and would add value locally. SLAAL would have to gear up technically as it currently lacks the expertise and technical know-how to carry out such a project.

10. Summary

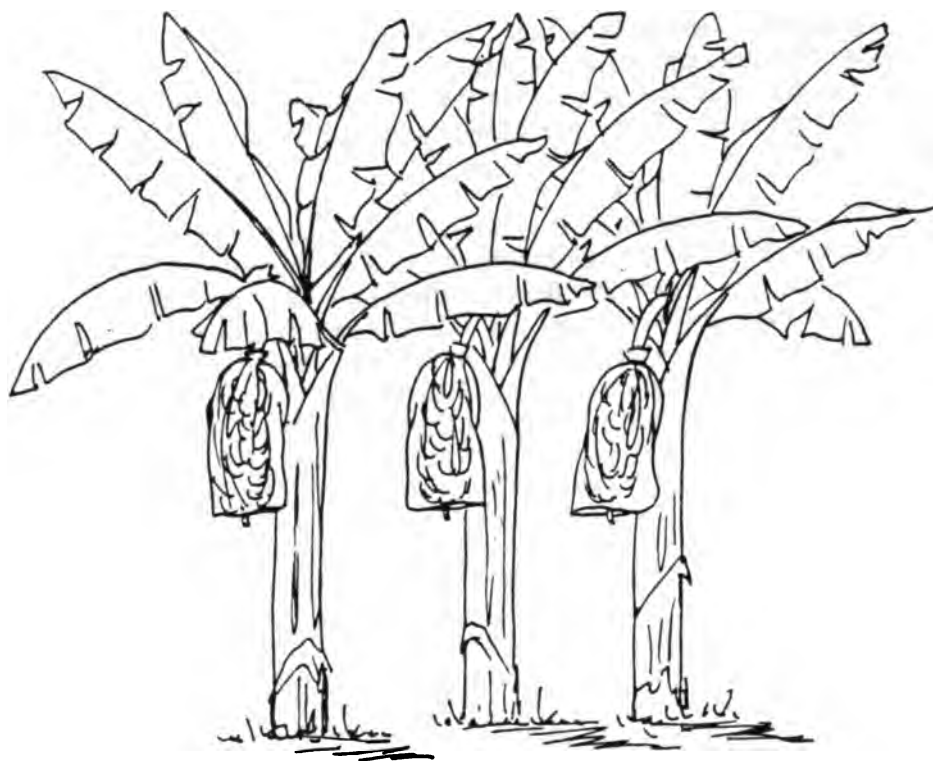
SLAAL was formed in 1950 to assure cocoa farmers of a fair return for their crop. Good management and effective marketing and input supply services have been the main reasons for the growth of this institution. Cocoa farmers are slowly making a comeback from the 1979/80 destruction caused by Hurricane Allen, this due mainly to a guaranteed price negotiated in 1983 with World's Finest Chocolate, Inc.

SLAAL's greatest need at the present time seems to be for greater storage space. At present, they are unable to stock sufficient amounts of fertilizer for the farmers, affecting the consistency and quality of cocoa produced. However, it is difficult to find convenient and adequate space in the Castries area as well as to secure financing for the purchase of such accomodations.

The other problem facing SLAAL is that of inconsistent fermentation which negatively affects cocoa bean quality. With the financial and technical assistance of HIAMP/Agriculture Venture Trust, plans are in progress for the establishment of a cocoa fermentry in Soufriere.

SLAAL seems to have undeveloped potential and may be a suitable organisation to offer other types of services to producers of other commodities.

ST LUCIA BANANA
GROWERS ASSOCIATION
(SLBGA)



THE ST. LUCIA BANANA GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

1. Background

Banana production is the largest single generator of employment and foreign exchange in St. Lucia. The St. Lucia Banana Growers' Association (SLBGA), the sole legal exporter of bananas from the island, is a large, complex organisation. It has responsibility to approximately 10,000 farmers who depend upon income from banana production. To fulfill its mandate, the SLBGA must ensure efficient, disease-free production, whilst supplying a quality product regularly and in sufficient quantity.

The history of the SLBGA is a reflection of dedication, steadfastness and complexities. Negotiation of market contracts, for example, involves the Governments of the UK and the four Windward Islands, the Geest group of Companies, the four island growers associations and the Windward Islands Banana Growers' Association (WINBAN).

The SLBGA, when formed in 1953, was an independent farmers' organization operating along commercial lines and dominated by larger growers. As more and more smaller growers became members, conflicts arose over the distribution of services and benefits and protest became very strong. Dispute arose and Government intervention resulted.

Indeed, on several occasions over the past thirty years, Governments have become directly involved in the affairs of the SLBGA, effecting changes in the management, financial administration of the organisation, legal standing, and in the composition of the Board of Management.

The present legal status of the SLBGA is that of a Government Statutory Corporation, with three of the nine members of the Board nominated by Government, the other six being elected by the membership. Given the importance of this enterprise to the national economy, the many steps in postharvest handling, the large number of benefiting members, and the international marketing arrangements, the mix of public and private participation in this farmers' organisation is not surprising.

2. Objectives and Goals

The main objective of the SLBGA is to market all bananas produced in St. Lucia. Consequently it has, as secondary objectives, to engage in all related activities

which encourage the efficient production, transportation, postharvest handling and export of bananas. To reach these objectives it supports research, provides training, and supplies a number of the inputs required to obtain a regular supply of quality fruit for market.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

a) Agricultural commodities: green bananas

b) Other items: production inputs, including: fertilizers, weedicides, pesticides, boxes, twine, anti-fungal pads, plastic sleeving and others.

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

The SLBGA buys all bananas of acceptable quality produced by its members and sells them on the United Kingdom market, through a contract negotiated between the Windward Islands Banana Growers' Association (WINBAN) and Geest Industries. The actual marketing and postharvest handling from St Lucian docks to UK consumer is undertaken by Geest Industries.

3.3 Other services offered

The SLBGA sells inputs on credit, provides training and extension services, funds research, carries out aerial and ground spraying, and provides regular information services to members. Inputs are sold to farmers on a pre- and post-paid basis. A cess on each member's sales repays the costs of fertilizers, weedicides, pesticides, twine, mist blowers, and boxes, i.e. all inputs the farmer requires in order to produce and transport his green bananas to market.

To improve pre and postharvest practices, the Association provides extension services and training to members. Approximately thirty (30) Field Officers work with member farmers in programmes oriented to improve drainage, application of pesticides, sanitation, harvesting, and packing as well as to monitor and control pests and diseases. They are also responsible for distributing packing materials and buying the bananas.

The SLBGA provides an annual grant to WINBAN (EC\$1.6 Million in 1987) for research and marketing activities. WINBAN, in turn, employs scientists who carry out research on all aspects of production, including varietal testing, disease control and inter-planting techniques, and postharvest handling.

The SLBGA provides disease and pest control services to farmers. It owns one aeroplane and provides aerial spraying services for all members. Root borers and banana leaf spot, two of the major pests/diseases affecting bananas, are largely under control due to a combination of disease control measures and extension and information services.

The SLBGA, in collaboration with WINBAN, provides information services through regular radio education programmes, meetings with farmers, and newspaper articles.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

The overall policies of the SLBGA are determined by the Board of Directors which comprises nine members, six elected and three nominated. Three members are elected annually for a two year period by the Delegates of the forty branches of the SLBGA. The remaining three Directors are appointed by the Minister of Agriculture on the basis of technical or financial competence. Of the six elected members, two large growers are elected from delegates who produce at least 12,000 lbs. of bananas a week; two medium growers are elected from delegates who produce at least 2,400 lbs., but not more than 11,999 lbs. per week; two small growers are elected from delegates who produce at least 500 lbs. but no more than 2,399 lbs. per week.

The Board employs the Manager and senior staff of the Association, who are in turn charged with the management of the operation of the SLBGA.

The Board operates with considerable autonomy but it should be noted that according to the Bye-laws of the organisation, the Minister of Agriculture, with the approval of Cabinet, may dissolve the Board and request that a new Board be elected. With three of the nine Board members nominees of the Minister in any case, the impact of Government upon the Affairs of the organisation can be considerable.

4.2 Type and number of members and geographical distribution

The St. Lucia Banana Growers' Association is an island-wide organization with approximately 10,000 members on its rolls. Of these, between 7,000 and 8,000 are active producers, of which at least 5,000 produce less than the minimum 500 lbs. weekly required to qualify for service on the Board of Directors.

4.3 Type and number of employees

The SLBGA employs approximately 630 persons of which 500 are daily paid workers and 130 are monthly paid workers. Employees include management and administrative personnel, finance and information officers, trained fruit quality (extension) officers, pest and disease control officers, inspectors and supervisors of fruit quality during delivery, dock representatives, inland buying depot and stapling centre employees, and maintenance and warehouse division employees.

4.4 Number of centres of operation and location

The SLBGA owns its administrative offices; a three story structure on Manoel Street in Castries. It also owns thirteen Inland Buying Depots (IBD). Bananas from small growers are delivered and transhipped from these Depots, growers are paid there and boxes are made and/or delivered from the IBDs.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

The SLBGA has three warehouses for fertilizers and inputs (Victoria, Vigie, and Troumassee), a maintenance division and garage at Vigie, and a pest and aerial spraying division and warehouse at Vigie. It uses ten of the thirteen IBDs as stapling centers for boxes obtained from WINERA at Vieux Fort.

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

The SLBGA owns and operates a fleet of fifteen vehicles which it uses to transport bananas, to make payments, to carry out extension services and for leaf spot control. It also owns one aeroplane used for spraying.

4.7 Annual sales by commodity

Years	Bananas		Farm Input Sales EC\$
	tonnes	EC\$	
1980	28,996	28,831,000	
1981	43,029	39,593,000	
1982	42,240	42,208,000	
1983	53,478	50,168,000	5,813,002
1984	64,576	64,207,000	9,016,743
1985	80,634	89,528,000	12,446,409
1986	110,234	150,551,000	17,862,302
1987	83,199	113,741,000	19,382,420

Source: SLBGA and WINBAN

4.8 Net assets

In 1987, approximately EC\$2.1 million of the total assets (EC\$12.4 million) were in land, buildings and equipment. The balance is apportioned to working capital, of which approximately EC\$10.3 million is on fixed deposit as a reserve for price support, disaster funds, and cash collateral.

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

After World War II, the United Kingdom encouraged the development of the banana industry in the Windward Islands and Jamaica in order to provide the United Kingdom with a source of bananas from a Sterling area, whilst encouraging employment in the islands. Thus the Windward Islands obtained preferential access to the United Kingdom market. That preferential trading policy has remained in force for over thirty years.

The United Kingdom Government controls the quantity of fruit which may be imported each month, by a licensing system. The Windward Islands supply over 50% of the total annual demand (340,000 tonnes) on the UK market with different proportions of the remainder being allocated to Jamaica, Belize, other African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Countries and Latin America (dollar fruit). A relatively complex licensing process allows importers (such as Geest and Fyffes) to meet any shortfall from the projected Commonwealth supplies from the less expensive dollar markets.

The SLBGA buys all bananas, of acceptable quality, produced by its members. Each week the SLBGA advises members of the acceptable times for reception at its depots at the Castries and Vieux-Fort ports. Farmers cut, dehand, and pack green bananas in boxes in the fields. Then, depending upon the size of his operation, the member transports his bananas to one of the reception depots, or to one of thirteen SLBGA Inland Buying Depots (IBDs). The bananas are weighed and checked for quality and those up to standards are purchased by the SLBGA. Green bananas delivered to the IBDs are transported by SLBGA to the reception depots. These, and the rest which are transported directly to the wharf by members, are loaded onto refrigerated ships owned or leased by Geest Industries.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

a) Field packing

The advent of field packing has made it possible for the banana industry to continue in St. Lucia. By packing bananas in the farmer's field, it has cut down handling of the fragile fruit by about 75%. This has, in turn, meant an improvement in quality and increased supply. Prior to the introduction of field packing, average rejection of farmer's bananas was about 30%, largely due to problems in postharvest handling or transportation. With field packing, rejection has dropped to approximately 12%.

b) Improved farm practices

The advent of field packing occurred at about the same time that crown pads were introduced to replace the fungicidal dip. Deflowering and sleeving techniques were introduced, with incentives paid to growers who adopted the new practices. All of these modifications have had a significant impact upon both yield and quality.

c) Increased returns to farmers

This combination of new practices has led to increased production, reduced handling and improved fruit quality, which has translated into increased returns to the farmer. Dipping, dehanding, and boxing were practices formerly done at the boxing plants. All of the major handling now takes place in the farmer's fields, using labour controlled by the farmer. In 1982, the SLBGA received EC\$0.428/lb. for bananas, of which the farmer, with production incentives, received EC\$0.225/lb. In 1984, the SLBGA received EC\$0.414/lb. for bananas whilst the farmer received EC\$0.247/lb. In 1987, with the elimination of much of the boxing plant expenses, while the SLBGA received EC\$0.624/lb. the farmer received EC\$0.398/lb.

d) Trained extension staff

In the opinion of SLBGA staff, the introduction of qualified Fruit Quality Officers (funded by the British Development Division and commencing in 1980) as extension agents, appears to have also been an important element leading to the increase in farmers' returns. These Officers literally taught farmers how to make money in bananas, by demonstrating how incentives for field packing, sleeving, and good quality could make a critical difference in net income at the farm level.

e) Computerization

The introduction of computers has assisted in cutting administrative costs, and in improving significantly the management of farmer accounts for credit purchase of inputs of various kinds.

f) Protected market

Without a protected market in the United Kingdom, St. Lucia would probably not be in the banana business. Latin American countries, due to comparative advantages on the production side, can supply the United Kingdom market with a more consistent quality product at the same or lower prices.

g) Marketing agent as producer

When Geest began to market bananas from St. Lucia, the fact that this company was both a producer of bananas and offered a sure market, encouraged small and medium size growers to go into banana production.

h) Board representation

Nominated members of the Board must be technically competent to supplement the expertise of grower representation. This translates into effective and dynamic leadership.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With government

The SLBGA is a Government Statutory Corporation, and is interlocked by its Board and by its Act with Government.

Bananas are a major foreign exchange earner. Government agricultural policy has encouraged maximum production of bananas, and hence revenue to the country. Government has tried to promote this policy by strengthening the SLBGA as an administrative body and by providing incentives (or subsidies) to banana farmers to increase production.

As a related issue, government focus upon banana production may have effectively diminished efforts to diversify agricultural production, particularly as it affects the domestic market. As revenue from banana production can provide the farmer with substantial cash income, efforts by the farmer to diversify his own production and marketing is not consistently pursued. When he encounters difficulty in marketing or production of

other crops, the farmer tends to revert back to banana production where he finds a guaranteed market and good production services. There seems to be insufficient government incentive for diversification into other crops.

6.2 With farmer organisations

As the major agricultural organisation in St. Lucia, the SLBGA influences the activities of other agricultural organisations. The SLBGA supplies to farmers, inputs which are of use for other crops, and hence of benefit to other agricultural organisations. The concept of cesses used by the SLBGA for incentives and stabilizing funds has been subsequently applied by other organisations. Board members of the SLBGA have also served (and serve) on the Boards of other farmer organisations.

The SLBGA recently leased a portion of one of its boxing plants to the St. Lucia Association of Farmers Cooperatives (STAFCO-OP) to assist it in establishing a broiler processing plant.

6.3 With regional or international organisations

a) Regional

The Banana Growers' Associations of the four Windward Islands have formed the Windward Islands Banana Growers' Association (WINBAN). WINBAN has responsibility for negotiating market contracts with Geest Industries for allocating market shares to each island (Over the past few years, St. Lucia's share of the total has ranged between 45 and 55%), for carrying out production and postharvest related research and providing information services.

b) International organisations

A number of international organisations have assisted the St. Lucia Banana Growers' Association, including the British Development Division, USAID, CIDA, the European Development Fund (STABEX), and the Caribbean Development Bank.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

Banana production is greatest in November/December when the market demand in England is lowest, and conversely, in May/June production is lowest when demand is highest. This results in market shortages in the United

Kingdom at some times of the year, and fruit being 'left-back' in St. Lucia at other times.

Leafspot (Yellow Sigatoka), is the major disease affecting the Banana Industry in the Island. Over EC\$1 million is spent annually on leaf spot control. Control is largely undertaken through aerial spraying, using a fungicide and spray oil. Banana growers have recently been using mistblowers, as a back up support for aerial spraying, especially in areas where the terrain makes it difficult for the Association's aircraft to cover adequately.

Wind and water damages caused by hurricanes and tropical storms are another production problem which cause significant losses both to farmers and the Association.

7.2 Marketing

The SLBGA does not know what quantity of bananas will be actually supplied on a weekly basis. Without accurate production forecasting, it is difficult to anticipate shipping requirements. While under-supply of bananas increases the per lb. cost of ocean transport, an over-supply means fruit 'shut out' which must be paid for by the Association. In 1987, 'shut out' fruit accounted for approximately 6% of total fruit supplied, representing a loss to the Association of some EC\$9.7 million.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural production

Methods need to be found to get more farmers to shift a greater percentage of their production to summer months to prevent the shortages and the gluts of bananas at some times of the year.

There is a need for continued control of the leaf spot disease through aerial spraying and mist blowers. Farmers also need to be aware of all precautions they can take against wind and water damage from hurricanes and tropical storms.

8.2 Marketing

Accurate production forecasting is needed to anticipate shipping requirements in order to prevent shortages and gluts.

Consistency in the quality of bananas needs to be improved so as to maintain the available market.

8.3 Management

There are no recognized problems in the area of management at this time but management has indicated a need for training in the following area in order to continue successful administration:

- Personnel Management
- Data Processing and Systems Analysis
- Financial Management and Analysis
- Agricultural Marketing.

9. Future Actions

9.1 New projects underway

a) Production Scheduling

The SLBGA is investigating ways to try and project and schedule production for the high demand season. The field staff is presently training farmers in improved production methods as well as monitoring their production to assist in projecting and scheduling.

b) Fruit Quality Drive

The SLBGA continues its efforts to improve fruit quality by carrying out seminars, meetings, and slide shows with growers. EC\$92,000 was allocated to this activity in 1987, including EC\$10,000 in advertising and promoting quality, and EC\$32,000 in prizes to farmers producing high quality fruits.

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

In respect to crops best suited for diversification, SLBGA would suggest plantain and bluggoe in the first instance as they are both associated with bananas and could be treated with the same facilities. A second choice would be hot peppers, if reaping can be mechanized. Breadfruit and mangoes would be subsequent choices.

- The actions to be taken would include the following:
- determine current levels of production and short-term possibilities;
 - secure buyer, including letter of credit and prices, and
 - explore transportation alternatives.

Each of the above actions requires attention be given to details such as quantities, market requirements, costs of production, yields, etc. The major problem would likely

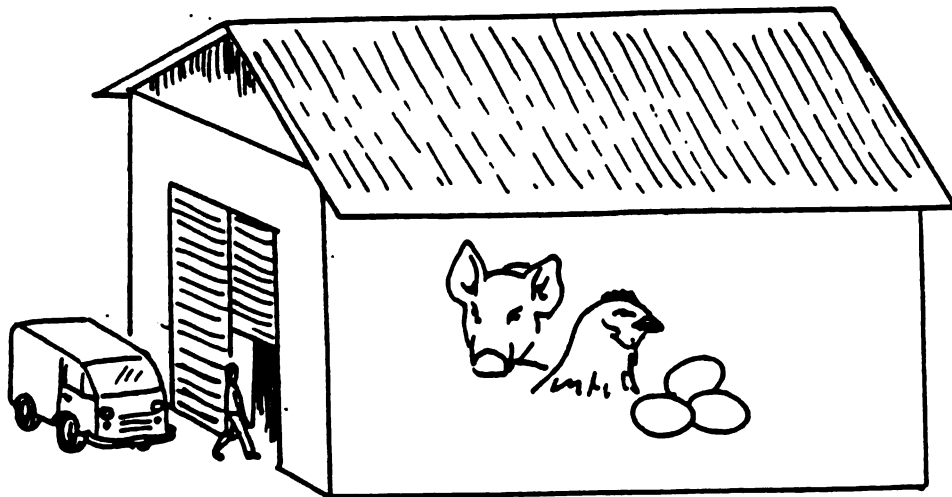
be transportation as it is very costly, seldom regular, with the exception of Geest, and not always available.

10. **Summary**

The SLGBA is a complex association operating with active participation/support from farmers, government, regional and international organisations and private commercial interests. Through this team effort the SLBGA has contributed greatly to the development of the agricultural sector by providing a wide range of services and good management. The SLBGA has shown that when a guaranteed market and necessary services are provided, farmers will respond by producing large volumes of quality produce on a regular basis.

With thirty (30) field officers working with the member farmers, SLBGA is well aware of what is happening in the field as relating to production, marketing and management. Farmers are kept current on production practices and market conditions and are motivated to increase quality through Fruit Quality Drive rewards. Continuous efforts are required to establish a workable production schedule with farmers in order to eliminate gluts and shortages of bananas.

ST LUCIA ASSOCIATION
OF FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE LTD
(STAFCO-OP)



ST. LUCIA ASSOCIATION OF FARMERS CO-OPERATIVES LTD.

1. Background

The St. Lucia Association of Farmers Co-operatives Ltd (STAFCO-OP) is a second level Co-operative Society registered in 1982 under the Co-operative Societies Act. In 1981 its two founder members, the St. Lucia Egg Producers Co-operative and the St. Lucia Pig Producers Co-operative, began a programme to import and sell feed to their members. Growing out of this experience, the Pig and Egg Co-ops agreed to form a second level society which would sell inputs, process and store their products, and carry out marketing activities.

In 1984, the Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative (a multipurpose co-operative society located at Ti Rocher, Micoud) and the Belle Poule Broiler Producers Co-operative Society (an island wide broiler co-operative) joined STAFCO-OP to bring its membership to four primary societies. In 1986, the Mille Fleur Honey Producers Co-operative joined STAFCO-OP. The proposed Sunshine Harvest Fruit and Vegetable Producers Co-operative is closely associated with STAFCO-OP and intends to apply for membership once it becomes officially registered. The Bellevue Farmers Co-operative Society Limited has made enquires about joining STAFCO-OP.

2. Objectives and Goals

The overall objective of STAFCO-OP is to encourage, support and service the needs of farmers to produce and market agricultural products. In support of this objective, STAFCO-OP has a number of goals:

- a) To purchase stock and sell inputs to members.
- b) To market, or otherwise facilitate the marketing of, farm produce of members.
- c) To promote the interest of member co-ops in all matters of public policy which are in their direct interest.
- d) To provide members with professional services, such as accounting and others.
- e) To promote or engage in activities of education, technical assistance and research, which benefit members and/or the agricultural sector in St. Lucia.

- f) To encourage and facilitate the formation and development of farmer co-ops in St. Lucia.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

- a) Agricultural commodities: eggs, pork and broilers and the manufacture of animal feed.
- b) Other items: sales of production inputs, including feed, drugs and equipment.

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

STAFCO-OP buys, sells, grades, controls quality, processes, freezes, and transports the above products. Specifically:

a) Eggs

STAFCO-OP, by agreement with the Egg Co-op, buys all eggs which members of the Egg Co-op bring to it or deliver directly to customers of STAFCO-OP in the name of STAFCO-OP. Eggs must be fresh, clean, and graded in order to be accepted. STAFCO-OP egg marketing operations represent 20% of estimated total national egg production.

b) Pork

STAFCO-OP buys pigs (150 to 200 lbs) produced by members of the Pig Co-operative. Pigs must be six to eight months of age, of improved breed, and raised to standards agreed to as minimum by STAFCO-OP and Pig CO-OP. STAFCO-OP purchases the pigs at the farm gate, oversees slaughter, and then butchers, processes (smokes, freezes) and markets cuts on a wholesale or retail basis.

c) Broilers

STAFCO-OP purchases live chickens produced by members of the Belle Poule Broiler Producers Co-operative. The farmer places the chickens in "live crates" provided by STAFCO-OP, and STAFCO-OP and the farmer transports these chickens to the processing plant. STAFCO-OP processes, freezes, and markets the broilers. STAFCO-OP broiler operations account for 1% of total consumption (local production plus imports).

3.3 Other services offered

STAFCO-OP manufactures animal feed and sells inputs, provides training, carries out professional services for members, and promotes the formation of co-operatives.

a) Inputs

STAFCO-OP stocks and sells all production inputs required by broiler, layer, and pig farmers to produce quality produce. It currently sells (for cash) feed, a wide range of animal health supplies, and poultry equipment. STAFCO-OP is the only local manufacturer of processed animal feeds.

b) Training

With assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture and CARDI, STAFCO-OP has carried out monthly seminars for farmer members and staff on improved production, quality control, processing, and storage techniques for pig and egg production and marketing. This training was extended for broilers. The training resulted in significant improvement to the industry.

c) Professional Services

STAFCO-OP carries out bookkeeping, accounting and secretarial services for its members, for a monthly fee.

d) Market Intelligence

STAFCO-OP participates in monthly market intelligence gathering and reviews activities of the Government Egg and Pork Monitoring Committees. The Market Intelligence Committee makes recommendations on national flock sizes and the levels of imports to be allowed.

e) Co-op Formation

STAFCO-OP has provided promotional and professional services to assist in the establishment of the Broiler Co-operative and is considering similar assistance to the Sunshine Harvest fruit and vegetable co-operative.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

The overall management of STAFCO-OP is vested in the Board of Directors whose members serve voluntarily. The Board comprises seven members, elected from among the delegates of the primary societies. Each society must have at least one delegate as a Board Member. The Board employs a Manager who is responsible for the operations of the Society.

4.2 Types and number of members and geographical distribution

Five primary societies comprise the membership of STAFCO-OP:

- a) The St. Lucia Pig Producers Co-operative: An island-wide co-operative with approximately eighty (80) members, of whom over half are active.
- b) The St. Lucia Egg Producers Co-operative: An island wide co-operative with approximately fifty-five (55) members, of whom 35 are regular producers of eggs.
- c) The Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative: A multipurpose co-operative at Ti Rocher, Micoud with approximately twenty-five (25) members.
- d) The Belle Poule Broiler Producers Co-operative: An island-wide co-operative with fifty-five (55) members, all of whom intend to produce broilers as the project comes on-stream.
- e) The Mille Fleur Honey Producers Co-operative: An island-wide grouping of approximately 40 beekeepers.

4.3 Type and number of employees

STAFCO-OP employs thirty-six people full-time plus nine part-time workers in broiler processing operations. Present staff includes: General Manager, Financial Controller, Feed Mill Superintendent, three book-keepers, Stock Control Officer, Operations Supervisor, Broiler Operations Supervisor (wholesale, et. al.) and various operating staff.

4.4. Number of centres of operation and location

STAFCO-OP maintains four centres of operations: one at Vieux Fort for feed manufacturing; the Boxing Plant at Union for broiler operations; the central office facilities at Marisule, and a wholesale/retail sales centre and warehouse at Marisule for all its additional activities.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

At Marisule, STAFCO-OP operates two large walk-in chillers, one large walk-in freezer, facilities and equipment for the processing of pork (cutting and smoking), warehouse and equipment for storage of feed and a wholesale/retail outlet.

At Union STAFCO-OP rents space in the banana boxing plant for the broiler processing operation. The equipment and a large walk-in blast freezer belongs to STAFCO-OP.

At Vieux Fort, STAFCO-OP produces a complete range of animal feeds. It leases the Feed Mill premises from the St. Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority. The mill was made operational at STAFCO-OP expense. Raw materials used are corn, soya, coconut meal, wheat middlings and feed concentrates. Feed is produced according to formulas, packaged in 50 lb. bags and transported to Marisule for distribution to farmers through STAFCO-OP.

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

STAFCO-OP owns feed manufacturing equipment, broiler and pork processing equipment (including scalding, plucker, eviscerating tables), a band-saw and a pork smoking unit. STAFCO-OP also owns one 3-ton truck, one 2-ton truck and one 1-ton truck which are used for deliveries and collections.

4.7 Annual sales by type commodity (EC\$)

Commodity	1983 (15 mths)	1984 (12 mths)	1985-86* (12 mths)	1986-87** (12 mths)
Feed	1,266,216	1,228,004	1,511,222	1,767,993
Eggs	755,061	571,732	615,758	505,150
Pork	242,359	170,594	300,921	405,457
Broilers			187,555	329,615
Farm supplies			31,510	98,140
Total (EC\$)	2,263,636	1,970,330	2,646,966	3,106,355

Source: STAFCO-OP * October to September ** preliminary figures

4.8 Net assets

<u>Year</u>	<u>Value EC\$</u>
1983	3,085
1984	84,224
1985	176,551
1986	472,773
1987	1,194,321

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

STAFCO-OP has consistently marketed eggs and pork since coming into being in August 1982.

a) Eggs

Many members of the Egg Co-op had established markets for eggs prior to the commencement of STAFCO-OP. Eggs are a very fragile commodity and highly perishable if not properly graded and stored. Demand is highly inelastic with greatest demand in December, when chickens normally produce most inefficiently.

STAFCO-OP markets eggs of members who sign a contract with the organization. This contract stipulates the member's flock size, and commits him to abiding by the recommendations of the SLEPCO/STAFCO-OP Stabilizing Fund Committee in the event of a glut. STAFCO-OP markets approximately 25% of the eggs produced by members. In times of glut this percentage increases, with almost all members selling some eggs to STAFCO-OP. All members support the marketing programme through a cash payment of EC\$1.00 per 50 lb bag of feed. In times of glut, the Stabilizing Fund supports significant reductions in the price of eggs, and provides payments to farmers who "force molt" their flocks. Training programmes, which have taught the procedures and examined the economics of "force molt" and artificial lighting, reinforce this marketing effort. This centralized marketing programme has generally increased the standard of the industry in grading and stabilized the price and availability of eggs. It has been directly responsible for achieving near national self-sufficiency in egg production.

b) Pork

Prior to the establishment of the Pig Co-op, premium quality pork (about 40% of the national demand at that time [1981]) was almost completely imported. The Pig Co-op/STAFCO-OP initiative obtained Government's agreement to protect the local industry from imports of fresh pork and coupled this with training in pig production and in the processing of fresh pork.

STAFCO-OP purchases approximately 30 pigs per week (January 1988) from members at the farm gate.

The pigs are kept overnight at either the Castries or Gros Islet Abattoire where they are slaughtered. They are then taken to STAFCO-OP premises for chilling. The following day(s) the sides are butchered, trimmed, packaged and placed in the freezer for marketing or processed as bacon, smoked hams or salted items. STAFCO-OP then wholesales these cuts to hoteliers, supermarkets, and restaurants and retails many at its Marisule premises.

c) Broilers

STAFCO-OP is now developing a market for locally produced broilers. However, there are several constraints: locally produced chicken has generally been higher priced than imported; previously, locally produced chicken suffered from poor quality and presentation; added to this is the vertical integration between importers, wholesalers, and some supermarkets. In sum, this market is difficult to penetrate.

STAFCO-OP has begun its marketing programme by emphasizing quality, presentation, and national effort. Hoteliers are responding positively but it is too early to determine the success of the marketing initiative.

d) Beef

In 1983, STAFCO-OP tried to market locally produced beef in a similar fashion to pork. However, the quality of locally produced beef compared unfavourably with the premium cuts of imported beef. STAFCO-OP discontinued this effort until such time as local forage and feeding programmes improve the quality of the beef produced to enable it to compete in the premium market.

e) Vegetables

STAFCO-OP sold small amounts of vegetables in its retail outlet in Conway, Castries in 1984. The location was not suitable and the outlet was closed. The purchase and marketing of vegetables was discontinued at the same time (1984). STAFCO-OP has held some discussions with its primary societies, who produce fruits and vegetables, for expansion into the marketing of fresh produce.

f) Farm inputs

STAFCO-OP markets approximately 200 tonnes of feed per month which it produces at its animal feed

mill in Vieux Fort. It stocks and sells a variety of farm inputs as required by its members, including fresh vegetable seeds.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

Some of the principal lessons learned by STAFCO-OP in respect to marketing of agricultural commodities are the following:

- a) Any marketing programme geared for the domestic market has to be in the best interest of the farmer or it will not work. For example, the only way that farmers are likely to market eggs through the co-op is if there is a cess on feed which will cover most of the costs of marketing.
- b) Pork marketing works because the Co-operative has made the capital investment to relatively efficiently transform the pig into a product for which there is a demand at the hotels. In other words, the farmer has a guaranteed market at farm gate for his product.
- c) Quality is critical to obtaining access into and maintaining a place in the market.
- d) Governmental policy instruments, to protect the local producer, and to provide up-front subsidies, are critical to the marketing effort. They not only help the farmer but can also induce buyers to purchase locally.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With government

Marketing intelligence monitoring has proven to be a necessary facilitating service to satisfy local demand while protecting the local production capacity. STAFCO-OP and government cooperate in the generation of the necessary production, supply and demand information on the egg and pork industry.

As a result of STAFCO-OP's capacity to meet local needs, Government has agreed to limit imports of pork and eggs where local farmers can supply requirements.

STAFCO-OP has requested from Government an independent analysis of the foreign exchange and employment implications of a local broiler industry so as to test the STAFCO-OP hypothesis that it is an appropriate national endeavour. Such a study is currently being carried out.

STAFCO-OP maintains regular linkage with the Co-operative Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Veterinary Division and the Ministry of Trade, Licencing Division. It also works with a variety of other Departments in efforts to develop broiler production and marketing and develop the feed mill.

6.2 With farmer organisations

STAFCO-OP has provided organizational assistance to some co-ops, i.e. Ti Rocher and Sunshine Harvest. The St. Lucia Agriculturists Association Ltd. imported feed on behalf of STAFCO-OP at its inception and still maintains close informal linkage. The St. Lucia Banana Growers Association leased a portion of its premises to STAFCO-OP at concessionary rates to assist the start-up of broiler operations. Informal ties also exist with the Barbados Agricultural Society, Organisation for Rural Development (ORD) in St. Vincent and Farm to Market in Dominica. Exchanges of experiences are also taking place with Agricultural Co-operatives in Haiti.

STAFCO-OP has recently initiated a newsletter entitled "Focus on Integrated Rural Development" which will be used as an instrument to stimulate inter-island coordination among farmer organisations.

6.3 With regional or international organisations

STAFCO-OP receives technical assistance and evaluatory services from Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute (CARDI), International Volunteer Service (IVS), the Canadian Executive Service Overseas (CESO), the Interamerican Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA), the Foundation for International Training (FIT), and Harmony (FITH) suppliers of premixes and technical services in the feed business. The Canadian Co-operative Agency (CCA) provides major financial assistance to STAFCO-OP for training and development of capital projects. The Canadian government, through CIDA and the St. Lucia National Research and Development Foundation (NRDF), is assisting in the development of a pig production supervised credit programme and a pork processing project.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

Shortage of working capital with which to purchase balanced feeds either results in pig farmers producing hogs with excessive fat or in a shortage of supply as farmers sell the pigs before they are large enough for

the Co-op to purchase. This problem is being addressed through a programme of supervised credit for farmers.

Co-operatives have experienced difficulty in achieving and maintaining production goals which coincide with demand. A large number of farmers, each making individual investment decisions for replacement and/or expansion, coupled with periodic and uncontrolled imports of eggs or pork, lead to periodic gluts and shortages, eroding farmer confidence, and causing further cycles.

7.2 Marketing

Established importers with large amounts of capital, experience and established marketing channels often frustrate efforts in marketing locally produced pork and broilers.

STAFCO-OP cannot market fresh fruits and vegetables for lack of physical space for expansion.

7.3 Management

Developing management capabilities to efficiently monitor production, oversee production and storage and to market and maintain financial viability, has been a challenge difficult to overcome.

STAFCO-OP resources are presently taxed to the limit. Resources are not available to promote new primary societies and to strengthen existing members in management, information services, project formulation, credit management, leadership training and other priority areas.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural Production

The pig producers need working capital with which to purchase balanced feed rations due to high feed costs. There is also a need for market information to assist the farmers in setting production goals to eliminate periodic gluts and shortages.

8.2 Marketing

STAFCO-OP needs a larger, more centralized area to allow them to increase their retail sales of eggs, pork and chicken, and to add space for the marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables.

8.3 Management

Management capabilities need improvement in the areas of production monitoring, storage, and maintaining financial viability. Qualified staff is needed to promote new societies and strengthen existing members in management, information services, project formulation, credit management, leadership training and other priority areas.

9. Future actions

9.1 New projects underway

a) Pig production credit

STAFCO-OP has developed a pig production credit programme in which farmers will produce larger (180 lb) pigs in six months. STAFCO-OP provides a market to the farmers and technical production supervision, whilst the NRDF provides directed credit for purchase of feed. The project began in March of 1986.

c) Pork processing

STAFCO-OP has begun to process ham, bacon, sausage and to cure other parts of pork utilizing the increased throughput from pig production.

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

In keeping with STAFCO-OP's original purpose and objectives it must continue to consolidate existing activities and services while developing expertise in the production and marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables. Over the next five years STAFCO-OP would like to reach the following goals:

- 1) Obtain the necessary infrastructure which will allow it to expand its level of operations and extend its services to include the marketing of perishable produce.
- 2) Centralize services of STAFCO-OP in the Castries area so as to provide a regular supply of meats, eggs, honey, fruits and vegetables and farm inputs to the general public.
- 3) Consolidate and strengthen the economic viability of all on-going activities of STAFCO-OP and its members.
- 4) Increase its membership in terms of farmers, and primary societies representing small farmers, until it becomes truly a national organisation.

- 5) Assist members to develop the capacity to produce and market agricultural produce in support of national objectives of import substitution and export development.
- 6) Develop new markets for local produce through exports, processing and wholesaling to hotels and cruise ships.
- 7) Stimulate demand through improved product presentation, packaging and general product quality.
- 8) Improve the availability of credit to members by building upon the credit union model.
 - a) Develop its managerial capabilities to undertake the above.

10. **Summary**

STAFCO-OP is the only second level organisation in St Lucia providing basic supply and marketing services to primary societies. It was established originally by producers of small animal products and most of its services are oriented towards this type of farmer. STAFCO-OP is diversified, decentralized and has grown rapidly since its foundation in 1982. It provides a line of valuable services but recognises the need to consolidate its operations, improve its infrastructure and expand its managerial capabilities.

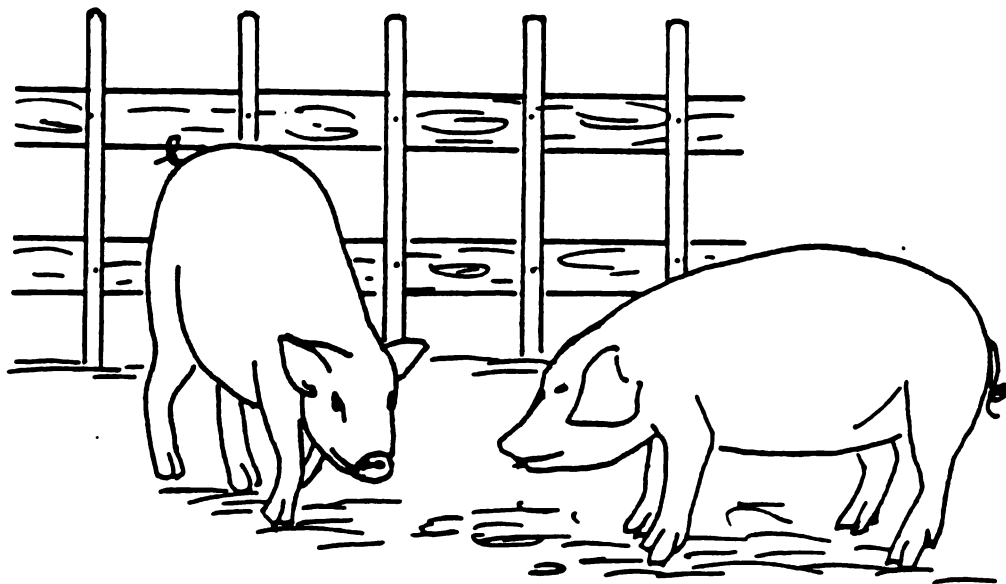
STAFCO-OP appears to be well aware of its own organisational problems and needs as well as those faced by its primary societies. It has established goals for the next five years addressing problems related to production, marketing, and management.

Under these plans STAFCO-OP would like to centralize their services in order to regulate the supply of their members' produce as well as to expand the level of operations to include perishable produce. Marketing will also be enhanced through establishing new markets including exporting, processing and wholesaling.

It is hoped that membership in STAFCO-OP will continue to increase so that STAFCO-OP becomes a truly national organisation.



ST LUCIA PIG
PRODUCERS CO-OPERATIVE



ST. LUCIA PIG PRODUCERS' CO-OPERATIVE

1. Background

For several years prior to 1979, large amounts of pork were being imported into St. Lucia. On the initiative of the Minister of Agriculture, a meeting of pig farmers was held during that year (about 200 farmers were present); the Minister encouraged these farmers to organize so that they could produce and market their animals more efficiently. After several meetings of pig producers, and much discussion, the St. Lucia Pig Producers' Co-operative was formed in February 1981 with thirty-two founding members.

Initially, farmers involved in pig production received subsidies from government to assist with the building of proper housing for the animals and facilities for feed storage as well as for initial purchase from the Government livestock farm of well bred stock.

Government stood security for a loan by the organization to lease premises at Marisule and to purchase freezing space; when these facilities became available, the Co-op began to penetrate the local market supplying hotels, supermarkets and individual housewives with fresh pork. The eventual aim was to produce enough fresh pork for St Lucia to become self-sufficient.

The problem of getting feed at the right time and at a reasonable price soon reared its head and the Co-op (together with the Egg Producers' Co-op) in 1981 went into an agreement with the St. Lucia Agriculturists' Association for the purchase of feed. Two years later, the organization started to do its own purchasing of feed and presently carries out this function, through STAFCO-OP, along with the importation and retail to members of special tools and medicines.

During the period since its formation and registration, membership has increased to over 120, but only about forty members are at present actively engaged in pig farming.

2. Objectives and Goals

The attainment of self sufficiency in the supply of fresh pork, thereby stopping importation and saving foreign exchange, is the principal aim of this organization. Training of farmers so that they become more reliable and move into full-time pig rearing or other

farming activities is an important secondary aim of the Co-op, as is the processing of pork to meet the local demand.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

a) Agricultural commodities: fresh pork and smoked ham and bacon

b) Other items: feeds and medicines sold through STAFCO-OP

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

Initially, the Co-op purchased live pigs at the farm gate, slaughtered, butchered and sold the product to the hotels, supermarkets and to the general public. A small retail outlet was maintained on the premises of the St. Lucia Marketing Board. Storage space was available at its Marisule depot and transport of both the live animals from the farms and the finished cuts to the various outlets was undertaken by the Co-operative.

This situation existed until the formation of STAFCO-OP in 1982. STAFCO-OP is now responsible for all the activities mentioned above. The members of the Pig Co-op are responsible only for the production of pigs.

3.3 Other services offered

Feed and other farm inputs are sold to the Co-op's members through STAFCO-OP. Members also receive regular information on the state of the market and training in various aspects of pig production.

Credit is being offered through an arrangement between STAFCO-OP and the National Research and Development Foundation (NRDF) under the Pig Production Credit Scheme. The Committee which oversees this Scheme includes members of the Board of the Pig Co-op who are responsible for supervising the selection of those members to whom loans are granted for the purpose of purchasing feed. The Veterinary officers of the Ministry of Agriculture provide assistance upon request.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

The Board of management consists of seven (7) officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer,

Assistant Secretary and three other members. At their monthly meetings all problems brought to their attention by members are considered and proposed solutions are relayed to the general membership. Three members of the Board of Management represent the pig producers in STAFCO-OP in those areas where farmers need support and assistance.

4.2 Type and number of members and geographical location

Total membership is approximately 120 farmers. The forty active members are located islandwide, however, there are more members in the northern districts than elsewhere. All districts in St Lucia have pig farmers belonging to the Co-operative.

4.3 Type and number of employees

Formerly, the Co-operative employed a manager, secretary/book-keeper, operations supervisor, butcher and two assistants. The operations supervisor controlled and operated the vehicle collecting the live pigs and delivering the finished product. Since the formation of STAFCO-OP, all the employees have been taken over by this body and the Pig Co-op now has no employees.

During the first year of its operation, the Co-op was assisted by Barclays's Bank International which provided a grant to meet the manager's salary and by the government which, through subsidy to the Co-op, met the salary of the operation supervisor. During its second year of operation, Government paid half of the supervisor's salary and the Co-op the other half; the Co-op also paid its manager until being integrated with STAFCO-OP.

4.4 Number of centres of operation and location

Formerly, there were two centres at which the Co-op's activities took place - the main centre at Marisule and a retail outlet in Castries in the St. Lucia Marketing Board (SLMB) building. The SLMB outlet was closed down in 1984 when the operations at Marisule came under the wing of STAFCO-OP. A new retail outlet was opened in an apartment of the St Lucia Labour Union Building which, at the time, was thought to be a better area for business. That too, has now been closed and transferred to Marisule.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

The co-operative originally operated, at Marisule, storage facilities for feed and a retail outlet for drugs and other inputs, as well as two walk-in freezers and a chiller. These were all passed over to STAFCO-OP, soon after its registration in 1982, under a sales purchaser agreement.

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

One pick-up van and some butchering equipment were originally owned by the Co-op. These were taken over by STAFCO-OP.

4.7 Annual sales by commodity

The items sold were fresh pork, medicines and feed. According to auditors reports, total sales for the years 1982 through 1987 were as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Value of sales (EC\$)</u>
1982	154,645
1983	193,480
1984	68,879
1985	200,961
1986	300,921
1987	405,457

4.8 Net assets

According to auditors reports, the Co-op's assets during the 1982-84 period were as follows:

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>
Current Assets (EC\$)	29,637	13,204	6,451
Fixed Assets (EC\$) (less depreciation)	52,513	40,420	25,900

Current assets include cash on hand, accounts receivable and prepaid expenses while the Co-op's fixed assets were the walk-in freezers, a chest freezer, a Toyota Van, fixtures and fittings and office furniture and equipment. Overall, in each of the three years 1982-84 the Co-operative had Net Liabilities (rather than assets) of \$30,516, \$54,294 and \$45,998 respectively. As mentioned, the fixed assets were passed over to STAFCO-OP.

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of each experience of consequence

Difficulties were experienced, especially in the early years, as there was no effective advertisement of the product nor marketing officer. The presentation of the product left much to be desired, especially as all operations were manual.

It has taken some time to penetrate the local market with fresh pork. But as of 1987, there has not been any

imported fresh pork. This coop has been supplying 80% of the market, the remaining 20% supplied by other local pig producers, nonmembers of SLPPC.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

The unavailability of trained staff and insufficient operating capital to pay farmers for their pork was a serious constraint.

Intense training in improved production techniques for members and of meat processing for butchers was organised through the MOA. This enhanced the quality of the product placed on the market and significantly reduced the age by which slaughter weight is attained. As a result of the training program farmers are now able to produce a much better quality animal than previously.

The high costs of production initially experienced has forced most of the part-time farmers out of pig production, thus the number of active members has dwindled to forty.

The Co-op lacked expertise in various aspects of marketing. This problem is now being seriously addressed by STAFCO-OP.

In an attempt to expand the market for pork, STAFCO-OP began smoking hams and bacon in January 1988. They are quite satisfied with the market response to date. They also plan on processing and marketing pork sausage by May 1988.

STAFCO-OP is in the process of conducting a survey in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture of all pig producers in St Lucia to determine the production capacity at this time. Using these results, and considering national consumption, STAFCO-OP will determine how many more farmers may enter in to pig production with continued market certainty.

The local Chamber of Commerce is constantly attempting to convince Government that the quality of locally produced pork is inferior and that the price is high by comparison with imported pork. Despite this, the response from the hotels is quite good and a large quantity of the pork used by them is local.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With government

Although no direct and permanent links exist with Government, there has been frequent dialogue between the

Pig Co-op and the MOA and the Ministry of Trade. As a result Government has placed a 'temporary' ban on the importation of any fresh pork which can be produced locally. A license to import is not granted as long as the Co-operative has fresh pork available.

6.2 With farmer organizations

The Pig Producers Co-op has very strong linkages with STAFCO-OP (being a founder-member) and, therefore, with all its affiliated farmer organisations.

6.3 With regional or international organisations

The Pig Producers' Co-op has links with CARDI from which it obtains training and information. The Co-operative Union of Canada, via STAFCO-OP, has rendered assistance by funding some of the Pig Co-op's activities and by providing expert assistance when necessary. Moves are now afoot to improve coordination between farmers organisations in the Windwards, so the Co-op, through STAFCO-OP, is becoming associated with similar organizations in Grenada, St. Vincent and Dominica.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

The lack of a proper breeding programme is a problem for some Co-op members.

Getting farmers to use a well balanced ration is still sometimes a problem, and some rely heavily on bananas as an alternative to the recommended balanced ration, resulting in poor growth and fat animals.

A special ration has been formulated which is to be used with green bananas, called banana supplement. This ration is produced by STAFCO-OP at the Vieux Fort feed-mill. Farmers have been very pleased with the results of feeding this ration but high costs of production have been discouraging. The cost of feed is very high but STAFCO-OP hopes that as the volume of its feed sales increase to poultry and pig producers, costs will decrease, increasing the profit margin to farmers.

7.2 Marketing

Trade statistics, by the time they become available from the Ministry of Trade, are not of much use for forecasting. The Co-op relies heavily on the MOA's Statistical Division as well as on the statisticians at CARDI for marketing information but this is not always readily available and the Co-op cannot afford to hire consultants.

Sometimes poor presentation of the product affects consumer demand.

There are still cases, from time to time, when imports of fresh pork get into the country. This occurs when importers use unusual names or when they use names giving the impression that the meat is not fresh, but processed.

7.3 Management

The management of the St Lucia Pig Producers Co-operative is primarily the responsibility of STAFCO-OP. Due to relatively fast expansion, their resources are stretched thin resulting in a lack of administrative and secretarial support for the farmer organisations. The field officer has had to take on other responsibilities as well, leaving him little time to actually visit the farmers and assist in problem solving and decision making.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural production

There is a need for support in a breeding programme for some farmers. These farmers require technical assistance in selecting and managing the stock and financial assistance in purchasing stock and feed. There is also a need for assisting some farmers with feed costs for fattening pigs, either by furnishing credit or reducing the feed costs. With lack of funds, farmers are unable to purchase the proper feeds, resulting in slow weight gain and poor quality pork.

8.2 Marketing

To prevent shortages and gluts of pork on the market, there is a need for timely marketing information to be used in forecasting production. Continuous efforts need to be made by STAFCO-OP in respect to presentation of the product so that consistent quality can be maintained to satisfy consumer demand.

8.3 Management

STAFCO-OP needs to strengthen their administrative support to the Pig Producers Co-op in order to assist the Co-op in making wise and timely decisions. There is also a need for a field officer to assist some of the farmer members in making efficient management decisions.

9. Future Actions

9.1 New projects underway

In January 1988, STAFCO-OP began smoking hams and basons at the Marisule Centre using a new liquid smoking process introduced from Canada. The smoked pork is marketed at hotels as well as at the Marisule retail outlet. STAFCO-OP received equipment to make sausage in early 1988. In March 1988, a specialist from Canada conducted training in sausage making during three weeks.

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

The Ministry of Agriculture is conducting a survey to get some accurate figures on the production and consumption of pork. With the emphasis on diversification, the Pig Co-op has been swamped with applications from farmers wanting to go into pig production. The Co-op will not accept new members until they are certain that there will be a market for the increased pork supply.

10. Summary

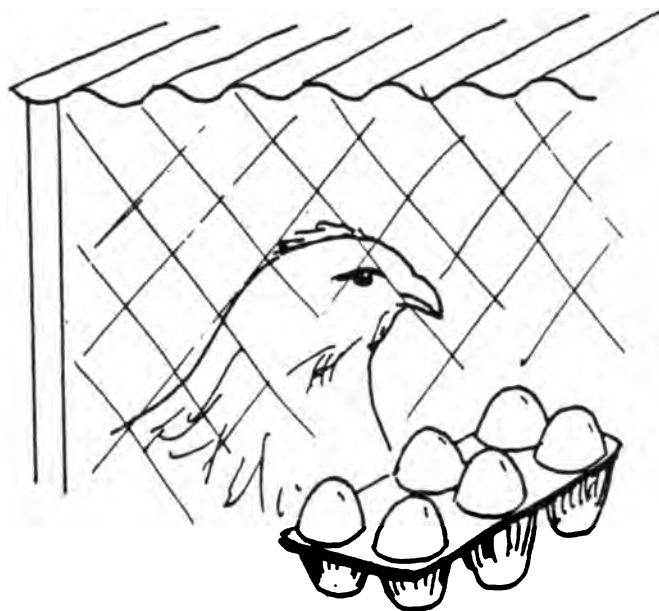
The SLPPC resulted from a felt need for improved services in farm input supply and marketing of pork products. It received considerable support from the public and private sector and has been able to grow into a viable organisation by affiliation with other primary societies and some vertical integration. Its principal problems relate to the high production costs of pig raising and coordination of supply with demand.

The high cost of feed is being addressed through the NRDF Credit Scheme, providing loans to farmers to purchase feed and the operation of a feed mill by STAFCO-OP. Support for the breeding programme is needed to maintain the production level, as well as farmer confidence in the Co-op. Due to lack of sufficient human resources in STAFCO-OP, field visits and managerial support are not as regular as would be preferred. There is no travel allowance available for the management of the Co-op to make field visits either.

Farmers need to know when to produce and how much to produce to prevent shortages and gluts on the market. Lack of timely supply and market information is therefore a severe constraint. STAFCO-OP is aware of the problems and is stressing the development of new markets through improved quality, presentation and packaging. It is hoped that centralized services, through STAFCO-OP, in the Castries area will also assist in regulating supply and demand.



ST LUCIA EGG
PRODUCERS CO-OPERATIVE
(SLEPCO)



ST. LUCIA EGG PRODUCERS CO-OPERATIVE (SLEPCO)

1. Background

For several years prior to the establishment of SLEPCO, a number of large farmers were producing eggs in St. Lucia. Some small farmers also went into production but for them, and for a few large farmers, the competition very often became too fierce, resulting in their being squeezed out of the market. Apart from the internal competition, there was also imported eggs which were cheaper, more presentable and more evenly graded. The price of eggs was controlled by the Ministry of Trade and was more related to the price of imported eggs than to the cost of locally produced eggs.

A Pig Producers' Co-operative had been formed in February 1981 and feed was being imported in bulk for its members. Those farmers still producing eggs decided to form an organisation through which feed and other inputs could be purchased in bulk as done by the pig cooperative. SLEPCO was formed and registered in 1981 with twenty founding members. Apart from the savings to members resulting from bulk purchases of feed and other inputs, there was also the advantage of having their input requirements on hand when needed.

At the time of SLEPCO registration, the St Lucia Marketing Board (SLMB) was responsible for the importation of eggs. The SLMB eggs were made available to the public at a lower cost than those eggs produced locally. This led to a confrontation between egg producers and Government and led to the establishment of an Egg Monitoring Committee by the Ministries of Agriculture and Trade in February, 1982.

The chief function of the Egg Monitoring Committee was the regulation and monitoring of local egg production so that importation would be allowed only when supplies fell short of demand. Such a responsibility required that the demand for eggs be ascertained and the flock size needed to produce the number of eggs required be carefully estimated. Having carried out the necessary survey, the Committee allocated quotas to three types of producers: the Egg Producers Co-operative, private commercial producers and backyard producers. SLEPCO's quota was then re-allocated to its members. Some of the larger egg producing members, having faced the difficulties of the past, did not wish to expand their egg-production activities. It was decided that any allocation by the Co-op not used by these farmers was taken up by smaller producers so that SLEPCO's quota would be met.

Egg production was monitored by the inter-institutional Committee on a monthly basis. The average rate of production for each month was determined and, from this, the deficit (if any) in production. Any deficit could then be imported.

To assist farmers with various aspects of production, so that maximum efficiency would be attained, regular training sessions were arranged by SLEPCO for its members.

The above described arrangement has worked satisfactorily and the Egg Monitoring Committee has proven its usefulness in generating the required decision making information. With the greater expansion in the hotel industry, the demand for eggs has increased. Despite the increase of the national flock size to 32,500 birds in 1987, large quantities of eggs have been imported since 1986 to meet the increased demand. SLEPCO's quota is 27,250 or 80% of the national flock size.

2. Objectives and Goals

The immediate objectives of SLEPCO are to attain self-sufficiency in egg production in St. Lucia and to lower the costs of production by training members and making bulk purchases of all required inputs. Another objective is to operate as an organized body which can seriously lobby and influence government policy in the area of egg production and marketing.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

a) Agricultural products: eggs (marketed through STAFCO-OP).

b) Other items: SLEPCO supplies baby chicks to its members; formerly, these were imported but as of mid 1986 they have been hatched locally with imported eggs. Farm inputs necessary for egg production (feed, drugs, egg cartons and other supplies are handled by STAFCO-OP).

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

The Co-operative assures its members that their eggs will be purchased, transported, graded, stored, when necessary, and sold to hotels, supermarkets and other customers. Most of these functions, however, are carried out through STAFCO-OP. In effect, the members main

function is to produce the eggs. The producers, in some instances, continue to deliver eggs directly to selected outlets so that the relationships which existed prior to STAFCO-OP's formation are maintained. Such deliveries, however, are really made on STAFCO-OP's behalf.

3.3 Other services offered

In addition to the supply of inputs, through STAFCO-OP, training in various aspects of egg production is provided as needed by members. This is usually undertaken by technical resource personnel from the Ministry of Agriculture or from CARDI and coordinated through STAFCO-OP.

Baby chicks are available from SLEPCO. The members must pay 50% down when they make the order and the remaining 50% is due within seven days after the delivery of the chicks. For all other inputs, obtained through STAFCO-OP, terms are strictly cash; no credit is available to members.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

The Board consists of five members - the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and one other member. Two of these officers are changed every year by election and out-going members are eligible for re-election to the Board. The Board oversees all aspects of the various activities of SLEPCO, striving for the highest level of management and assurance that deliveries, complaints and other problems are promptly dealt with.

4.2 Type and number of members and geographical location

Some sixty-five (65) members of which forty (40) are active, all with equal rights, now comprise this Co-op. Most carry out their farming activities in the north of the island in areas such as Babonneau, Monier, Grande Riviere, Forestiere, Morne Fortune and Cul-de-Sac. However, in other areas around the island, e.g. the Dennery, Vieux-Fort, Choiseul and Soufriere districts, there are members with large flocks of birds.

4.3 Type and number of employees

Formerly, a Marketing officer and a Customs Broker were employed by the Co-op. The functions of marketing and passage of goods through Customs are now performed by STAFCO-OP, a fee being paid to that organisation for this service.

4.4 Number of centres of operation and location

Each member carries out his production activities on his own premises. Since the formation of STAFECO-OP, members may use the facilities at Marisule for storage of eggs rather than delivering them directly to the customer.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

SLEPCO has no infrastructure, save for its participation in STAFECO-OP.

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

SLEPCO has two debeakers which are rented to the members. Previously the Co-op owned a calculator but this was passed over to STAFECO-OP upon registration.

4.7 Annual sales by type commodity

Year	Baby Chicks number	Eggs * dozen	National production	National consumption
1982			369,300	443,900
1983	22,500		398,900	428,500
1984	21,500		518,000	550,300
1985	20,000		573,409	593,409
1986	15,000		691,180	700,000
1987	26,000	114,260	501,729	770,000

* Sold through STAFECO-OP

4.8 Net assets

At 31st December, 1987, net assets were EC\$95,952 according to the audit report for 1987. Statutory reserves of EC\$92,384 are being held by the Co-op and the Shareholders' equity is EC\$71,716.

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

Prior to the formation of the Egg Monitoring Committee, eggs were imported and sold more cheaply than those produced by local farmers. On several occasions local eggs were dumped because of serious competition. The St. Lucia Marketing Board, which was responsible for the importation of eggs, is represented on the Egg Monitoring Committee and on one occasion, attempted "blending" of prices. This was stopped as it was difficult to have full

control over the importers and the fact that eggs could be imported was thought to act as a disincentive to achieving the aim of self-sufficiency.

The formation of SLEPCO and the supporting Egg Monitoring Committee has contributed towards reaching the objective of St Lucia self-sufficiency in egg production. The national production of eggs steadily increased while the importation of eggs has declined over the period 1982-86. From 1975 to 1979 imports accounted for about 25 percent of supply. In recent years, with the exception of 1987, this percentage has declined to between 3 and 6 percent.

In the early days of the Co-op's existence, all the requirements for production inputs were imported in an uncontrolled manner. Shortages occurred quite often and, at times, feed remained in stock for so long that it became mouldy or was attacked by weevils. With the formation of SLEPCO and STAFECO-OP the supply of farm inputs has been systematised and imported feeds are now being mixed locally.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

St Lucia self-sufficiency in egg production has been more - or - less attained and problems involving management of the organisation, timely replacement of hens and the purchase of inputs, especially feed, have been overcome. Early failures, such as untimely replacement of layers, have largely been overcome with the Egg Monitoring Committee playing a key role.

There was an instance when the feed, imported from neighbouring St. Vincent, was substandard. This was observed through a monitoring exercise and compensation was obtained from the feed-mill. An important lesson learned from this is the usefulness of the monitoring exercise and the significance of keeping proper records. The Co-op, since April 1987, purchases all of its feed from the feed mill, managed by STAFECO-OP, in Vieux Fort since April 1987.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With government

With respect to general agricultural policy, SLEPCO cannot boast of any influence. However, through constant lobbying, the Co-op has obtained the respect of, and in fact influences, the decisions of Government on importation of eggs, control of their price and their marketing in St. Lucia.

The Co-op is not linked to government as it is a properly registered Co-operative governed by Co-op law. It is, however, in frequent contact with various Government Departments, especially the Ministries of Trade and Agriculture (Livestock Division and Co-operatives Dept).

6.2 With farmer organizations

SLEPCO has influenced both the Chamber of Commerce and the Hotel Association, with which it has close links, to assist in the struggle concerning importation of eggs into the country. Further, SLEPCO's success in attaining self-sufficiency and in maintaining control over the importation of eggs has given the stimulus to other local organizations to aim at attaining this goal for the products with which they deal. The other organizations with membership in STAFCO-OP are in the forefront of this drive, particularly the Pig Producers' Co-operative and the Belle Poule Broiler Co-operative. Other Co-operative organisations are interested and are taking the necessary steps to gain membership in STAFCO-OP so that firm links with them may soon be registered.

6.3 With other regional or international organizations

SLEPCO has links with CARDI (Barbados) through which several training sessions have been conducted by experts from that Institution. Links also exist with the Co-operative Union of Canada (Canadian Co-operative Agency) which has, to date, provided funds for the training of SLEPCO's members in handling and management practices. The Poulettee Copepe, A Haitian Co-op has also assisted in the training of SLEPCO's members, through exchange visits.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

The major problems lie within production as marketing problems having largely been overcome. The principal production problems are in respect to farmers habits in grading, handling and storage. Farmers sometimes attempt to mix eggs of different sizes. Some soak the eggs in an attempt at cleaning which shortens their storage life; this has been overcome to a large extent. The amount of space which farmers have for storage is adequate but the conditions which obtain in these areas are far from ideal; walls are usually built high in an attempt to keep out rodents but this causes the space to be quite warm, reducing the storage life of the eggs. Farmers are encouraged to use STAFCO-OP storage space rather than their own.

7.2 Marketing

There has not been a glut in the egg market since 1985. There are several factors to explain this:

- The hotel industry has expanded, increasing the demand.
- There has been low productivity in young laying pullets due to believed genetic problems.
- Poor management practices at the farmer level reduce efficiency.
- Some deliveries by the hatchery are short of the number ordered, and
- The local population is consuming more eggs in substitution of the more expensive imported foodstuff.

All importing is done in consultation with SLEPCO.

The Egg Monitoring Committee is studying the situation to determine whether the national flock size should be expanded or whether greater efficiency and improved standards should be demanded from existing egg producers.

7.3 Management

STAFCO-OP cannot, given its rapid expansion, meet the administrative and secretarial needs of their members. This makes it difficult for SLEPCO to make decisions regarding management because they do not have current records to review. STAFCO-OP is responsible for all administrative functions including farm visits to standardize farm management practices and efficiency. The Board of SLEPCO would be willing to make farm visits if they had a travel allowance to do so.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural Production

There appears to be a need for training to be available for existing and new egg producers to insure that they maintain good habits with grading, handling and storing eggs. This training would also address all other management areas in egg production as well.

8.2 Marketing

There is a need to investigate reasons why eggs have been short on the market, especially those possibilities relating to believed genetic problems with the chicks and poor management practices at the farm level.

8.3 Management

There is a need for financial records to be regularly updated to facilitate management decisions. There is also a need for support at the farm level to assist in standardizing farm management practices.

9. Future Actions

9.1 New projects underway

None

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

An alternative to wood shavings for the deep litter is being sought and the idea of using the waste cardboard from the local box factory is seriously being considered. The major problem is the purchase of the right shredding machine with the appropriate dies. Research on a shredding machine is underway.

Due to such a high mortality rate of baby chicks, SLEPCO is looking in to selecting several farmers with the appropriate facilities to raise baby chicks to the "point of lay", about 18 weeks old. This would reduce the mortality rate and increase efficiency.

Belle Poule is also looking in to ways that STAFCO-OP can market cull birds: smoking them or processing them in to sausage. This would provide a good market for the farmers as well as increase the product line to the customers.

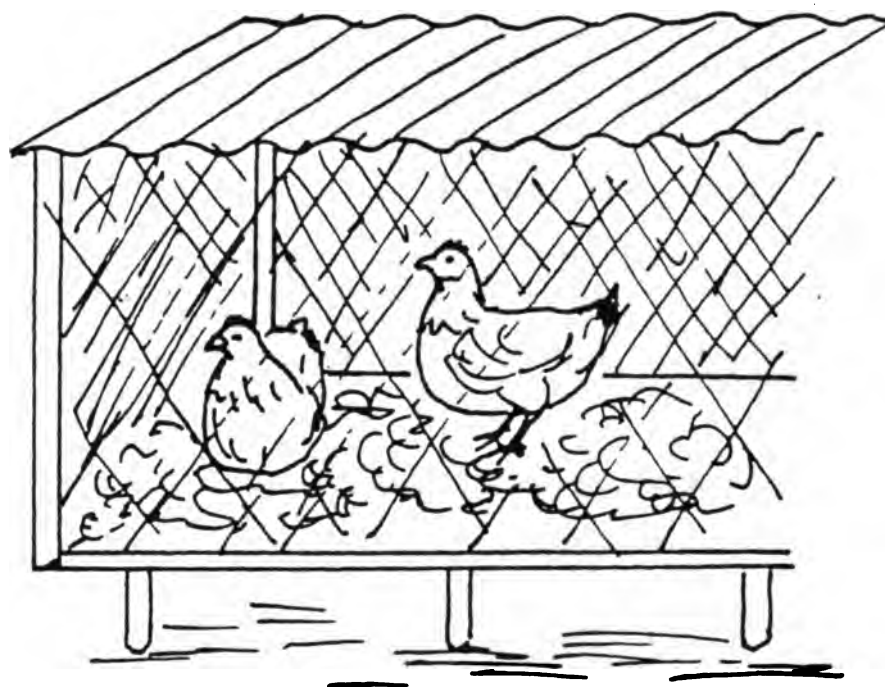
10. Summary

SLEPCO has come a long way since its beginning in 1981, assisting farmers in increasing production from 75% to 95% of the total national consumption of eggs. The establishment of a private/public sector Egg Monitoring Committee is one of the main factors contributing to their success.

There still appears to be room for improvement as a need exists for assistance in supporting their farmers in the areas of good production and management practices. With new producers constantly entering the market, training needs to be offered on a continuous cycle. High quality eggs must be produced consistently in order to hold the market.

Management must be improved leading to increased efficiency in production, processing and marketing.

BELLE POULE BROILER
PRODUCERS CO-OPERATIVE



BELLE POULE BROILER CO-OPERATIVE

1. Background

A series of meetings was initiated in January 1984 with persons already involved in the production of broiler chickens, as well as others interested in broiler production. Some of these farmers had been members of the Babonneau Poultry Co-operative which flourished in the 1970-1980 period but became defunct for a variety of reasons. These persons had retained their interest in growing broilers and wished to organize another grouping of poultry farmers. Other interested farmers included those who were producing eggs, vegetables, bananas and/or other agricultural products and wished to add another source of income to their activities.

Belle Poule Broiler Co-operative was officially registered in August, 1984 with twenty-five (25) founder members.

On the day of the Co-op's initiation each member purchased one thousand dollars's worth (\$1000) of shares to be paid in two installments - one immediately, of five hundred dollars (\$500) and a second, within six months. On that day, thirteen thousand dollars (\$13,000) was received for the shares purchased. Following this "initiation" meeting, anyone wishing to obtain membership paid fifty dollars (\$50) with his application and, if accepted, one thousand dollars for shares in the Co-op.

2. Objectives and Goals

The aim of Belle Poule is to develop an efficient organisation where members will eventually produce sufficient poultry meat to satisfy St. Lucia's needs, thus stopping the importation of this product, saving foreign exchange and creating employment.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

a) Agricultural commodities: live broilers

b) Other items: feed, medicines and other farm inputs are purchased through STAFCO-OP.

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

At the time of Belle Poule's formation, STAFCO-OP was already in existence. Belle Poule liased with STAFCO-OP and got a grant from the Co-operative Union of Canada to purchase processing equipment to carry out a pilot programme, processing one thousand birds per week (although the equipment is capable of handling one thousand birds per day). The actual processing is undertaken through STAFCO-OP.

3.3 Other services offered

In addition to the responsibility of processing, STAFCO-OP provides farm inputs including such items as baby chicks, feed, medication and equipment, such as feeders and waterers, through its outlets in Marisule and at the Vieux Fort Feedmill.

In the past, farmers have had to pay cash for all their supplies and no credit facilities were available to members from the organization. Since mid 1988 the National Research Development Foundation has provided EC\$80,000 and a CIDA funded project has provided EC\$30,00 for a feed credit scheme for members of Belle Poule Co-operative.

Payment for broilers is made to the farmers, by STAFCO-OP, within a week.

Grants are received on Belle Poule's behalf by STAFCO-OP for training purposes. A specialist in Broiler Production has come from CARDI, Barbados and delivered lectures to members on more than twelve occasions. MOA staff have also assisted in these and other training sessions. Such aspects of production as: general growth of broilers, management, litter, waterers and feeders, space per bird, processing, catching of the birds and transportation (including number per box during transport and ideal times and methods of transportation), were treated.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

Five directors comprise the Board, these are: a Chairman, Vice-chairman, Secretary/Treasurer, Public Relations Officer and one member without portfolio. In addition, two persons - the former Registrar of Co-operatives and a farmer having several years' experience in the field of Co-operatives and overseas contacts - attend meetings of the Board and act as advisors.

The Board meets once a month or more often if necessary. All the members serve on a voluntary basis.

4.2 Type and number of members and geographical distribution

Belle Poule's Members are spread islandwide. Membership of the Co-op has increased to seventy-five (75) as of October 1988, of which twelve (12) are actually producing. There are other persons who would like to begin producing but these are being held at bay while efforts are made to penetrate the difficult broiler market. Members include both male and female and all members have the same rights.

4.3 Type and number of employees

STAFCO-OP presently offers secretarial services to the Co-op, for which no charge is made; at a later date, when profits begin to accrue, these services will have to be paid for.

4.4 Number of centres of operation and location

The processing plant at Union is being rented from the St. Lucia Banana Growers Association; this also contains a Blast freezer. These facilities are operated on Belle Poule's behalf by STAFCO-OP. There is no separate office, telephone, typewriter, etc., belonging to the Co-op; all such equipment, together with the premises, both at Union and at Marisule, are under STAFCO-OP's administration.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

None.

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

STAFCO-OP places three vehicles at the disposal of the Broiler Co-op's members (as well as of the members of the other Co-ops which compose STAFCO-OP.)

4.7 Annual Sales by commodity

Live birds are the commodity sold. Between August and December, 1985, some 20,000 lbs. of live chickens were sold for approximately EC\$42,500. It must be noted that these sales are from a pilot project involving only eight of the Co-op's members. In 1986, approximately 100,000 lbs. of live chicken were sold for EC\$325,000 and in 1987 about 120,000 lbs. of live chicken were sold for EC\$390,000 from twelve (12) producers.

4.8 Net assets

This originally consisted of Share capital amounting to \$30,000. Half of this - \$15,000 - was transferred to STAFCO-OP to assist in obtaining the above-mentioned processing plant. An additional EC\$500 was allocated for the purchase of one hundred STAFCO-OP shares at \$5 each. A balance of \$14,500 therefore remained at the end of 1985. At the end of 1986, share capital had a balance of EC\$19,900, and at the end of 1987 there was a balance of EC\$29,440.

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

Despite the promise of protection by government, some whole chicken from overseas has reached the market, probably because it has been imported under the name "Whole Fry." As of October 1988, there has been no evidence of whole chicken imports in 1988.

Also, Cornish hens have been imported in the past. These compete with locally produced whole chickens. Some hotels are demanding a smaller bird, Club Med, for example, is requesting a 2 1/2 lb. chicken. As of October 1988, all Cornish hens sold in St Lucia are being produced locally.

Deception by a local businessman resulted in serious problems some time ago; he obtained a licence to import on the basis of having placed an order for a hotel (it was a requirement for obtaining the licence that one purchase a certain amount of local chicken); the hotel, however, did not accept the order, claiming that it had not placed it. As a result, there was a build-up of stocks on the local market which had to be disposed of at a far lower price than usual, some 50 cents per pound below the normal price.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

Among its successes Belle Poule Co-op can boast of having gotten properly organized and registered. It has also successfully lobbied Government and gotten a measure of protection for its market. Little by little, the number of customers is increasing, a number of supermarkets and all the hotels, except one, purchase the processed product from STAFCO-OP.

There have been failures also. For example, stocks have built up for various reasons and the processed birds had to be sold very cheaply; on one occasion they were even sold for use as animal feed. One very important

lesson learned is that careful monitoring of the market situation is needed so that farmers can be informed in good time when to produce more birds and when to slow down.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With government

Although Belle Poule has had no impact on the general agricultural policy of government, members of Cabinet have certainly taken notice of its efforts to penetrate the broiler chicken market. The policy of the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Agriculture have been influenced as witnessed by their efforts to stop the importation of whole chicken. The duty-free concessions made to STAFCO-OP on its imports of feed and of equipment for the renovated feed-mill will filter through to Belle Poule.

The Co-op is not officially linked with Government; however, much assistance and advice is obtained from the Livestock Division of the Ministry of Agriculture. Recently, a request was made to the Ministry for the secondment of an officer whose duties would include the inspection of poultry farms to ensure that all was well with the national flock. Any problems would thus be 'nipped in the bud.'

6.2 With farmer organisations

Belle Poule's efforts to penetrate the market, and its persistence, despite many obstacles, has influenced other organisations, giving them encouragement to struggle to attain their goals. Its membership in STAFCO-OP has encouraged others to join in this union so that a much stronger local agricultural co-operative movement will eventually result.

6.3 With other regional or international organisations

CARDI: the training sessions conducted on various aspects of production with CARDI's assistance have already been mentioned. Belle Poule has links with a sister Co-op in Haiti; in 1985, eight of Belle Poule's members spent a week in Haiti where they observed the operations of the Haitian farmers and exchanged ideas and experiences; during the previous year (1984), three Haitians had come to St. Lucia on a similar mission.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

The slow weight gain noted by many farmers is thought to be caused by poor genetic quality of baby chicks. The chicks are hatched locally from imported eggs.

Disease has been minor, usually a result of poor management at the farm level. The Co-operative is rectifying this through a training programme for members with CARDI and the Ministry of Agriculture.

7.2 Marketing

The marketing is dependent on STAFCO-OP's marketing of processed birds. This is made more difficult by the competition from imported chicken. The St. Lucian farmer cannot really compete with his US counterpart; it is argued, however, that the employment generated in producing broilers is worth the extra amount which the customer pays for local chicken and the Co-op's efforts are geared toward penetrating and securing this market.

Local broilers are also considered of much higher quality than imported chicken.

7.3 Management

Expertise at the managerial level for planning farm management and training purposes is insufficient to meet the needs of farmers.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural production

Investigations need to be made to determine where the problem of poor quality chicks originates, before or after hatching, and what can be done to resolve it. Farmers also need to be kept informed of good management practices to continue producing a high quality product.

8.2 Marketing

STAFCO-OP must continue its efforts to expand into and maintain market share as competition with imported chicken continues.

8.3 Management

A systematic effort must be made to get members to design and follow through on a production/marketing strategy to penetrate local market.

9. Future Actions

9.1 New projects underway

As a result of the Co-op's existence and its relations with STAFCO-OP, the plant for processing of broilers at Union has come into operation on a trial basis. It is, however, not operating at a profit; in fact, there is a loss of EC\$7,350 on the marketing operations for each batch of one thousand birds. This loss is largely a result of the high turnover of employees at the processing plant. Chickens are only processed two days per week. Once the employees are trained and are just becoming efficient, they often leave the Union plant to take a full time job elsewhere. This constant turnover reduces the efficiency of operations drastically. Alternatives to reducing costs are being studied.

The Co-op, though not directly involved, has an input into the Vieux Fort feed mill through STAFCO-OP.

The Feed Credit Scheme financed through NRDF will begin operation by June 1988. STAFCO-OP will be partially responsible in assisting in the monitoring as well as in recommending applicants. This project is designed to assist new farmers in entering in to poultry production.

9.2 In the planning stage

Belle Poule has approached government asking for an area of land to be made available to the Co-op at a peppercorn rent so that a proper processing plant could be built. However, until the picture on costs/benefits of broiler processing becomes clear and the market situation is properly arranged, this project is being "kept on standby."

The Co-op has plans to smoke chicken, process chicken sausages, and as of October 1988 they have started selling chicken parts, all in an attempt to increase market potential. It also produces and markets Cornish Hens to hotels to meet the demand for smaller birds.

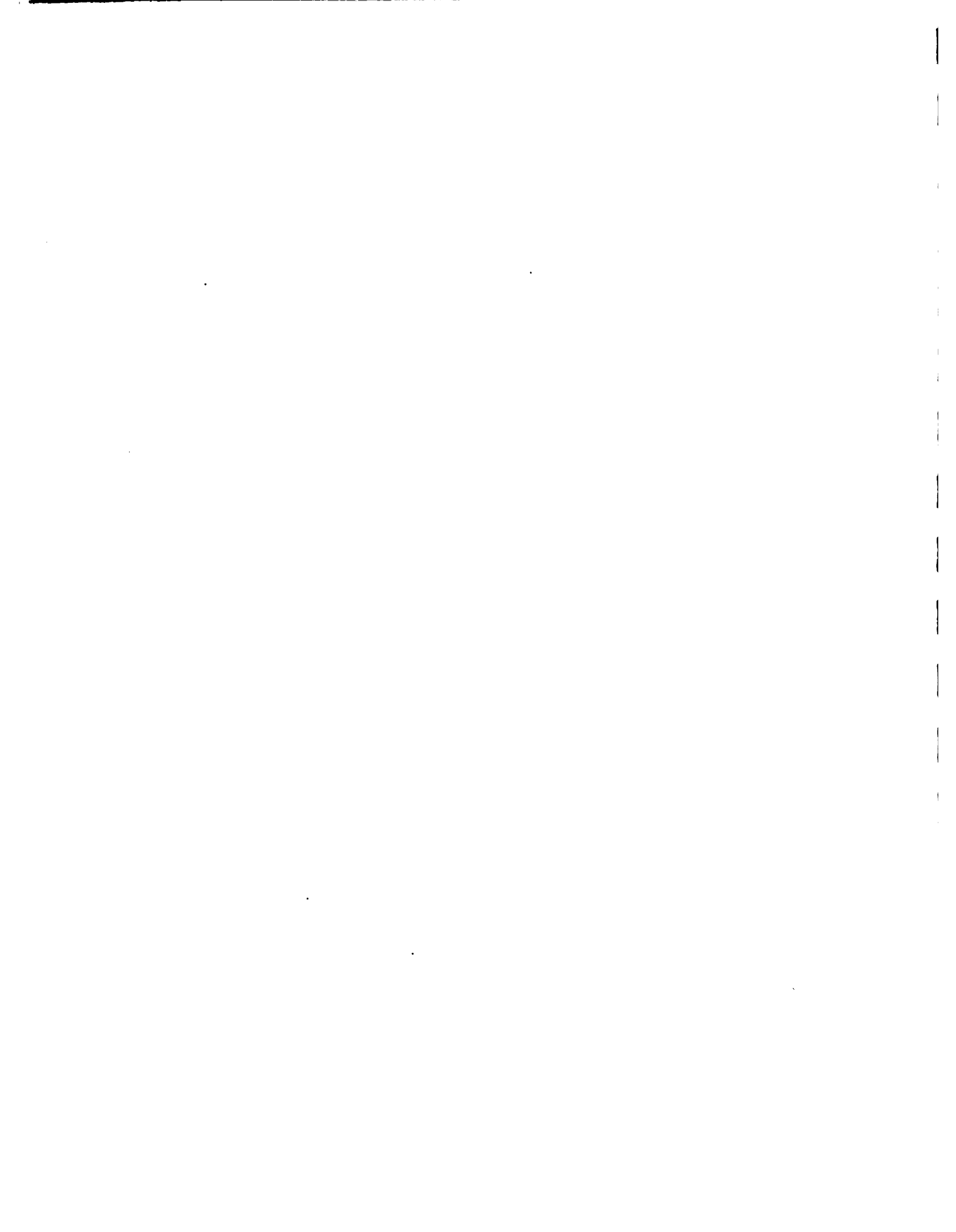
Belle Poule is looking in to expanding its broiler operation as the market increases. It has intentions of opening a centralized retail outlet through STAFCO-OP when they find available space and financial resources.

10. **Summary**

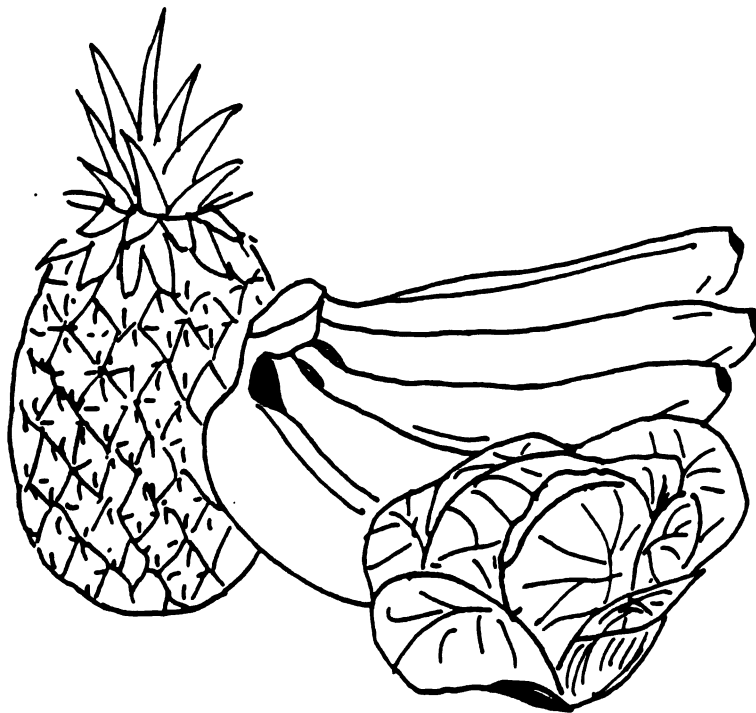
Belle Poule Co-op seems to be making slow but steady progress. The marketing of broilers has gone well as no whole chicken is presently imported. STAFCO-OP soon plans to begin selling chicken parts, as well as smoked chicken and chicken sausage, which will all assist in expanding the market. As market expands the processing plant should experience increased efficiency with larger volumes and longer periods of operation.

There is still a concern with the genetic quality of baby chicks as weight gain is very slow, resulting in high cost birds. SLEPCO is addressing this problem as well through contact with the farm in United States where the eggs originate. Other production problems are hoped to be addressed through on-going training involving STAFCO-OP field personnel and Ministry of Agriculture extension officers.

The competition with imported chickens is very keen and Belle Poule Broiler Co-op is likely to require increased and continued public and private sector support for this organisation to obtain a significant portion of the local market.



TI ROCHER
FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE



TI ROCHER FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE

1. Background

The Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative is a multi-purpose Society which obtained legal registration as a Co-operative in 1983. Ten founding members formed the Co-operative in order to diversify their agricultural production, largely centered on bananas. After formation, members bought a two story, wall building, which serves as its operations centre. The Co-op runs a consumer shop, a recreation and meeting area, and sells farm inputs to its members. In late 1984 and 1985, the Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative exported, by air, traditional food crops to a market in St. Croix.

2. Objectives and Goals

The overall objective of the Ti Rocher Co-operative is to assist members diversify from bananas into other farming ventures. The Ti Rocher Co-operative would like to carry out a number of activities in support of this objective, including marketing, research, training, supply of inputs and development of infrastructure. Growing out of this effort to diversify, the Co-operative has carried out other activities to increase the economic and social well-being of the community. The consumer shop and the recreation centre are two examples of these related activities.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

- a) Agricultural commodities: food crops and vegetables.
- b) Other items: farm inputs and consumer goods.

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

- a) Food crops and vegetables

The Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative engaged in export sales of traditional food crops and vegetables to St. Croix for approximately one year (1984-85). Due to delayed and irregular payment for these export sales, the farmers stopped supplying the order in 1985.

b) Consumer shop

The Co-operative operates a consumer store on the bottom floor of their two story operations center. They stock and sell grocery items, as well as a few farm inputs, including seeds and feeds to members and the public.

3.3 Other Services offered

The Ti Rocher Co-operative sells inputs, and provides information and training for members. Members were originally allowed a limited amount of credit (up to EC\$200/month) at the consumer shop, which was to be cleared monthly. Problems arose as members were unable to clear their debts at all, resulting in the end of the credit programme in early 1987. Now only cash sales are made to all customers.

The Co-operative has carried out some training for members, including co-operative education, enrollment in adult literacy programmes and technical training in Martinique in the cultivation of pineapples for one member. Since November 1987, the Co-op Department has been providing training to board and farmer members of the Co-op on an alternative weekly basis. The board members have been very receptive with good attendance but the other members of the Co-op have shown little interest. This training includes record keeping, management practices and cooperative education.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

The Board of Directors comprises seven members who serve for two years on rotation. The Board of Directors has delegated responsibility for management of the consumer shop and the recreation area (bar) to separate committees of management. The Board directly oversees marketing and other development activities.

4.2 Type and number of members and geographical distribution

The Co-operative has thirty-two members all of whom live in the Ti Rocher, Micoud, and Desruisseaux area. In August 1988 approximately 15 members were considered active.

4.3 Type and number of employees

The Co-operative regularly employs one person to work in the consumer store.

4.4 Number of centres of operation and location

Ti Rocher Co-operative has one centre of operation located at its premises at Ti Rocher, (Micoud).

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

None

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

None

4.7 Annual sales by type commodity (EC\$)

Year	Consumer shop	Recreation bar	Agricultural Domestic Exports
1984			
1985	50,000	62,000	25,000*
1986	75,000		
1987	80,000		

Source: Ti Rocher Co-op.

* \$500 to \$750 per shipment.

4.8 Net assets (Unaudited figures)

	<u>December 1985</u>	<u>December 1987</u>
Land and building	EC\$100,000	EC\$ 70,000
Storage building	7,500	(sold in 1986)
Inventory/stocks	10,000	7,990
Fixtures/Equipment	0	16,925
Cash at Bank	2,500	6,800
Total	<u>EC\$120,000</u>	<u>EC\$101,715</u>

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

a) Sales for export to St. Croix

This activity began in late 1984 and continued through most of 1985. The buyer, having whole-sale/retail outlets in St. Croix, informed the Co-operative of his food crop needs, and prices. The Co-operative informed members and non-members who

brought their products (yams, dasheen, sweet potatoes, breadfruit, plantain, bananas, tomatoes and cabbages) to the Co-operative premises. The products were graded, packed, and weighed in the presence of the seller, the buyer and representatives of the Co-operative. The buyer took delivery at the Co-operative and transported the products to the airport for air shipment to St. Croix. The farmers were to receive payment one week after delivery of produce, but often times it was late. This was discouraging to the farmers resulting in the termination of this arrangement. The Co-operative charged members a 2% commission on sales and non-members a 5% commission on sales.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

a) Production planning

Farmers and farmer organisations need to plan their production activities well in advance and these should be based on market requirements. The St. Croix market opportunity came about quite suddenly and had to be discontinued after several months because of irregular payments and an inadequate supply of food crops, thus the need for better planning.

b) Selling prices

It was learned that farmers will accept a lower price than the going rate in the market of St. Lucia, if their products can be bought quickly at one buying point, and if the market is regular. At one point farmers began not to supply produce because of the lower export price. However, a series of confidence-building discussions between the Co-op and the buyer, convinced the broad membership of the Co-operative that a sure market for specified amounts of produce was more advantageous, even at lower unit prices, than the risks of the traditional market.

c) Packing station

There is a need to establish a packaging plant nearer the Airport for shipments which come from several points in the island.

d) Produce assembly

Buyers prefer to deal with a Co-operative rather than individual members. Dealing with a group increases reliability and facilitates communication.

e) Member support

The marketing experiences have also heightened the spirit of individual members who now have more confidence that the Co-op can assist them in marketing the products into which they wish to diversify.

f) Institution strengthening

The community at large now sees the Co-operative in a more positive light in terms of a developmental strategy and its ability to be of immediate service to members and non-members. It has brought increased inquiry for membership.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With government

Involvement in export has made the Agricultural Extension Service more responsive to the Co-operative, and they have used the Co-operative premises as the venue for several meetings. More recently the Co-operative has been invited to participate in a number of seminars on proposed extension policy changes involving decentralization of the offices and methods of service of the Extension Division.

The Ti Rocher Co-operative maintains linkage with the Ministry of Agriculture for agricultural projects, and with the Central Planning Unit for preparation of a project for a nursery and an irrigation system for the area. It also maintains liaison with the Co-operative Department for training and supervision.

6.2 With farmer and rural organisations

The Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative is a member of the St. Lucia Association of Farmers Co-operatives (STAFCO-OP). It co-ordinated its export programme with the Sunshine Harvest Co-operative. Since mid 1987, Ti Rocher has been supplying produce to Club Med through the Sunrise Harvest Co-operative. Sunrise Harvest also assists Ti Rocher obtain planting materials.

Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative has been purchasing new varieties of seed from Caribbean Chemicals through Sunshine Harvest Co-operative. A few farmers are very interested in growing non-traditional crops including chinese cabbage, eggplant, watermelon, tomatoe, pumpkin, broccoli and sweet pepper. Sunshine Harvest provides the market for these items.

A youth sports club of twenty-five men and women was formed and was named the Co-op Sports Club. When asked why they called themselves this name, the club members stated that they felt that the Ti Rocher Co-op was the only functional and successfully organised group in the area and the youth felt proud to associate themselves with it. The Co-op has since provided monies to the club to purchase equipment and has agreed to the use of its recreation centre for club meetings.

6.3 With regional or international organizations

The Co-operative maintains relationships with the French Mission in St. Lucia, with whom it is working to develop a nursery and irrigation system.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

The lack of a production strategy which would permit regular supplies of food crops for export is a serious hinderance. Very few farmers are willing to plant the non-traditional crops because of the fear of an unstable market. It is hoped that as a few farmers take the initiative to plant new crops and share their success stories, other farmers will gain confidence and also try planting new varieties.

The lack of a regular water supply for short-term crops is a limiting factor as well. Without an irrigation system it is very difficult to maintain production through the dry season.

7.2 Marketing

With a lack of production strategy it is not possible to secure a steady market. When produce is available, Ti Rocher markets through Sunrise Harvest to Club Med and Club St Lucia. Lack of transport by Ti Rocher makes it difficult to search for markets for the remaining produce and for picking up and delivering it, as well as for collecting inputs and planting materials for the Ti Rocher Co-operative.

7.3 Management

The other economic activities of the Co-op, (the supermarket and the bar) do not currently generate sufficient income to pay for the mortgage on the building. The records of the shop activities have not been adequate, making it difficult to determine the problem areas needing assistance. As long as the marketing of produce

by the Co-op is so minimal, an alternative source of income is needed to sustain the Co-op operations.

The lack of farmer confidence in the Co-op has made it difficult to keep the Co-op active. The farmers have not been producing for the Co-op. They have just been doing their own thing, afraid of the market risks of non-traditional produce. But it is felt that with time, as a few of the progressive members plant new varieties and have positive marketing experiences, the confidence in the Co-op will rise and participation of other members will increase.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural production

A production strategy needs to be developed with the cooperation of all member farmers in order to organize and permit a regular supply of produce for local and international markets. In support of a production strategy, there must be an adequate supply of good planting materials and inputs offered by the Co-op shop as well as a dependable vehicle for transporting produce and inputs to and from the farms. There is also the need for regular water supply to facilitate the production of good quality fruits and vegetables.

8.2 Marketing

With the implementation of a production strategy, there needs to be a secure market, either local and/or export. Transport is needed to pick up produce at the farm gate and to deliver it to destinations.

8.3 Management

A cooperative cannot work without the collective efforts of its members. The Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative is working to increase the level of farmers confidence. There is a need for co-operative education to renew the interest and to make members aware of the importance of cooperation among all members. There is also a need for assistance in the management of the shop as it has not been profitable in the past. Some members feel that the Co-operative needs a full-time manager to assure the smooth operations of Ti Rocher Co-operative in general.

9. Future Actions

9.1 New projects underway

None

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

a) Nursery and irrigation projects

The Co-op has prepared nursery and irrigation projects to facilitate the plan to diversify members production into vegetables and food crops. The Co-op prepared proposals and obtained an EC\$18,000 grant to construct a plant nursery for tree crops and vegetables. However, as the irrigation portion of the project is not yet approved, the nursery project is on hold. The irrigation portion of the project requests EC\$150,000 from the French Mission in St. Lucia to meet the costs of piping and technical labour. The remaining labour will be provided by the Co-op members. It will provide irrigation from an old water source, by gravity, to twenty-five members of the Co-op. It will have capacity to provide water to an unstated number of additional farmers who are expected to join the Co-op.

b) Food preservation

The Co-operative is considering preparing proposals to dry or preserve fruits produced by members.

c) Diversification

The Co-op is interested in producing high price, short and medium term crops, such as sweet pepper, passion fruit, and plantain, and permanent crops, such as mango and soursop. The production of these crops will require assisting farmers to the point where they can conveniently produce the product, by providing irrigation, plant material and the marketing structure. Emphasis will be placed on quality control, packaging and sales at local, regional, and international levels.

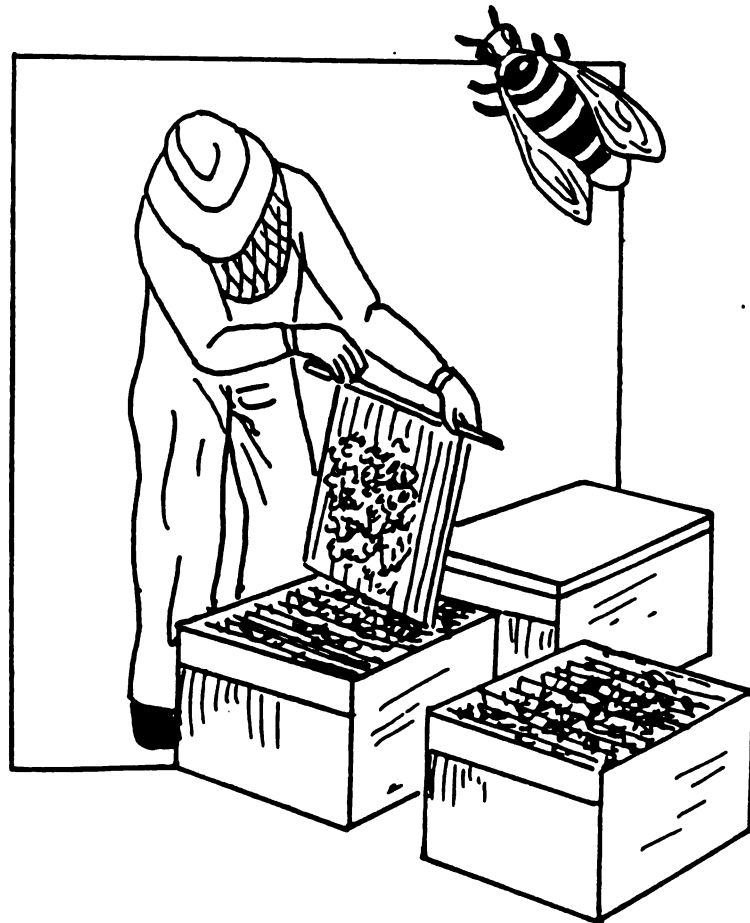
10. Summary

The overall objective of Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative is to support members in diversification from bananas to other produce. Experiencing difficult marketing situations caused farmer confidence to drop, making it difficult to maintain an active and viable cooperative movement.

The Sunshine Harvest Co-operative has since entered the scene, offering a variety of new seeds as well as a market for the produce. Only a few farmers have been interested and willing to try these new varieties, but they have been very pleased with the results, both in production and in marketing. The need for an irrigation system is obvious as it has been difficult to maintain production through the dry season. The Co-op is waiting for the French Mission to approve funds for this project which will hopefully increase the production of vegetables and breath new life into the movement.

The training offered by the Co-operative Department has been of assistance to the Board of Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative. They have received guidance in administration, record keeping, accountability, management and in co-op education. Training has also been available to the members, but very few have shown interest.

MILLE FLEUR HONEY
PRODUCERS CO-OPERATIVE



MILLE FLEUR HONEY PRODUCERS CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD

1. Background

Beekeepers in St. Lucia have traditionally carried out beekeeping and marketing of honey on a highly individualized basis. There has been no local market standards, lack of available production training, and a highly disorganised marketing and distribution system.

The Mille Fleur Honey Producers Co-operative (Mille Fleur) came into being from a suggestion made by the Partners of the Americas organisation, which indicated that the United States could be a significant market for honey produced in St. Lucia. However, the development of this potential would require beekeepers to organize themselves and their operations.

Beginning in late 1984, and continuing throughout 1985, beekeepers in St. Lucia met to discuss their problems, to determine what institutions could assist them in solving those problems, and to determine their priorities for common endeavour. By December 1985, much of the organisational effort had been achieved and Mille Fleur applied to the Co-operative Department for registration as a Co-operative. The Department provided registration on March 7, 1986.

2. Objectives and Goals

The overall objective of Mille Fleur is to support the efficient production, marketing, and processing of honey, beeswax, royal jelly, queen bees, and other bee by-products which can be produced in St. Lucia. In support of this objective, Mille Fleur will also engage in training activities for members, promote public policies and regulations which can assist the development of the industry, and secure the regular supply of equipment and supplies for its members.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

Mille Fleur does not yet handle any products; it expects to purchase and market honey from members and subsequently bee by-products.

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

None at the present time. Mille Fleur plans to buy, grade, and sell honey, but at the present time all beekeepers do the marketing on an individual basis.

3.3 Other services offered

Mille Fleur does offer supplies to its members including hives, frames, smokers, gloves, tools, etc. Eventually they also plan on providing training to improve production and management, and to increase the number of bee products which members can produce and sell.

4. Description and Quantifications of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

Mille Fleur is managed by a Board of Directors of nine (9) members elected by the General Body. These nine members include a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasure and a Public Relations Officer. This body, assisted by advisors from the public and private sectors, is carrying out the organisational effort.

4.2 Type and number of members and geographical distribution

Twenty-five beekeepers from throughout St. Lucia are founding members of the Mille Fleur Honey Producers Co-operative. Each has paid an entrance fee of twenty dollars and has agreed to purchase three hundred dollars in shares.

As of March 1988, there were forty (40) members of Mille Fleur, all quite active. There is estimated to be approximately eighty (80) total beekeepers in St Lucia. While beekeeping is carried out throughout the island, there appears to be a predominance of activity in the North and Southwest portions of the island. Both of these areas fall outside heavy banana production areas and its related heavy aerial spraying programmes.

4.3 Type and number of employees

None

4.4 Number of centres of operation and location

Mille Fleur does not yet have a centre of operation.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

None

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

None

4.7 Annual sales by type commodity

Mille Fleur does not yet sell honey or related products. They did begin selling supplies to members in mid 1986.

4.8 Net assets

Mille Fleur has on deposit a few hundred dollars comprising application fees and shares.

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

Mille Fleur has begun to prepare the groundwork to carry out marketing of honey locally and for export.

a) Secure local market

To make sure that the St. Lucian market is available to local honey producers, Government has agreed to a request by Mille Fleur to place honey on its "negative list," requiring, therefore, that a license be issued before honey may be imported into St. Lucia.

b) Export market potential

Martinique has traditionally been a market for St. Lucian honey. Speculators (small private traders) have carried small amounts of honey to Martinique for sale, and then used the proceeds from this sale to purchase goods in Martinique for resale in St. Lucia. However, standards of honey exported to Martinique have varied significantly; consequently that Government periodically prohibits imports. Mille Fleur is exploring, with an import agent in Martinique, the possibility of consolidating shipments out of St. Lucia and selling a guaranteed quality honey to this marketing agent. Mille Fleur is also exploring the possibility of exporting and trading with the OECS countries.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

Mille Fleur feels it has been very successful in organising a beekeepers cooperative that is functioning

and serving the members by providing inputs. They have received recognition from the government which has allowed them to receive all supplies duty free.

Considering Mille Fleur a representative body on honey production, the government consults them prior to importing.

They have been unable to get a depot for centralized marketing and this has delayed their organised marketing plan. Without a centralized market, it is extremely difficult to maintain quality control and consistent pricing. The price of honey has been established by Mille Fleur at EC\$60 per imperial gallon but as producers all market individually, there is no way to monitor the pricing.

6. Relationships

6.1 With government

Members of the Ministry of Agriculture's Import Substitution Committee attended meetings of Mille Fleur. As a result of Mille Fleur requests, Government, as previously noted, has made the import of honey subject to license. Members of the Ministry of Agriculture's Livestock Division and members of the Co-operative Department have attended a number of meetings of Mille Fleur and relationships are proper.

6.2 With farmer organisations

Mille Fleur is an active member of STAFCO-OP and participates in meetings and events organised by that federation.

6.3 With regional or international organisations

The French Technical Mission in St. Lucia is working with a group of young beekeepers in the Southwest of St. Lucia. These beekeepers and representatives of the French Technical Mission have attended meetings of Mille Fleur. The French Mission is providing support through a grant of EC\$32,000 for purchase of supplies and for training costs for members in production and management.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agriculture production

Lack of standards at farm level. Each beekeeper raises bees according to his own experience, thus there are widely divergent production practices relating to

brooding, honey collection, and extraction. The result is an industry marked by wide variations in honey quality and production efficiency.

7.2 Marketing

Lack of organised production and resulting wide variation in quality makes it difficult to market St. Lucia honey and by-products.

Producers of honey may sell their product locally or export it. At present, local consumption is about 40% of total production. The problems of regular export to Martinique have already been described above. To sell on the local market, the beekeeper, until recently, had to compete with supplies of lower quality but well packaged, imported, processed honey. As a result beekeepers have a small effective market. Many beekeepers find themselves either storing large stocks of honey for future export or being forced to sell their honey on the local markets, at 60% of its expected economic value.

There are inconsistent and inadequate processing facilities for bee by-products. There is reportedly a good potential local market for beeswax, particularly with local manufacturers of batik. However, because of the poor processing of the wax by local beekeepers, the quality of local beeswax is unacceptable to the makers of batik, resulting in the importation of beeswax from England.

7.3 Management (institutional development)

A significant number of beekeepers have yet to join the proposed Mille Fleur Honey Producers Co-operative. Beekeepers who are not members of the Co-operative may recognize the problems of production and marketing already identified, but prefer, according to a member of the Executive, "to wait and see" if the Co-operative can solve these problems. This lack of unity of all beekeepers contributes to the slow pace with which Mille Fleur can organise to solve common problems. The Executive of the Co-operative believes that active promotional work with beekeepers could help to solve this problem of lack of faith, resolve and effort.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural production

Mille Fleur feels that it is essential for them to receive some formalized training in production to assist in quality control and good management in general. There needs to be standards set relating to brooding, honey

collection, and extraction to increase quality and efficiency in production.

8.2 Marketing

The marketing of honey needs to be organised through a central point to assist in quality and pricing consistency. Mille Fleur feels a need for technical assistance in identifying specific markets for honey and other by-products, locally as well as within other OECS countries.

8.3 Management

Mille Fleur has provided some training to farmers on an informal level but feels that even though the production skills and efficiency has definitely improved, beekeepers in general still do not see beekeeping as a "business". They feel that a field coordinator is needed to work with the beekeepers and bring them together as a group. Since the beekeepers are scattered island-wide, it is difficult for the present management to maintain contact with all members.

9. Future Actions

9.1 New projects underway

Mille Fleur is looking for a location in Castries from where to buy, process, bottle and sell honey, wholesale and retail. They would also sell supplies from this point.

Mille Fleur is investigating expanded markets through honey exports to OECS countries as well as exporting queen bees to United States and Canada since the disease, Varroasis, has affected queen bees there.

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

Over the long term, Mille Fleur sees that the institution should purchase and market honey produced by its members. Support activities are to include: apiary expansion to increase local production of honey and training of beekeepers to improve efficiency and skills. To achieve that stage of development Mille Fleur sees the need to bring to all beekeepers in St. Lucia an awareness of the potential of Mille Fleur by providing:

- a) Technical training and methods of quality control;
- b) Education in co-operative organisation and co-operative potential;
- c) Training for members to assume leadership roles in the co-operative, and

d) An analysis of the available market alternatives for honey and by-products locally and regionally.

At this time exact proposals for training and/or marketing have yet to be described.

10. **Summary**

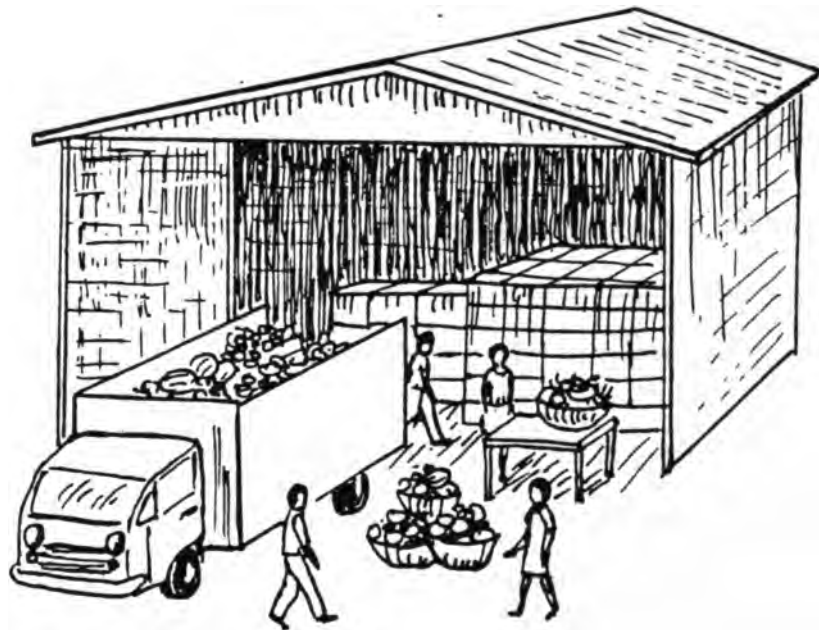
Mille Fleur Honey Producers Co-op was a good idea which has gotten bogged down after the initial organisational effort. A lack of systematic support from either the public or private sectors has resulted in an organisation with little impact upon its members and potential members. The scattered nature of beekeepers and the lack of managerial capabilities and technical assistance has stymied the original enthusiasm.

Mille Fleur continues to have support from a few farmers who would like to expand the market locally as well as internationally. However, before this can happen, a lot of changes must occur including the consolidation of the organisation, the standardization of the production of honey at the farm level to assure consistent quality, and the general coordination of beekeepers working together all over the island.

Technical and financial assistance is needed to provide training to farmers in production and management, to establish a central marketing depot and to purchase processing and bottling equipment.

Mille Fleur is fortunate in that it does have good support from farmer members who loaned money to the Co-op for operational expenses. They have been repayed either in cash or in kind with beekeeping supplies.

BELLE VUE FARMERS
CO-OPERATIVE



BELLE VUE FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED

1. Background

The Belle Vue Farmers Co-operative (Belle Vue) grew out of a dynamic between small farmers in the Belle Vue area of Choiseul and intensive programme support to small farmers in the Southwest Region by the French Agricultural Mission. Small farmers in the area saw certain advantages to working together and this coincided with the strategy of the French Mission for supporting agricultural development. The initial focus was to find some way to supply inputs to farmers at lower costs.

In Mid-1984, nine small farmers decided to form a co-operative, its initial activity being the sale of inputs such as seeds, chemicals, and tools. With assistance from the French Mission, the members built a small shop for sales, began Co-op promotion activities, and planned for future marketing endeavours. Twenty-two small farmers became founding members on April 4, 1986, when the Cooperative Department granted registration to the Co-op.

2. Objectives and Goals

The overall goal of Belle Vue is to meet the felt needs of small farmers, particularly in production and marketing. To achieve this goal, the Co-operative sells inputs to farmers, markets members' production, represents farmers interests before Government and other institutions, assists in production diversification, and improves farming skills of members.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

a) Agricultural commodities: vegetables, fruits and food crops.

b) Other items: farm inputs.

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

Belle Vue purchases, weighs, grades, transports and sells produce of members and non-members.

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3.3 Other services offered

Belle Vue sells inputs, provides information and training, and offers credit to its members.

- a) **Inputs:** Members, as well as non-member farmers, purchase basic inputs such as seeds, tools, chemicals, veterinary medicines, and fertilizer from the Co-operative shop. The Co-op purchases semi-bulk quantities of these items, packaging them in smaller sizes for sale in the shop.
- b) **Information:** In a joint endeavour with the French Mission technical personnel, the Co-operative provides information to members on use of medicines, chemicals, and diversification alternatives.
- c) **Training:** Utilizing technical assistance from the French Mission and the Cooperative Department, farmers from Belle Vue receive training in book-keeping and principles of co-operatives.
- d) **Credit:** In 1987 a credit division was added to the Co-op to allow farmers to receive a maximum of EC\$1,000 at an interest rate of 2% per month for a maximum time of one year to cover operating expenses.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

Seven Board members, half of whom are elected annually to serve for a two year term, direct the affairs of the Co-operative. Most management functions are carried out on a voluntary basis by the Board of Directors.

4.2 Type and number of members and geographical location

From the nine founding members, membership increased to 26 in July of 1986, 70 by March 1988 and 120 by August 1988. Part of the big jump in membership between March and August was due to the integration of the La-Point farmers group in April 1988. The La-Point Association had 19 members. All these are from the Southwest Region. By statute the Co-op limits membership to those farmers who are full-time farmers and smallholders, who neither engage in trade of agricultural produce nor manufacture agricultural equipment.

4.3 Type and number of employees

During the first year of operation Belle Vue had no employees. Members operated the input supply shop for

four hours each afternoon on a voluntary, round-robin basis. Since November 1987, two part time shopkeepers have been employed, one working 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. and the other working 1 p.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. These shopkeepers were trained by the French Technical Assistant in shopkeeping, book-keeping and shop management. When the Co-op markets produce, it employs four people on a salary and commission basis: the marketing officer, the paymaster, and the driver with his assistant.

4.4 Number of centers of operation and location

The Co-op owns one small wooden building which it has constructed on rented land. It is used as an input supply centre and a receiving depot for produce. The French Mission normally makes its offices available for meetings. The Co-op also purchased 2/3 acre of land on which it is constructing a building to store inputs, to receive and market produce and to accomodate the administrative staff. This structure is expected to be completed by June 1988.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

None.

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

Belle Vue owns a knapsack sprayer which members may borrow at no charge. The Co-op also owns small scales and measuring equipment which it uses in marketing and input sales activities. A truck to transport farmers produce to market was purchased by the Co-op in June 1986. The funds were provided by the French Mission on a loan basis.

4.7 Annual sales by type commodity

Year	Sales of Fresh Produce	Sales of Farm Inputs
1985	EC\$5,560	EC\$30,850 *
1986		
1987		

* Through January 31, 1986
(September 1986 to September 1987, total sales of produce and inputs were EC\$250,000)

4.8 Net Assets

At January 31, 1986, Belle Vue had assets of EC\$27,156, of which member shares totalled EC\$5,546. On December 31, 1986, assets were EC\$70,318.

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

Beginning in September 1985, Belle Vue marketed vegetables and food crops on a weekly basis to hotels and supermarkets located in the north of St Lucia (Castries). Due to unusually heavy rains in November, which affected production, and to the relatively high cost of transportation and administration in relation to sales volume, the Co-op stopped this activity in December 1985.

Belle Vue hired one of its members on a salary and commission basis to carry out this activity. Together with an assistant, his responsibilities were:

- To identify market requirements at selected hotels and supermarkets (Mondays);
- To inform members of these requirements and find out what they could supply (Tuesdays);
- To supervise selection, grading and boxing at the Belle Vue supply shop (Wednesdays);
- To transport to identified markets (Thursdays); and
- To pay farmers, after monies were received from sales (Fridays).

In this manner, the Co-op supplied between \$300 and \$1400 worth of produce each week to the greater Castries area. From sales, Belle Vue deducted 12% to cover costs of transportation and administration.

Since September 1986, the Co-op has been making weekly trips to the Castries area to market produce. At times, during the high season, trips are made twice weekly due to the large size of the orders and the limited capacity of the truck. The Co-op now deducts approximately 20% from the sales to cover administration and transportation costs.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

- a) The marketing effort has gone well, and will be continued, once the Co-op solves the major problem of

obtaining sufficient quantities of produce on a regular basis.

- b) Members were not sufficiently geared up to produce for the market identified. In order to maintain access to the market the Co-op had to buy from non-members. This gap has prompted Belle Vue to go on a membership campaign. Membership has since grown, but the Co-op still buys from non-members.
- c) Members' confidence in the Co-op marketing capacity has grown during the period. Belle Vue believes that the farmers are gaining confidence in the Co-op for several reasons; they see how the organisation of the Co-op has greatly improved, they see the Co-op marketing produce every week, and they know that they will get paid cash at the time the produce is picked up.
- d) Farmers are willing to accept a lower than normal price for their produce in exchange for a regular market.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With government

The Co-op has had no significant impact upon Government agricultural policy. Belle Vue maintains proper arrangements with Government through the Co-operative Department and the Ministry of Agriculture.

6.2 With farmer organisations

Except for an exchange visit with the Ti Rocher Farmers' Co-operative, Belle Vue has not yet established relationships with other farmer organisations.

6.3 With regional and international organisations

The French Agricultural Mission provides technical assistance, training, and research to assist the Co-op in its start-up operations. The level of input is significant in relation to the Co-op's operations. It includes feasibility analyses for projected operations, research on crops, and training in co-operative management, livestock management and others.

Representatives of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Small Farmer Assistance Development (SFAD) Project have attended meetings of Belle Vue. Since early 1987, the Co-op has been purchasing inputs such as seeds, chemicals tools, pesticides and sprayers from SFAD on long term credit.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

From the perspective of the farmer, the major production problem faced is insufficient capital to intensely produce on all of the land which the farmer owns.

7.2 Marketing

The major marketing problems are the lack of transport from farms to Co-op and the lack of communication. Since there are no telephones it is difficult to keep farmers informed of market demands in a timely manner. Other problems that the organisation faces is the lack of a secure and guaranteed market. Each week the requirements vary. Neither the Co-op itself, nor farmers, can precisely plan production to meet projected market needs.

7.3 Management

The French Mission is providing good support in this area of management for the supply, market and credit divisions. They have trained members in each division to carry out the management but it is felt that the entire Co-op is too dependent on those few people. Very few other farmer members understand the system, putting a lot of responsibility on too few people. At present there is a Marketing Committee but they are more formal than operational leaving all the work to the marketing officer.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural Production

The farmers feel a strong need for credit to assist with purchasing inputs to increase production.

8.2 Marketing

There appears to be a need for securing guaranteed markets so farmers can plan production. The communication between the farmers and the Co-op also needs improving. The truck that is presently used in marketing is not of adequate size to meet the demands as well.

8.3 Management

In order to assist the members who are presently responsible for the management of the supply, marketing and credit division, training is needed. Members need to be made aware of their responsibilities; what it means to be a member of a co-op, how to keep accurate records, how to analyze past records and project future actions, and ways to encourage and increase membership. Even though specific tasks must be assigned to individuals, the support of all members is still needed.

9. Future Actions

9.1 Projects underway

The new building, inaugurated on September 11, 1988 will provide additional space to increase availability of inputs to farmers and increase marketing capacity. It will facilitate the consolidation of all activities, including the administrative functions, in one location.

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

With the new premise and with all activities considered, particular attention will be made to training at different levels by the French Mission:

- Individuals members must be well informed of decisions made in all divisions.
- Committee members need to be trained in their responsibilities relating to control and follow-up tasks (supply and market).
- Co-operative members need training in the area of management to supplement that received in administrative tasks.

10. Summary

The Belle Vue Farmers Co-operative Society Ltd. is one of the most recently formed in St Lucia. It has grown very fast over its short life (less than 3 years) and presently provides a wide range of production/marketing services to over 120 vegetable, fruit and food crop farmers in the Southwest. Its rapid growth and apparent success is linked to the large and continuous support received from the French Agricultural Mission, which includes: training, permanent technical assistance and financing.

Belle Vue Co-operative appears to be a very well managed organisation, meeting the needs of farmer members. In November 1987, the Co-operative established a Credit Division and by March 1988 had loaned out EC\$4700 to 11 farmer members to assist them with operating expenses. The loans will be paid back at the time the produce is marketed through the Co-op. This Credit Division allows farmers to receive loan funds as well as to save money in an account.

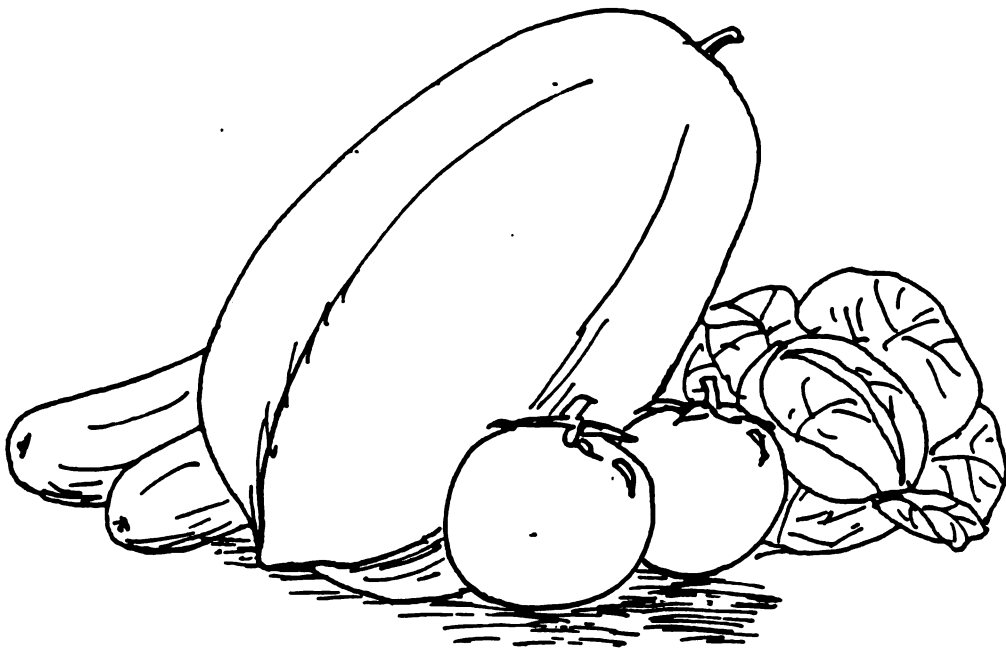
The Belle Vue Co-op staff is very well trained in managing the Credit, Supply and Marketing Divisions each with their own set of records.

Limited credit, market insecurity, and limited communication and transportation facilities are reported as the Co-ops major constraints



SUNSHINE HARVEST

CO-OPERATIVE



SUNSHINE HARVEST CO-OPERATIVE
(registration pending)

1. Background

Sunshine Harvest is a pre-co-operative of twenty five (25) small fruit and vegetable farmers from the Southwest Region of St. Lucia. It was previously known as "Southwest Region Fruit and Vegetable Producers Pre-Co-operative (Southwest)." It applied for Registration as a Co-operative Society in May 1985, the Department of Co-operatives requested that it change its name in early 1987 as only umbrella organisations may use a name of a region, as 'Southwest' in their title. After discussion the name was changed Sunshine Harvest Co-operative in March of 1987. As of August 1988 it had not yet been registered by the Co-operative Department.

In late 1984, several vegetable farmers from throughout St. Lucia met together to discuss their production and marketing problems. They decided that something needed to be done to control imports of vegetables and to rationalize local production. They held several meetings and formed an island-wide steering committee. This became impractical so they decided instead to form several regional groupings rather than an island-wide association. This regional approach took hold in the Choiseul/Soufriere area, traditionally a producer of large quantities of fruits and vegetables for the St. Lucian market. As it is relatively a long distance to the major market of Castries, farmers encounter difficulties in obtaining market place information and in the transportation of their produce to that market.

In early 1985, Southwest farmers held a series of general meetings. With a core of committed leaders and strong farmer interest, approximately 70 farmers decided to form a Co-operative. They discussed and drafted a constitution and byelaws and presented these to the Registrar of Co-operatives in May 1985.

Since March 1985 to the present (September 1988) the Sunshine Harvest Steering Committee has worked voluntarily on behalf of the group to identify and develop specific markets.

2. Objectives and Goals

The overall objective of Sunshine Harvest is to produce and market high quality fruits, vegetables, and flowers produced by members as part of the diversification efforts. In support of this objective, Sunshine Harvest hopes to carry out the following related

activities through its affiliation with STAFFCO-OP:

- a) Input supply: particularly seeds, fertilizers, tools, pesticides, and herbicides;
- b) Infrastructure development: including storage and packing facilities and irrigation, where necessary, to introduce non-traditional crops;
- c) Research support activities: particularly where new varieties are being tried, and
- d) Postharvest handling: including transportation, processing, grading, packaging and preservation (chilling, drying, freezing, etc.) needed to make the farmers products more marketable.
- e) Communication system between farmers and other organisations i.e. STAFFCO-OP and Marketing Board.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

- a) Agricultural commodities: vegetables, food crops, fruits, and flowers for domestic consumption and export.
- b) Other items: vegetable seeds.

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

Sunshine Harvest collects produce from the farm, grades, packs, and transports produce to the domestic buyer or export marketing agent. Sunshine Harvest, or its agent, receives payment from the buyer and pays growers.

3.3 Other services offered

Sunshine Harvest provides information to its members, and through CARDI and STAFFCO-OP, provides seeds for growing proven varieties or testing new varieties of non-traditional crops.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

As noted previously, Sunshine Harvest has yet to receive legal status. A steering Committee of four farmers, selected by the General Meeting, oversees the general operations of Sunshine Harvest until the Inaugural Annual General Meeting can elect the first Board of Directors.

4.2 Type and number of members and geographical distribution

This pre-co-operative had 25 active members in March 1988. It is expected that when the Co-operative is registered some eighty to ninety farmers will become founding members. Each of these will be asked to purchase at least 10 shares at \$5.00 per share. To retain membership, it is expected that each member will sell produce to the Co-operative to the value of at least \$1,500 per annum (\$30 per week). Membership will be drawn from the Southwest region of St. Lucia, mainly the Soufriere-Choiseul district and its environs.

4.3 Type and number of employees

None. Members of the Steering Committee provide transportation and other services, on a cost basis, to ensure the delivery of quality fruit to marketing agents.

4.4 Number of centres of operation and location

Currently Sunshine Harvest has no center of operation. All produce is packed and graded in the field and transported directly for export or for sale on the local market.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

None.

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

None. Two of the Steering Committee members provide a three ton and one ton pickup to Sunshine Harvest on a loan basis. They are paid a transportation allowance of \$0.05 to \$0.10/lb, depending on the produce, for most products marketed. This amount is considered insufficient to cover transportation costs.

4.7 Annual sales by type commodity

Year	Sales of Fresh Produce* Pounds	Value EC\$	Sales of Seeds/Inputs Value EC\$
1985	112,000	40,000	
1986			
1987			

4.8 Net assets

As it has not yet registered as a co-operative,

Sunshine Harvest has not formally acquired any assets.

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

a) St. Croix market

A St. Lucian born construction engineer, resident in St. Croix, decided to import and sell a large range of fresh produce from St. Lucia. Sunshine Harvest sold 1,000 to 3,000 lbs. per week of food crops, flowers and vegetables to this agent for approximately six months. Until the activity ended in September 1985, Sunshine Harvest would collect, grade, and transport fresh produce to a central buying point. The exporter then made selections by size and packed the produce for export. Sunshine Harvest encountered the following problems in this project:

- Prices paid were low and did not offer, in the short term, an opportunity for profit to the producers. A promise of better prices in the future when the importer expected to operate his own retail outlet, kept the activity going.
- Requirements were highly specialized and variable. Only large size sweet potatoes and dasheen were acceptable, whilst yams had to be small. As the project geared up to provide quantities of plantain, on a regular basis, orders for plantain stopped, and macambo became the requirement almost overnight. Sunshine Harvest believes that if the importer had a wider range of marketing contacts, including, for example, St. Croix hoteliers, then the large yams, etc., which were dug with the small ones, could also have been purchased.
- Sunshine Harvest encountered repeated problems in receiving payments which strained relationships between the parties.

b) The Ministry of Agriculture/IFAD Project

With assistance from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Ministry of Agriculture has undertaken a project to assist small farmers in producing and marketing fresh fruits and vegetables. Sunshine Harvest has collected, selected, packed (in the field) and transported to the Hewanorra Airport several shipments (1,500 to 3,500 lbs. each) of plantain, mangoes and grapefruit. The Ministry of Agriculture/IFAD project then air-freighted these items to England or Barbados and

paid Sunshine Harvest approximately 4 days after shipment.

All indications are that this experience was very positive. The product requirements were well defined, selection was done by the Steering Committee and spot checks were carried out by the exporter. Payment was prompt and the communication between the parties was good. Sunshine Harvest was active in this project from July 1985 to February 1986 when the export management changed and IFAD became SFAD.

c) Caribbean Agricultural Trading Company (CATCO)

Sunshine Harvest has exported small quantities of plantain and mangoes to Barbados through CATCO. As with the Ministry of Agriculture project, collection, selection, packing and local transportation was carried out by Sunshine Harvest. Although the experience was constructive, payment, in spite of promises to the contrary, arrived six weeks after shipment. Sunshine Harvest does not have the working capital to repeat this experience, as any delay in payment strains relationships with the farmers. Farmers could not afford to continue this experience with such late payment. Also CATCO's selection process regarding grading with colours and sizes was nearly impossible to abide by.

d) Private Trader

Sunshine Harvest has sold plantain (80 to 100, 30 lb. boxes/week), mangoes, and avocados to a private trader for shipment by air to the United Kingdom market. From June to August 1987 over 38,000 lbs. of Julie Mangoes were exported through this trader. Sunshine Harvest collects, selects, field packs and delivers to the Airport. Sunshine Harvest reports that the trader is very conscious of the farmers' problems and needs, pays promptly, and defines his needs carefully; in short, the business relationship is positive. Sunshine Harvest continues this practice, shipping a variety of produce including breadfruit, soursop, mango and tamarind two to three times per week.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

a) Demand

Each of the external markets is different and requires different standards of selection. Since a considerable quantity of produce does not meet the required standards, Sunshine Harvest needs to develop

the capacity to market this produce on the local market (retail market or for processing).

b) Discipline of members

Sunshine Harvest has developed the discipline of members to supply produce regularly. When commitments are made they must be met. Farmer confidence has increased as the farmers have seen the regularity of Sunshine Harvest purchases.

c) Pricing

Through marketing experience Sunshine Harvest has been able to illustrate to farmers the important relationship between market availability and price. When farmers know there will be a market for their produce, they will accept a slightly lower price as the risks are less.

d) Standards

Sunshine Harvest has developed a programme to carefully explain to farmers why a particular product is rejected. Farmers have thus been able to better understand the requirements of the external market, resulting in subsequent supplies generally meeting the external requirements. Sunshine Harvest also has developed contacts with agroprocessors, resulting in new markets for unexportable produce.

e) The Exporter

It is extremely important to develop good relationships with reliable traders so as to minimize problems associated with payment, communication of requirements, logistics of supply and regular shipments.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With government

The working relationships with officials in the Ministry of Agriculture, particularly as it applied to the Ministry of Agriculture/IFAD production and marketing project, were very strong in the early years of this co-operative. They provided much support in the organising of the initial group but such support has dwindled in recent times, as they concentrate on the SFAD project.

Sunshine Harvest has received good support from various people in the Ministry of Agriculture including the Permanent Secretary and the Director of Agriculture Services.

6.2 With farmer organisations

The St. Lucia Association of Farmers Co-operatives (STAFCO-OP) and the Ti Rocher Farmers Co-operative have provided significant support to Sunshine Harvest both by sending representatives to most of the General Meetings of the Society and by providing counsel to members of the Steering Committee. A small group of Ti Rocher farmers have become extremely interested in vegetable production, trying the nontraditional varieties. Exchanging of experiences and advising is an ongoing activity between these farmer organizations.

6.3 With regional or international organisations

The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) has assisted Sunshine Harvest by providing them with technical advice and seeds for non-traditional crops and new varieties. Representatives of CARDI have attended general meetings of Sunshine Harvest and have invited them to participate in technical seminars of that organisation. CARDI played a key role in providing encouragement and support for the formation of Sunshine Harvest.

The Organisation for Rural Development (ORD) of St Vincent has also been extremely supportive. They have offered their assistance in seeking farm inputs and expertise in producing non-traditional crops. They have also played a vital part in assisting in getting several Sunshine Harvest members trained in postharvest technology and agri-business management.

The Chinese Mission has shared their expertise in providing new varieties of fruit trees.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

Through co-op education farmers have been willing to try non-traditional crops such as broccoli, cauliflower, cucumber, and eggplant. They have seen quick cash results, encouraging them to continue the experience.

7.2 Marketing

Sunshine Harvest has found that lack of means of communication with farmer members has been a major cause of marketing problems. With scattered members, no telephones, and limited transportation, it is very difficult to transmit information in regards to orders to be

filled and general market and production information. It is difficult as well to monitor what produce is available at the farms.

Club Med is the major local market for Sunshine Harvest. It is difficult to predict long term demand with them as their administration changes every six months along with pricing strategy and demand for different produce. Club St Lucia also obtains a very large amount of produce from Sunshine Harvest as well as the St Lucia Marketing Board.

7.3 Management

Sunshine Harvest believes that its single most important problem is lack of legal standing as a Co-operative. By not obtaining legal registration, it has been unable to open a bank account, carry out business as a Co-operative, or abide by many of the principles of Co-operatives in the conduct of its affairs, particularly on the point of full participation by "members" in the affairs of the society.

8. Needs

Sunshine Harvest's greatest need is to become registered as a co-operative so they may conduct their business as such.

A means of local communication is also needed in order to facilitate communications between farmers and Sunrise Harvest to assist in organising the marketing.

9. Future Actions

9.1 Projects underway

The lack of progress in registration has stymied the development of projects, which require legal standing, bank accounts, etc.

Sunshine Harvest is in the process of preparing a newsletter including information on new seed varieties, planting and harvesting techniques, marketing and any other information of interest and assistance to members.

9.2 In the planning stages

Upon registration, Sunshine Harvest will begin preparation of projects which will provide for a packing station, a chilling facility (to extend shelf life), and

a center of operations.

In respect to those crops which have potential for diversification, priority should be given to the following: Julie mangoes; horn plantain; cauliflower; broccoli; chinese cabbage; soursop; special varieties of citrus, and flowers, including ginger lily and heliconia. The actual order of importance would vary according to the economic viability of export.

10. **Summary**

Sunshine Harvest Co-operative has been awaiting official registration as a co-op for over three years. Although it has gained a great deal of useful domestic and export marketing experience, it has not been able to develop its full potential for lack of legalisation. Without official recognition it has not been able to develop physical infrastructure or integrate fully its membership. Even with this limiting factor, Sunshine Harvest has made valuable contributions to the Co-operative movement and has prepared the following plan of operation for 1988:

- a) membership education through field trips, demonstrations and lectures;
- b) assistance in obtaining new seed varieties, other inputs, irrigation equipment and possibly small tractors with assistance from IVS, Ministry of Agriculture, and CARDI;
- c) marketing through advisory services to farmers concerning types of crops to grow (non-traditional), identifying local, regional and extra-regional markets, conducting periodic surveys of crop availability and potential, seeking chilling facilities and space for storage and coordinating with other traders;
- d) seeking funding for and obtaining a local radio communication system; and
- e) supervising a Mobile Field Officer employed by STAFCO-OP to monitor and coordinate production, disseminate new crop information and supervise the purchasing, handling and shipping of produce.

BLACK BAY VEGETABLE PROJECT

1. Background

In 1972 the British Development Division financed a project aimed at increasing food production in St Lucia. After a series of soil tests, site investigations and selection of eleven farmers, using the basic criteria of "interest in farming" and "a family unit", the project began in 1974 as the Black Bay Vegetable Project. About 25 acres were occupied by eleven farmers interested in growing vegetables. A Project Manager provided direction, supervision and assistance.

The management changed many times between 1974 and 1978. The organisational and financial structures broke down as a result of poor management, floods, diseases and pests, and poor germination of seeds. Most farmers were operating at a loss and by mid 1977 they began using the land mainly for grazing cattle, virtually ceasing the growing of vegetables.

In 1978, CARDATS took over the project. The Agriculture Investment Development Bank (AID) approved loans of about EC\$71,000 to farmers over three year periods to pay for tractors, irrigation systems and farm inputs. The farmers were responsible for the repayments of their loans and payments to hired helpers. They made a serious effort and crop acreage increased. Employment of hired labour and average production costs increased as well. Though the average production volume also increased, returns to family labour per crop decreased due to hurricane Allen (Aug. 1980), flooding (May 1981), crop failure due to unavailability of chemicals, and high production costs.

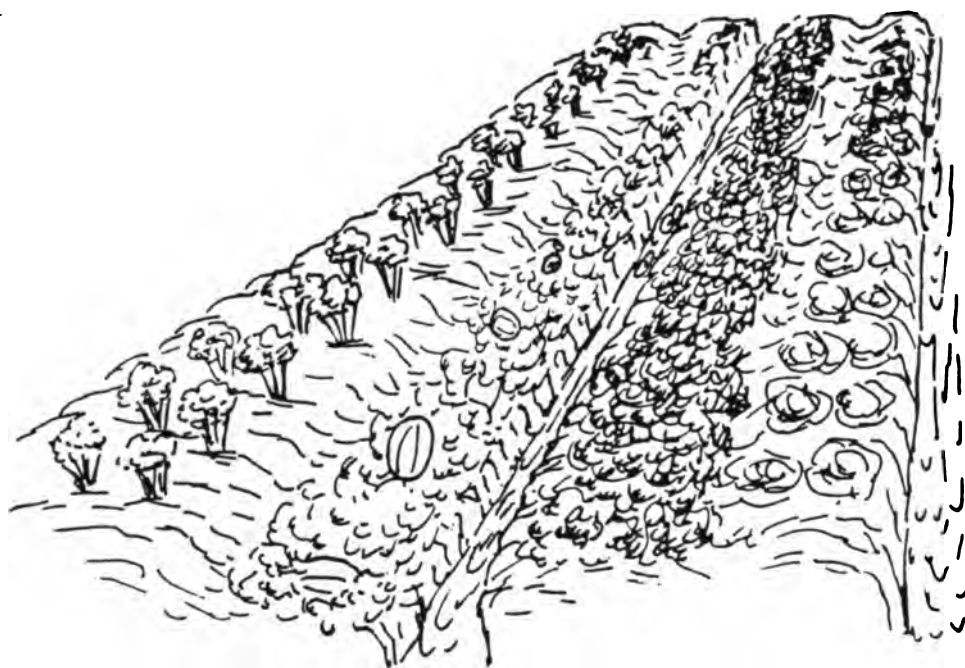
Despite all the problems facing the farmers, the Black Bay Vegetable Project has continued with increasing acreage and increasing farm members. As of June 1988, twenty-five farmers are in the project area with a total of fifty-one acres of land.

2. Objectives and Goals

The project was designed with the following objectives:

- To fully use an area of flat fertile land to grow crops.
- To produce selected vegetables, particularly during low supply periods, with the help of irrigation.

BLACK BAY VEGETABLE
PROJECT



- To test an approach to economic food production by which small farmers are provided with land and inputs, except labour.
- To demonstrate the benefits of integration of production and marketing and the aspects of forward contracting arrangements.
- To encourage producers to form a cooperative. and
- To collect farm activity data for future planning of production of food crops.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

- a) Agricultural commodities: a variety of fruits and vegetables including cabbage, tomatoe, carrot, plantain, cantaloupe, corn, cucumber, egg plant, hot pepper, onion, radish, squash, sweet pepper, string bean, sweet potatoe, watermelon, yam and livestock including beef and dairy cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry.
- b) Other items: farm inputs are sold to mem and non-members including seeds, fertilizers and insectides.

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

The Association hires transport for the marketing of the members' produce. It is the members responsibility to get the produce to the centre and from there it is either picked up by the hucksters or transported to the market (usually Club Med) by the Association. A Production Committee determines what produce is available and allocates orders to the farmers. Marketing is usually done several days per week, depending on orders. The grading, weighing and packaging is done at the centre as the farmers bring the produce in. Pay sheets are prepared for each farmer, a deduction of 11% is made to cover marketing costs and other costs incurred by the Association.

3.3 Other services offered

Inputs are offered to the farmers for sale at the centre. Technical support is available to all members from the management staff who make regular farm visits. The tractor is also available for members' use at subsidized rates. Credit is available to members for the purchase of inputs. The money used for this purpose comes from the cess taken out of produce sales and from the Association dues.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

The nine member Executive Committee is elected annually from the general membership. This Committee includes a president, two vice presidents, secretary and assistant, treasurer and assistant, and two other committee members. The Executive Committee is responsible for making decisions assuring effective operation of the Association. They determine eligibility of applicants, land allocation, and eligibility for credit. At present, the management staff of three people are not represented on the Executive Committee but a request has been made to change this. The Executive Committee meets once per month and the general body must meet at least once every three months but many times it meets every other month, depending on the needs.

The management of the Association consists of the Project Manager, employed by CARDATS, and two Ministry of Agriculture Extension Officers. Their responsibilities include programme planning, identifying problems and solutions, procuring inputs, providing technical support, managing finances, collecting, collating and processing farm data, and liaising with the wider extension area.

The Association also has five subcommittees, each with specific duties and responsibilities. These committees are production, marketing, financing, livestock, and fund raising. The committees meet as needed to address specific problems.

4.2 Type and number of members and geographical distribution

The Association had a membership of 36 farmers in March 1988, 25 located in the bottom lands on the project site, and the remaining 11 scattered through the Southern District. Members must pay a joining fee of EC\$25, purchase 10 shares of stock at EC\$5 each, and pay a monthly fee of EC\$5. Members farming on land in the project site lease the land for EC\$40 per acre per year.

4.3 Type and number of employees

The Association has no employees per se and management is provided by CARDATS and the Ministry of Agriculture.

4.4 Number of centres of operations and location

The Ministry of Agriculture owns the building that the Black Bay Vegetable Project uses as their centre to

store equipment, complete marketing activities, store and sell farm inputs to farmers and complete record keeping.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

None

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

The Association owns the following equipment: tractor, plow, harrow banker, platform scale, and 2 irrigation pumps. All of this equipment, except for the tractor which was purchased by the farmers, was purchased for the Association by funding from CARDATS and one irrigation pump was purchased with funding from United State Peace Corps. The Association maintains all equipment, buying fuel and spare parts with money received through the rent farmers pay for the use of the equipment.

4.7 Annual sales

Year	Number of Farmers	Cultivated Acres	Pounds Sold	EC\$ Value Produce
1984	12	11	30,350	\$27,223
1985	14	19	15,212	\$14,021*
1986	24	53	94,488	\$121,973
1987				

*Produce sold was limited due to absence of a tractor to assist with land preparation for first 9 months.

4.8 Net assets

Since Black Bay Vegetable Project is not yet registered as a co-operative, their financial structure is most difficult to establish. They do not have any audited values to disclose.

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

Club Med has been the largest market, taking orders several times per week, varying with the size of the tourist trade. More recently, the Black Bay Vegetable Project is gearing more heavily towards exports due to the expansion of the Project. The project has entered export contracts with CATCO and SFAD.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

The farmers traditional planting season habits are very difficult to break. With irrigation systems in place and technical assistance from staff in production planning, attempts are being made to assist farmers in planting produce for the off season market when prices are more favorable. Farmers have done quite well in resisting deviation from the plans but at times their anxiety wins and they plant too early. When marketing time comes and they see the glut on the market, resulting in low prices and often times in dumping produce, they realize their mistake in not waiting to plant.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With government

Relations are very close with the Ministry of Agriculture as every type of assistance coming in to the Project must be approved by them. The Ministry also provides the Project with two Extension Officers.

6.2 With farmer organisations

Linkages with other farmer groups have been very weak in the past but management wishes to correct this situation, enabling them to share experiences, technical assistance and marketing arrangements. They do coordinate with Sunshine Harvest Co-operative in providing produce to Club Med.

6.3 With regional or international organisations

The Black Bay Vegetable Project maintains very close relations with CARDATS who has supported the Project since 1978, providing technical and financial assistance.

The Project also maintains relations with CAEP, tapping their expertise in extension work; CATCO for exporting produce; and CARDI for their technical assistance in producing new varieties of vegetables.

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

This Project has experienced very few problems in the area of production. With irrigation systems in place and technical assistance from the Extension Officers, farmers have good assistance available for support in production.

There appears to be an underutilization of land with large uncultivated parcels left to pasture livestock. This seems to be tradition, reflecting the social and economic vision of the farmer. Management feels that if changes are to be made, they must be determined by the farmers, reflecting their goals for an improved standard of living, not from the management level.

The management level assists farmers in making production plans but at times it is difficult for the farmers to follow them due to anxiety, resulting in gluts and low prices.

7.2 Marketing

Marketing has become increasingly important to the Black Bay Vegetable Project with acreage and production increasing. The export market is becoming much more popular. With production increasing transport will become a greater constraint as the present means will be inadequate. Matching production with market demands has been a problem but now that irrigation permits production during off seasons, with assistance in production planning the problem is being addressed. It will, however, definitely take some time to break the traditional habits. This will be achieved with some education and with the experiences of some of the more progressive farmers

7.3 Management

The Black Bay Vegetable Project has identified problems in their credit scheme with a delinquency rate of about 50%. They feel the problem arises from farmers not understanding how to manage credit nor their own finances.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural production

CARDATS, along with the management staff of the Black Bay Vegetable Project, have been providing adequate assistance to the farmers in the area of production for the past ten years.

8.2 Marketing

As production increases, Black Bay Vegetable Project will need more reliable transport for collecting produce. Training has been on-going by CARDATS in the area of marketing. The management still feels a need for increased training of farmers in such areas as harvesting techniques, testing ripeness, packaging and shipping.

First hand exposure is felt to be the best teacher, leaving a greater impression than a lecture or classroom setting. The management would like to send farmers to other sites where they can see the differences resulting from various treatments of produce.

8.3 Management

There is a need expressed by the management staff for some very basic business management training for the farmers stressing the importance of planning, budgeting, record keeping, costing and pricing, and organizing production. Training is also needed for the staff in the area of financial credit management to improve repayment in the credit scheme.

9. Future Actions

9.1 New projects underway

CARDATS is sending a Credit Specialist to Black Bay Vegetable Project to assist and advise them in setting regulations and restrictions to improve repayment.

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

Black Bay Vegetable Project plans to increase production of small livestock including sheep, goats, pig and poultry. Eventually they would like to start on-farm processing with cool rooms and group marketing for livestock. Wholesaling and retailing could be done at the centre as well.

Black Bay Vegetable Project plans to complete the Co-op registration process in 1988. This will enable them to have audited financial statements as well as to carry on in a more business like manner.

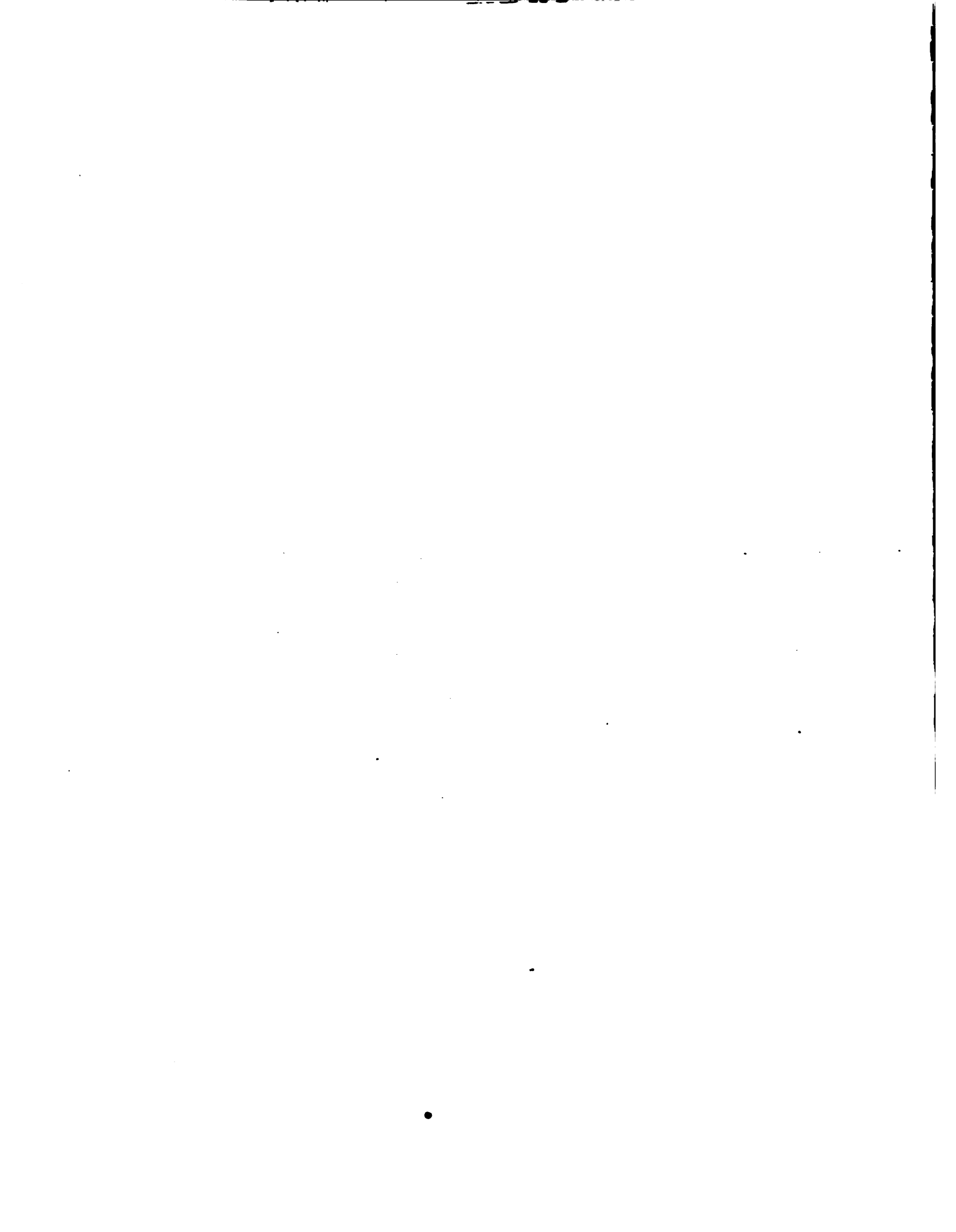
10. Summary

Black Bay Vegetable Project has been in existence since 1974, and has been managed and controlled continuously by non-farmer institutions. about 14 years and with continuous support from other organisations. There is a concern that the farmers involved may have become too dependent on outside support. However, it is also felt that continued support is necessary. It appears to be changing levels as the Project progresses.

In the early stages of the project, needs were greatest in the area of agriculture production. Those needs have been addressed through the purchase of a

tractor, the installation of two irrigation pumps and technical assistance from two Ministry of Agriculture Extension Officers.

As the Project expands the greatest needs lie in the established of secure markets and in training farmers in business and management practices and organisational techniques.



ST LUCIA FLOWER
GROWERS ASSOCIATION



ST. LUCIA FLOWER GROWERS ASSOCIATION

1. Background

The production and sale of ornamentals and cut-flowers has been mainly done through a few individual growers in St. Lucia. The local market has been largely unexplored but the good price and relatively quick sales seem to suggest that demand exceeds supply. Aware of this market potential, six small flower growers in the Castries and Gros Islet area came together in late 1986 to form an association to assist them in organized marketing. This association was registered in January 1987 as the St. Lucia Flower Growers Association.

The local demand for flowers has drastically been increasing with cruise ships requesting fresh arrangements while in port in Castries and in Marigot Bay. Flower arranging classes, as well as the general public, have contributed to demand. The association has made two trial export shipments; one to England and one to Germany. All local demands are being met on an individual grower basis. The association has no transport and no central structure from where to organize marketing.

Since the six founding members formed the Association in January 1987, the membership has increased to eleven with potential members still standing by watching and waiting. The eleven members have a total of approximately twelve acres in fresh flower production. The initial membership fee is EC\$250 per member with an annual fee of EC\$50. Members must have at least one acre in flower production.

2. Objectives and Goals

The overall objective of the St. Lucia Flower Growers Association is to improve the availability and marketability of cut-flowers for the domestic and foreign markets. The Association also plans to provide inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, packing paper and boxes; and to provide technical assistance to members in areas such as planting techniques, pre-picking treatment, harvesting techniques, and packing.

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3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

a) Agricultural commodities: Ginger Lilies,
Anthuriums, and
Heliconias.

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

At present, St. Lucia Flower Growers Association members sell flowers directly from their farms to the local market including the cruise ships as well as individuals. The Association has made trial shipments to Germany and to England. basis beginning in August 1988.

3.3 Other services offered

At the present time the Association does not offer any other services to their members. They do have plans to offer production inputs for sale to members at some future time.

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

The Board of Management consists of a president, vice-president, secretary and treasure. The board is directly responsible for organizing and overseeing the exportation of fresh flowers.

4.2 Types and number of members and geographical distribution

The Association began with six founding members but has expanded to eleven members as of August 1988. These members are scattered over the island including Bois d' Orange, Castries, and Soufriere.

4.3 Type and number of employees

None

4.4 Number of centres of operation and location

None

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

None

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

The members each provide their own transportation.

4.7 Annual sales by type commodity

The Association has only made sales through the two trial shipments to Germany and to England. All sales to the local market are done on an individual basis.

4.8 Net assets

None

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

The St. Lucia Flower Growers Association has exported only Heliconias to date, but they plan on marketing Ginger Lilies and Anthiriums as well. Meantime, the individual members are marketing Heliconias, Ginger Lilies and Anthiriums locally to cruise ships, florist shops, flower arranging classes and individuals.

5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

The St. Lucia Flower Growers Association feels that it is very important that an exporter carefully investigate the importer prior to signing a contract. They have made trial shipments to test the system which they have found successful. This assisted them in also testing the boxing techniques, picking times and their general coordinating abilities.

Members have found that this is all very hard work as quite expensive. The cost of Phytosanitary Certificates prevents the Association from selling boxes of flowers at Point Seraphine and at the airports to departing tourist. The cost is EC\$20.00 per box of flowers regardless of the size or value of the box.

Exports must be transported by air. A recent trial shipment (August 1988) to Germany was a disaster as the airlines placed the flowers with the luggage. The flowers froze and were squashed. Air transport is a serious constraint

6. Relationships (Linkages)

None

7. Major Problems Encountered

7.1 Agricultural production

The dry season creates a problem with growing Anthiriums. Members are currently experimenting with irrigation systems. If they want to maintain an export market, it is crucial for them to have consistent production of the fresh flowers year around.

7.2 Marketing

Different markets require different packaging. The Association lacks experience in packing techniques: determining the size of the box, how many to pack to a box and how to pack them.

The lack of a central marketing location and of transport prevents the Association from marketing locally. As the local market is expanding, the difficulty in gathering enough flowers to meet the export demand has increased.

7.3 Management

Management of this Association is difficult as the members are scattered, making communication difficult. Management is trying to increase membership so as to increase production to meet the market demands. Many producers are just standing by, waiting to see what the Association does for its members before they make a committment to join.

8. Needs

8.1 Agricultural production

The St. Lucia Flower Growers Association has requested assistance in the areas of pre-harvest treatment, use of imported tissue cultures, packing techniques particularly for the Heliconias, and post harvest treatments. They also need to increase their acreage in production so as to meet the local demand and still have a supply available for the export market on a regular basis.

8.2 Marketing

In order to coordinate all marketing activities, it is necessary to have a central point of operation from where to purchase and sell the fresh flowers. Inputs could also be made available for sale from this point. This central point would not only improve the marketing capabilities but it would also allow for the producers to

meet more often to share information and experiences, improving production and marketing capacity.

9. Future Actions

9.1 New projects underway

The Association is researching the possibility of importing tissue cultures of various types of Heliconias through a contact person in the United States. They have written the Ministry of Agriculture to request permission and are awaiting a response.

They are also trying to increase membership to assist in increasing the acreage and production of flowers for export. The German market has requested an unlimited supply of Heliconias and Ginger Lilies with greens on a weekly basis but due to the dry season, lack of flowers and the rise in local demand, they have been unable to fill this order.

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

None

10. Summary

Considering that the Association is only a year old, they are quite well organized and have good plans. The members work well together and are very keen on learning new methods of production and postharvest handling. They are having difficulty in finding people with expertise in the field of fresh flowers. With scattered production and no centre of operation the Association is finding it very difficult to meet the growing demand for flowers on the local market and for export. Increased membership and production is a must to be able to enter the export market successfully and improved transportation is necessary to be able to provide the export market with quality flowers on a continuous basis.

NATIONAL FARMERS
WELFARE ASSOCIATION
(NAFWA)



NATIONAL FARMERS ASSOCIATION

1. Background

After Hurricane Allen destroyed much of the agricultural production of St. Lucia in 1980, banana farmers were to receive compensation for some of their losses through the European Economic Community's Agricultural Stabilizing Fund (STABEX). Government, which was the initial recipient of these funds, decided to allocate some of the monies to a wider range of farmers and fishermen even though the compensation came about because of the damage done to banana production. Banana farmers protested this action through a series of meetings and as a result, Government re-allocated some of the funds back to the banana farmers to help them reconstruct the industry.

The process of discussion that this situation set in motion convinced a number of farmers that they needed an institution which could speak with "one voice" on a range of farmer related issues. Education programmes were launched and by 1983 the National Farmers Association (NAFA) registered as a Farmers Action Group under the Trade Union and Disputes Ordinance. During the period 1985-87 NAFWA fell into a state of inactivity.

At the April 1988 Annual General Meeting, an entirely new executive committee was voted in. The immediate priorities of the new executive are to:

(a) Consolidate NAFA. Revizing the constitution, restructuring and putting in place some basic factors which are key for positive and productive development of NAFA.

(b) Expanding membership base. This would include ongoing education and mobilization work among farmers. The new constitution which is an updated version of the original one set up since the inception of the association was presented at a special general meeting of NAFWA on October 16, 1988. The Constitution was revized by a three man committee appointed by the executive in compliance with a resolution passed at the April 10 A.G.M. To that effect, NAFA is affiliated with the Windward Islands Farmers Association (WINFA) which is based in St Vincent.

2. Objectives and Goals

The overall objective of NAFA is to provide representation to the Government of St. Lucia and other

organisations on all matters which affect farmers; in effect to be an advocacy and development organisation for all farmers of St. Lucia.

The board feels their first objective is to improve upon the organisation of farmers throughout St Lucia and to encourage farmer participation at the community level. The Association believes that this would ensure a strong organisation which could more effectively tackle the problems that farmers face.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

None as NAFA is not a hands on operation.

3.2 Marketing functions carried out

NAFA does not engage, at present, in the buying or selling of agricultural produce.

3.3 Other services offered

NAFA provides information, education, and advocacy services. These can best be illustrated by a series of examples:

a) Access to expertise

A farmer experiences disease problems with his citrus and cannot readily obtain extension services. NAFA, at the farmer's request, contacts the Ministry of Agriculture to obtain the services of an extension officer to assist in resolving the problem.

b) Linkage of farmer to market

The Caribbean Agricultural Trading Company (CATCO) wishes to market mangoes, extra-regionally. CATCO contacts NAFA who introduces CATCO to farmers who can supply directly (or indirectly) the desired mangoes.

c) Verification of statistical information

An organisation collects statistical information on production. NAFA is contacted by the organisation to verify that the information is correct, given their own experience.

d) Encouraging nontraditional use of local produce

NAFA heard that breadfruit could be used, combined with wheat flour, to produce a tasty bread, thereby increasing the use of local produce and reducing the food import bill. NAFWA volunteers collected breadfruit from members, took them to the Union Agro-Processing plant for processing into flour and then carried this product to a local baker where it was used (with wheat flour) to make bread. NAFA then took the bread to one of its meetings (which was also attended by officials of the Ministry of Agriculture) for tasting. This trial was considered a success and NAFA intended to repeat the exercise with cassava and sweet potatoes, but due to lack of facilities they have been unable to do so.

e) Promoting unified action

NAFA has encouraged the owners of small agro-processing industries in St. Lucia to come together as one group. They believe that this would strengthen farmers' efforts to link up with a unified group for processing purposes.

NAFA has carried out a number of radio and television programmes designed to improve the image of the farmer in St. Lucia. The theme they have stressed is that "The farmer is the most important person in the country. He supplies food and foreign exchange for the rest of the country and everything must be done to maintain and improve his status."

4. Description and Quantification of Operations

4.1 Board and method of management

An Executive Committee comprising seven members is elected at the Annual General Meeting. Their responsibility is to foster a healthy relationship among farmer members and to keep farmers well informed about the affairs of NAFA.

4.2 Type and number of members and geographical distribution

Approximately six hundred and fifty farmers from throughout St. Lucia form NAFA (July 1988). NAFA is encouraging and supporting the formation of branches or farmer groups all over St Lucia. As of October 1988 branches have been formed in: Mon Repos, Fond St Jacques, Bellevue (Vieux Fort), Fond Assau, and Micoud. Each of these branches have their own executive and hold

meetings as well as plan and take part in various activities from time to time. The association maintains close links with these branches so it can understand and relate to the farmer and his problems.

A small fee is collected from all participants/members at the monthly meetings to assist in raising funds.

4.3 Type and number of employees

Previously the Association functioned mainly on a voluntary basis. However since April 1988, the Association has hired the services of a full time general secretary. The association intends to establish a secretariat very soon and which would necessitate employment of an office assistant. There are also plans for appointment of a full time field officer.

4.4 Number of centres of operation and location

None at present. The Association is presently in the process of identifying suitable office space. The Association has drawn up a project proposal for international funding. This proposal includes a request for funding the establishment and development of a National Secretariat.

4.5 Other types of infrastructure

None.

4.6 Equipment and vehicles

None owned by NAFA; members provide their own transport for meetings and other activities.

4.7 Annual sales by commodity

Not applicable

4.8 Net assets

NAFA's net assets are approximately \$2,500 which were collected as membership fees.

5. Experiences in Marketing

5.1 Brief description of marketing experiences

Not applicable.

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5.2 Successes, failures and lessons learned

Not applicable.

6. Relationships (Linkages)

6.1 With Government

NAFA has good working relations with the Ministry of Agriculture.

NAFA has lobbied Government on several issues which has resulted in policies being adopted similar to NAFWA's position. For example:

- a) As earlier noted, the policy changes in the use of STABEX funds after Hurricane Allen.**
- b) A decision by Government to continue its exemption from income tax on the first \$75,000 of agricultural income.**
- c) A decision by Government to reduce the duty on farmers' vehicles.**
- d) NAFA promoted the concept of a pension scheme for farmers. The Ministry of Agriculture is now working out the legal framework for such a programme, by means of deductions from farmers sales. They completed the proposal in November 1987 and it is presently in the Assembly.**
- e) Government has set aside a National Day for Farmers, April 4, as earlier advocated by NAFA.**

6.2 With farmer organisations

NAFA has held several meetings with the St. Lucia Banana Growers Association (SLBGA). The institutional policies subsequently adopted by the SLBGA provided more benefits and convenience for farmers. NAFA recommended that allowances for field packing be increased and lobbied for a decrease from 72 to 50 boxes as the minimum that a farmer could bring to the reception depots at Ports Castries and Vieux Fort. They also argued for the creation of Intermediate Buying Depots (IBD) to meet the needs of the small farmer. The SLBGA adopted all of these policies.

6.3 With regional or international organisations

NAFA is beginning to establish regional linkages and has contact with the National Farmers Union of St Vincent and Canada, Grenada Cane Farmers Union, O.P.A.M.

of Martinique, National Food Producers Association of Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica Farmers Union, and the Windward Island Farmers Association (WIFA). WIFA is providing financial support to NAFA as well as to other Farmer Organisations in the region.

7. Major Problems Encountered

Whilst NAFA does not institutionally carry out production and marketing activities, its members do. These farmers identify two major constraints to increasing farm level production and revenue:

- a) Market identification and transportation in the case of external markets; and
- b) Better protection against imports for the domestic market.

NAFA's major problems have been related to the difficulty in getting farmers to organise. Without coming together, it is very difficult to solve problems, especially problems with marketing. As individuals, the farmers can make little or no impact.

Lack of financing has been a problem as well. With only a small membership fee, NAFA has had insufficient funds to implement any kind of a programme. The Association recently completed a project proposal for funding request.

8. Needs

8.1 Farmers

NAFA sees the farmers needs to be for production, marketing, and management training.

8.2 NAFA

The greatest needs of the Association seem to be in the area of organisation of the farmers. NAFA feels responsibility towards reaching a feeling of "togetherness" among the farmers throughout the island. Without the cooperation of all the farmers, NAFA could not exist because they simply could not represent the farmers which is their purpose.

NAFA also needs technical and financial support to carry out their schedule of workshops and to continue their membership drive.

9. Future Actions

9.1 New projects underway

There are a number of possibilities for developing small projects at the community level, however there is need to develop group unity and strength as a pre-requisit to undertaking these projects.

Pending the receipt of grant money from international sources, NAFA will begin implementing the three year project in Organisation Development and Education for their members. This will include an exchange programme for farmers to visit other countries to gain insight in to ways of strengthening farmer organisations. The project proposal will be specially geared towards consolidating farmer groups and strengthening the Association.

9.2 Projects in the planning stage

- a) NAFA's main plan for the immediate future is to continue work aimed at mobilizing and educating farmers. The Association also intends to provide basic services to farmers eg sale of agri-inputs and provision of technical and support services.
- b) NAFA has held a number of meetings with senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture to encourage them to develop a project which will make full use of the citrus produced in St. Lucia.
- c) NAFA is planning to organise a series of workshops for farmer members that will cover training in production, marketing, and management.

10. Summary

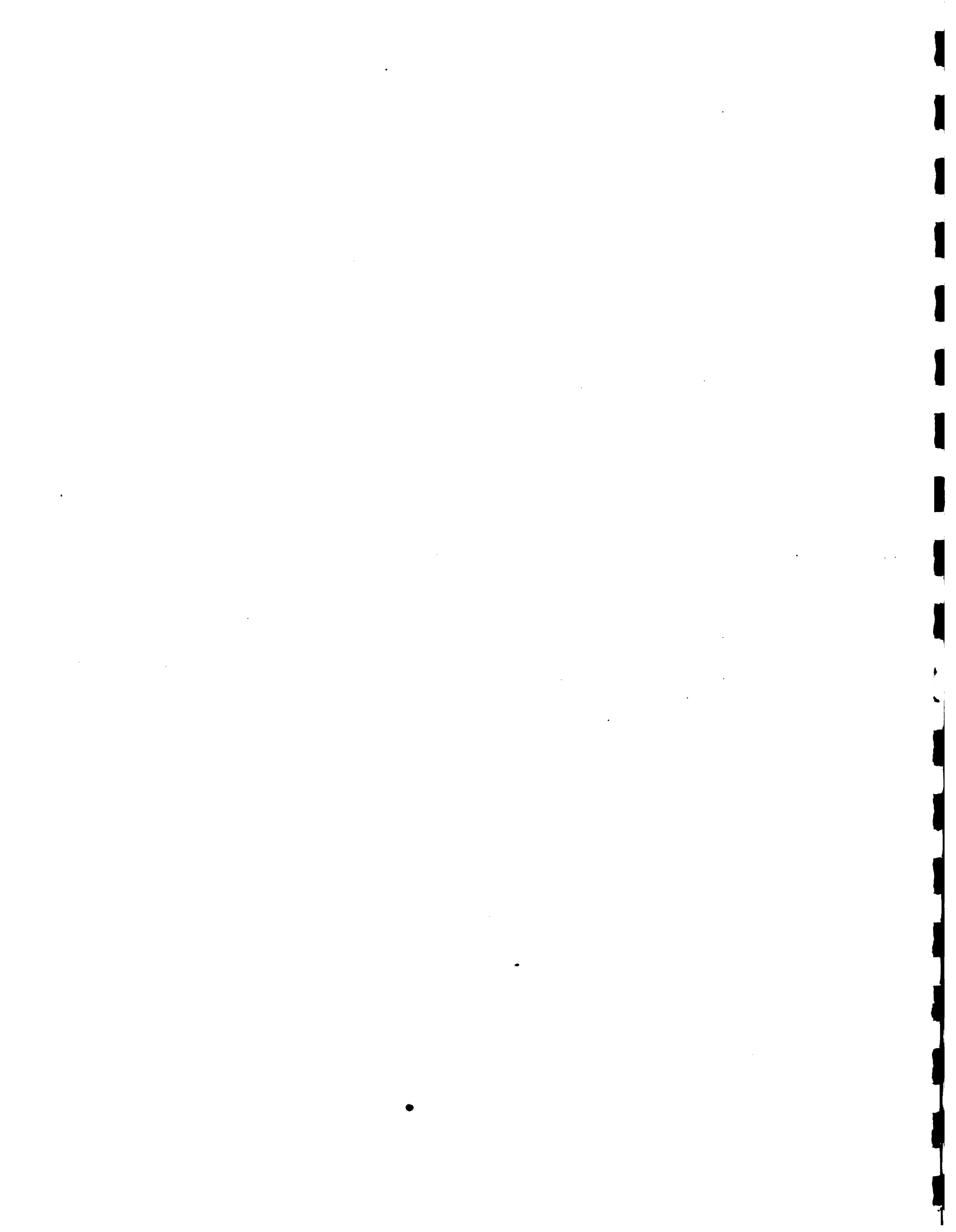
NAFA was formed in 1983 as an advocacy group for St Lucian farmers but was active only a short time. On 10 April 1988, NAFA held an annual meeting in Mon Repos where eighty to one-hundred farmers gathered in an effort to revive the Association after about three years of being inactive. A new Executive Committee was elected.

NAFA is concerned with the well being of rural communities as a whole. Feeling that the "farmer is the core of the country", they plan on providing assistance to the farmers in terms of production, marketing, and management training, and by representing the farmers when seeking government assistance, putting aside all political preferences.

The Association is stressing the importance of group formation, allowing farmers to share experiences and to work collectively toward solving problems.

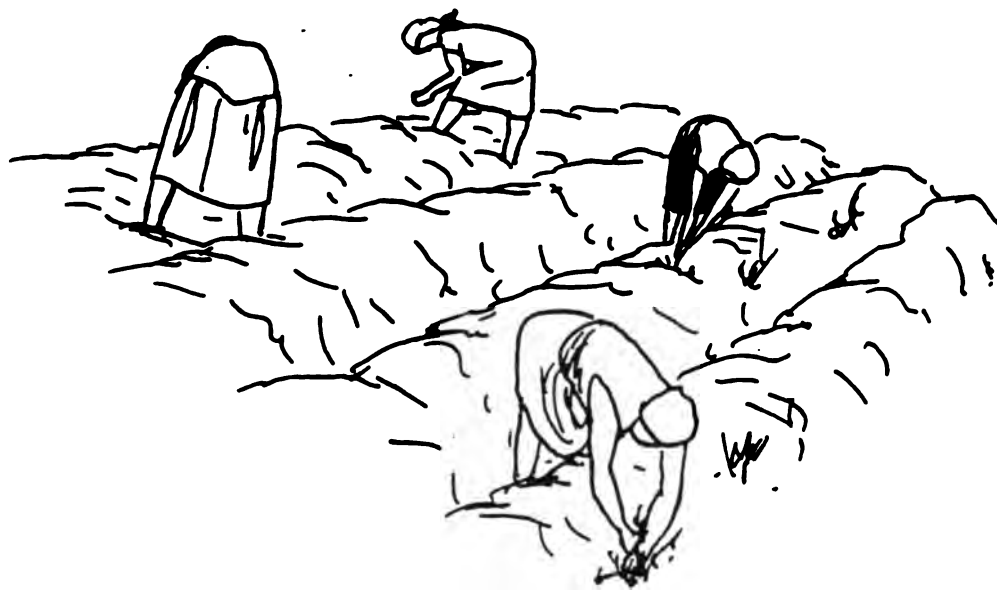
The Association is in process of seeking funding and support from international agencies for a three year project in Organisational Development and Education for members.

In the next six months they plan on concentrating on consolidating and building membership to strengthen the Association. So far some five branches have been organised.



MILLET WOMEN

ORGANISATION



MILLET WOMEN ORGANISATION

1. Background

Millet Women Organisation was formed in October 1979 from the Millet Mothers Groups in an attempt to strengthen the group by broadening the objectives and goals. The Mothers Groups met only once per year but the members wanted to include more activities so they reorganized into the Millet Women Organisation. This group started with 100 members and as of September 1988 the membership was 90 members including five very active men. Of the 90 total members, about 40 to 50 are active, regularly attending the monthly meetings.

2. Objectives and Goals

The objective of the Millet Women Organisation is to improve the standard of living of the families in the Millet Community by providing support and training in the agriculture and craft sector.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

- a) Agriculture commodities: dasheen, plantain, tannia, sweet peppers, cabbage, tomato, cucumber, salad beans, avocado, breadfruit, pumpkin, oranges, and Anthuriums.
- b) Other products: Interested members have received training in macrame and flower arranging. If a market should develop they could produce and sell those products as well.

3.2 Other areas

With financial support from St Lucia Save the Children's Fund, the Millet Women Organisation has established a very successful tool pool for the community. Included in the tool pool are machetes, spades, forks, sprayers, shovels, wheel barrels, etc. Members provided the labour in building the shed for the storage of the tools. The tools are rented out for a minimal fee to community members.

4. Organisation and Description of Operations

Millet Women Organisation is managed by a committee of seven members including a President, Vice- President, Secretary, and Treasure. This committee meets once a month before the monthly general meeting to discuss problems and activities. The general meeting is always held the second Sunday of every month. Communication within the groups is not too difficult as all members live in the Millet community. Each month the members pay a due of \$1.00. This money is used to support an annual trip to Soufriere as well as to pay the passage for members with opportunities to take part in educational tours.

When the group was first organized, each week or month a group of members would assist another member in gardening for several hours. This practice has ceased with members losing interest and not participating in the activities.

A member has lent a parcel of land to the Organisation for no charge on which Anthiriums are grown for sale. This project has received little cooperation with members providing little time to maintain the crop. Several members have had to take full responsibility for the parcel.

5. Experience in Marketing

The Millet Women Organisation has experienced a lot of frustration in trying to market their produce. Every Friday and/or Saturday the women take their produce in to the Castries market, relying on public transportation which is unreliable in the Millet area. Often times they cannot sell all of their produce because everyone has the same produce at the market, so they end up transporting their produce back home in the evening. Many of the members are weary of planting nontraditional crops because of the fear of a lack of market. These marketing problems are discouraging the younger people of Millet from entering into an agriculture enterprise. They are trying hard to get a Community Centre established to provide a training site for many different projects: sewing, macrame, vegetable production and marketing.

6. Relationships

Millet Women Organisation has maintained a good relations with St Lucia Save the Children Fund who has provided a lot of support for the group. They provided funding to purchase the tools for the tool pool, as well as provided training in macrame, flower arranging, and in marketing of produce. The marketing training resulted in

the distribution of the green trays presently utilized by all Millet women in displaying their produce at the Castries market.

The Millet Women Organisation is looking for ways to increase motivation and participation of the members. The Organisation wants to especially support the agriculture sector by encouraging members to plant nontraditional crops. With the present marketing problems and lack of transportation, this has been difficult to achieve.

ROOTS FARM



ROOTS FARM

1. Background

The Roots Farm, which was officially organised in 1983 in the Dennery Valley, is a result of a group of Rastafarians cooperating in a farming enterprise. As of September 1988, the group consists of 25 active farmers who have been farming together for many years in the hills surrounding Dennery Valley. In 1983 they decided to formally organise themselves and expand their farming operations together in an attempt to improve their standard of living and to produce a greater variety of fruits and vegetables for St Lucia. They are not a registered organization but they are recognized by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Cooperative Department.

The Roots Farm sought assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture which proved successful in getting them eleven (11) acres of land in the Dennery Valley which has since been well utilized in mixed farming.

2. Objectives and Goals

The objective of the Roots Farm is to allow for good cooperation among each other while practicing maximum utilization of the available land to improve their standard of living and to increase the supply of organically grown fruits and vegetable in St Lucia.

3. Areas of Specialization

3.1 Products handled

a) Agriculture commodities: soybeans, okra, corn, black-eyed beans, peanuts, sorghum, rice, mung bean, yard long beans, pawpaw, oranges, avocado, coconut, banana, soursop, Jamaican ackee, sorrel and mango.

4. Organisation and Description of Operations

The Roots Farm consists of 25 members who all share the same philosophy, making cooperation come very easy among them. They all have delegated duties within the group such as project manager, assistant project manager, budget director, treasurer, and accountant. Also each member is assigned to care for specific crops so everyone has specific responsibilities.

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All of the members live in the hills surrounding the valley making communication quite easy among them. They have weekly meetings to keep informed of any problems arising, as well as of the crop production and marketing progress.

The only equipment owned by the Roots Farm is the inventory of hand tools including machetes, forks, hoes, etc.

5. Experiences in Production and Marketing

The Roots Farm has never experienced a problem in marketing, except for never being able to meet the demand. They seem to be well known throughout the island as people come from all over to purchase their produce.

In order to increase production to increase supply and sales, equipment is needed. At the present time the production is very labour intensive limiting their ability to plant more. The soybeans are all processed by hand which is very time consuming. They do not have irrigation which prevents them from planting in the dry season. They rely heavily on borrowed equipment including a plow and a pump for the rice fields. This causes problems when the equipment cannot be obtained at the precise moment when needed resulting in reduced production.

6. Relationships

The Roots Farm maintains good relations with other institutes and organisations. CARDI allows the Roots Farm the use of the plow and stores seeds from one season to the next since Roots Farm does not have adequate storage space.

The Chinese Mission has been very supportive to the Roots Farm, especially in the area of rice production. The Chinese Mission visits the Roots Farm at minimum once per week in the rice production season. The Chinese Mission has allowed the Roots Farm to use their pump for keeping the rice fields flooded. The Roots Farm gets their broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage seeds from the Chinese Mission as well.

The Roots Farm has also had support from Plenty Canada, specifically in the area of soybean production. The Farm has purchased soybean seeds from them as well as sold soybeans back to them for processing and use.

The Roots Farm maintains a good relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture through the local extension officer.

The Roots Farm members are all very keen to improve their production of a variety of fruits and vegetables. As can be observed from their many relations with other organisations, they are interested in improved practices and varieties. They feel that the lack of equipment is holding them back the most. They have many more farmers waiting to join their group but they are unable to accommodate them at the present level of production.

In order to improve and increase the production and marketing, they are seeking:

- irrigation pump and distribution system;
- plow;
- pump for the soybeans, and
- transport to assist in getting inputs and in marketing.

The Roots Farm members are all very dedicated in cooperating to make their farm a success and a model of good mixed farming practices.

MABOUYA VALLEY
FARMERS COOPERATIVE



MABOUYA VALLEY FARMERS COOPERATIVE

Background

The Mabouya Valley Farmers Cooperative originated from the first two groups of graduates from the Mabouya Young Farmer Training Programme in 1985 and 1986. The nineteen (19) founding members had been farming their own parcels of land in the area from Mon Repos to Bexon while attending the training programme.

After graduating, it was suggested and accepted that they form a cooperative and farm a parcel of land together to set an example in the community of good farming practices and techniques, learned during their year training. They approached the Ministry of Agriculture, presented their proposal and were granted the use of 15 to 16 acres of government land located behind the CARDI Research Station in the Dennery Valley.

As of September 1988, the Cooperative has not utilized any of the available land. Most member have lost interest in the idea and have returned to their own parcels of land showing little intention of pursuing the Cooperative idea. A group of five members, including the President, Treasurer and Assistant Secretary (2 men and 3 women) are working hard in an attempt to revive the group. They have cultivated eight seed beds to prepare for the planting of vegetables including broccoli, cauliflower, and bush beans. They are concerned about the possibility of losing the land back to the government so they are working on getting it into production soon. They also plan on raising pigs, poultry and goats.

The small groups of five people feel confident in turning this project in to a success. They do not foresee any marketing problems as they have spoken to the SFAD project coordinators, as well as to a middleman, who have shown interest in purchasing produce. They have also had offers for assistance from CARDI, the French Mission, and the Chinese Mission.

They feel their greatest needs at the present time are:

- (a) to get fencing put up around all the cultivated areas in order to keep the animals out,
- (b) get a shed put up for the livestock, and
- (c) to get an irrigation system installed for the dry season. •

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