

IICA



IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Volume 3. No. 2.

April 1996

CARIBBEAN REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

The Caribbean Regional Council of Representatives meeting was held on April 17 to 19, 1996 at the Kapok Hotel in Trinidad. The Opening Ceremony was attended by the Minister of Agriculture, Dr Reeza Mohammed, officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, collaborating agencies and members of the diplomatic corps.

At the Opening Ceremony, Dr Mohammed indicated that the real challenge to regional agriculture is to increase production and profitability of production; and to foster

linkages with agro-industrial activities so as to increase the quantum of value-added products out of the sector.

The meeting informed on opportunities, threats and constraints to agricultural development in member countries and reports from IICA's four Areas of Concentration and their potential for linkages. The meeting also heard from CARDI on its restructuring process. ♦

SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY, TRADE & INVESTMENT

Regional

Institutional Strengthening of Planning Units:

The 'Technical Assistance' Programme for the Ministries of Finance and Agriculture in Grenada continued with emphasis on the preparation of a two-year project for external funding. Agreement was reached among IICA, the Government of Grenada and the FMTC on financing the project.

Trade Liberalization:

The project, in collaboration with the TCA in Jamaica, conducted a two-day workshop on trade liberalization. The workshop was attended by the Diplomatic Corps and personnel from both the public and private sectors.

Improving Competitiveness of the Agri-Food Sector in the Lesser Antilles:

Work continued on the compilation of the data base for the IICA/FMTC study on competitiveness. Two in-depth studies of 'The commodity chains for mango, heliconia, anthurium and pork in Grenada' and 'Research

and Review of the Macro-Economic Policies of Trinidad and Tobago' were completed.

The review and reformulation of the project was undertaken.

National

The national component in AoC I continued follow-up training in AGSYS for the research department of the ADB and initiated the preparation of two commodity budgets, viz. milk and rice.

Two technical sessions were conducted to review the draft reports of the Target Farmer Characterization of Tobago Farmers and the Evaluation of Farmers Organizations in Tobago. The preliminary findings of this exercise were presented to the Secretary for Agriculture of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), the Technical Officer of the Division of Agriculture and other senior officers within the division. The preparation of a final report of this study is in progress. ♦

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TRAINING COURSE

The Rural Development Specialist, Marlene Antoine and Policy Analysis Specialist, Patrick Antoine, participated in the three weeks Senior Management Training Programme INCAE II in Montefresco, Nicaragua.

The programme involved a series of lectures and workshops in the following areas: Management Communication, Leadership & Organization, Strategy Formulation,

Economic Analysis, Marketing, etc. and provided an opportunity for reflection aimed at improving the decisions made by the Institute's specialists, sharing with them the experiences of others. This will enable them to design strategies for the positioning of IICA based on the specific demands of their areas of competence, their geographic location and the market for technical cooperation in the region. ♦

SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the last two months, the second draft of an agreement between the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD) and IICA was prepared based on comments received from CNIRD. A project proposal for the St Mary's Creative Women's Group was prepared by IICA and submitted to a funding for financing.

Discussions were held with marketing and product development specialists to explore the potential for

handicraft and processed products of members of three women's groups. The tourist market, in particular, is being looked at for the sale of 'gift packages'. IICA also held discussions with representatives of the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) towards accessing the bank's Youth Window facility.

A project proposal and plan of operation for 1996 was completed. ♦

REGIONAL FRUIT PROJECT (RFP)

The project hosted a 3-day workshop in Guyana on Clonal Selection and Rapid Multiplication of Pineapple for technicians in the region. Three meetings of the CARIFRUIT Steering Committee were held to deal with the formation of the National Fruit Committees (NFCs), the publication of the book series on Tropical Fruits, and the participation of the project in the Workshop on Marketability of Caribbean Minor Fruit Crop planned for September 1996 in Suriname.

The project supported the visit of Nadeer Baksh of the

MoA to CIRAD/FLHOR in Martinique to collect approximately 2,000 of the four citrus cultivars. The citrus industry in Trinidad and Tobago, for some time, has been plagued with the citrus tristeza virus (CTV) and more recently, psorosis. The new virus free material is to be utilized by the MoA in its efforts to restart the citrus industry. They include varieties of oranges, mandarins, grapefruits, tangors, tangelos, pummelos, limes, kumquats, limequats and others.

Tropical Fruit Newsletter #18 was distributed. ♦

STAFF PROFILE



Francilla Stewart, fondly called Doreen, is the Financial Assistant at the IICA TCA in Trinidad and Tobago. Her career at IICA began in March 1982 as the Secretary to Dr. Chelston Brathwaite, then, to the coordinator of the Plant and Animal Protection Programme. She has also worked in this capacity with other project

leaders including Barry Stenshorn and Raymond Dugas. Her 14 years of service to this TCA has made her the longest serving member of the team.

Doreen's earlier years in the working world were spent as a secretary at the University of the West Indies and the Central Experimental Station of Ministry of Agriculture in Trinidad. While performing her secretarial duties at

IICA, her enthusiasm and interest in accounting led to her appointment as the understudy to the Accountant in 1985. Later, Doreen's professionalism in accounting was enhanced through her participation in IICA's inservice training programmes in Guyana, Barbados and Costa Rica. She has held the post of Financial Assistant since 1990.

Doreen attributes her quiet and independent personality to her childhood years in the fishing village of Matelot. She confesses that these traits have made her an open and sympathetic person. She spends her spare time taking leisurely walks and tending her flourishing garden.

Doreen is pursuing studies towards becoming a certified chartered accountant. She enjoys working with the team at IICA Trinidad and Tobago and looks forward to many more fruitful years. ♦

IICA IN Trinidad & Tobago is published once every two months with updates on the activities undertaken and managed by this office. Our aim is to encourage, promote and support the efforts of Trinidad and Tobago to achieve its agricultural development and rural well-being.

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