



Annual Report **2008**

Trinidad and Tobago

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



**IICA's Contribution to the Development of
Agriculture and Rural Communities
in Trinidad and Tobago 2008**

Annual Report

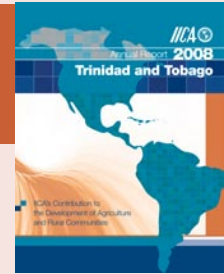
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1 FOREWORD



Gregg C.E. Rawlins
IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago

2008 was a very busy year for the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago. The technical programme of the office was successfully completed with some additional activities and initiatives adding value to the overall work programme.

Significant strides were made in the area of cooperation with some of the key national agencies, with a view to strengthening inter-agency collaboration in support of the programmes for agricultural development in Trinidad and Tobago.

Our continued support to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR) was again strengthened as many initiatives, particularly in the areas of Agricultural Health and Food Safety and Policy and Planning were successfully implemented in 2008. The development of a three-year joint programme of technical cooperation with the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) – in the area of agribusiness development should prove crucial in light of the emphasis being placed on food security of the nation. It is a programme that we at IICA are looking forward to implementing with NAMDEVCO with much vigour.

We also renewed our relationship with the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) specifically in the areas of Agro-Tourism and Policy and Planning.

The Institute celebrated 30 years of service to Trinidad and Tobago in 2008, and recognized this milestone by awarding key collaborators with special awards of “Excellence in Collaboration”.

I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the two Regional Specialists resident in this office, for their collaboration and dedication in executing the 2008 programme of work and implementing all additional activities. We have a small staff and limited resources and yet have been able to execute our programmes efficiently and effectively over the past year.

Collectively, we look forward to 2009, to expand on some of the programmes that we embarked on in 2008 as well as implement new ones with new partners.

We trust that the technical cooperation services provided by the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago are of value to the development of agriculture in this country and we stand willing to assist in this area as required of us by the National Authorities and our institutional mandates.

Gregg C.E. Rawlins
Representative

STAFF



Front row: (l. - r.)

Edwin Franco, Driver/Messenger; Richard Rampersaud, Consultant; Gregg C.E. Rawlins, Representative; Edric Harry, Policy Analysis and Planning Specialist.

Second row (l. - r.)

Francilla Stewart, Accounting Technician; Diana Francis, Regional Specialist, Policies and Trade Negotiations; Robert Reid, Regional Agribusiness Specialist.

Back row (l. - r.)

Janelle Archibald, Secretary; Kathryn Duncan, Information & Communications Specialist; Grace Pajotte-Greene, Administrative Assistant and Secretary to the Representative; Glenda Charles-Ash, Office Attendant.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE REPOSITIONING OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE

THE IICA OFFICE IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO continued to play its role in assisting the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR) with preparations for their participation in the IABA Meeting and the Forum for New Leaders held in Costa Rica. In addition, two young persons from Trinidad and Tobago were selected to participate in the Forum for Young leaders in Agriculture which involved young people from across the hemisphere. One of these young persons has recently entered an internship programme at the IICA Office in Panama for one year.

With respect to strategic planning, the office conducted training programmes aimed at improving the capability of the Extension Service in the area of project planning and management. Thirty-six extension and technical officers received training over a six-week period and two projects were prepared during the training which were submitted for consideration within the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP). The Office also began implementation of a project under the IICA/CARDI Technical Cooperation Agreement that seeks to enhance information and communications for Food Security in Trinidad and Tobago.

PROMOTION OF TRADE AND THE COMPETITIVENESS OF AGRIBUSINESS

In an effort to support policy formulation and agribusiness planning at the enterprise level, the office provided support to the Division of Agriculture, Marine Affairs, Marketing and the environment of the Tobago House of Assembly in developing cost of production models for a range of root crops, vegetables and livestock. The completed models were presented to Hon. Hilton Sandy, Secretary of Agriculture and training in the use of the models conducted for technical officers, extension staff and farmers. Support is also being provided to the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Marine Affairs with initial emphasis on the development of a cost of production model for rice.

In a joint effort between the Inter-American Programme for the Promotion of Trade, Agribusiness and Food Safety, the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago and the IICA Regional Specialist in Agribusiness, a programme was developed in collaboration with the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Company (NAMDEVCO) to strengthen the agribusiness sector and development of an export promotion platform. The programme will strengthen the National Agricultural Marketing Information System (NAMIS), build agribusiness capacity among farmers and exporters through training and technical assistance and provide for the institutional strengthening of NAMDEVCO.

The Office hosted two students of the University of the West Indies under the Agribusiness Internship Programme. The students contributed significantly to research work done in preparation for the programme with NAMDEVCO.

The Office continued to implement activities under the OAS funded agro-tourism project. Two agro-tourism investment profiles were prepared and presented to a regional investment meeting in Barbados. Two Farm-to-Table workshops were held – one in Trinidad in March 2008 and the other in Tobago in November 2008 to bring farmers, purchasing managers and chefs together to build partnerships and establish business relationships. A survey of demand for agri-food products in the hotel sector is currently being undertaken with NAMDEVCO with a view to identifying clear opportunities for the development of business relationships between entrepreneurs in the two sectors. The Agro-tourism Task Force continued to meet to review activities in this area and addition, meetings were held with officials of the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Agriculture to discuss agro-tourism development and policy related issues.

The Office also pursued initiatives which provided for the development of the herbal industry through a project formulated for implementation under the IICA/CARDI Technical Cooperation Agreement which focuses on the commercialization of two herbs – shadon beni and lemon grass. This project is being implemented in close collaboration with the



(left to right) **DIALOGUE:** Discussing the export promotion platform with local agribusiness stakeholders. **TRAINING:** Project planning and management training for extension and technical officers of the Ministry of Agriculture

Ministry of Agriculture, University of the West Indies (UWI), University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), Trinidad and Tobago Agribusiness Association (TTABA) and other collaborators.

STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY SYSTEMS

IICA continued to participate actively in the activities of the Cabinet appointed National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Committee (NAHFSC). The Institute conducted an assessment of the food safety system in Trinidad and Tobago using the Performance Vision and Strategy (PVS) instrument developed by IICA. The Office also facilitated the delivery of two key workshops via webcast: a two-day workshop on “The Codex Alimentarius and You” and another one-day one on “The OIE Normative Process and You”. A total of 20 persons benefitted from these workshops. The office continued to facilitate the participation of officials from Trinidad and Tobago in meetings of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Committee on Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS) Measures.

STRENGTHENING RURAL COMMUNITIES BASED ON THE TERRITORIAL APPROACH

A baseline study which was conducted in the Brickfield Community (a community with former CARONI 1975 Ltd workers) was completed and results presented to the community members. An agricultural plan for the community is currently being formulated. Support was provided to community groups in a number of locations including Plumitan and Fishing Pond. Additionally the Office continued to provide technical and administrative support for the activities of the Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWP) and the youth in agriculture. A 3-day training session in computer and Internet use was delivered to executive members of the youth group.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Office also held its annual accountability seminar in April 2008 and worked with a number of collaborators in many other events such as the MALMR’s National Agricultural Entrepreneurial Awards, UWI’s AgriTech Expo and the FAO/MALMR World Food Day Celebrations.

3 THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO IN 2008



THE CONTEXT FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE

Global growth began to lose momentum in the first quarter of 2008, as the financial turmoil stemming from the US sub-prime mortgage crisis and high commodity prices weighed on the world economy. In the US economy, for example the economy grew by a mere 2.5 % and the 15 nation euro-zone by 2.2 % in the 12 months to March 2008. The Japanese economy also performed sluggishly, growing at a mere 1.3 %.

In developing economies, growth softened in the first quarter of 2008. The economies of India and China grew at slightly lower rates of 10.6 % and 8.8 %, respectively. Growth in the tourism dependent economies of the Caribbean Region was also slowed down as the global economy contracted.

The economy of Trinidad and Tobago also slowed down in the first quarter of 2008. Real GDP increased by 1.6 % when compared to 6.5 % in the first quarter of 2007. Real value added in the energy sector contracted by 0.7 %, mainly on account of declines in production of crude oil, liquefied natural gas and fertilizers. The non-energy sector, however performed well. Real value-added in that sector expanded by 1.3 % and strong growth occurred, interalia, in

government (14.3 %) and construction (9.3 %).

The unemployment rate fell to 5.3 % in the first quarter of 2008, compared with 6.5 % for the similar period in the previous year. Many persons, for example, found employment in the construction, transportation and the community, social and personal services sectors.

The domestic economy, however continued to be challenged by strong inflationary pressures. On a year and year basis, to May 2008, the Index of Retail Prices rose by 10%, compared with 7.9% for the corresponding period in 2007. Food prices, the major driver of inflation, rose by 21.8% year-on-year to May 2008. The major contributors to inflation were increases in the prices of imported foods, principally: bread and cereals; fruits; oils and fats.

In view of the strong inflationary pressures, the Central Bank maintained tight monetary control. In February 2008, for example, the Bank raised the repo-rate by 25 basic points to 8.25% and simultaneously raised the reserve requirement ratio applicable to commercial banks to 13%. The relatively tight liquidity conditions and the increase in the repo-rate in February 2008 led to a general increase in the short term money market rates.

During the first quarter of 2008, the balance of payments surplus amounted to US\$663.1 million. This was attributed to the high energy prices ensured favorable earnings for Trinidad and Tobago's main export commodities. The global financial crisis also caused the collapse of some of the world's leading financial institutions, and consequently, sourcing of credit became difficult.

By the end of 2008 however, the global financial crisis had impacted on the ability of the government to continue with its budgetary allocations on planned programmes, as a result of revenue shortfalls, estimated at \$6 billion. The shortfall was largely due to a reduction in the export price for many of the commodities exported by Trinidad and Tobago. These commodities include: oil and petroleum products, ammonia, methanol, urea and steel.

All Ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources were consequently requested by the Cabinet to reduce expenditure. Social projects, however, were not affected.

The agricultural sector is also impacted upon by climate change which can cause, inter alia, rising temperatures; variable rainfall patterns; flooding and pest and disease outbreaks. Within recent years, Trinidad and Tobago has experienced weather systems that are different from normal patterns. Farmers have been complaining of the unusually hot weather in the dry season, and heavy rainfall that often results in flooding and loss of crop and livestock. There are also other environmental concerns, principally related to the destruction of forest cover and its impact on flooding in residential and farming areas.

Agriculture's contribution to GDP remained at 0.4% over the period 2006 - 2007, with domestic agriculture contributing significantly more (over 96.3%) to the sector's output. The export agriculture sector contributed only 3.7%. The economy is dominated by the petroleum and services sectors which each contribute over 45% of the country's GDP. The service sector, in particular, attracts much of the resources from the agricultural sector, principally labour. Agricultural labour decreased from 4.3% of the country's labour force in

2006 to 4% in 2007.

CHANGES IN AGRIFOOD PRODUCTION

There were increases in production in a wide variety of commodities produced in 2007, when compared with production levels of the previous year. Fruits, vegetables and root crops which recorded increases in production include: tomatoes; cabbage; melongene; bodi; ochro; pumpkin; patchoi; sweet pepper; cassava; dasheen and rice. This increased output from the agricultural sector had a positive impact on the country's food security situation.



However there were decreases in the production of cucumbers; lettuce; watermelons; chive; hot peppers; ginger; green corn; dry corn; pigeon peas; sweet potato; green corn; cocoa; coffee; oranges; grapefruit; copra and sugar. Decreases in production can be ascribed, to a large measure, on frequent flooding which destroyed extensive areas of crop land, as well as to the difficulties which many farmers experience in sourcing agricultural labour. Production is limited to the acreage that they can manage.

In the areas of livestock and poultry, there were increases in the production of pork; beef and table eggs. The production of mutton remained unchanged.

Prices

There were overall increases in the prices for a wide range of vegetables, fruits and root crops produced in 2007 when compared with the prices recorded for those commodities in 2006. This trend of increase in food prices is consistent with the conclusion of the Central Bank that food was one of the major drivers of inflation. A major contributor to the price of locally produced food was the sharp increases in the prices on inputs, principally fertilizers and chemicals.

Food Imports and Exports

The value of food imported in 2007 (TT\$3.4B) was 22.64% more than the value of food imported in the previous year (TT\$2.8B). The major categories of food imported in 2007 were cereals and cereal preparations and fruits and vegetables; beef; mutton and lamb. The higher value of food imports reflects, in part, the higher prices for those commodities on the world market. The value of food exported in 2007 (TT\$755.4M) was 20% more than the value of food exported in 2006 (TT\$906.6M). The principal exports were cereals and cereal preparations fruits and vegetables.

Several initiatives were taken by the government to address the food crisis situation however the impacts of these measures are yet to be realized.

CHANGES IN POLICY THAT AFFECT AGRICULTURE

The Ministry of Agriculture Land and Marine Resources prepared a Transformation Plan for the Agriculture Sector to meet, inter alia, the food security goals of the country. The strategies of the plan include, inter alia, making more land available for production; building marketing and processing capacity; expanding entrepreneurship and commercialization of agricultural operations; lowering input costs and increasing the adoption of new technologies; improving marketing information and marketing infrastructure; increas-

ing access to labour and restructuring research and development.

Other important policy decisions taken to address the food security situation include:

- Involvement of the state, either alone or in partnership with the private sector, in the operations of 11 large commercial farms. The role of the farms will be to: increase domestic food output; to provide raw materials for industry; to transfer new technologies to farmers as well as to produce large quantities of output to stabilize prices of local produce.
- The establishment of a National Agricultural Advisory Commission to advise the Minister of Agriculture on matters pertaining to the preparation and implementation of the National Food and Nutrition Security and Agribusiness Competitiveness Plan.
- Revision of the Agricultural Incentive Programme.
- Establishment of a Working Group on Praedial Larceny. Recommendations of the Group have been accepted.
- Development of a pilot insurance programme for agricultural products.
- Establishment of a Programme within the University of Trinidad and Tobago which focuses on biotechnology research in agriculture.
- Transfer of all state lands to the Estate Management and Business Development Company, so as to expedite the release of lands for agricultural production.
- Development of proposals in the allocation of agricultural plots for graduates of UWI, the Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (ECIAF) and graduates of the Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture (YAPA).
- A proposal for development of the small ruminants sub-sector by the Sheep and Goat Society and CARDI.
- Development of proposals for sale of the state-owned rice mill to a private sector interest..

Policy Initiatives taken for addressing the Food Crisis and Food Price Inflation included the establishment of a Prices Council to make recommendations and advise the Minister of Trade on strategies for addressing high food prices. Additionally, a Ministerial Committee for Food Prices and Inflation was established, which considered the following:

- Removal of duties on food items when such commodities are not available from CARICOM;
- Elimination of value-added taxes on certain staples;
- Implementation of an import procurement strategy to source cheaper food;
- Expansion of farmers markets' markets for selling produce directly to farmers;
- Enhancement of consumer information to improve the price information process;
- Intervention by a State company (the National Flour Mill) to source and distribute cheaper food to consumers.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE THEMATIC AREAS THAT AFFECTED THE PERFORMANCE OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE

Agricultural Health and Food Safety

The report on the establishment of a National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (NAHFSA) was completed by the Consultants and is expected to be submitted for Cabinet approval in early 2009.

Animal Health

The National Avian Influenza Committee continued to meet, under the chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary of the MALMR, with the major aim of developing contingency plans for outbreaks of Newcastle Disease and other poultry diseases.

An evaluation of the Vet Services of Trinidad and Tobago was conducted as well as an assessment of the SPS system, which was carried out by IICA, (using the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) instrument for Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures).

Collaboration with the Customs Department to address regulations pertaining to smuggling of

animals and a review of animal import regulations to bring them in line with OIE Standards was conducted. Contingency plans were developed for addressing possible outbreaks of Foot and Mouth and West Nile diseases which have been reported to be in the region. Programmes to deal with the entry of the Giant African Snail, which entered the country in 2008 were developed.

Plant Health

A pest risk analysis was conducted in Guyana, for 56 commodities earmarked for possible importation into the Trinidad and Tobago. Contingency plans to prevent the entry of Frosty Pod (a disease of cocoa), and Citrus Greening (disease of citrus) which are present in neighbouring countries were also developed.

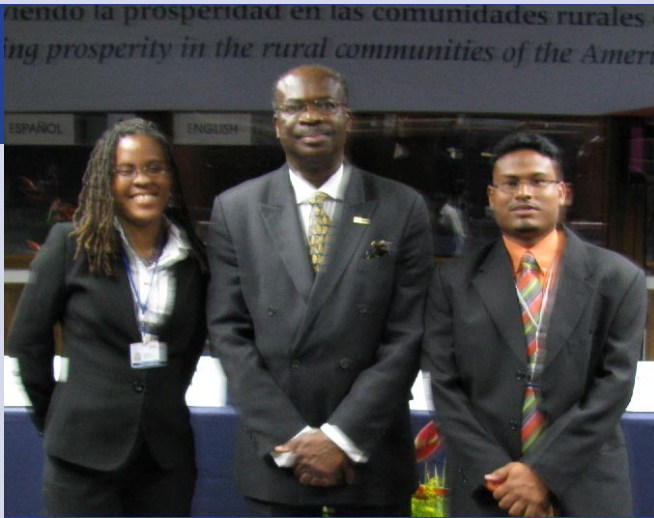
Trade

The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between CARIFORUM and the EU was signed in October 2008. The signing of this agreement paves the way for Trinidad and Tobago to export a wide range of products, including those from the agrifood sector, duty-free and quota free, into the EU. Rice and sugar are the exceptions. CARIFORUM, on the other hand, will have a 25 year time frame for liberalization of 86.9% of EU imports into its market. Various non-competitive and sensitive products have also been excluded from tariff liberalization.

The Trinidad and Tobago Agribusiness Association (TTABA), which is charged with the responsibility for implementing the National Agribusiness Programme, initiated several programmes over the 2007/2008 period. Processing plants for the production of coconut water and for processing of cassava and sweet potato into chips and other types of processed products were established. Plants for the processing of fruits and vegetables will be commissioned in 2009. Through TTABA - 11 farmers' groups and 6 commodity associations were also established.

The IICA Office hosted a national Agribusiness seminar, that focused on the development of an export promotion platform for members of the agrifood sector who wish to export to the Miami market.

4 RESULTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGENDA IN 2008



(left to right) LEADERSHIP: Abidemi and Richard with Dr. C.W.D. Brathwaite, IICA's Director General at the Forum for Young Leaders in Costa Rica. CAPACITY BUILDING: Edric Harry imparts training in project planning and management to officers of the MALMR



IICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE REPOSITIONING OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE

...support in implementing national, regional and hemispheric mandates

In March of 2008, the Institute also sponsored a Forum for Young Leaders in the Hemisphere, which was held at IICA's Headquarters in Costa Rica. The one-week programme was instituted to encourage young people of the Americas to participate and show leadership in the agricultural development of the hemisphere. Two nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, Ms. Abidemi Smenkh-Ka-Ra, a young entrepreneur and Mr. Richard Rampersaud, a Consultant with the Caribbean Regional Agricultural Policy Network (CaR-APN), participated in the Forum on behalf of Trinidad and Tobago.

Subsequently, Ms. Smenkh-Ka-Ra was awarded a one-year programme of internship to be taken up at the IICA Office in Panama. The programme is expected to enrich and strengthen the professional and human capacities of the young leaders by involving them in initiatives in the agri-food and rural sector in

other countries of the Hemisphere.

IICA's Director General, Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite paid an official one-week visit to Trinidad and Tobago in late November to early December, 2008. The Director General came to Trinidad to participate in the 60th Anniversary Celebrations of the University of the West Indies and to make a presentation at the International Conference on Tropical Agriculture, as part of those anniversary celebrations.

The visit included many engagements for the Director General. Key among those were the visit with the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Arnold Piggott, Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, and with Ambassador Luis Rodriguez, Coordinator of the National Secretariat for the 5th Summit of the Americas and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Discussions focused on the preparations for the 5th Summit of the Americas, to be held in Trinidad in April 2009. The visit with Ambassador Rodriguez was also timely, since the Institute plans to table the issue of Food Security at the upcoming Summit of the Americas.

The Director General addressed the issue of Food Security in his discussions with the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, indicating that IICA remained committed to supporting the Ministry in its efforts to transform the sector in Trinidad and Tobago. He further lauded the Ministry for the very exciting initiatives which were being implemented to address food security.

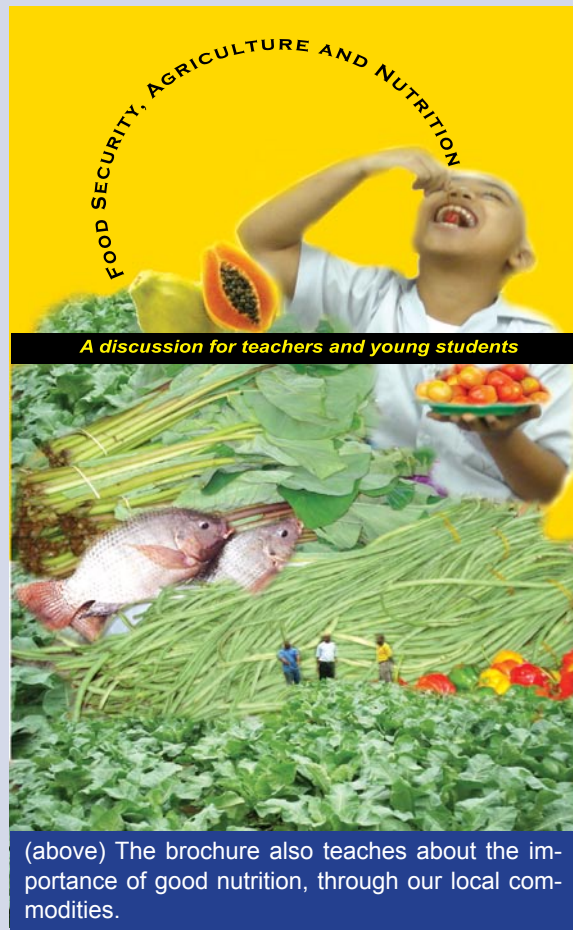
The IICA Office organized a press conference which was hosted by Dr. Brathwaite to address the issue of Food Security, present to the media the idea of a Caribbean Food Security Plan and to highlight some of IICA's achievements on its celebration of 30 years of service to Trinidad and Tobago. His address subsequently received much coverage in the local and regional print and electronic media during that week. The Director General was accompanied by Mr. Trevor Murray, Director of Operations and Integration, Caribbean Region and Mr. Gregg C.E. Rawlins, IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago on the official visits.

...strengthening public sector capacities in project management

The capacity of the Extension Service of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources in the area of project planning and management was addressed through the delivery of training by IICA in those areas. Thirty-six (36) extension and technical officers received training over a six-week period. Two of the projects which were prepared during the training programme were submitted for consideration within the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP). A programme completion workshop was held for the participants in June of 2008, at which senior officials of the MALMR were present to congratulate the officers and strongly endorsed the programme of training offered by IICA. The knowledge and skills gained through the training provided will serve the officers as they seek to contribute to the development of projects that address key issues within the sector, in particular food security.

...enhancing information and communication for food security

Under the auspices of the IICA/CARDI Technical Agreement, the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago initiated a one-year project entitled "Enhancing Information and Communications for Food Security in Trinidad and Tobago". The project seeks to enhance information and communications for Food Security in Trinidad and Tobago and will involve the participation of the other agencies in the planning and implementation process. One of the first products of the project – a brochure – targeted primary and secondary school students and their teachers and looked at the definitions and benefits of food security, domestic agriculture and nutrition in Trinidad and Tobago. The brochure was distributed from the IICA booth at the World Food Day celebrations, held in October at the University of the West Indies. Several schools and youth groups nationwide also received copies.





(Above left to right) COLLABORATION: Members of the IICA Miami team and NAMDEVCO at the Agribusiness export seminar. (Right) LINKAGES: Arthur Guerrero (centre) shows off some of the herbal produce that he supplies to the Hyatt Regency Hotel.



PROMOTION OF TRADE AND THE COMPETITIVENESS OF AGRIBUSINESS

One of the major activities on IICA's agribusiness programme in 2008, was the development of a Technical Cooperation Programme with the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Company (NAMDEVCO). A team of specialists from IICA's Inter-American Programme for the Promotion of Trade, Agribusiness and Food Safety, Frank Lam, Daniel Rodriguez and Mario, assisted by the Caribbean Regional Agribusiness Specialist, Mr. Robert Reid, supported NAMDEVCO in a number of initiatives in 2008, one of which was the development of a Technical Cooperation Programme to strengthen the agribusiness sector and development of an export promotion platform. The programme designed will also strengthen the National Agricultural Marketing Information System (NAMIS), build agribusiness capacity among farmers and exporters through training and technical assistance and provide for the institutional strengthening of NAMDEVCO.

The IICA specialists were hosted for one week during July of 2008, during which they participated in several field visits, meetings and a major seminar – held jointly by IICA and NAMDEVCO, the main objective of which was to outline the benefits of the export

platform programme and how Trinidad and Tobago may benefit from such a programme.

In March 2008, the Office facilitated the participation of officials from NAMDEVCO in a Caribbean regional meeting under the framework of the Market Information Organization of the Americas (MIOA). Through NAMDEVCO, Trinidad and Tobago became a member of the MIOA at that time and has since been elected Chair of the Caribbean group, therefore representing the Caribbean in executive meetings of the MIOA.

As a member of the MIOA, NAMDEVCO's National Agricultural Market information System (NAMIS) was the subject of a review conducted by a consultant on behalf of the MIOA, with a view to recommending improvements. The consultant visited Trinidad and Tobago and met with IICA and NAMDEVCO officials as part of that review.

...strengthening agro-tourism linkages

IICA continued to support agro-tourism operators and service providers in T&T to improve their capabilities to pursue agro-tourism initiatives in rural communities, through activities under the IICA/OAS project "Strengthening of the Tourism Sector through the Development of Linkages with the Agricultural Sector in the Caribbean".

Under the project, the Office had two agro-tourism investment profiles prepared for private operators, one from Tobago and the other from Trinidad. Both operators benefited from participating in a Regional Investment Forum that was held in Barbados in February of 2008, where they had an opportunity to meet and learn from other agro-tourism operators from the wider Caribbean region, as well as potential investors.

Two “Farm to Table” workshops were held in an effort to bring farmers, purchasing managers and chefs together to build partnerships and establish business relationships. The IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago organized the first workshop which was held in Trinidad in March, with funding under the IICA/OAS Project. Over 30 persons benefitted from this training, out of which some key relationships have been built and thus far sustained between farmers and the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The second Farm to Table workshop was held in Tobago, organized jointly by the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) and IICA.

Other initiatives under the agro-tourism programme included the commencement of a community engagement strategy which would guide community leaders on how to identify economic opportunities in agro-tourism, mobilize resources and implement projects. During the exercise, the community formed its own agro-tourism committee.

In keeping with the agribusiness linkages between the farming community and the hotel sector, IICA collaborated on a project with NAMDEVCO to conduct a survey of demand for agri-food products in the hotel sector. This was initiated with a view to identifying clear opportunities for the development of business relationships between producers and hoteliers/restaurateurs. The survey will be made available in 2009.

The profile of the programme was lifted further as meetings were also held between IICA’s Hemispheric Agro-Tourism Specialist, Mrs. Ena Harvey and officials of the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, to discuss agro-tourism development and policy related issues. The Hemispheric Agro-Tourism Specialist also met with the Agro-Tourism Task Force, which continued to meet to review activities in this area.

...developing the herbal industry

IICA’s support to the development of the herbal industry in Trinidad and Tobago was continued through the commencement of a project under the IICA/CARDI Technical Cooperation Agreement. The project, which focuses on the commercialization of shadow beni (*Eryngium foetidum*) and lemon grass (*Cymbopogon citriodora*), will benefit from the collaborative efforts of several key institutions, including the Ministry of Agriculture, University of the West Indies (UWI), University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), Trinidad and Tobago Agribusiness Association (TTABA).



(top to bottom) DIALOGUE: Ena Harvey, IICA’s Hemispheric Agro-Tourism Specialist talks with the Agro-Tourism Task Force. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Members of the Matura community at one of the committee meetings.

STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY SYSTEMS

The Institute carried out a number of activities in the area of Agricultural Health and Food Safety in 2008. Most of these activities were supported by Ms. Carol Thomas, Regional Specialist in Agricultural Health and Food Safety.

IICA conducted an assessment of the Food Safety system in Trinidad and Tobago using the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) to generate information to support the work being done by the NAHFS. In May 2008, a Common Vision Session (CVS) was facilitated by Ms. Carol Thomas, with support from Dr. Maxine Parris-Aaron, Agricultural Health Specialist from the IICA Office in Guyana.

Under a regional project to develop sustainable institutional capabilities in the countries of the Americas so that they can participate actively in the SPS Committee and move forward in implementing the SPS Agreement of the WTO, the Institute conducted several activities in Trinidad and Tobago during 2008. On August 11-15 an assessment of the SPS system was conducted, using the PVS instrument for Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. The exercise was out by Ms. Carol Thomas.

Following this, in September, a CVS was facilitated jointly by IICA and the USDA, at which the findings of the assessment were discussed with all stakeholders (private and public sector) in a one day consultation. The session was instrumental in identifying recommendations for projects (both national and regional) that seek to address the gaps identified.

The project is one more component of a long-term cooperation policy focused on the development of capabilities for the active participation of international organizations, especially the SPS Committee of the WTO and in the implementation of its Agreement. It seeks to identify practical and concrete solutions to institutional problems that limit effective and active participation in international forums, and to problems related to the practical application of the SPS Agreement.



(top to bottom): IICA's Regional AHFS Specialist Carol Thomas delivers her presentation to stakeholders at the CVS. TRAINING: Using web technology, IICA delivers training in Codex Alimentarius to professionals.

...improving national capacities in agricultural health and food safety

The Office facilitated the delivery of two workshops via webcast for the benefit of public and private sector stakeholders. The first was a two-day workshop held in June on “The Codex Alimentarius and You”. This was delivered at the IICA Office. Participants from the public and private sector participated in the two-day exercise and reported their satisfaction at the knowledge and information they gained from the course. In September, the one-day workshop on “The OIE normative Process and You” was delivered to a larger group comprising mainly professionals from within the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health.

The IICA Office continued to facilitate the participation of officials from Trinidad and Tobago in meetings of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Committee on Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS) Measures.

Additionally, IICA played a role in the activities of the Cabinet appointed National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Committee (NAHFSC).

STRENGTHENING RURAL COMMUNITIES BASED ON THE TERRITORIAL APPROACH

In its efforts to engage a rural community in a holistic development exercise, using the territorial approach, the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago conducted a baseline study in the Brickfield Community (a community with former CARONI 1975 Ltd workers). The results of the study were presented to the community members and an agricultural plan for the community is currently being formulated.

Additional support was provided to rural community groups in a number of locations including Plumitan and Fishing Pond.

The Office continued to provide technical and administrative support for the activities of the Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWP) and the young people involved in agriculture. Training in computer and Internet use was requested by executive members of the youth group and a 3-day training session in this area was designed and delivered by IICA at the Office.



(left to right) DIALOGUE: Grace Pajotte-Greene and Edric Harry discussing issues with members of the Brickfield community. EMPOWERMENT: Young women - members of the youth in agriculture group enjoying their computer training session at the IICA Office.



5 RESULTS OF INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

- In 2008, IICA commenced implementation of two projects under the IICA/CARDI Technical Cooperation Programme, in the area of commercial herbal development and information and communications. The herbal project saw IICA and CARDI cooperating with institutions such as TTABA, CARIRI, UTT and the UWI. The office has begun to collaborate with the ADB, CARDI and the FAO on aspects of the information and communications project.
- The office continued to collaborate with the national office of the OAS in the administration and implementation of the Agro-Tourism project.
- The Office supported the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the University of the West Indies and cooperated with a number of other national and regional agencies and institutions by participating in the Agri-Tech Expo, a national agricultural and industrial exhibition which was held over 5 days in April 2008. The office mounted a booth which incorporated displays by IICA as well as by business members of the Caribbean Herbal Business Association (CHBA).
- In celebration of World Food Day activities in October, the Office participated in an exhibition hosted by the FAO and the MALMR at the University of the West Indies. Additionally, the Office mounted a display at the Ministry of Local Government's World Food Day celebrations hosted by the Tunapuna Regional Cooperation.
- The Office participated as a member of the organizing committee of the MALMR's National Agricultural Entrepreneurial Awards and played a key role in the planning and preparation for the Gala Awards function in September 2008, working closely with other agencies such as the Ministry itself, the ADB and the FAO.
- Through the participation of the Representative, the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago, continued to support the national efforts at establishing the National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency.
- The Development Partners comprises a group of international organizations: agencies of the UN System, the Inter-American System and various missions. The group meets on a quarterly basis to discuss issues pertinent to the development of the country and to be apprised of key social and economic developments. In September, IICA, which is a member of this group, was asked to coordinate the meeting under the theme of Food Security. Subsequently the FAO, the MALMR and a representative from the University of the West Indies made presentations to the meeting.



Meeting of the Development Partners in September 2008.

6 RESULTS OF HORIZONTAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION

The Office drew on the strength of the wider IICA technical network to enhance initiatives in 2008, that assisted with the delivery of its work programme in Trinidad and Tobago. (*Further details of these are provided in the body of the report.*)

- Technical expertise and support was delivered by the IICA Office in Miami - whose team collaborated with the Office, the Regional Agribusiness Specialist and the NAMDEVCO team in the conceptualisation and development of the technical cooperation programme between NAMDEVCO and IICA.

- IICA's Hemispheric Agro-Tourism Specialist, provided technical guidance in the implementation of the agro-tourism programme and accompanied the Representative of the Office to meetings with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Senior Management of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Marine Resources (MAMLR), to discuss development of Agro-Tourism in Trinidad and Tobago.

- The Office received full technical support in the area of Agricultural Health and Food Safety from IICA's Regional Specialist in this area, in the delivery of several initiatives to assist the MALMR in the modernization of its systems and services. Additional support in this area was received from the Agricultural Health Specialist from the IICA Office in Guyana.

- Additionally, the Office was supported by the department from CECADI, the Distance Learning Centre at Headquarters, in the delivery of training programmes in Codex Alimentarius and the OIE, via webcast, for the benefit of public and private sector officials.

- In November, the Office played host to a small group of agricultural information professionals from the within Caribbean, in a meeting to discuss the situation of and outlook for agricultural information services in the region, with a view to building leadership and commit-

ment to joint actions. Participants were from The Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago. The meeting was the final activity in a regional project funded by the CTA and implemented by IICA Headquarters, through its Publications and Documentation Division.

- The Office supported the Regional Agribusiness Specialist in hosting a regional workshop on sweet potato in November 2008, in Trinidad.

- Staff of the Office supported the Regional Specialist, Policies, Trade and Negotiations with the organization and management of the Agriculture Roundtable (ART) for members of the media and other stakeholders at the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) in St. Vincent in October.

- In collaboration with staff from the IICA Offices in Barbados, St. Lucia and St. Vincent, IICA Trinidad and Tobago mounted and managed the IICA booth at the CWA.



Participants of the regional agricultural information meeting hosted by IICA Headquarters and the CTA in Trinidad, November 2008.

7 NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources has recently published a new Transformation Plan for the Agriculture Sector in Trinidad and Tobago, which places a strong emphasis on agribusiness. The IICA office has identified opportunities for technical cooperation, most of which will support the implementation of the Ministry's renewed focus on agribusiness development:

- The Office will continue to develop its programme of work in the area of Agro-tourism building on work commenced under the IICA/OAS Agro-tourism project. In its efforts to assist agro-tourism operators and service providers to improve their capabilities to pursue initiatives, specific interventions will include:

- development assistance to the Matura Community as they seek to establish a community agro-tourism venture;

- continued work in the area of linking farmers to hotel/restaurant markets under the "Farm to Table" initiatives; and

- further support to the development of an Agro-Tourism Task Force that can drive the process forward in Trinidad and Tobago.

- Building on the work that it commenced in the development of Cost of Production models, the Office will continue to deliver the models to benefit farmers and extension officers and other stakeholders having a better understanding of the profitability of their enterprises.

- The Office will collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization in the implementation of a programme entitled "Excellence in Extension" to evaluate the extension services in Trinidad and Tobago, in support of the improving the agribusiness capacities of the extension network of the MALMR

- The Office will collaborate with the FAO Food Security Project with respect to work on value chain analysis and building synergies with work that IICA is doing with NAMDEVCO on value chains.

8 MAIN ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY IICA

Building “Farm to Table” Partnerships - Trinidad. March 17 – 19, 2008

Agro-Tourism workshop to foster closer linkages and business ties between producers and operators of hotel, restaurants and supermarkets.

Common Vision Session - Assessment of the Food Safety System. May 9, 2008

Completion workshop for persons trained in Project Management. June 27, 2008

NAMDEVCO-IICA Workshop. August 2008

Building “Farm to Table” Partnerships - Tobago. November 11-13, 2008

Training in the use of Cost of Production Models. November 18 – 20, 2008

Training provided for technical officers, extension staff and farmers in Tobago in the use of Cost of Production models for root crops, vegetables and livestock developed by IICA.

Common Vision Session. September 19, 2008

Workshop at which the findings of an assessment of the SPS System in Trinidad and Tobago were discussed among a number of stakeholders from the private and public sector.

30th Anniversary Cocktail Reception. November 28, 2008

Cocktail reception held in celebration of IICA's 30th anniversary of service to Trinidad and Tobago. A wide range of the Institute's collaborators and stakeholders and past and current members of staff attended the function. In commemoration of the 30th Anniversary, the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago presented special awards of “Excellence in Collaboration” to seven of its key stakeholders: The Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), The Division of Agriculture, Marine Affairs, Marketing and the Envi-

ronment, Tobago House of Assembly (THA), The Faculty of Science and Agriculture, University of the West Indies, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR), The National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO). Awards were also presented to three past Representatives of the Trinidad & Tobago Office: Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite: 1983 – 1988; Dr. Arlington Chesney: 1994 – 2002 and Mr. Aaron Parke: 2002 – 2007.



(top to bottom) GREETINGS: (l.- r.) The Hon. Arnold Piggot - Minister of Agriculture, welcomed by Mr. Gregg C.E. Rawlins - Representative, Dr. Chelston W.D. Brathwaite - Director General and Mr. Trevor Murray - IICA Director of Operations & Integration, Caribbean Region.

CELEBRATION: Dr. Brathwaite and Mr. Murray with the IICATT team at the 30th Anniversary Cocktail Reception.

9 PUBLICATIONS

IICA. ***Production Guide for Sapodilla, Soursop and Sugar Apple.***
(Available in PDF on www.iica.int/trinidadandtobago)

10 ACRONYMS

ADB	Agricultural Development Bank
CaRAPN	Caribbean Regional Agricultural Policy Network
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CHBA	Caribbean Herbal Business Association
CVS	Common Vision Session
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IABA	Inter-American Board of Agriculture
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
MALMR	Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources
MIOA	Market Information Organization of the Americas
NAHFSC	National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Committee
NAMDEVCO	National Agricultural Marketing and Development Company
NAMIS	National Agricultural Market Information System
NRWP	Network of Rural Women Producers
OAS	Organization of American States
OIE	World Organization for Animal Health
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Programme
PVS	Performance Vision Strategy
SPS	Sanitary Phytosanitary
THA	Tobago House of Assembly
TTABA	Trinidad and Tobago Agribusiness Association
TTFAYA	Trinidad & Tobago Foundation for Youth in Agriculture
UTT	University of Trinidad and Tobago
UWI	University of the West Indies
WTO	World Trade Organization

11 SNAPSHOTS



IICA and CHBA booth at the University of the West Indies' AgriTech Expo, April 2008.



IICA booth at the World Food Day Celebrations at the University of the West Indies, October 2008.



Presentation of the Annual Report at the annual Accountability Seminar, April 2008.



Consultant Mr. Steve Maximay facilitating the Farm to Table workshop in Tobago, November 2008.



Mr. Rawlins with members of the TTFAYA at the office.



Abidemi Smenkh-Ka-Ra with Mr. Rawlins at the office prior to her departure for IICA Panama.



Mr. Robert Reid facilitating a session at the regional workshop on sweet potato, November 2008.



(l. - r.) Mr. Rawlins with Agribusiness Interns: Deokie Sookdeo and Trevon Cooper and Dr. Dyer Narinesingh, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture & Natural Sciences, U.W.I.



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