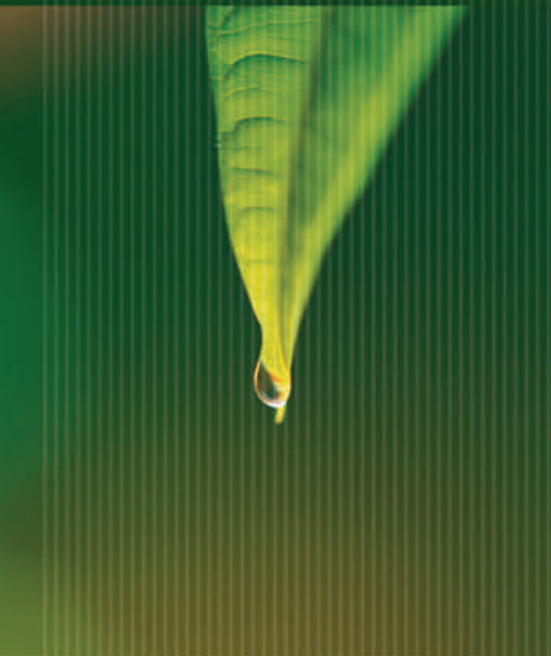




2007

A n n u a l R e p o r t

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



**IICA**   
Inter-American Institute for  
Cooperation on Agriculture

**65<sup>th</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY  
1942 - 2007

## **Inter-American Institute For Cooperation On Agriculture**

### *Vision*

*To be the leading agricultural institution in the Americas and the partner of choice by virtue of the quality of the technical cooperation it provides in response to the needs of Member States, and its contributions to sustainable agricultural development, food security and rural prosperity.*

### *Mission*

*IICA is the specialized agency for agriculture and the rural milieu of the Inter-American System, whose purpose is to provide innovative technical cooperation to the Member States, with a view to achieving their sustainable development in aid of the peoples of the Americas.*

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Dr. M. N. Alvarez  
*Representative Office in The Bahamas*

## FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to present our 2007 Annual report on behalf of the team at the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)-Bahamas office. The report entitled “The Contribution of IICA to the Development of Agriculture and Rural Communities” shows the results of close cooperation with several stakeholders in the Bahamas.

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture continues to serve as a development agency to its thirty-four member states in the northern hemisphere. The IICA office in The Bahamas, with support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, is in its tenth year of service. It aims at expanding the scope of its collaboration with national and hemispheric partners in order to address the call for a revitalized effort in agriculture and development of rural communities. The participation of the Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources and his delegates in the “Week of Agriculture and Rural Life” Summit in Guatemala demonstrates this commitment.

It is with pride that I acknowledge the support and collaboration of the Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources, the Hon. Lawrence Cartwright and his personnel; staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Education, Youth, Sports and Culture; Ministry of Lands and Local Government and partners in the Diplomatic Community and the private sector groups, through BAPA, for the activities we were able to implement and new projects funded in 2007. Their guidance and support to the work program in the Bahamas contributed to the success in implementing the technical cooperation agenda and continued with the process of repositioning the sector.

The Institute also acknowledges the efforts and contribution of all producers, especially the Cooperative Societies and other stakeholders in the tourism sector, public and private, as well as national and *international organizations* to the achievements. We do look forward to continued collaboration with members of the community of agriculture and rural life, and those in tourism as we seek to implement the linkages plan for 2008.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The effort of the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources to revitalize agriculture in the Bahamas was highlighted by the reintroduction of the annual agricultural trade show (Agri-Expo) in November 2007. Farmers and other stakeholders from many Family Islands and New Providence participated. Within the framework of the revitalization effort, IICA Bahamas addressed the following strategic priorities in collaboration with many stakeholders.

### Repositioning of Agriculture and Rural life

- Decision makers were able to obtain a better idea of the scope of key issues from a regional prospective and to get first hand view of a small sample of value-added products and range of technologies from the region during the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA).
- Internship student and private sector representative participated in CWA-07, Jamaica.

### Promotion of Trade and Competitiveness in Agriculture

- In partnership with the Bahamas Agricultural Producer Association (BAPA), BCLL and the Department of Cooperative Societies was able to obtain a MIF Grant from IDB to encourage the formation of producer groups into consolidated clusters for competitiveness, in a project to link agriculture with tourism.
- Contributed to two exhibitions, radio talk shows, and supported agribusiness training for members of BAPA, Cooperative agents and leaders.
- In partnership with the Bahamas Agricultural Industrial Corporation (BAIC), support was provided for the Arts and Crafts Women Cooperative for a tradeshow and launching of the Bahamas Chapter of Caribbean Network for Rural Women Producers (CANROP).

### Strengthening Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems

- PAHO and IICA collaborated with the national authorities in the group for the Avian Influenza discussion.
- Technicians participated in SPS meetings.

### Promoting Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and Environment

- North Abaco Fishing Cooperative and Grand Bahama Farmers Agricultural Co-operative Society Ltd. initiated strategic planning to increase capacity for sustainable harvest of marine resources and increase competitiveness.
- Participation in damage assessment after Tropical Storm Noel in Long Island.

### Introducing Technology and Innovation for the Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Life

- In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources (MAMR) conducted training on clean seed production of sweetpotato cuttings.
- The introduction of an improved seed production system and other new aspects of agriculture were promoted.
- Students and teachers from New Providence and the Family Islands know about the importance of agriculture and the wide range of opportunities for them in agriculture, including hydroponics and greenhouse technology.



## INTRODUCTION

The performance of the tourism sector is an important determinant of the level and pace of economic activity in the Bahamas. The sector's total impact on **GDP** in 2004 was estimated at 50%; made up of a direct contribution of 22%, indirect contribution of 10%, and an induced contribution of 18%. (*Source: Department of Statistics, National Accounts Report, June 2007*) Despite recent indications of a slowdown in some areas, the sector maintains its buoyancy and the medium term outlook is positive. However, the impact on the other sectors has been uneven and, in the case of agriculture, the potential of tourism to support growth, employment and the generation of foreign exchange has been largely untapped. The result has been that, in spite of the existence of 15,000 hotel rooms with occupancy rates averaging between 65% and 70% and fairly consistent growth of the hotel and restaurant sector over the years, linkages with the agriculture sector remain weak and both the country's food import bill and hotel expenditure patterns reflect a very strong dependence on imports. (*Source: Caribbean Hotel Association: Hotel Spend Study, 2007*) The agriculture sector has generally lagged behind the rest of the economy-accounting for less than 2% of **GDP** and registering negative growth rates over the last 3 years while the economy grew at an average of 3% over the same period.

In 2007 there was a change in Government and consequently a new Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources-the Hon. Lawrence Cartwright. There are new strides to bring agriculture into focus and catalyze interest in agriculture with the reintroduction of the agro-expo, which was well attended and well-organized. This will become an annual event for the sector. Government has indicated their interest in agriculture with a restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources as Bahamas Agriculture Industrial Corporation moved back to this Ministry from Lands and Local Government.

It is projected that there will be growth in the agriculture sector in the coming years as the ministry takes bold moves to boost production. The Government has purchased 502 acres in Andros, the biggest Family Island in the country, for distribution to interested farmers. Increasing cost of food imports and rising food price index suggests that more investment might go into local production. To reverse the prolonged decline in the sector, consideration will also need to be given to develop adequate infrastructure to improve post-harvest handling, storage and capacity building.

The Bahamian macroeconomic performance continues to be solid, with a gross domestic product (**GDP**) of \$6.2 billion. The economy grew by close to 3.4% in 2006. Tourism and related activities account for roughly 33% of **GDP**, and the financial sector, including a dynamic offshore banking sector, account for over 20%. The continued construction of new resorts and second-home projects in the Family Islands provide an opportunity for agro-tourism linkages. (*Source: Department of Statistics, National Accounts Report, June 2007*)

In close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, Bahamas Agriculture Industrial Corporation and in partnership with the Bahamas Agricultural Producers Association, The Bahamas Cooperative League, the Ministry of Lands and Local Government, Department of Cooperatives and other stakeholders, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture continued to implement the technical cooperation agenda. **IICA** is committed to the advancement and sustainability of agriculture, agribusinesses and agro-tourism in the Bahamas. This report describes the main technical cooperation activities at the national level during the past year.

## THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE IN THE BAHAMAS

### Recent Performance in the Agricultural Sector

The agriculture sector, which is made up of agriculture, fisheries and forestry, is within the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources. Under the new administration, the Bahamas Agriculture Industrial Corporation has shifted back to the Ministry of Agriculture from the Ministry of Lands and Local Government (MLLG). Other departments and organizations that also offer services to agriculture include the Department of Cooperative Societies within the Ministry of Lands and Local Government.

The Hon. Lawrence Cartwright, the new Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources, highlighted several important policy issues during the 2007 budget debate presentation. They included: Opening of the new Andros Agricultural Research and Demonstration unit (AARDU) to conduct research and demonstration in crops and livestock; promote the use of greenhouse technology for the production of selected herbs, fruits and vegetables to facilitate the production of salad greens for use in agri-tourism. These supportive policies are efforts to affect rapid and significant results and improve competitiveness of the agriculture sector.

The Fisheries sub-sector continues to be the major portion of the Agricultural domestic export. The overall fisheries output in dollar value in 2006 indicated that improved average prices boosted the total value of fisheries exports by 14% to \$42.2 million and the volume of export declined by 2.5% to 5.9 million pounds with a value of \$96.5 million.

Crop Exports represented 4.6% of crops-livestock sub-sector. Grapefruit is the most important crop export item, which is produced in North Andros. Citrus canker has drastically reduced the export of oranges and lemons out of Abaco. The grapefruits are exported mainly to the United States. The crop export for 2005 is B\$8.3 million, which is 59% of value of registered crop produced.

The livestock sub-sector, which includes poultry, pork and mutton, is estimated at B\$16.1 million, which is 24% of the agriculture sector. In 2004, the three largest poultry producers had an output valued at B\$15.1 million share almost equally between broilers and layers, which constitute the poultry agribusiness in the Bahamas. In 2005 and 2006 the poultry output was B\$16 million. *Source:* Agricultural figures from the Department of Agriculture.

Table 1: Value of Agricultural Output and percent change (\$B)

Item	2005	2006	%Change
Crops	47,167.45	46,208.32	-9.59
Poultry	16,031.28	16,002.83	-0.28
Red Meats	928.45	918.62	-0.098
Ornamentals	8,000.00	8,000.00	0
Other	432.16	356.43	-0.75

Source: Agricultural figures from the Department of Agriculture.

### Critical Issues in the International and National Context

The macroeconomic performance continues to be favorable; however, the external environment poses new challenges, risks, and opportunities. These include the slow down of the United States economy as reflected in a drop in total visitors, high oil prices and vulnerability to natural disasters. Nonetheless, the business climate remains very attractive and planned investments in the tourism sector continued. This continued performance of tourism coupled with high import bill and leakage can be viewed as a source of stimulus for growth in agri-tourism.

The new Minister of Agriculture and his delegation participated in the fourth Ministerial Meeting "Agriculture and Rural Life" Summit of ministers in Guayacil, Guatemala in 2007. During this meeting the minister and his team discussed several hemispheric and regional issues, which were prioritized and follow up actions agreed. The other area of discussion, which has opportunities favourable to agriculture and rural development, is the Economic Partnership Agreement. Although the Bahamas is not a major exporter of agricultural products, the trade facilitation implication in this agreement can be a catalyst to increase investment by the private sector in niche areas of agriculture.



## **RESULTS OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION FOR 2007**

This year's technical cooperation results demonstrated an expanded scope in output and participation among our partners. There were several ground breaking events such as the launch of the Agro-tourism linkage project. Several farmers' cooperatives also participated in strategic planning and prioritization. The results of the cooperation are shown below.

### **Strengthening Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems**

**PAHO** and **IICA** collaborated with the national authorities group for the Avian Influenza discussion. The institute continued to support the participation of ministry technicians to the **SPS** Geneva meetings. Follow-up activities have been discussed to formalize the national body that will deal with related issues on the rules and procedures for meetings of the Committee on **SPS** Measures. The draft legislation still needs to be developed.

### **Promoting Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and Environment**

North Abaco Fishing Cooperative and Grand Bahama Farmers Agricultural Cooperative Society Ltd. initiated strategic planning to increase capacity for sustainable harvest of marine resources and increase competitiveness. During the year, several meetings were held to develop strategic plans and to brief producers and potential participants to the Agri-Expo about the requirements for participation.

#### **Abaco**

A training workshop was held with the North Abaco Fishing Cooperative in the Fox Town area. A visit was also made to farmers who can participate in the cluster concept, and the upcoming November Agri-Expo. Several farmers were visited who were in production of varied products, banana & papaya and mixed crops of cassava, corn, cocoyam (xanthosoma). On another farm, innovations in hay making and organic chicken production were also observed. The members of the cooperative collaborated in the use of equipment, synchronized production and other operations. This group is the beginning stage of a cluster on vegetable production. The other active cooperative is the North Abaco Fishing Cooperative that has initiated the process for the construction of a fish processing facility. The Coop plans to improve marketing of fish products and provide a series of complementary services to its members. The services will include ice distribution, packaging, input supplies and distribution services. The producers are aware that the supply must be matched by quality and quantity demand. Based on a rapid assessment, there is potential for increased output from the group. Technical support will continue to facilitate the development of the proposal for the fish processing facility.

## Grand Bahama

The Grand Bahama Farmers Agricultural Co-operative Society Ltd. had discussed several expansion scenarios and approached the government for additional lands for the expansion program. The members agreed that to better position the society and to clarify the long-term goal, a strategic plan was necessary. They have completed the initial stage of the strategic planning process. The plan is based on the result of a two-stage strategic planning exercise in collaboration with **BAPA**, **BAIC** and **IICA**.

This initial stage of the process was consultative, diagnostic and participatory. The process involved an initial visit to farms of some of the members in Grand Bahama and discussion with the Society members. The visit was to get a first hand view of the challenges and strength of the producing area. Twelve members of the society, representing a cross section of the various kinds of activities, participated in the exercise. There are presently more than 15 members of the society. The strategic planning exercise identified the following major priorities: -Development of business plans, -Technical training and assistance, - Organizational strengthening, Acquisition of equipment and labor.



Fig.1: Meeting with the Grand Bahama Co-op on Strategic Planning.

## Long Island

### Participation in damage assessment after Tropical Storm Noel in Long Island

On October 21st and November 1st heavy rains due to Tropical Storm Noel caused extensive flooding on the Family Islands of Long Island, Eleuthera, Exuma, Cat Island and Acklins. It drifted to the Bahamas at near **9mph**, with maximum sustained winds at **60mph** extending up to 130 miles from the centre. The central minimum pressure was **992mb**. According to the metrology estimates, up to 15 inches of precipitation could have occurred during the period of Tropical Storm Noel on the island.

On November 9th the Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources the Honourable Lawrence Cartwright, the Director of the National Emergency Management Agency (**NEMA**) Mr. Carl Smith, the Director of Agriculture, Mr. Simeon Pinder accompanied by the Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**) Representative, Dr. Dunstan Campbell and the Representative of The Inter- American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, Dr. Marikis Alvarez visited Long Island for a rapid assessment of the scope of damages cause by flooding due to Tropical Storm Noel. The major focus for this assessment was on agriculture. This was a one-day trip, which included an aerial view of the island and visit to farmers' fields, community dwellings and other infrastructure.

There was no doubt that the storm had a negative impact on the island. The cost of repairs and replacement/replanting will be considerable. The appropriate Ministry will provide the estimated damages. The tropical storm, while damaging, has provided an opportunity for lessons on mitigation strategies.



Fig. 2: Aerial view of a flooded area in Long Island after Tropical Storm Noel





Fig. 3: Flooded house after Tropical Storm Noel.



Fig. 4: Flooded farmer's banana/plantain field after Tropical Storm Noel.

## Strengthening Trade and Competitiveness of Agribusiness

### Agro-Expo 2007

The Agricultural Expo was a great comeback event after many years of not having a promotional event to showcase agriculture in the country. IICA's participation as member of the sub-committee was high (there were only three last minute cancellations from Eleuthera, Abaco and Long Island, mostly because of Tropical Storm Noel). However, the Abaco group did send their products for exhibition with the Extension Officer. The enthusiasm of the participants was also high, as they provided an orientation to the state of agriculture in the country. Despite the Tropical Storm Noel, some Long Island farmers did manage to come and participate in the event. The sales were very good and the majority of the Family Island participants were sold out by Sunday. The rapid movement of products is a good indicator that the public is hungry for our homegrown products.



Fig. 5: Customers purchasing at the Lucayan Tropical Booth

## **BahamArts Festival**

In partnership with the Bahamas Agricultural Industrial Corporation, **IICA** provided support for the regional Caribbean Network for Rural Women Producers (**CANROP**) president to attend the **BAIC** tradeshow. The show was hosted with the Bahamas National Craft Association, during which a Bahamas Chapter of **CANROP** was launched.



Fig. 6: Ms. Christine Wilson,  
**CANROP** President (St. Lucia)  
at the BahamArts Festival.

## **Agro-tourism Project**

This pilot project, which will be implemented by **BAPA** in partnership with **BCLL**, **BAIC**, and **IICA**, supports private sector capacity building and clustering that will allow for

vertical and horizontal linkages for competitiveness. Both the public and private sector will be contributors. The objective of this project is to strengthen the linkages between the tourism sector and domestic agriculture production. In pursuit of this objective a **MIF** Grant was obtained from **IDB**, the program will support the linking of producers into viable clusters, based on distinctive products based on each Family Island's niche comparative advantage in crops, livestock and services. The program will help participating farmers to match their production to projected demand of the hotels, restaurants and other related markets while simultaneously contributing to sustaining livelihoods and food security. Cluster formation will be strengthened through training, development of quality assurance systems, implementing good agricultural practices, risk management and formalizing partnerships between agri-business and tourism. The lessons on competitiveness learned from the **IDB** supported “Adopt a Farm” program, and the program on “Strengthening Market Access Opportunities for Small and Medium Size Enterprises (**SME**'s) in the Caribbean Agri-Food Industry” and local vertically integrated market channels already established in The Bahamas will be used. The current market for fresh fruits and vegetables is estimated at US \$127 million/year, of which only 24% is supplied by domestic production.

The technical backstopping for this project will be provided by a multidisciplinary team lead by **IICA** in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, **BAIC**, **BCLL**, and the Agro-tourism Center in Barbados. The team will also include national officers (Extension agents, Agronomists), regional specialists and the other regional centers of excellence. The expected outputs of the project include:

- Equip and train producer/processors groups (vegetables, small ruminants) to be competitive and penetrate the local tourism market,
- Conduct strategic training workshops to update producer members of good agricultural practices, regulatory issues and other specialized requirements by clients, and
- Strengthen the producer groups, cooperatives to enhance capacity in production, processing, and marketing.



Fig. 7: Agriculture and tourism participants in the Cluster development workshop in October.



## Caribbean Week of Agriculture 2007

During the Caribbean Week of Agriculture, 2007 in Jamaica, the Bahamas was well represented by both public and private sector participants. The Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources and his delegation shared in several meetings. They were able to obtain a better idea of the scope of key issues in agriculture from a regional prospective and got first hand view of a small sample of value added products and range of available technologies from the region. Other representatives included: **BAIC's** Handicraft department; **BAPA** (private sector); and Miss Michelle Davis participated in the **CAFY** forum (Fig. 8). At **CWA** we also had two poster competition entries, under the theme “*The Influence of Global Warming on the Caribbean Agricultural Sector*”. Our winning posters placed 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> overall for the region. The Bahamian students’ poster entry, which was a part of the **CWA-07** exhibition, is shown below in Fig 9.



Fig. 8: Miss Michelle Davis, Summer Student participates in the **CAFY** Forum at **CWA** 2007



Fig. 9: **CWA's** Poster Competition. This poster placed 7<sup>th</sup> overall at **CWA** and 2<sup>nd</sup> in our local competition.

## Introducing Technology and Innovation for the Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Life

### Sweetpotato Training

In collaboration with **MAMR**, **IICA** conducted training on clean seed production of sweetpotato. The introduction of a needed improved seed production system and other new aspects of agriculture were promoted. The training workshop was held at the media House at Knowles, Cat Island. Eighteen farmers participated throughout the full two days of activities. The training workshop took the form of classroom lectures, demonstrations and discussions. The objectives of this workshop were to conduct training on sweetpotato clean seed production, introduce components of Integrated Pest Management (**IPM**) for sweetpotato weevil, demonstrate irrigation technology, and to establish on-farm testing of selected sweetpotato varieties. The participants exchanged ideas and experiences about their varied strategies. Different root crops/corn based mixed cropping systems; lands in preparation for new plantings were observed. Sweetpotato and selected planting material was distributed to farmers interested to test in comparison with their own. Summer Workshops The major training program for 2007 occurred with the assistance of Regional Experts Melvin Edwards and Joseph Peltier in August 2007. The week's activities under the theme "*Building Capacity in the Agriculture Business Sector*" were implemented through an admirable partnership spearheaded by Department of Cooperatives in close linkage with **IICA**, the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, the Bahamas Cooperative League Ltd. and **BAPA**. The resource persons for the 6-days of capacity building exercises were the Sustainable Rural Development and Agri-business Specialists and leaders from the various partnering groups also made important contributions. There were five workshop sessions completed with the following themes:

1. New Regulations and Issues in Supervision;
2. Agribusiness Entrepreneurs;
3. Group Management Forum;
4. Entrepreneurship and Investment in Agribusiness; and
5. **BAPA** and Co-ops Council.



Fig. 10: Regional Specialist and the national committee visit pineapple farm in Eleuthera, Bahamas.

This joint mission was applauded by the partners and other participants as successful due to:

- The advancement of the draft regulations readiness for Cabinet's approval- this was expected to be approved in the short term.
- The workshops helped to clarify the regulations, which had implications for business success through closer working linkages between agro-enterprises, agribusiness organizations and financial institutions, and the focus on developing core business ideas and proper modeling. This has paved the way for developing appropriate business plan and further training.
- Greater understanding of the impact that new technologies can have on local production of fruits and vegetables and the willingness of small farmers to invest in the technology, in order to gain a competitive market share in the BAH \$300 million food market.
- Highlighting the need to work with successful models already operational, such as *Goodfellow Farms*, a successful agro-tourism farm involved in direct marketing.
- An understanding of the importance of stakeholder analysis, which enables the small producers and processors to access critical technical support and improve capacity for resource mobilization.
- The invaluable guidance, strategies and processes given for improved group leadership, governance and effectiveness in delivering services to their members
- The quality and relevance of the presentations; and
- The opportunities provided to business managers and entrepreneurs for resolving technical and pressing operational problems.

## Summer Internship

The Summer Internship program for 2007 took a different format under the idea to orientate students to the state of agriculture in the Bahamas. The purpose of the program was to: consolidate and expand the range of institutional partners, which will promote agricultural education and capacity building in the Bahamas. Strengthen the link with **CAFY/Caribbean Agriculture**. We looked at establishing linkages with the College of the Bahamas, **GRAC**, **BAIC**, and networking with several agribusinesses.



Fig. 11: Summer students Kippling and Michelle participate in the teacher's workshop with Mr. Joseph Peltier.

The agenda implemented during the internship included:

- Orientation to the range of activities of the Institute's Technical Corporation Program in the Bahamas and a tour of its facilities,
- Tour of **BAPA** members' farms, which included crops and livestock production,
- Hands-on practical ranging from 2-3 days at state of the art greenhouse operations at Lucayan Tropical Greenhouse, Atlantis Landscaping Department, and Tall Pines Nursery,
- An orientation to the Ministry's research Station, Metrological Station, and the Poultry Unit at the College of the Bahamas,
- There were several other visits to facilities in which the students expressed personal interest.

The program trained our two participants: Miss Michelle Davis (a graduate from Government High School), Mr. Kippling Thompson (a graduate from North Andros High School), both June 2007 graduates. The scope of the program also covered some of the following areas: Introduction to Agri-

culture in the Bahamas and the Caribbean, What is the “New Agriculture”?, Caribbean Community Agricultural

Policy - Agro Plan, Jagdeo Initiative, Career Planning Sessions, Appearance/Department & Protocol of Professionals, Research and Report writing, and an Orientation for CAFY. The program was a jumpstart for CAFY in the Bahamas. The students, at the end, made presentations on what they had learned on Agriculture in the Bahamas. And, one of the students also participated as a panelist during the CAFY activity for CWA-07 in Jamaica.

The following are comments for our 2008 prospective students:

- For next year's program I would suggest that some of the students who will be enrolled should be from grade eleven, as this will enable them to share some of the information with their classmates (who may not have such opportunities).
- The program should be expanded to include four students for up to six weeks. The summer students should be taken to places where they can do physical work (e.g. Lucayan Tropical) to see how farming really is.

### **The Bahamas Co-operative League Ltd.**

*Producer-Suppliers Council Strategies to Reduce Leakages and Capture More of the Food Dollar*

On Saturday March 17<sup>th</sup> the Bahamas Cooperative League Limited Producer Supplier's nine member council, accompanied by the President of Cooperative and the Representative of IICA converged on Treasure Cay, Abaco to re-examine the Producer-Supplier strategic plan and prioritized new agricultural projects for the coming years ahead. The meeting was dedicated totally to forward planning.

Represented at this strategic planning workshop were: Abaco-Agricultural Cooperative Society, North Abaco Fishing Cooperative Society, Grand Bahama Farmers Cooperative Society, New Providence Livestock Producers Cooperative Society and Department of Cooperative Development.

The workshop addressed key issues of concern and new opportunities that all the cooperative societies can capitalize on. Among the main concepts discussed were strategies to increase agricultural



productivity, to increase participation in the tourism industry, increasing capacity of North Abaco fishing cooperative, strategies to strengthening the overall cooperative movement, as well as to identify key priorities to focus on for the next five years. The priorities agreed upon were:

- i. Equip and train producer groups,
- ii. Strengthen the national production and marketing network (emphasizing agro-tourism linkages),
- iii. And strengthening producer groups in processing and market intelligence.

The council highlighted many opportunities which are available for the agricultural societies for greater participation in the Bahamian Agri-business. They can play a role to reduce poverty, improve human nutrition and overall well being of many Bahamian families. They have the strength in the diversity of the societies. The cooperative representatives reiterated that through good leadership, sound management of society resources, strategic partnership with other organizations involved in supporting development, the cooperative societies can make meaningful contribution to reducing leakages.



Fig. 12: Council member, farmer (L. Etienne) tastes Super-sweet corn in his field



Fig. 13: Council members view onion field soon to harvest



## **FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

We look to the future to assist more farmers with their revitalization efforts and adapting “new agriculture”. **IICA** was able to encourage a potential farmer to attend the **CDB** Agro-Processing workshop in St. Lucia. Mr. Dewey Taylor attended the workshop August 13-17 and is planning a mixed farm in South Andros. The following are his comments from the workshop:

The models given, emphasized the need to define your core business first, finding the niche in the market and testing, before beginning was very good advice. Essentially it was clear that much planning must be done up-front before starting. Mr. Harvey also showed the difference of moving from being someone who makes a good jam, for example, to someone who produced it commercially. I think, looking at our market here in the Bahamas, many people did not go through this exercise and as a result they are spinning wheels in their business and do not know if they are truly making money.

I am excited and eager to find the right niche to get started in the planning of an agri-processing business. This has risen since I attended the course as I see even more that the support for the planning is even greater than I had envisioned and now it is up to me to get a working model going.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AI</b>	<b>Avian Influenza</b>
<b>Alliance</b>	<b>The Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture And Rural Life</b>
<b>BAIC</b>	<b>Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation</b>
<b>BAPA</b>	<b>Bahamas Agriculture and Producers Association</b>
<b>BEVF</b>	<b>Bahamas Entrepreneurial Venture Fund</b>
<b>CAFY</b>	<b>Caribbean Agriculture Forum for Youth</b>
<b>CANROP</b>	<b>Caribbean Network for Rural Women Producers</b>
<b>CDB</b>	<b>Caribbean Development Bank</b>
<b>CFNI</b>	<b>Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute</b>
<b>CHA</b>	<b>Caribbean Hotel Association</b>
<b>COB</b>	<b>College of the Bahamas</b>
<b>CPC</b>	<b>Cooperative Producer Council</b>
<b>CSME</b>	<b>Caribbean Single Market Economy</b>
<b>CWA</b>	<b>Caribbean Week of Agriculture</b>
<b>DIB</b>	<b>Domestic Investment Board</b>
<b>FAO</b>	<b>Food and Agricultural Organization</b>
<b>GCC</b>	<b>Global Climate Change</b>
<b>GDP</b>	<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>
<b>GHS</b>	<b>Government High School</b>
<b>GRAC</b>	<b>Gladstone Road Agricultural Research Station</b>
<b>IICA</b>	<b>Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture</b>
<b>IDB</b>	<b>Inter American Development Bank</b>
<b>JCN</b>	<b>Jones Communication Network</b>
<b>MAMR</b>	<b>Ministry Of Agriculture and Marine Resources</b>
<b>MFSI</b>	<b>Ministry of Financial Services and Investments</b>
<b>NAFC</b>	<b>North Abaco Fishing Cooperative</b>
<b>NAHS</b>	<b>North Andros High School</b>
<b>OAS</b>	<b>Organization of American States</b>
<b>OIE</b>	<b>World Organization for Animal Health</b>
<b>PAHO/WHO</b>	<b>Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization</b>
<b>SPS</b>	<b>Sanitary and Phytosanitary</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>United States of America</b>
<b>USDA</b>	<b>United States Department of Agriculture</b>
<b>WTO</b>	<b>World Trade Organization</b>



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