



IICA HOSTS TRADE WORKSHOP

The first of two regional workshops on Global Market Integration, jointly sponsored by the MALMR, IADB and IICA, was held from June 13-14 at the Trinidad Hilton Hotel. Participants were drawn from a wide cross-section of countries, government departments including the Ministries of Trade and Agriculture, major commodity associations, agro-industry, farming and other commercial interests. Guest speakers included specialists from IICA (Panama, Canada, Costa Rica and Trinidad), the USDA and other international agencies.

The workshop concentrated on three strategic themes -- agri-food sector competitiveness and hemispheric integration, country experiences with trade liberalization and elements needed to successfully engage in trade liberalization.

In his opening remarks, Dr Arlington D. Chesney, Caribbean Regional Director, stressed that agriculture is a vital and indisputable part of our social and economic fabric, emphasising that urgent attention be placed on enhancing competitiveness, social equity, alleviating poverty and generating employment.

The joint workshop was intended to strengthen the understanding by regional policy makers on the importance of viewing the agri-food sector in a holistic and systematic manner. Against this background, the workshop underscored the role of human resources development, trade negotiation skills and domestic agri-food policy reforms for CARICOM countries participation in the gains which will emerge from the Free Trade Areas of the Americas (FTAA) in 2005. ▢

SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Rural Development Specialist presented the paper, "Challenges Facing Regional Organizations in promoting Youth Development in the Region" to the CARICOM consultation of the same name, held on May 3-4 in Georgetown, Guyana.

Work continued towards training in food preservation for the beneficiaries of the project. At the request of the Trinidad and Tobago Dairy Farmers Association, this TCA facilitated the visit of Panday Mansaram, Farm Manager of the St. Stanislaus College Dairy Farm.

Mr Mansaram conducted a six-day training course on silage-making and improved dairy herd management techniques at various locations throughout Trinidad.

Through discussions with officials of the MoA, two districts, Tortuga and Mayaro, were identified for testing the gender-sensitive methodologies of the project. A training programme in Food Preservation was also conducted for the group, Women in Rice (WINRE). This group has identified a potential site for its food processing facility. ▢

REGIONAL FRUIT PROJECT (RFP)

Work continued on the publication of proceedings of the Third Regional Workshop on Tropical Fruits and Issue #19 of the Tropical Fruit Newsletter. The RFP Coordinator, Edmundo Monteverde, participated in a six-week course on Tropical Fruit Production at the University of Florida, USA. The course focused on horticultural practices in commercial production and management of a wide range of tropical fruit crops.

The RFP welcomed Aicha Pakora, French student from the Centre National d'Etudes Agronomiques des Regions Chaudes. Ms Pakora will work on the biological control of Toxoptera Citricida, the main vector of the Citrus Tristeza virus (CTV).

The work of the RFP in Suriname and Guyana is ongoing. In Suriname, a request was made by the OAS in Brazil to collaborate on a project with the Amerindians in the processing and marketing of Brazilian nuts. ▢

SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY, TRADE & INVESTMENT

Regional: The project co-organized a regional workshop aimed at increasing the awareness and improving the linkage between public and private sectors in agricultural sector in the OECS. The two-day workshop, held in St Lucia, was attended by representatives of agribusiness firms and public sector professionals from the Ministries of Agriculture and Trade in the region.

The project coordinator, Dr P. Antoine and the FAO Senior Policy Specialist, Dr E. Valenzuela (Caribbean Directorate) finalized arrangements for the conduct of a joint IICA/FAO study on trade liberalization. This study is scheduled to commence in August 1996.

Under the joint FMTC/IICA study on competitiveness of the agricultural sector in the Lesser Antilles, agreement was reached to conduct 6 preliminary 'Consensus Building Visits' to participating OECS countries from September-December 1996.

Dr Antoine attended a seminar held in Hawaii on the theme, "Enhancing the Role of Value-Added Agriculture

in Tropical Island Economics" and presented a paper, "Enhancing Value-Added in the Agri-food System in the Caribbean." □

National: Work is in progress to upgrade the Work Plan Management System (WPMS) to a Windows Version for the MALMR. As such, agreement was reached and a new contract prepared for consultancy services.

The national specialist, W. Phillips, conducted a seminar on the Work Plan Management System (WPMS) at the Ministry of Agriculture in St Lucia and participated in Regional Workshops on MRS and Global Market Integration.

The key findings of the specialized follow-up studies for agricultural development in Tobago were presented to a meeting of the Committee for the Revitalization of Agriculture in Tobago. Members of the committee have requested, and IICA agreed to conduct a short study to characterize the fisheries sub-sector in Tobago. □

STAFF PROFILE

Grace Pajotte has been a secretary at IICA's TCA in Trinidad & Tobago for the past 8 years. She has worked diligently with many of IICA's professionals including Rafael Salazar, Isidro Planella, Marlene Antoine, Raymond Dugas and Wayne Lees. Amongst this list, her attachment to the CARAPHIN Project is the most notable to date. She is now secretary to Dr P. Antoine, Head, Multi-national project on Socio-economic Policy, Trade & Investment.

Before joining the team at IICA, Grace worked as a clerk/typist at the Trinidad & Tobago Electricity Commission and at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Labour and Cooperatives. In her words, the IICA experience has given her the opportunity to give full expression to her organizational skills. This, she has put to good use in planning



and organizing many of IICA's seminars and workshops.

In addition, working at IICA has allowed her to become proficient in many computer programmes. She was given the responsibility of coordinating key aspects of this TCA's Office Management System and Local Area Network (LAN), mechanisms instituted to increase the efficiency of the expanded office. She will soon widen her knowledge in this field when she completes her studies on Computer Information Systems. Grace has also attained proficiency in Spanish having attended classes at NIHERST for three and a half years.

On the personal side, Grace has a quiet personality and enjoys the outdoors, swimming and reading. She looks forward to enjoying many more years at IICA. □

IICA IN Trinidad & Tobago will be replaced in September by the Quarterly Newsletter of the Caribbean Regional Centre (CRC)

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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