Representative’s Note

Message on the occasion of the 35th anniversary celebrations of IICA

As IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago, I bring greetings from our Institute as we celebrate 35 years of providing technical support for the development of the agrifood sector.

Here in Trinidad and Tobago, we have sought, throughout the years, to strengthen and adopt our national technical cooperation programs in response to the changing landscape of agriculture and other socio-economic developments, both locally and internationally. Indeed, these changing situations have forced us to reassess and restructure our operations so as to remain relevant and to better position ourselves to be more effective and focused, to meet the demands of public and private sector stakeholders.

We have over the years also added new strategic areas of focus such as agribusiness, agro-tourism and technology and innovation to our portfolio and have placed great emphasis on building and consolidating our strategic alliances, with development partners and stakeholders in the agricultural sector and in other key sectors such as health, education, community development, the environment and tourism given the need to foster inter-sectoral linkages and adoption of integrated approaches in the development process.

We have also adopted a more participatory, consultative approach in developing our national technical cooperation programmes, so as to ensure that they are relevant and responsive to the needs of the sector. In this regard, accountability has become a hallmark of our approach to delivering technical cooperation as we strive to keep our partners and clients fully aware of our programmes and at the same time offer an opportunity for them to inform the design of our technical cooperation agenda. Also, in order to better facilitate and engage stakeholders of the sector, we have moved the Office out of Port of Spain to its present address which is more strategically located for interacting with farmers and other stakeholders. Our office facilities, for example, are now utilized by many of our stakeholders for hosting their meetings and training workshops.

The IICA office here in Trinidad and Tobago has therefore, undergone many changes during our 35 years of existence. These changes were precipitated by a desire within the institute to be flexible enough to meet the demands of an evolving agricultural sector. Our team of dedicated staff will continue to work assiduously to make a difference in the development of the agricultural sector. I would also like to take this opportunity to salute our partners in agricultural development with whom we have collaborated, and relied on, over the years.

This special edition of the IICATT Newsletter highlights some of our most important achievements in 2013.

Gregg C.E. Rawlins

IICA’s Director General attends CARICOM meeting in Trinidad and Tobago

During the period July 2-4, 2013, the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago was delighted for the second time in 2013 to welcome our distinguished Director General, Dr Victor Villalobos to our beautiful twin islands. The DG was in Trinidad and Tobago to attend the Opening Ceremony of the Thirty-Fourth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community through an invitation from the Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Ambassador Irwin La Rocque, which was held at the Prime Minister’s Diplomatic Centre, St. Ann’s. Accompanied by IICA Representative, Gregg Rawlins, he made courtesy calls to the Minister of Food Production, the Honourable Devant Maharaj and the Ambassador of the United Mexican States, His Excellency Mario Arriola Eugenio Woog. Dr. Villalobos also made a brief visit to the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago to meet with staff prior to his return to Costa Rica.
The Trinidad and Tobago IICA Office successfully led a project intended to transfer improved technologies to root crop producers and processors via horizontal technical cooperation between the collaborating IICA and CARDI countries (Barbados, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago), and institutions in the region; Latin America (International Potato Centre, Peru; CIAT-CLAYUCA, Colombia and EMBRAPA, Brazil).

The 2-year Competitive fund for Technical Cooperation (FonTC) project “Enhancing the value-added processing of roots and tubers in the Caribbean through the transfer of improved technologies’ began in 2011 which was executed to primarily improve the performance and to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the root and tuber industry with a focus on adapting and transferring technological information and scientific knowledge to the processing sector from amongst the Caribbean and Latin American institutions.

The project consisted of two (2) components: Component 1- Training of Regional stakeholders on the processing of cassava and sweet potato and Component 2- Enhanced production of the root and tuber varieties suitable for value-added product development.

A survey instrument captured the profile of processors in the 7 Caribbean countries, showed the main limitations and challenges; along with cassava and sweet potato varieties currently being processed and range of products produced. The data also showed the current dominance of micro-enterprises in the regional industry, the identified needs of these enterprises and recommendations and areas for interventions.

From these interventions, a regional workshop was planned and subsequently executed in 2012. The workshop addressed the major challenges of knowledge and access to processing technologies, equipment and best practices which contributed to the sustained growth and development of the industry.

The project covered areas such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) including postharvest handling, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and food safety (FS) principles, high yielding varieties identified by CARDI including value added products from primary and secondary processing; improving efficiency of operations through processing equipment; product development; production of cassava and sweet potato refined flour; improved processing methods/techniques for farine processing; value added products: cassava & sweet potato from wet processing; and business development.

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Processed cassava products

Other project results

Strengthened horizontal cooperation among the IICA offices in LAC countries -Peru, Brazil and Colombia and stronger linkages formed among IICA Technical programs.

Developed strategic partnerships among the Government of St, Vincent and the Grenadines, Scientific Research Council in Jamaica, BDMC in Barbados, NARI in Guyana, Tobago Cassava Products Ltd in Tobago, and CARIRI in Trinidad.

Paper produced for the CAES conference entitled ‘Root and Tuber Processing in the Caribbean-Situation, Constraints and Opportunities’ authors: Lisa Harrynanan, Andrew Jacque & Brent Theophile, CFCS/CAES/ISHS Conference –Hyatt Regency and Conference Centre, Port of Spain, Trinidad, July 1-5, 2013.

Production of booklets through the CARDI component recommending suitable varieties and value added products for processing (in print)

Project contributed towards an MOU between IICA Headquarters & CLAYUCA

The results from this project also contributed to the ‘State of the Cassava industry in the CARICOM Region’, through a Cassava Industry Development Consultation.
Supporting the APDP

The Office played a major role in the training programme of interns of the Ministry of Food Production (MFP), Agricultural Professional Development Programme (APDP), spearheaded by local professionals in the Trinidad and Tobago Office. IICA collaborated with the MFP, APDP Unit and other institutions to execute various workshops in April and May of 2013:

**Farm Business Management**
Interns were sensitized to the use of a tool with applications for record keeping, farm business management and for assessing the profitability of agricultural production. The interns had a further opportunity to utilize the tool to assist farmers in determining the profitability of their operations, at extension offices throughout the country. The students found this training to be very informative and its practical application showed the versatility of the tool as an investment tool. Training was delivered by Mr. Edric Harry, Policy Analyst and Planning Specialist, IICA.

**Food Safety Principles and Regulations**
Participants were sensitized to:
- Food safety, cleaning and sanitation and employee health and hygiene - Dr. Lisa Harrynanan, AHFS Specialist;
- Public health regulations & requirements - Mr. Gosine, Public Health Inspector, Ministry of Health;
- Chemistry Food and Drug (CFDD) regulations & requirements - Mr. Farz Khan, Food Inspector, CFDD, Ministry of Health;
- Entrepreneurial success - David Thomas, Market Movers, a successful entrepreneur in online sales of fruits and vegetables.

**Agro-Processing**
The APDP interns benefitted from sessions on making yoghurt, pineapple jam and candied fruit processing from papaw and bananas. They gained practical exposure in raw material preparation; formulation calculation - manipulation of formulation for raw material; processing parameters; relevance of parameters and equipment - usage, maintenance and care. IICA collaborated with the University of the West Indies, Food Technology Department to facilitate the session which was led by Karen Camejo, Senior Research Technician, Food Science and Technology Unit, UWI.

**Meat Fabrication - Small Ruminants**
Theoretical sessions on Slaughter and Cutting Techniques of Small Ruminants were led by Mr. Reiza Mohamdally, Meat Fabrication Specialist, Sugarcane Feed Centre (SFC). Dr. Lisa Harrynanan presented a session on Personal Hygiene & Slaughter House Sanitation. Interns were exposed to practical sessions at the SFC Meat Room where Mr. Mohamdally demonstrated the techniques used to break down a lamb carcass into various high-end retail cuts, followed by the interns breaking down two lamb carcasses.

APDP Unit Coordinator, Ms. Kimberly Gay, is confident that the interns thoroughly enjoyed and benefitted from the theoretical and hands-on exposure of all the sessions organized by IICA and the other partners. The APDP looks forward to further collaborative efforts in 2014.

Above and at right: Workshop sessions with APDP interns
Demand for investment policy tool increases

The IICA-developed agricultural planning and production tool is being demonstrated to groups and associations in Trinidad and Tobago and across the region. Mr. Edric Harry, IICA’s Policy Analyst and Planning Specialist was kept busy last year demonstrating the use of an interactive tool, with capability for accessing the profitability of agricultural production. The tool can be used for improving and maximizing record keeping as well as for making policy and investment decisions and developing investment profiles.

Trinidad and Tobago. Locally, workshops were conducted for officers from the Agricultural Planning Division of the Ministry of Food Production - March 5 and Extension Officers of the Department of Agriculture of the Tobago House of Assembly - August 13-14, 2013. The tool was used to assist the Division of Agriculture, Marketing and the Marine Environment (DAMME), in a pilot project, to develop investment profiles for specific commodities. The Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) staff members also benefitted from a two –day training workshop on the topic maximizing the benefits of recordkeeping. One workshop was conducted for staff of the northern, eastern and central branches and another for those in the southern branches during the period May 7-14.

Jamaica. Regionally, Mr. Harry conducted a five-day workshop in Jamaica, at the request of the IICA Office in Jamaica. Participants at the workshop included representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: Farm Management Unit; The Economic Planning Unit; The Agricultural and Market Information Division as well as representatives of the Planning Institute of Jamaica, the Pork Processors Association; the Pork Producers’ Association and Agro-Investment Corporation. The visit also included a one-day field trip to pork farms in the Mandeville and Clarendon areas to get a further understanding of the structure and issues in the industry.

Guyana. Interest in the tool was expressed by Dr. Leslie Ramsammy, Minister of Agriculture, Guyana. Two workshops were held in Guyana in 2013: the first at the Caribbean Week of Agriculture in October. The second workshop in November benefitted a more targeted group of over fifty persons from various agencies including the Guyana Marketing Corporation; The Guyana Livestock Authority; NAREI; the Guyana Forum for Youth in Agriculture; The Guyana Hydroponics Association; the Ministry of Agriculture; the University of Guyana; WOKRAMA; MoH/GMC; GLDA and farmers.

The usefulness of the tool was endorsed by Guyana’s Minister of Agriculture who stressed the importance of record keeping and the need for farmers to focus more on the financial aspects of their production and businesses. He also indicated that he would like to see investment profiles prepared for various commodities so that information can be available for investors in the sector.
The already close working relationship between IICA and CARDI was further strengthened through support to CARDI on a number of initiatives.

On May 6, 2013, Mr. Edric Harry made a presentation on planning, production and marketing in a one-day workshop hosted by The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), on the general theme, New production and marketing technologies in hot pepper. The aim of the workshop was to expose farmers to new and improved production and marketing technologies and to sensitize farmers to emerging marketing opportunities for hot pepper.

Mr. Robert Reid, IICA Specialist in Agribusiness and Commercialization, facilitated technical sessions in CARDI’s Group Dynamics Symposium - Improving the viability and competitiveness of agricultural industries through stronger farmer groups on June 6-7, 2013. Mr. Reid delivered presentations on Setting the Stage: Farmer Group Development within the Context of the Caribbean Environment and Role of Farmer Groups in Developing Food Value Chains and Clusters in the Caribbean Region. The objectives of the symposium were to introduce farmer’s groups to the principles and practices of “good” group management and performance; provide participants with practical tools and techniques to develop group cohesion and alleviate common problems/issues which may arise in the group development process; and to highlight the role and function of groups in the development of agri-business clusters.

The Office also supported CARDI’s CFC Regional Small Ruminants training programme for a group of small ruminant farmers, through the session on enterprise development entitled Planning for the small production business, for a group of small ruminant farmers. The training, which took place at the Centeno Livestock Station in December, was attended by 35 small ruminant farmers.

Mobilization of Resources for Farmer Groups

IICA continued its outreach for rural communities by providing support to farmer groups, in developing their project ideas into formal project proposals for funding. Two of these groups, the North Manzanilla Farmers’ Association and the Roxborough Agro-Processing Cooperative Society from Tobago completed the process of training and submitted their proposals for grant funding to the Community Development Fund, a programme of the Ministry of Community Development.

The proposal of the North Manzanilla Farmers’ Association entailed establishment of a facility for processing coconut oil from coconuts supplied from their estates. The proposal also includes establishment of a spa facility that will utilize value added products from coconuts.

The proposal of the Roxborough Group focuses on the establishment of a processing facility for creating value added products from the wide variety of fruits that are abundant in Roxborough. Similar work with the Felicity Farmers’ Group, former workers of the sugarcane industry, is currently in progress.

Support to other agencies and institutions

The Office continued to expand its reach to new partners over the last year. New relationships were forged with the Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprises Development which hosted a consultation for development of a green policy for micro and small enterprises in Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Edric Harry, with support from Dr. Humberto Gomez, IICA’s Technology Innovation Specialist, delivered a paper, entitled, Pathways to Sustainability and productivity for generating employment in the agricultural sector.

Other agencies which the Office supported included CANARI; the Cropper Foundation and the National Training Agency. A representative from the Office participated in meetings convened by CANARI to review and update their work program on natural resource management in communities. Similar inputs were made at meetings of the Cropper Foundation which focused on programs for sustainable hillside development in communities. Participation in meetings hosted by the National Training Agency focused on developing standards for work in agriculture.
IICA provided partial scholarships to 5 members of the Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWPPTT) to attend a 2-day workshop on seasoning and sauces at the Caribbean Research and Industrial Institute (CARIRI) from May 22-23, 2013.

Mr. Gregg Rawlins saw the need to assist the NRWP members in building capacity in agro processing in an effort to afford the women an opportunity to learn the art of seasoning and sauces and to improve the production, preparation, distribution and handling of food products.

The workshop was conducted by the experienced and knowledgeable staff from the Food Technology Unit, CARIRI, UWI Campus, St. Augustine. The persons sponsored were women actively engaged in agro-processing - Kandice Toussaint, Merlyn Howell Richardson, Rose Rajbansee, Patricia Dalrymple representing the Stacia Women’s Group; and Valerie George representing the North Manzanilla Farmers Group.

The 2-day workshop provided the participants with theory, practical and expert advice from the facilitators.

Several collaborative initiatives were undertaken by the Office with other institutions and development partners such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and World Bank to address and find solutions to major issues affecting agricultural development. One such initiative in which the IICA Office took a leadership role was in the involvement in the Caribbean Growth Forum. The forum - a working group of public and private sector personnel, were charged with the responsibility of critically examining factors that stymie productivity and growth along the agrifood chain and make recommendations for increasing productivity. IICA’s, Edric Harry, chaired the proceedings of the meetings, and led the team in preparing the final report for submission to the Ministry of Planning and Development for presentation at a forum in the Bahamas.

Support to the MFP for Baseline Livestock Survey

Following the completion of a livestock baseline survey in early 2013, the IICA Office was given the responsibility by the Ministry of Food Production to analyse the data and prepare a report. The report was completed and submitted to the Ministry of Food Production, as an input into a revised agricultural policy which is being prepared by the Food and Agricultural Organization for the Ministry.

The Office was also involved in the technical working group of stakeholders of the public and private sectors that developed the questionnaires.

Working with Partners to find Solutions to Problems in Agriculture (CARIBBEAN GROWTH FORUM)

Micro-agroprocessors benefit from expert training at CARIRI
Tobago Agriculture Sector Plan

The IICA Trinidad and Tobago team of National and International Specialists led by Gregg Rawlins, Representative in Trinidad and Tobago is assisting the Department of Agriculture, Marine Affairs, Marketing and The Environment (DAMME) of the Tobago House of Assembly to develop a framework for the Agriculture sector. Diane Francis, Specialist in Policy and Trade is leading the framework process by referencing the Tobago Comprehensive Economic Development Plan 2013-2017 (CEDP2), to ensure that the end product is aligned with the overall objectives for development of the Tobago economy in keeping with the theme Clean, Green, Safe and Serene.
With support from the IICA TT Office through the Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) Programme the Trinidad and Tobago Codex Focal Point, Ministry of Health, Chemistry Food and Drug Division (CFDD) actively participated in “Promoting the Participation of the Americas in Codex Alimentarius” at the following events in 2013:

**January 14-16:** Colloquium on Codex Alimentarius for the Latin American and Caribbean countries held in Panama City. IICA and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) sponsored the participation of two representatives from the CFDD in this event. The event provided an opportunity to identify specific issues of mutual interest or concern, as well as to improve the effectiveness of participation in the various Codex committees. The activity was also designed to promote greater cooperation among the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) delegates and provide an opportunity to devise strategies aimed at developing common regional positions.

**August 2:** In a first of its kind collaboration, IICA and CFDD held a seminar on Dissemination of information from four (4) Codex meetings. The presenters shared information on the recommendations made and the conclusions drawn from issues discussed. Presentations were made by CFDD personnel who attended 4 Codex Alimentarius Committee meetings:

- Ms Wendy Ramrattan, Ag. Deputy Chief Chemist and Assistant Director of Food and Drugs - 7th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food, April 8 – 12, 2013, Moscow, and the 36th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, July 1 - 5, 2013, Rome, Italy;

- Food and Drug Inspectors, Mr. Imtiaz Ali - 45th Session of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues, May 6 - 13, 2013, China; and Mr. Farz Khan - 41st Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, May 14 - 17, 2013, Charlottetown, Canada.

The seminar was intended to strengthen the ties that exist between the IICA Office, the Codex Committee in Trinidad and Tobago and the stakeholders in supporting and addressing issues in the country affecting trade and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) matters. The participating audience (30 persons) was drawn from all the food safety agencies and institutions in Trinidad and Tobago.

**August 26 – 30:** The Office also supported the participation of Dr. Saed Rahaman, Director Veterinary Public Health to the 21st Session of the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Food (CCRVDF), Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**November 4 - 8:** CFDD Inspector, Wayne Watts was supported to the 35th Session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU), which was held in Bad Soden am Taunus, Germany.

**CCLAC Meetings:** IICA also supports the CCLAC meetings through videoconferences which are held one week in advance of the CAC meetings. These meetings are usually held in conjunction with experts in various countries and their Codex Focal Point to adopt a country position on issues tabled in the agenda. In IICA’s experience, the country contributes to a greater spirit of collaboration when it is consistent in designating their delegates, since the officials concerned get to know one another and strengthen their working relationships at the Codex Alimentarius Committee Meetings. Trinidad and Tobago is well represented at these meetings through support from the T&T IICA Office and the National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Specialist.
IICA Recognizes Agricultural Innovation of Farming Families in Trinidad and Tobago

Dr. Gomez and Edric Harry, IICA’s specialists, provided technical support to all three (3) families in preparing their case studies. At the function entitled ‘Innovations in small farming agriculture’ IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago, Gregg Rawlins, noted that despite the challenges which face small producers in Latin America and the Caribbean regions, many small farmers continue to adapt and implement new technologies in agriculture and their efforts have given rise to several success stories. Several agricultural stakeholders including presidents of farmer groups and Heads of Diplomatic Missions present in Trinidad and Tobago attended the function.

IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago honoured three (3) outstanding families on March 13, 2013 at the Centre of Excellence, Macoya, Trinidad for their contribution in the area of agricultural innovation. Farming families honoured were the Roop’s, Vieira’s and Ramsaroop’s who were all given certificates of excellence at the function. The spotlight, however, fell on the Ramsaroop’s family who was accorded special mention by the organizers of FONTAGRO for their ability to design and build various types of farm implements from scrap material for harvesting root crops. Details from their case study are included in a special publication which can be found at:

http://www.iica.int/Esp/Programas/Innovacion/Publicaciones_TeI/B3089e.pdf

The Ramgopaul Roop family presented a case study on “Integrated system to rehabilitate degraded heavy clay acidic soils for horticultural production based on the management of pests, diseases, soil and water with minimum external inputs in an economically sound and environmentally friendly manner”. Kent Vieira family submitted a case study on “An integrated horticulture and tilapia production system running on fish feed as the sole input with no waste generated”.

The FONTAGRO fund is an alliance of the Latin American and Caribbean countries that support research and innovation in agriculture with the overall objective of reducing poverty, promoting competitiveness and sustaining natural resources. This fund is sponsored by IICA and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) with a focus in the area of innovation.
In 2013, 2 workshops were held under the IICA Competitive Fund For Technical Cooperation [FonTC] project on Intensive Small Ruminant Production Systems for the Caribbean Countries led by IICA Dominican Republic Representative Dr Manuel Sanchez. The workshops were held to promote innovation for increasing productivity and competitiveness of agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago through capacity building and the demonstration of small ruminant production models based on local feedstuffs.

The Centeno Livestock Station in El Carmen was the site of the first 2-day workshop held in collaboration with the Ministry of Food Production, CARDI and the Trinidad and Tobago Goat and Sheep Society during February 27-28. A total of 32 persons, comprising small ruminant farmers, livestock officers and technicians from the various institutions in Trinidad and Tobago received the training from the workshop “Improving small ruminant production based on suitable forages and management”. The workshop’s specific objective was to build capacity among the participants in small ruminant production techniques with strong emphasis in using locally grown forages such as Leucaena (wild tamarind) and Moringa (saijan) among others. “Saijan” is commonly eaten as a vegetable in curries. The leaves contain more than 23% protein and possess a high digestibility of over 80%.

The second workshop entitled “Establishment, management and processing of forage species of high nutritive value” was held in collaboration with CARDI; the Sugarcane Feed Centre, and the Trinidad and Tobago Goat and Sheep Society at the Sugarcane Feeds Centre, Chaguana on September 19, 2013 followed by 2 days of field demonstrations.

The consultant for the project Dr. Ismael Hernandez delivered presentations in Silvopastoral systems: an option for integrated farms and establishment of forage species of high nutritive value; and recommendations for management and processing. In addition he demonstrated forage establishment at 2 demonstration sites: the Ministry of Food Production Mon Jaloux Forage estate and a small ruminant farmer, Up De Hill Farm in Moruga. Local and imported species used in the demonstrations either by seedlings, seeds, stakes or cuttings were Tithonia (Tithonia diversifolia); Leucaena (Leucaena leucocephala var. Cunningham); Clitoria (Clitoria ternatea var tehuana); Moringa (Moringa oleifera); Teramnus (Teramnus labialis); Guanacaste (Enterolobium cyclocarpum); Gliricidia (Gliricidia sepium) and Trichantera gigantean.

Dr. Hernandez, a native of Cuba has extensive experience in this area and has worked in a number of countries including Cuba, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Dominican Republic.

The IICA-led 2-year project among participating countries - Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Barbados, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago is expected to benefit farmers and stakeholders in using high nutritive value forages to support and manage small ruminant units with higher efficiency and productivity for meat and milk production from goat and sheep.

The high nutritive value of the leaves from the moringa tree (saijan) can replace concentrates at a fraction of its cost according to Dr. Manuel Sanchez, IICA Livestock Specialist from Dominican Republic.
The value of having access to information on preparing products for the market is high on the agenda for micro and small agroprocessors. IICA delivered two workshops for different groups of individuals involved in the management of small businesses, with an emphasis on food products.

These workshops provided information to the agroprocessors on producing quality and safe products with appropriate labelling and packaging materials intended to provide enhanced visual appeal in the market place. The workshops featured informative and interactive sessions:

- **Preparing Food Products- the Food Safety Approach** - Sharon Peart-Rose, Food Technologist with the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI)
- **Introduction to HAACP** - Dr. Lisa Harrynanan, AHFS Specialist, IICA
- **Labelling Regulations** - Wayne Watts, Food Inspector with Chemistry Food and Drug Division, Ministry of Health
- **Packaging- Improving your sales through visual appeal** - Devonne Jeffers, Graphic Artist with Print on Demand
- **Marketing Tips and Tricks for Small Business Entrepreneurs** - Kathryn Duncan, Karibgraphics Ltd.

**May 2013** - “Preparing and Marketing Foods the Safe Way,” 32 members of the Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWPTT), including 3 men, benefitted from the one-day training session, which was held at IICA’s Office. This training was specially planned in response to a request by the President of the NRWP for improving the food safety standard and sales and visual appeal of products displayed at the annual mango festival.

**September 2013** - “Preparing your Product for the Market – a workshop for small agroprocessors”. Twelve persons from a Youth, Training, Employment and Partnership Programme (YTEPP) Agro-processing class participated.

**November 2013** - Dr. Harrynanan conducted a follow-up HACCP workshop for 11 YTEPP adult students and agro processors. The session was conducted through a request by the group to learn more about food safety and in particular HACCP principles. HACCP as one of the Food Safety Management systems was discussed as a tool to food safety management, along with the required perquisites (GMPs, GAPs, SOPs) and developing the HACCP Plan.

Mr. Gregg Rawlins, IICA Representative indicated that the members of the Network need to produce foods that are safe, wholesome and attractive, which can compete with comparable products in the region. The training provided is a step in the right direction in enabling them to better participate in the marketplace.
The 12th Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) was held in Guyana during October 2013 under the theme ‘Linking the Caribbean for Regional Food and Nutrition Security and Rural Development’.

The Trinidad and Tobago Office led by Mr. Gregg Rawlins and supported by International and National specialists played a key role in the successful hosting of a 2-day workshop: “Innovation driving the Small Ruminant Industry in the Caribbean” on October 5-6, 2013. The workshop was a combined effort of the members of an alliance (IICA, CARDI, FAO, GLDA).

This first of its kind Canadian initiative was led by Dr. Audia Barnett, IICA Canada Representative, who conceptualized, organized and executed the workshop during CWA with assistance from a team of IICA professionals.

The Canadian initiative brought together innovative small ruminant producers in the Caribbean, farmers and farmer organizations, representatives of the Canadian small ruminant industry (including farmers, government officials, organizations from Trinidad and Tobago) and IICA staff.

Activities were structured into 4 sessions:
- The Caribbean experience;
- the Canadian experience;
- Sustainable Small Ruminant Production in the Caribbean
- Practical Session demonstrating the value added potential of cheese and other dairy products from goat’s milk.

Issues covered included: sector financing; access to land; challenges of feed production and availability; need for greater technical knowledge; improved genetics; the need for farmers to speak one voice and liaise with CARICOM Secretariat to channel requests; improved business attitude; need for traceability in the sector to curb and prevent praedial larceny.

A practical session on cheese-making was delivered by UWI and IICA as part of the workshop. Goat’s milk from Lindsay Gay’s farm in Trinidad was exclusively exported to Guyana for use in the cheese-making session. Over 40 participants were shown the basic technology for cheese-making from goat’s milk.

In response to a special request from Guyana’s Minister of Agriculture, Minister Ramsammy, the IICA & UWI teams demonstrated cheese-making and other value added products to agro-processing students from the Guyana School of Agriculture.
Working towards Agribusiness Competitiveness in Trinidad and Tobago

The IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago collaborated with the Institute’s Programme for Agribusiness and Commercialization (PAC) to assist the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Production in Trinidad and Tobago to improve its approach to building competitiveness in the agribusiness sector. Under IICA’s Hemispheric project for the Caribbean region, entitled “Improving Agribusiness Competitiveness and Market Transparency in the CARICOM Region”, together, a platform for dialogue between public and private sector entities; chain development planning; and improved capacity of agricultural market information systems, are being promoted as modern institutional mechanisms and approaches to build the competitiveness of the local rice industry.

To date, an interim Rice Development Committee has been established, and a Rice Development Strategy 2012-2022 has been completed and submitted to Cabinet. Subsequently, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has allocated funds to support implementation of prescribed actions and a Rice Development Unit is soon to be established within the Ministry. The IICA hemispheric project also seeks to improve the transparency of markets and food chains, and in doing so, has applied an instrument to assess the National Agricultural Marketing Information System (i.e. NAMIS). Based on the findings of the assessment, the project executed a regional training workshop for NAMIS Data Collectors. The IICA Office facilitated the participation of a representative from NAMDEVCO in this exercise which was recently held in the Dominican Republic. An Action Plan for the development of the AMIS unit is being developed with attention given to supporting the market information needs of the rice industry.

The Hemispheric project comes to an end in 2013, and is anticipated that by then the framework to improve the institutional and policy framework to support the rice industry will be fully in place, and further actions taken to implement the Rice Development Plan which seeks to attain at least an eight-fold increase in rice production by 2018 (18,000 tonnes finished rice). The IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago, through its Policy and Planning Specialist Edric Harry, and with the assistance of IICA International Specialists Robert Reid (Agribusiness and Commercialization) and Dr. Humberto Gomez (Innovation and Technology), will continue to support the Ministry in its plans to improve the competitiveness of the local rice industry in an effort to reduce the country’s food import bill, and therein enhance its food and nutrition status.

Agriculture Policy Programme for the Caribbean

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the European Union (EU) signed a Contribution Agreement involving funding of 8.6 million Euros in March 2013, under which the IICA is to spearhead and coordinate a four-year regional agricultural development program in the Caribbean. The beneficiary countries are the members of CARIFORUM: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, The Bahamas, and Trinidad and Tobago. IICA will be the executing agency and will work closely with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the CARICOM Secretariat (CCS) which will serve as implementing partners for the implementation of the programme.

The “Caribbean Action under the Programme entitled Agriculture Policy Programme (APP) with focus on the Caribbean and Pacific” is funded under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF). The APP is designed to contribute to providing the critical support to enhance rural incomes and livelihoods, food security, and develop rural communities by addressing three fundamental areas of development concern: Component 1- Strengthening regional agricultural development strategy to be implemented by CCS; Component 2 - Improving dissemination and adoption of applied research and appropriate technologies, including agriculture–oriented measures in disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation to be implemented by CARDI; and Component 3 - Enterprise development under improved market linkages to be implemented by IICA.

The Project Management Unit for this programme has been established at the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago under the overall management of IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago and Regional Coordinator, Caribbean, Mr. Gregg Rawlins. The PMU is staffed by Project Coordinator, Mr. Robert Best; Administrative Assistant, Mr. Brent Theophile; and Financial Coordinator, Ms. Sonia Scarce.
In April 2013, nine (9) participants from Trinidad and Tobago joined a delegation from Barbados (4) and Jamaica (5) on a 3-day study mission to Fort Valley State University, Atlanta Georgia. The mission was in partial fulfillment of the small ruminant commercialization project entitled “Improving the Competitiveness of the Small Ruminant Sub-sector through the Development of National Grading Standards and enhanced Market Intelligence” funded by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) Fund for Competitiveness (FonTC). The project sponsored 5 participants from Trinidad and Tobago and facilitated 4 others.

The Fort Valley State University (FVSU) in Atlanta, Georgia has a proven track record of rearing small ruminants under conditions similar to those of the Caribbean. They also have a commendable small ruminant research and extension programme. The tour was organized for the participants to observe good and applicable practices that were being employed by their peers in that region of the United States. The sponsored participants included Lindsay Gay and Ravie Renie (farmers), Ansari Hosein (CARDI); Nirmala Gannesingh (MFP, CLS); Keith George (THA) and assisted participants Shivana Ramraj (MFP, FTC); Suresh Benny and Raj Singh (SFC).

During the 3-day tour, the participants had the opportunity to participate in lectures and demonstrations led by Dr. Brou Kouakou (Assistant Professor of Ruminant Nutrition) and his other esteemed colleagues. The participants were exposed to the holding area used to evaluate sheep and goats that were being prepared for slaughter; determining the age of animals, techniques in evaluating goats and sheep based on body conformation, techniques in determining the development and weight of animals according to age, and differentiating muscle development in sheep and goats, grading systems for small ruminants; muscling; marbling; calculating processing losses; classification of lamb and goat carcasses; and fabrication and cuts. The participants also had an opportunity to tour the Fort Valley State University’s dairy goat milking processing plant located at the Dairy Goat Research Centre. Participants were able to observe the facility for the storage and pasteurization of milk; demonstration processes for making ice cream from goats’ milk and subsequent tasting of the ice cream; and the process for making soap from goats’ milk.

The participant also had an opportunity to learn about the marketing of meat and value added products from small ruminants; view the pastures and the different types of forages; and the different types of goat herds and the University’s feed mill where various types of feed were blended for use on the farm.

Partnerships with FSVU on national research work in small ruminants were forged through this collaboration. The participants benefitted tremendously from the experience and thanked IICA for the opportunity.
IICA once again stepped up to provide sponsorship to the UWI Agribusiness Society (ABS) in support of their Annual Graduate Study tour. This year’s study tour focused on the cocoa industry in Grenada, who is also a fine flavour cocoa producer like Trinidad and Tobago. IICA provided financial support to the UWI ABS for previous study tours to Guyana/Suriname and Jamaica in 2011 and 2012 respectively. The group, which comprised of both undergraduate and graduate students, undertook a comprehensive assessment of the cocoa industry in that country in order to evaluate production and management systems and make recommendations for improving the industry in the region.

IICA considers the activities in these study tours extremely beneficial and useful and can reinforce and complement the academic programmes offered by the University of the West Indies. Mr. Gregg Rawlins, IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago, also views the annual study tours as an essential component of horizontal technical cooperation which allows for the sharing of experiences and promoting networking among stakeholders in the region, while fostering greater understanding of selected commodity systems.

UWI Agribusiness Society benefits from study tour to Grenada

Twelve (12) students benefitted from the study tour which took place during May 25 to June 1, 2013.

IICA has supported the CFCS throughout the years in planning and executing their annual conferences, recognizing the role the CFCS has adopted in promoting agriculture and food security in the Caribbean. IICA views the hosting of this important annual conference as an integral step in the commitment to making agriculture more productive, more inclusive and more sustainable in the region.

In 2013, the 49th Annual Conference was held from June 30 -July 6, in Trinidad, under the theme “Agribusiness essential for food security: Empowering youth and enhancing quality products”.

The Conference was held jointly this year among the CFCS, the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS) and the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society (CAES).

IICA provided financial support to the hosting of the conference and also provided technical support of some of its professionals.

Mr. Edric Harry, Policy Analyst and Planning Specialist, also Treasurer of CAES, was part of the local organizing committee, managed the registration and financial transactions for the conference.

Mr. Gregg Rawlins, IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago participated in the opening ceremony and chaired sessions on Strategic Commodities & Aquaculture and Livestock.

Dr. Lisa Harrynanan, Agricultural Health and Food Safety Specialist, presented a paper at the CAES Conference entitled “Root and Tuber Processing in the Caribbean - Situation, Constraints and Opportunities”. This paper was presented as part of an IICA-lead Regional project among 7 countries (Barbados, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago).
The 2nd Annual Mango Conference 2013, was hosted by the NRWPTT at The Chancellor Hotel in Port of Spain, with the support of the Ministry of Food Production (MFP), the University of the West Indies (UWI) and IICA.

On July 7, 2013 the 5th Annual Mango Festival was held at the University Field Station, Mt. Hope. The annual event was hosted by the NRWPTT in collaboration with IICA, UWI, and the Sangre Grande Regional Corporation.

Members of IICA staff participated in planning meetings for the mango festival and judged various booths and activities on the day of the event. An evaluation survey was prepared and administered by IICA at the festival to determine the areas of weakness and opportunities that can be identified and addressed towards improving the festival in 2014.
### North Manzanilla Farmers Association

The North Manzanilla Farmers Association is comprised of 69 active members, whose average age is 40 years. The association, which was formed in October 2011, is led by a president and supported by a vice-president, secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer, trustees and guided by their constitution. They are registered with the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago. Members of the group are principally involved in the production of food crops and coconuts on estates which vary from five to ten acres. Specific crops cultivated include plantain, limes, hot peppers, watermelon, pimentos and mangoes. Some members also do vegetable small scale production. Within the group are masons, carpenters, welders, plumbers, cooks, electricians, teachers and other skilled professionals. The areas in which cultivation take place are generally undulating and are in close proximity to the north east coast which is not prone to flooding.

The community has relatively easy access to many social amenities including schools, churches, health services, recreation facilities. It is in close proximity to the major town of Sangre Grande, Caigual, Sangre Chiquito and Plum Mitan. Main roads leading to the community are in fairly good condition however, agricultural access roads are in a state of disrepair. The area is well served with utilities (electricity, water and telephone). There are two main rivers that run through the village that provide recreational and economic benefits to the community. Public transportation is not readily available.

Employment opportunities are very limited in the North Manzanilla community. Other economic activities that the area is noted for include crab-catching, fishing, hunting and Leather back turtle watching. The rate of unemployment particularly among young people is high to the extent that many of them leave the community to seek employment outside.

The group proposes to establish the facilities for the production of value added products from coconuts and for provision of spa services. The coconut facility will be established on plot #21 off Lyder Trace, North Manzanilla on one acre of land, donated by a member of the group. The spa facility will be constructed on a parcel of land close to the North Manzanilla Beach.

### Roxborough Agro-Processors Cooperative Society (Tobago Flavours)

The Roxborough Agro-Processors Cooperative (Tobago Flavours) is situated at Bloody Bay Road, Roxborough, Tobago. Roxborough is located seventeen miles from the capital, Scarborough. The Roxborough Agro-Processors Cooperative Society was formed on February 8, 2012. The group made up of 20 persons: 9 men and 11 women, with an average age of 42 years. The Executive is made up of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, and 2 Trustees.

The group was registered on April 17, 2012 under the Cooperative Societies Act of 1971 (Act 22). The group meets twice per month in accordance with the stipulation of its constitution.

Persons within the group have various levels of skills including culinary, value addition, farming, computer and management. Some of the members are fully employed while others are under-employed.

The Cooperative has plans for the establishment of a processing facility in the community. There is an abundance and wide variety of various fruits grown in the Roxborough area and environs, in particular mangoes, cherries and guava. While some of the fruits are consumed in the fresh state, a large percentage of them is wasted largely because they are seasonal and perishable. There are also no facilities for processing these fruits so that the shelf life and harvest yield can be maximized.

There are many persons who are either unemployed or underemployed in Roxborough. Establishment of the agroprocessing facility within the community will create direct employment for them at the facility. Opportunities will also be created for other members within the community to earn additional income from the sale of their fruits to the plant for processing or from providing other services such as transport, input supplies and security services. Other persons in the community will also be able to establish businesses based on products supplied by the processing facility.

The Cooperative’s goal is to have an operationalized agro-processing facility producing mango products (relish, chow, anchar, stew); cherry products (stew, chow, wine); guava products (jam, cheese, wine) and bay leaf powder.
We as final year students were given the opportunity to be part of the IICA experience through an in-depth professional scope within IICA’s Programme of work in areas of agribusiness, policy and planning and Agricultural Health and Food Safety environments. The skills of critical thinking and analysis were fostered within the internship by the distinguished professionals who involved the interns within their respective area of expertise.

I believe that the experience provided the seeds for the pursuit of knowledge, critical thinking and general etiquette of business and management. This ability to “think” has been fostered by the introduction of many new concepts notably that of “value chain” as the various job tasks taught my colleague and me to rationalize and examine in a “value chain frame” of thinking.

The exposure to technical meetings with agricultural associations rationalized the reality of the agricultural sector and the many issues that exist. The internship exposed the reality of the opportunities that the agricultural sector has and the potential to offer an enormous impact on the region and by extension the economies of the world. The eight-week internship offered the most edifying experience of an invaluable scale, the perfect combination of variety and challenge due to the wealth of professional academic knowledge and the introduction to the agricultural sector nationally, regionally and globally.

This experience was integrated by working in real time and with involvement in such activities as: The Rice Development Committee, Mango Festival, Mango Conference, Small Ruminants Training, Carbon Footprint, the Agri-Food/Value Chains: Relations and Developmental Implications-Literature review; Group Dynamics Symposium (CARDI), the Caribbean Food Crops Society annual meeting/conference, and Cost of Production investment models.

Each member of IICA’s staff ranging from the office support staff to the national and international professionals was accommodating. I even had the pleasure of meeting with IICA’s Director General, Dr. Victor Villalobos who was accommodating and courteous. This speaks volumes for the quality of IICA’s corporate culture.

This internship has matured my colleague and me. It stimulated independent thinking and enhanced our demeanor. We would both like to thank the Representative in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Gregg Rawlins for affording us the opportunity to intern at IICA and as such we sincerely are thankful for the IICA Trinidad and Tobago family experience, an experience of a lifetime!
World Food Day celebrations form an important part of the activities in which the office is engaged. In 2013, the office celebrated the event by participating in three activities during the month of October.

Two of those activities involved establishing booths: one at the invitation of the Ministry of Food Production, in their celebrations to mark the occasion, in downtown Port of Spain. The other was at the Dwight Yorke Stadium in Tobago.

In the third activity, Mr. Edric Harry, IICA’s Policy Analyst and Planning Specialist presented a paper on behalf of IICA on “Sustainable Food Systems for Food and Nutrition Security”, at the World Food Day Celebrations, Oct 17, hosted by the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus.
Regional Meetings held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2013

IICA’s Caribbean Regional Planning Meeting

Staff of the IICA Offices Caribbean-wide, comprising Representatives, national and regional specialists met at the Hyatt Regency in Trinidad and Tobago from April 10-12 for the Caribbean Regional Planning Meeting. Also attending were several senior level and support staff from IICA Headquarters in Costa Rica including, Dr. Victor Villalobos, Director General of IICA. The Caribbean Regional Meeting under the theme “An Integrated Framework for Planning and Implementation of IICA’s work in the Caribbean” was held with an overall objective to design an integrated framework for planning and implementation of IICA work in the Caribbean. In honour of the DG’s visit, a Cocktail reception was hosted at the Hyatt Regency on April 10, 2013 where several members of the Diplomatic Corps were in attendance.

Coordinating Group for Pesticides Control Boards of the Caribbean CGPC

A Regional meeting on the Coordinating Group for Pesticides Control Boards of the Caribbean CGPC with the theme “Promoting Safer Pest Management Initiatives in the Region” was held in Trinidad and Tobago during June 10-14, 2013. The workshop brought together national delegates from 15 Caribbean countries to attend the 18th meeting of the Coordinating Group for Pesticide Control Boards of the Caribbean (CGPC) in Trinidad and Tobago. The meeting was a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Food Production, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), CARICOM and IICA. The objective of the meeting was to promote sustainable agriculture and to protect human health and the environment through effective management of pesticides and toxic chemicals in the Caribbean. The function of the technical secretary at present is undertaken by IICA, Ms. Carol Thomas (Regional AHFS Specialist). IICA, through its technical cooperation program has been playing its part in promoting the safe use of pesticides in agriculture through our Agricultural Health and Food Safety program.

Review of Draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs)

IICA through its Agricultural Health and Food Safety Program, supported the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention on Phytosanitary Measures (IPPC) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations for a Regional Workshop to review the draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) on September 3-5, 2013 at Hyatt Regency, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Trinidad and Tobago office supported the AHFS Programme from Headquarters and Regional Specialist Carol Thomas in the organization of the event in addition to IICA Trinidad and Tobago Representative providing opening remarks at the session.

Every year the Commission of Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), the governing body of the International Plant Protection Commission (IPPC) consisting of all member countries, approves several draft standards for regional consultations. At these consultations countries are given the opportunity to review the draft standards and to make comments which are then submitted to the Standards Committee for consideration to be incorporated into the final standards. This encourages Trinidad and Tobago and the Region to play a significant role in the standard setting process of the IPPC and to influence the final outcome of these ISPMs. Participants from the region’s Plant Protection/Plant Health Units discussed five draft standards which included international movement of wood, pest movement by sea containers, movement of growing media, and fruit fly management and glossary of terms.

Training for Plant Quarantine Inspectors

The third Regional Training Course on Plant Quarantine Principles and Procedures for Plant Health Inspectors was held at the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago through the collaboration of the Ministry of Food Production of Trinidad and Tobago, UWI, the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative (USDA APHIS GCSI), FAO and CABI.

Twenty-three (23) participants from 16 CARICOM countries, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the British Virgin Islands participated in the training. The continued interest of these countries clearly reflects the relevance of this training to the Region as the training continues to play a significant role given the increased emphasis globally and regionally on food safety, food security and trade related issues including non-tariff measures affecting intra-regional trade. Safeguarding the Greater Caribbean Region from the entry and establishment of exotic plant pests, as well as managing any outbreaks that may occur through the strengthening of regional phytosanitary capabilities and capacities through improved training in the principles and procedures of plant quarantine is necessary and this training seeks to reinforce this safeguarding initiative.

IICA’s obligation in the Region is to ensure that adequate and modern Plant Health systems that are compliant with the requirements of the WTO SPS Agreement (World Trade Organization Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) exist in all our countries. Good Plant Health systems with well trained and equipped Plant Quarantine inspectors will position our countries in the global market place, will engender confidence in our trading partners, will increase our access to markets worldwide and will result in increased protection of our plant health and local agricultural sector.
ADVANCES OF AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

On February 22, 2013, the VII Annual videoconference on “Advances of Agricultural Biotechnology 2012 - the year of science, egos, cancer and rats” was transmitted from Costa Rica, through the Program of Innovation for Competitiveness (PIPC) and the Area of Biotechnology and Biosafety (AB&B). The session sensitised 38 participants to scientific and validated information regarding biotechnology. The 24 participants who attended the VC at the IICA Office in Trinidad comprised of researchers, government officers, journalists, and other stakeholders, including members of the National Biosafety Committee. 14 Participants from Tobago also participated through a link that was extended to the Department of Agriculture, Tobago House of Assembly.

FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT

Through the AHFS Program, 2 Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) sessions were streamed live to participants in Trinidad and in Tobago. The first virtual conference was held on April 4, 2013 on “Preventive controls for human food and Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption” presented by FDA’s Dr. Lisa Lopez. On November 5, 2013 a video conference was held on Foreign Supplier Verification Programs for Importers of Food for Humans and Animals and the Accreditation of Third-Party Auditors/ Certification Bodies by Dr. Carmen Booker, FDA. The objectives of these virtual conferences were to sensitize government and private-sector officials about the enactment of the new regulations and its impact to exporters and potential exporters of agricultural related products to the US.

UNITED SOYBEAN BOARD

The office participated in a virtual Joint IICA/United Soybean Board (USB) Meeting on May 29, 2013 through an invitation of IICA’s Director of Management and Regional Integration, Diego Montenegro. The virtual meeting was held to discuss possible cooperation programs related to the dissemination of information on the use of soybeans in aquaculture and to provide an opportunity for dialog between the soybean board and aquaculture producers in the country. The Soybean Council provides training and technology transfer to aquaculture producers on various areas such as formulation and food processing, improved nutritional quality, value-added innovation and competitiveness of the industry, the current economic and business environment, and identification of sources of capital and investors. Jim Sutter, US Soybean Export Company made a presentation on Global Soy in Aquaculture program. Various aquaculture organizations from Trinidad and Tobago participated in the virtual meeting.

ONE WORLD, ONE HEALTH

A virtual technical Forum on One world, One health, was held on November 7, 2013 in an effort to sensitize government and private-sector officials on the importance of working together to resolve interagency health and economic problems in Trinidad and Tobago. The presentations were delivered virtually by Dr. Susan Coming, OIE, Dr. Luis Carlos Villamí Jiménez, Colombia National University and Eng. Alejandra Díaz, Agricultural Health and Food Safety Specialist, IICA, Costa Rica.

OIE STANDARDIZATION PROCESS

An IICA-OIE Virtual Conference - Support for participation in the OIE Standardization process was held on December 12, 2013. The meeting was coordinated and moderated for the Caribbean Region by Dr. Lisa Harrynanan, AHFS, IICA T&T with support from IICA Argentina Specialist, Dr. Thomas Krotisch and Mr. Ricardo Soria. The event was directed at professionals of the National Veterinary Services and related private sector interests.

During the session OIE (World Animal Health Organization) experts connected from the IICA Office in Argentina to make presentations on the proposals that were under review in the OIE standardization process. These standards provide the OIE Member Countries with the reference material required to prepare their national standards for safeguarding the health and well-being of the local animal population, as well as the health of the public.

The active and continuous participation of members in the OIE standardization process is of utmost importance in ensuring that the process of developing such standards takes into account their conditions and particular viewpoint. In Trinidad and Tobago, 6 officials from the Animal Production and Health Division, Ministry of Food Production participated in the session.

MINISTERIAL SUB-COMMITTEE ON NTMS

The IICA Office also facilitated a Video Conference on Non-Trade Measures (NTMs) in the Caribbean Ministerial Sub-committee (MSC) for the facilitation of Agricultural Trade on July 24, 2013 through a request by CARICOM Secretariat and the Ministry of Food Production. The meeting was chaired by Minster in the Ministry of Food Production, Honourable Jairam Seemungal. Senior members of the Ministry of Food Production also attended the meeting which was transmitted from the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago to CARICOM in Guyana and other Caribbean countries via IICA’s VC facility. Brent Theophile & Dr. Lisa Harrynanan from IICA Trinidad and Tobago Office participated in the meeting along with representatives from CCS, Ministry of Agriculture in Guyana, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia.
As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacities of rural communities in the use of information and communication technology, the Office donated computer equipment to the Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWPTT) and the North Manzanilla Farmers Group (NMFG).

Above 1: Mrs. Gia Gaspard-Taylor, President of the NRWPTT receives a computer for the Network.

2: Valerie George receives a computer for the NMFG.
Milestones

Years of Service

CONGRATULATIONS!

10 years
Edric Harry
Policy Analyst and Planning Specialist

10 years
Robert Reid
Agribusiness Specialist

CELEBRATING ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY


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