

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ANNUAL REPORT - 2004

Message from the Representative



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Representative in
Trinidad & Tobago
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The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Office in Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to present this 2004 Annual Report to our stakeholders, collaborators/partners and clients throughout Trinidad and Tobago and beyond. This report is one mechanism whereby the Institute accounts for its stewardship in the sector and disseminates information on initiatives for supporting Development of Agriculture and Rural Life in Trinidad and Tobago.

The actions undertaken on the ground in 2004 gave life to our mission, which is to support the efforts of Trinidad and Tobago, to achieve progress and prosperity through the modernization of the rural sector, the promotion of food security and the development of an agricultural sector that is competitive, technologically prepared, environmentally managed and socially equitable for all nationals.

As the liberalization process deepens, this office recognizes the importance of closer collaboration with our strategic partners and the stakeholders in order to confront the many challenges and opportunities which present themselves. We note with satisfaction a more purposeful and coordinated attempt by the key agencies in promoting further agricultural development and by extension, a strengthening of the linkages with other key sub sectors of the economy.

The institutes' work continues to be greatly facilitated by our many friends and strategic partners whose commitment and collaboration we continue to rely on as we seek to advance the pace of development in agriculture and rural sectors.

The dedication of the IICA staff in achieving our goals and satisfying the needs of our clients is deeply appreciated and acknowledged. The funds received from external sources as well as the quota contribution from Member States to carry out our work are duly acknowledged.

We hope you will accept this report as a true reflection of our work and contribution to Agriculture and Rural Development in Trinidad and Tobago.

Aaron H. Parke
Representative in Trinidad and Tobago
and Coordinator Regional Agenda

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

1. Introduction

During 2004, the IICA Office continued to provide critical support to the development of the Agri-food Sector in Trinidad and Tobago. Implementation of the National Agenda was accomplished against the backdrop of an agricultural sector that is increasingly being challenged to maintain its importance in an economy with growing energy, service and construction sectors.

Further, the country is committed to deepening the liberalization process through its involvement in soon to be implemented bilateral and hemispheric trade agreements. Movements in that direction will not only present new challenges for the sector, but will open new opportunities for improving the livelihood of stakeholders and others living in rural communities.

The IICA Office has recognized the importance of repositioning the sector for it to be able to confront those challenges and opportunities that may be presented in the new trade Agreements. The Office has prudently deployed its resources to effect programmed results under the seven thematic areas that define the Institute's main areas of work.

As such, the Office dedicated much of its resources to sensitizing and to building the capacities and skills of farmers and stakeholders in the areas of trade, agribusiness, health and food safety. Much of the National effort was achieved with the collaboration of many agencies and Organizations. A major part of team effort was focused strengthening institutional capacities and creating investment opportunities through the right mix of policy guidelines and investment profiles. Inputs were also made in development of the Vision 2020 national plan for the agriculture sector.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Facilitating Competitiveness and Global Trade

The Office provided opportunities for agri-entrepreneurs to further understand the implications of continuously evolving trade developments at the regional, hemispheric and international levels. To this end, a series of seminars and workshops was organized, in conjunction with other partners, for the benefit of our clients. One workshop, a National Farmer's Forum, dealt with specific issues pertaining to WTO compliance and FTAA negotiations. Two hundred farmers attended that Forum. The Office further presented a paper on market access, at a workshop in which 68 agro-processors attended.

Other training and sensitization workshops focused on market access related to trade expansion within the FTAA. The WTO-SPS Agreement was also addressed. IICA presented a paper on the impact of globalization on the dairy industry to stakeholders. The Office coordinated the work towards development of an agro-biotechnology strategy for the wider Caribbean and initiated steps to measure the real contribution of the Agriculture sector to the T&T Economy.

2.2 Promoting Food Safety and Agricultural Health

A series of seminars and workshops was organized to promote and sensitize farmers and plant and animal health providers on new and emerging issues on food safety and animal health. The training emphasized elements of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and best practices for organic production. One hundred and fifteen participants benefited from the GAP training workshops. Eleven participants, from Dominica, Grenada, and Trinidad and Tobago, benefited from the training in best practices in organic production. Five participants were facilitated in visits to Costa Rica to visit model farms.

The Office facilitated the conduct of studies on the incidence of Lethal Yellowing Disease in coconuts and Black Sigatoga Disease in bananas. The country is now aware of the level of infestation. Fifty staff members from the Tobago House of Assembly, Department of Agriculture, received training in the identification and detection of the Giant African Snail.

The Office contributed to the promotion of food safety and agricultural health by collaborating with four agencies to develop a bio-safety policy framework for Trinidad and Tobago, in concert with the Cartagena Protocol on Bio-safety. IICA also collaborated with the Project Unit (Strengthening Agricultural Quarantine Services) in training 20 persons at a workshop on accreditation for plant and animal health Officials. During the ensuing period, two national professionals from the MALMR were supported to participate in 3 meetings of the WTO/SPS sub-Committee Meetings in Geneva.

2.3 Strengthening Rural Communities

The Office collaborated with several agencies and organizations in conducting four workshops that essentially explored investment options and opportunities for the benefit of farmers and stakeholders. At one of those workshops, IICA collaborated with the MALMR, a Credit Union and the Employer's Consultative Association in the

training of 70 former Caroni 1975 Ltd workers in business management and agroprocessing.

Forty members of the 4-H Club also benefited from training in the identification of investment opportunities in agriculture. Other workshop training sessions exposed 90 farmers and other stakeholders to investment opportunities in hot pepper production as well as in the preparation of specialty sauces.

IICA also prepared two studies to facilitate investment opportunities in the sector. One such study was a marketing plan and industry enhancement strategy for the rabbit meat

production. The second study was a prefeasibility report for the establishment of a dehydrated fruit and vegetable product facility, as well as a marketing plan for development of those commodities.

IICA's on - going programme of direct technical assistance continues to play an important role in expanding and strengthening rural communities and women's groups. One principal beneficiary of the technical assistance was the Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWP). Specific technical assistance given included, training in food processing, developments of grant proposals and development of a strategic plan for the Tobago Branch. Four member of the NRWP received loans, from the revolving fund, for commercial ventures.

2.4 Hemispheric Integration

The Office facilitated the participation of the Ministerial Delegate at the ministerial meeting, in Panama, with the preparation of the Agro Plan of Action 2003 - 2015. This meeting afforded the Ministerial Delegate the opportunity to better understand the details of the Plan and the role Trinidad and Tobago will have to play in the process.

2.5 Developing Human Capital

Initiatives taken by the Office in developing Human Capital primarily targeted institutions and agencies with personnel working in the area of health and food safety. To accomplish this task, the Office collaborated with many agencies and organizations in hosting a series of workshops in:

- ◆ The management of enquiry points: Staff from the Crop Protection Divisions of CARICOM Member States was trained.
- ◆ Identification and detection of invasive species: Fifty professionals from the Agriculture Department of the Tobago House of Assembly were trained.
- ◆ Good Agricultural Practices and quality control of fresh produce: Professional staff from the THA was trained.
- ◆ Microbial Risk analysis and modeling for sanitary and phytosanitary measures: Twenty-five animal health and veterinary public health personnel were trained.
- ◆ Use of GIS and GPS technology for surveillance and detection of pest and disease. Twenty-five participants from the Ministry of Agriculture of CARICOM benefited.

2.6 Environmental Management

In completing the CPEC/CIDA organic horticulture project, the Office facilitated the attendance of 11 participants from Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada and Dominica at a workshop on best practices in organic agricultural production. Centers acclaimed for organic agricultural production in Costa Rica were also visited.

2.7 Institutional Modernization

The Office provided the necessary technical backstopping to:

- ♦ The CABA, in hosting a Regional CABA Strategic Planning Meeting to explore ways of restructuring the Association. A restructuring strategy was developed and implementation of the new strategy has commenced.
- ♦ The 4 - H Club to redefine and redraft its constitution to NGO status.
- ♦ Initiatives taken by the Caribbean Herbal Business Association for development of a business plan for its operations, as well as for the procurement of additional resources to help in the development of that sub-sector.

2.8 Other Activities

The Office made noteworthy contributions in promoting agricultural development both locally and in the region. Initiatives included technical support for the Vision 2020 Agricultural Sub- Committee. IICA also played a major role in coordinating the meetings of the Jagdeo Initiative for strengthening Regional Agriculture and Alliance and Ministers Forum respectively. The Office also actively participated in the Caribbean Agricultural Economics Society Conference in Suriname and presented a paper.

3. The State of Agriculture and Rural Life in Trinidad and Tobago

3.1 Recent Performance in the Expanded Agricultural Sector

The primary agricultural sector contributed an estimated TT\$ 525.9 million or 0.8 % to national GDP¹. If the food, beverages sectors were included, the contribution of this extended agriculture sector's contribution will amount to 4.0 % of national GDP. The sector however contracted by 20.2 %. Export agriculture's contribution to GDP remained unchanged at 0.2% while domestic agriculture's contribution to GDP increased by 0.1%

(Ministry of Finance, Review of the Economy, 2004).

¹ The CSO rebased the National Accounts at constant prices, shifting the base year from 1985 = 10 to 2000 = 100.
Annual Report 2004 for the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago

The number of persons estimated to be working in the agricultural sector for the period January to March 2004 was 21,300. This size of the labour force was 24.7 % less than the corresponding period of last year. The reduction in the number of persons employed in the sector was largely due to a reduction in the workforce in the sugar industry following the closure of Caroni (1975 Ltd): the workforce in the industry fell from 14,700 for the period January to March 04 to 6,600 for the corresponding period in 2003.

Sugar

In 2003, Caroni (1975 Ltd) was closed and replaced by the Sugar Manufacturing Company (SMCL). This new company focuses on milling and refining of raw sugar. For the period January to June, the SMCL operated one factory that produced approximately 42,000 metric tonnes of sugar. That quantity was 35 % less than the quantity produced for the corresponding months in 2003 and 30 % below the company's target of 60,000 metric tonnes. Poor weather conditions, factory breakdowns, labour disputes and poor quality cane were reasons cited for the reduced output.

Foreign exchange earned from the sale of sugar to the EU was TT \$176 million. Those earnings were 10 % less than last year's sales. However, sale of sugar on the local market amounted to TT\$ 65. Those sales were 22 % more than the amount earned in 2003.

Cocoa

An estimated 1000 tonnes of cocoa were harvested during the 2003/2004 harvest. This level of production was 26.5 % less than the amount of produce harvested during the 2002/2003 period (Coffee and Cocoa Industry Board).

Citrus

The industry produced an estimated 4.4 million kg of citrus during the period 2003/2004. That output represented a 381 % increase in crates delivered to the Citrus Growers when compared to the period 2002/2003 (CCGA Annual Report and Citrus Division, Caroni 1975 Ltd).

Vegetables and Root Crops



In the vegetable and food crop sectors, there were estimated ² increases in the production of most of the major vegetables, including Cabbage, cauliflower, sweet potato, cassava, dasheen, lettuce, pumpkin, melongene, sweet pepper and green corn. Decreases in output were forecasted for tomatoes, eddoes, hot pepper and pigeon peas.

3.2 Critical Issues in the International and National Context that Impact on Agriculture and Rural Life

Agricultural and rural development in the Trinidad and Tobago are likely to be affected by issues related to:

- ◆ Trade at the Regional and Hemispheric and International levels
- ◆ Changing climatic and weather patterns
- ◆ New policy directions at the national level

3.2.1 Trade at the Regional and Hemispheric and International levels

The Trinidad and Tobago Economy is expected to be further liberalized following its commitment to participate in several regional, bilateral and multilateral preferential trade Agreements. Many of these Agreements are likely to be concluded and implemented in the near future. Specifically, those Trade Agreements that are near implementation stage and likely to be of consequence to the agricultural sector include:

- ◆ The Single Market and Economy (CSME)
- ◆ The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)
- ◆ The Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU
- ◆ Bilateral Agreements

The direction which agricultural development takes will also be directly affected, in the near future by:

- ◆ New policy shifts for the sector at the national level
- ◆ Changing weather and climatic changes

- ♦ Increasing pressures or competition for resources traditionally used for agricultural activity

The CARICOM Single Market and Economy

Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Jamaica will implement the CSME in January 2005. The local economy therefore can expect an increase in the quantity and range of primary and processed agro products and services available on the local market. With increased competition, local producers will be pushed even further to seek cost-reducing technologies.

Increased competition will also push prices of agricultural commodities downwards with the possibility that, in the short term, (i.e until improvements in cost saving technologies can be institutionalized), farm income will fall and inefficient producers will be forced out of production.

The CSME has the potential for providing further opportunities for the agri-food sector to export a wider range of goods and services to the Regional market. The sector will therefore be in a position to generate higher levels of foreign exchange and more income for the farming sector. The local industry will also have the benefit of having a wider pool of managerial and technical personnel at its disposal.

The Free Trade Area of the Americas

The proposed date for implementation of the FTAA is January 2005. Proponents of this trade integration plan have articulated that member states participating in the trade bloc will realize growth in their economies, improved standards of living, as well as opportunities for creating more jobs and for reducing poverty levels.

Trinidad and Tobago, as a signatory to that Agreement will be provided with even further opportunities for exporting to a wider market, estimated at 13 trillion dollars. It is however expected that the agricultural sector will not be in a position to immediately take advantage of that expanded market since significant effort have not yet been made to expand or retool its production base. Certification of agricultural and agro processed products will also be a challenge for the agri-food sector.

It is expected that the FTAA will expose the local agricultural sector to even higher levels of competition from lower priced products from the Hemisphere. This situation has the potential, like the CSME, for pushing the price of competing agricultural commodities downward. It is therefore possible that unless and until the sector makes the necessary adjustments, farm incomes will be adversely affected.

Food and agro-processors however are likely to benefit from the availability of a wider range of cheaper agricultural inputs for manufacture of finished products. Access to more competitively priced raw materials from the Americas however will further soften the already weak linkages between local primary production sector and agro-processing sector.

As a consequence, it is possible that more agro-processing industries, based on imported raw materials, will flourish.

Economic Partnership Agreement

The traditional non-reciprocal preferential trade arrangements for ACP goods to the EU will expire in December 2007. The end of this trade Arrangement will make way for the signing of an Economic Partnership Agreement in January 2008 between the EU and CARIFORUM, Africa and Pacific countries.

The concern of the agricultural and agri-food sector essentially pertains to export of sugar and rum to the EU under traditional preferential arrangements. Concerns have been heightened in view of plans by the EU to remove preferential treatment for bananas imported from the Caribbean, even before commencement of the new trade EPA arrangements, scheduled to begin in December, 2007.

Of concern to producers in Trinidad and other sugar producing countries of the ACP, are proposals by the EU to reduce the preferential price of sugar in two phases over three years, beginning July 2005.

CARICOM estimates that if the EU implements that proposal, CARICOM producers would lose approximately US\$ 180 million in the first three years, and US\$90 million annually thereafter. (Ian McDonald, Chief Executive Officer, Sugar Association of the Caribbean, News Day's Business Day, 18th November 2004).

For Trinidad and Tobago, this loss in foreign exchange will translate into further job losses and income for the estimated 6,214 cane farmers. The EU's proposal will further threaten the viability of the sugar industry that was restructured last year in an attempt to improve its competitiveness.

Bilateral Agreements

The recently signed CARICOM / Costa Rica Agreement signed on March 9th, 2004 will provide opportunities for farmers in Trinidad and Tobago to export agricultural products to Costa Rica, a market of four million people.

The Specifically producers of vegetables (viz., tomatoes, cauliflower, cucumbers, sweet peppers and pigeon peas); root crops (sweet potatoes, yams) and fruits (avocado, guava, watermelons and papayas) will benefit from exporting to Costa Rica.

Costa Rica on the other hand will be allowed to export tomatoes, cauliflower, cabbage, lettuce, cucumber, sweet pepper, pigeon peas, sweet potato, yam, avocado, mango, guava, watermelon and papaya into Trinidad and Tobago at specific times of the year when production of the respective commodities on the local market is low. This mechanism ensures that competition between agricultural produce from Costa Rica and local farmers is kept at a minimum.

New Policy Shifts

Trinidad and Tobago proposes to reach developed country status by the year 2020 (This goal is referred herein as the Vision 2020 Programme). The task of directing the process was assigned to twenty-eight sub-committees, each representing a particular sector of the economy. The mandate of each sub-committee was to prepare a strategic plan for their respective segment in order to contribute to the 2020 Vision Programme.

The Agricultural Sub-Committee has completed its strategic plan, which now awaits the support of the Cabinet before it can be implemented. The Committee, on which IICA was represented, submitted bold recommendations to improve food and nutrition security; better living conditions in rural communities; reduce poverty; bolster competitiveness and place the sector at the cutting edge of innovation and technology.

The plan embraces the concept of an integrated approach to rural development; with programmes customized for the particular needs of specific communities. Emphasis was placed on mechanisms to build productive capacity and improve physical infrastructure to facilitate production. The plan also focused on strategies for improving add-value content of agricultural production and increasing the public's image of the sector.

The programmes proposed are to be implemented in three phases: 2004 – 2007; 2007-2010 and 2010 to 2020. A series of public consultations were held on the proposed strategic plan in order to obtain the consensus and the input from farmers and stakeholders in agriculture.

If the Cabinet accepts this strategic plan, and required resources provided for its implementation, it is possible that it will impact positively on growth, productivity and competitiveness of the agricultural sector. As a consequence, the livelihood of farmers who dwell in rural communities would be improved.

The Government proposes to provide each of the 5000 former Caroni 1975 Ltd workers with 2 acres of land for agricultural purposes. It is therefore expected that an additional 10,000 acres of land, formerly under sugarcane, will be utilized for the production of crop and livestock. These lands are earmarked for distribution by mid 2005, upon completion of infrastructural works that are in progress.

It is therefore possible that there will be significant increases in the production of vegetables; food crops on the market by the end of 2005. Many of those former Caroni 1975 workers therefore will be in a position to improve their income-earning capacities. The profitability of crop and vegetable production may become an issue unless surplus production can be exported and or processed.

Weather Conditions

Over the past year, many farmers, particularly in the central parts of Trinidad as well as in Tobago, suffered very significant losses of property, crop and livestock as a result of extensive flooding. The income of many farmers was therefore severely affected. It is also

highly possible that there will be significant shortages of vegetables and food crops on the local market, especially during the Christmas season, when the demand for those commodities increases appreciably. Consumers are therefore likely to be faced with higher prices for agricultural produce in the next few months.

3.3 The Status of Living Conditions in Rural Communities

The quantity and quality of physical and social infrastructure: water, electricity, roads, availability of health and educational facilities and opportunities for gainful employment all have a significant impact on the standard of living of the rural community. The crime situation and cultural influences will also impact on the lifestyle of the rural community.

In most agricultural communities, there are major deficiencies pertaining to:

- ◆ Employment opportunities: There is a major problem in attracting and maintaining core workers to work on farms.
- ◆ Attracting young persons to the agricultural sector: most young people are attracted by non- agricultural jobs outside rural communities.
- ◆ Physical infrastructure: In many rural communities the roads, bridges, in particular are in a state of disrepair.
- ◆ Availability of Transportation: many areas are not serviced by both public and private transport. In some areas, transport after certain times of day may be non- existent.
- ◆ Supply of portable water
- ◆ Provision of social amenities: In some rural communities, health care facilities are not properly staffed and equipped. Rural residents often have to travel long distances in order to seek health care.
- ◆ Security on farms: The incidence of praedial larceny is on the increase. This situation impacts on the income and profitability of farming.

4. Summary of the National Agenda

A summary of the approved National Agenda is presented in accordance with the respective strategic areas.

➤ Trade and Agribusiness Development

Goal: *To support the country in its efforts aimed at joining the regional integration process and ensuring that its enterprises can compete in global agri-food markets.*

Line of Action: - Analysis of Agricultural and Sectoral Policies

- ◆ Adapt the Jamaican approach in conducting case studies intended to assess the true contribution of selected agricultural and agro-industrial activities to the economy of Trinidad.
- ◆ Support decision making related to policies, through research and the preparation of proposals intended to encourage investment in the agricultural sector.

- ◆ Conduct research on different options for improving the agricultural economy, within a framework of open markets and integration processes.
- ◆ Hold workshops and implement information programs on the key aspects of the trade environment and the agenda for trade negotiations, for people in both the public and private agricultural sectors

Line of Action: -Trade Negotiations and Integration

- ◆ Conduct research on the impact of bilateral, regional and international trade policies and agreements on agriculture.

Line of Action: - Market Access

- ◆ Improving agricultural health and food safety system
- ◆ Enhancing information on trade requirements of trading partners

Line of Action: - Strengthening of Domestic Markets

- ◆ Promoting linkages between agriculture and tourism
- ◆ Strengthening relationships between producers and distributors

Line of Action: - Strengthening and Modernization of Business Management

- ◆ Conduct analyses of specific agricultural production systems, in order to identify opportunities for increasing their competitiveness.
- ◆ Support the establishment and expansion of rural agribusinesses, in the areas of agro-tourism and agro-processing.
- ◆ Provide support to the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago in developing marketing systems, in collaboration with CARDI.
- ◆ Participate, through the CABA, in studies on the competitiveness of specific sectors such as pork, citrus, oils and fats. Support the implementation of the recommendations issued in the studies.
- ◆ Support national and regional organizations in their efforts to prepare and implement plans for increasing trade.

➤ **Technology and Innovation**

Goal: To provide technical support to increase production and incomes, through

access to, and adoption of, new agricultural technologies.

Line of Action: - Strengthening of National Capacities for Technology Innovation

- ◆ Provide support to national research and development institutions and mechanisms (networks) in evaluating their current capabilities and competencies, and the impact of such research.

Line of Action: - Design and Implementation of Technology Innovation Policies

- ◆ Design and implement technology and innovation policies associated with production of dairy products and certain fruits.
- ◆ Provide technical support in improving the production and processing of selected products.
- ◆ Provide technical cooperation to national committees dealing with genetically modified organisms, bio-safety regulations and organic agriculture, in the development of policy frameworks and legislation.
- ◆ Foster links between research and development institutions and agricultural organizations, to improve the setting of priorities and the management of research.

Line of Action: - Consolidation of the Regional Technology Innovation System

- ◆ Promote the strengthening of the research and technology transfer capabilities of the relevant regional agencies (PROCICARIBE, CLAWRENET, NF).

Line of Action: - Development and Management of an Agricultural Science and Technology Information System

- ◆ Establishment of the Secretariat for the Caribbean Herbal Business Association (CHBA) and maintenance of the CHBA website and database to facilitate business development

➤ **Agricultural Health and Food Safety**

Goal: To provide cooperation to the country in its efforts to bring its agricultural health and food safety systems into line with the demands of global trade.

Line of Action: - Development of Regulatory Mechanisms, Science-based Technical Capacities, and Sustainable Institutional Infrastructures

- ◆ Develop plans to address export requirements (EU/US) for various products
- ◆ Develop accreditation system for private plant health professionals

Line of Action: - Application of WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Measures, and of Measures Adopted by the OIE, IPPC and Codex Alimentarius

- ◆ Support the strengthening and modernization of the agricultural health and food safety systems so that they can comply with the requirements of the WTO SPS agreement.
- ◆ Facilitate exchanges and improve coordination in the area of AHFS with other countries in the Caribbean and the hemisphere.

Line of Action: - Development of Standards and Rules, Leadership Capabilities and Technical Competence in the Field of Food Safety

- ◆ Promote the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and HACCP.
- ◆ Promote the adoption of GAP programs aimed at reducing the damage caused by pests, and making agricultural production environmentally sustainable.

Line of Action: - Recognition and Management of Emerging Issues

- ◆ National capacity to respond to Agricultural Health and Food Safety Emergency Issues increased through training in the use of modern surveillance and detection methods and in the identification of pests of economic importance

➤ **Sustainable Rural Development**

Goal: To provide cooperation for initiatives aimed at combating poverty and improving the living standards for rural inhabitants.

Line of Action: - Strategies, Policies and Investments.

- ◆ Support the consolidation of the National Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu.
- ◆ Support the development and implementation of work programs for rural and agricultural organizations, and facilitate linkages between them and regional organizations.
- ◆ Conduct analyses that will show the role and importance of agriculture in reducing rural poverty.

Line of Action: - Institutional Modernization and Development

- ◆ Work with agricultural and rural organizations in developing their institutional capacities to facilitate greater participation in agribusiness

Line of Action: - Natural Resource Management in Rural Territories

- ◆ Facilitate the organization of workshops to evaluate biodiversity and traditional knowledge regarding natural resources.

Line of Action: - Management of Rural Development with Social Actors

- ◆ Support the development of rural enterprises through technical assistance in the areas of production and marketing, with emphasis on specific products.
- ◆ Conduct research on the factors that have an impact on the success or failure of small-scale processing enterprises.
- ◆ Develop and promote specialized revolving credit schemes, aimed at rural women and dairy producers.
- ◆ Provide alternative forage for livestock.
- ◆ Coordinate research on and adaptation of the St. Stanislaus dairy production model.

Line of Action: - Knowledge Management

- ◆ Education and Training processes and materials developed to increase the know-how and practical skills needed by marginalized groups to participate fully in agri markets
- ◆ Dissemination of information

➤ **Education and Training**

Goal: To encourage actors in the community of agriculture and rural life to acquire new and update their existing knowledge.

Line of Action: -Training in Strategic Topics

- ◆ Collaborate with different agencies and institutions in holding training seminars and workshops on relevant topics.

Line of Action: - Improvement of Quality and Relevance of Educational and Training Programs

- ◆ Support the School of Agriculture and Natural Sciences of the University of the West Indies in reviewing and modernizing its curriculum in agriculture.
- ◆ Support student internship programs.

Line of Action: - Integration of Agricultural and Rural Education

- ◆ Development of programmes with tertiary and vocational institutions in agriculture in order to provide training for farmers and rural groups

Line of Action: - Strengthening of Distance Education and Training Programs

- ♦ Implement specific training programs through the Agricultural Distance Learning Center (ADLC).
- ♦ Support the establishment and operation of a Virtual Trade Academy, to strengthen the preparation of human resources involved in agricultural trade.

Line of Action: -Preparation of Teaching Materials using Digital Means

- ♦ Identification of training needs and the development of course material to facilitate production of CD-Rom or other appropriate format

➤ **Information and Knowledge Management**

Goal: To complement the management of information on specific topics, and promote the image of institutional excellence.

Topic: - Knowledge Management

- ♦ Promote and disseminate the results of products of projects executed.

Topic: - Standardization of Infrastructure and Information Systems

- ♦ Consolidate and expand the network of agricultural libraries, through the SIDALC project

Topic: - Consolidation of INFOAGRO System

- ♦ Assist the agricultural sector in reviewing, updating and modernizing the agribusiness information system by facilitating access to market and trade information available in other regional institutions as well as forge linkages where possible.

Topic: - Development of IICA website

- ♦ Support the maintenance and updating of the website in the Caribbean Region.

Topic: - Publication of Printed and Digital Materials

- ◆ Disseminate technical information and information on relevant activities, through virtual and printed publications.
- ◆ Support the following publications: IICA Caribbean News, Tropical Fruits Newsletter, CARAPHIN News, In a Nutshell, and Agriview.

5. RESULTS TECHNICAL COOPERATION

5.1 Facilitating competitiveness and global trade

.....Bringing stakeholders up to date

Farmers of today rely more and more on information for making decisions that affect their livelihoods. Understanding the complex and dynamic nature of trade and trade matters and their implications for the sector can be daunting for many in the sector. The Office has recognized this challenge and has continued to take several initiatives to ensure that the farming community is apprised of pertinent trade issues. During the past year, several workshops and seminars were organized, in conjunction with our partners, to bring stakeholders up to date on the WTO, FTAA trade and other agri trade negotiations that are likely to impact on domestic and export agriculture.

At those fora, stakeholders were invited to actively participate in the discussions so as to acquire full understanding of the issues and consequential adjustments that will be required in their production systems. At the National Farmer's Forum, in which 200 stakeholders attended, participants had the benefit of understanding more fully issues pertaining to globalization, trade liberalization and requisite policy options.

Our trade sensitization programme also targeted the dairy and agro-processing sectors. At a seminar for dairy farmers, the Office presented a paper entitled, the impact of globalization on the dairy industry. The Office also had the opportunity to present a paper on market access issues at a workshop for the benefit of 68 agro-processors. The workshop was held in collaboration with the Tobago House of Assembly (THA). Another 40 agri stakeholders in Tobago benefited from a workshop on WTO/ SPS issues. IICA collaborated with the Business Development Company and The THA on that venture.

.....Creating opportunities for expanding export markets

The Review of the Economy, 2004 have indicated that while domestic agriculture's contribution to GDP remained unchanged at 0.2 %, export agriculture's contribution to GDP decreased by 0.1

% Declining agricultural exports have in fact been a trend within recent times. Bilateral and multilateral trade agreements signed between Trinidad and Tobago and other countries at the regional and hemispheric and international levels can present tremendous opportunities for the sector to improve on its export performance, particularly for non-traditional export crops.

In this context, the Office took several initiatives to ensure that the sector was in a position to benefit from the emerging trade opportunities. One such initiative was the collaborative effort between the IICA and the NAMDEVCO in preparing protocols for 10 crops that were most frequently exported from Trinidad and Tobago. It is expected that development of those protocols will further facilitate trade with our major regional partners and establish benchmarks in terms of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).

Resource Person Making a Presentation at a GAP Seminar



A collaborative framework was also developed with NAMDEVCO for the promotion of agricultural exports and for export of fish products to the US and EU. In addition, a workshop was organized for the benefit of exporters of agricultural produce. A seminar on Food and Beverage market opportunities was also hosted.

..... Improving productivity and investment

Improving productivity within the agriculture sector is a major plank for improving the food security situation of the country. Productivity increases can accrue from production of higher yielding varieties of crop, genetically superior animals, and utilization of machinery and equipment in the agri-food chain. Parallel with productivity enhancements must be the ability of the sector to attract investments for a modernization programme. The sector must also be correctly positioned within the macro-economy.

The Office therefore, in its contribution to food and nutrition security, coordinated an initiative towards development of an agro-biotechnology strategy for the wider Caribbean. It is expected that the adoption of this strategy will promote increased productivity within the sector.

Initiatives are also being taken to show the real contribution of the agricultural sector to the economy. It is expected that once the true contribution or benefits of the agriculture sector is established, the sector will command greater national attention and encourage the state and private sector to invest more in the sector.

.....**Providing a framework for growth of the sector**

The Office has recognized that the agribusiness investors will respond to opportunities for investing in the sector if adequate support systems are provided. Support from the government and stakeholder organizations may be necessary, at least in the incipient stages, for catalyzing certain business ventures in the agribusiness sector.

With that philosophy in mind, the Office was instrumental in preparing several marketing plans and prefeasibility studies.

One such study was a marketing plan and industry marketing strategy for the rabbit industry, including a feasibility study for establishing breeding and slaughter facilities. Prefeasibility studies were also prepared for establishment of a dehydrated vegetable and fruit facility as well as a marketing plan for the product.



A Meeting of the Rabbit Breeders' Association

A second prefeasibility study examined opportunities for ecotourism in Tobago. The many risks associated with agricultural production often deter many potential investors from investing in the sector. Coverage is often limited to flood damages under the disaster relief programme that is supported by the government. In this context, the Office completed a study to provide a framework for agricultural insurance in Trinidad and Tobago.

.....Supporting Agribusiness Organizations

In addition to the secretariat support provided for members of the Alliance, the Office also established a Secretariat for the Caribbean Herbal Business Association (CHBA).

CHBA Display at the Caribbean Gift and Craft Show, Barbados



To date, the CHBA has undertaken several initiatives in support of the regional Association's objectives of facilitating commercial and sustainable use of natural Biodiversity and maintenance of standards through a certification process.

Training Session NRWP



The Office also took initiatives assist and promotes other organizations such as the Network for Rural Women and Beekeeper's Association to participate in various trade show and exhibitions. Continued secretariat support was provided for the CARIFRUIT and CIPMNET Committees.

5.2 Promoting Food Safety and Agricultural Health

.....Building institutional capacity and standards

Within recent time, the manner in which food is produced, prepared and handled has assumed greater prominence in the international trading environment. These new demands for higher standards of health and food safety by our trading partners have forced stakeholders in the agri-food industry to revisit existing health and food safety systems in order to meet internationally acceptable standards. Consequently, health and food safety issues are now high on the national agenda.

It is in this regard, the Office has been contributing to the national effort through its participation on a Cabinet-appointed National Agricultural and Health and Food Safety Committee, the forerunner to a proposed National Agricultural and Health and Food Safety Agency. Establishment of that agency will bring all matters pertaining to Health and Food Safety under one roof.

A collaborative effort was also initiated with the Bureau of Standards for development of CODEX Standards for specific agricultural crops. The Office collaborated with NAMDEVCO to organize a workshop on traceability systems for fresh produce. The Office also collaborated with the UWI, the Environmental Management Agency and National Institute for Higher Education, Science and Technology in preparing a draft bio-safety policy framework for Trinidad and Tobago.

.....Developing the Human Resource Capacity in AHFS

The human resource is a major link in the health and food safety system. The programme to upgrade and modernize the national health and food safety system must therefore focus on improving the skills and capability of those persons charged with health and food safety management. Need for this type of training becomes even more critical as international AHFS standards are raised.

In this regard, during the past year, the Office collaborated with many agencies, organizations and institutions, including the THA, MALMR, in organizing a series of training courses to build the resource capability of farmers and other stakeholders in the area of health and food safety. Much of the training effort was focused on training participants in good agricultural practices (GAP). In general, a total of 115 participants benefited from training in GAP and a further 20 individuals received training in accreditation systems.

The accreditation system was designed to expose persons in the private sector to regulatory procedures in plant health so they can offer the service to strengthen the quarantine system presently provided by governments.

.....Establishing Surveillance and Monitoring Systems

Pests and diseases of economic importance have the potential for undermining our food security position, disrupting trade with our trading partners and eroding the livelihoods of thousands of farmers. The region was reminded of that possibility with the outbreak of the Hibiscus Mealy Bug that dealt a severe blow to regional agricultural and forest industries. The response by regional governments at the time was largely reactionary, as appropriate monitoring and early warning systems were not in place to trigger preemptive action. Out of the mealy bug experience has emerged a greater awareness and commitment within the region to put systems in place to avoid or prevent a repeat of the mealy bug debacle.

In view of the potential threat posed by exotic pests and diseases in particular, the Office in 2004, embarked on a series of programmes in conjunction with other agencies and institutions such as, the USDA, FAO, CARDI, MALMR and the Banana Export Company of Jamaica, to minimize damage to the agrifood sector by exotic pests and diseases. These programmes included education component and field surveys to determine the presence or extent of infestation of pests and diseases. The focus was on those pests and diseases that posed an imminent and or immediate threat to the agricultural sector.

Inspection of Agricultural Produce by Plant Quarantine Officers at the Port



Surveys conducted included a survey on the Giant African Snail; a survey on the Lethal Yellowing Disease of coconuts and Black Sigatoga Disease in bananas. The Office collaborated with CARDI in organizing a workshop on Johnne's disease for stakeholders of the livestock industry.

Participants at the Opening Ceremony of GIS/GPS Workshop



A workshop on GIS and GPS workshop in pest and disease surveillance and detection was also conducted for the benefit of professional staff of the Ministries on Agriculture of CARICOM. One issue of the CARAHPIN news was also published. This publication provides information on plant, animal and food safety issues.

IICA Representative for Trinidad and Tobago Delivering the Feature Address at the GIS/GPS Workshop



It is expected that the information obtained from the surveys will provide the necessary information for designing an effective monitoring and surveillance system as well as for creating an awareness of pests and disease and the type of destruction they can cause.

5.3 Strengthening Rural Communities

.....Creating business opportunities

Development of rural communities through empowerment of persons living in those communities is a major goal articulated in most national developmental plans. Empowerment of communities may take the form of skills development or the provision of financial and other resources for creating opportunities for those communities to undertake business ventures that can be sustained in the long run. The Office has recognized that if rural communities were provided with that type of support, a significant leap would have been made in assisting rural folks.

The office therefore focused on several initiatives to stimulate business opportunities. These initiatives included the training of 70 former Caroni workers in business management of micro enterprises and training of 45 individuals in investment opportunities in the preparation of specialty sauces. Forty members of the 4-H club also received training in the identification of business opportunities.

Former Caroni workers developing skills in preparation of pepper sauces



Four farmers also benefited from the revolving credit from the revolving loan facility for the purchase of piglets, broiler chicks, inputs for wine manufacture and repair of a commercial blender.

..... ***Building the capacity of rural organizations and supporting committees***

Another approach taken by the Office in strengthening rural communities was to focus on providing support to several committees as well as rural groups responsible for developing and promoting the agribusiness sector. In this regard, support was provided to the National Vision 2020 Agriculture Committee in development of a strategy for taking the country to developed country status by the year 2020. Support was also provided to the Citrus Task Force, in implementation of a citrus certification programme. The Office further assisted the 4-H Club to redraft its constitution to attain NGO Status.

Participants of the Vision 2020 Consultation on the Agricultural Sector, in the Village of Cedros, South Trinidad.



Other groups that benefited from the support of the Office included PROCICARIBE, through hiring of a consultant to evaluate its programme and CANROP, through preparation of grant proposals for institutional strengthening.

Cross-section of the Audience of the Network of Rural Womens' Conference



The Network of Rural Women was a beneficiary of continued technical support in the area of food processing, development of grant proposals. Assistance was provided to the Tobago branch of the NRWP in development of their strategic plan.

5.4 Hemispheric Integration

The Office facilitated the participation of the Ministerial delegate at the ministerial meeting in Panama, with the Agro Plan of Action 2003 – 2015. That meeting afforded the Ministerial delegate the opportunity to better understand the details of the Plan and the role Trinidad and Tobago will have to play in the process.

5.5 Developing Human Capital

..... Upgrading the skills of professionals working in health and food safety

The Office collaborated with many of its partners including the USDA; the Ministries of Agriculture of CARICOM; MALMR; PAHO; FAO and the University of Tuskegee in conducting a series of workshops and seminars for the benefit of professionals working in institutions involved in health and food safety management. In one workshop, professional staff from the Ministries of Agriculture of CARICOM was exposed to the management of an enquiry point.

Twenty-five veterinary public health and veterinary officers benefited from a workshop on microbial risk analysis and modeling. A further 50 professionals from the Ministry of Agriculture, Tobago House of Assembly received training in the identification and detection of invasive species and 20 agricultural professionals were trained in accreditation in agricultural health activities.

.....Preparing youths for the world of work

The work environment today requires a cadre of workers who are highly motivated and have the necessary skills for a highly demanding, sophisticated and technologically challenging job market. Young people, in particular need to be properly trained to assume those roles. They also need to be properly guided as to the career options that are available in the field of agribusiness.

The Office had embarked on several programmes in response to the need for proper training and orientation of youth for today's job market. A major initiative was the hiring of two undergraduate students from the University of the West Indies for a three-month internship programme, at the Office. The Office further made its contribution to preparing youths for the world of work by collaborating with the schoolteacher's Association, in hosting a career day for youths. A seminar entitled, Youth their Potential Role in Sustaining Food Security in Trinidad and Tobago was organized. Eighty-five persons attended that seminar.

Youth speaks out at the Youth Forum



5.6 Environmental Management

Activities involved in the production of organically cultivated vegetables and food crops have relatively minimal effects on the environment, in terms of soil degradation, pollution of water courses and destruction of insect and other animal life. In order to promote the cultivation of organic food, grown under more environmentally friendly conditions, the Office facilitated the participation of 11 persons from Dominica, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago at a workshop on best practices in organic production. The workshop was a component of the CPEC/CIDA organic horticulture project. Five persons were selected to visit model organic farms in Costa Rica.

5.7 Institutional Modernization

The Office placed emphasis on providing specific types of training and technical support for stakeholder agencies and committees for improving their levels of efficiency. Technical support, in this regard, was provided to the CHBA in hosting a Regional strategic planning meeting for exploring ways of restructuring the Association. The Plan will serve as a blueprint to guide the operations and strategic operations of the Association.

The Office also provided assistance to 4-H Club in redefining and redrafting its constitution to NGO status.

5.8 Other Activities

The Office also undertook various types of activities that all had meaningful impacts on agricultural development. With the successful implementation of those activities, the following results were obtained:

Improvements in the efficiency and functioning of several and Networking Groups and Committees improved through the provision of secretariat services. These groups include:

- ◆ Caribbean Network of Rural Producers (with membership of 100).
- ◆ National Dairy Committee (with membership of 12)
- ◆ Network of Rural Women Producers (With membership of 200)
- ◆ Vision 2020 Sub Committee on Agriculture
- ◆ The Caribbean Herbal Business Association
- ◆ Caribbean Agricultural Business Association
- ◆ Caribbean Council for Higher Education

6. Inter Agency Cooperation

Activities of the Office were facilitated with support of the following regional and International Agencies:

- ♦ The Pan American World Health Organization which provided part of the technical and financial support for the workshop on Risk analysis and modeling held for sanitary and phytosanitary measures.
- ♦ The FAO and USDA that provided financial and technical support for conduct of a survey on the Giant African Snail in Trinidad.
- ♦ The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute that provided part of the financial and technical support for hosting a workshop on Johne's Disease;
- ♦ The USDA and University of the West Indies that provided part of the financial and technical support for a seminar on the use of GPS and GIS applications for pest and disease surveillance.
- ♦ The CTA that provided technical support in the preparation of a herbal handbook and development of the CHBA web portal.

7. Support provided in the Development of National plans and strategies (Implementation of Plan Agro 2003 – 2015)

A meeting was convened with the Director of the Agricultural Planning Division. At this meeting, the representative of the Ministry was provided with guidelines for relating the national plans and strategies with the 40 strategies identified in the Agro Plan 2003-2015. A format was designed for capturing the required information. A follow-up meeting was also held to support the effort the Ministry in their reporting on compliance with the Agro Plan of Action, 2003 – 2015.

8. Results of Implementation of Investment Projects

No Investments in projects were made in the past year.

9. Future Opportunities for Cooperation

The Office is committed to working with its stakeholders and other Agencies in an effort to pool financial and technical resources for improving the livelihood of rural dwellers and agriculture in general. In the coming year, IICA, Trinidad and Tobago will be collaborating with agencies and organizations, some of which have made formal requests to the Office for technical assistance. Opportunities therefore exist to work with:

- ♦ The Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI) which has requested technical assistance to assist farmer groups, on their behalf, in the preparation of project proposals. The projects must be aimed at enhancing food and nutrition security. Qualifying groups and organizations will be provided with grants under CFI's Small Grants Programme.
- ♦ The United Nations Development programme, in developing projects under their Small Grants Programme.

- ♦ The Ministry of Agriculture Land and Marine Resources, in reviewing their agricultural incentive programme and in the development of project ideas contained in the Vision 2020 document for the agriculture sector.
- ♦ The USDA and the University of the West Indies (Department of Veterinary Science,), in producing a manual and CD-ROM on herd health management of small ruminants.
- ♦ The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute, in providing technical assistance for developing a business plan for a model organic farm in Trinidad.
- ♦ PROINVEST and CDE- in the Promotion of Herbal Business Investment
- ♦ CTA - in development of biotechnology and herbal business
- ♦ Tobago House of Assembly - in development of a programme for training of farmer groups
- ♦ National Agricultural Marketing and Development Cooperation - in development of GAP protocols for export crops
- ♦ The agricultural Development Bank - in development of the distance learning programme

10. Annex: Publications

1. Burgess, K. 2004. A Farmer's Guide to Citrus Production
2. De Chi, L.W; Ambrose, E. (Eds) 2004. CARAPHIN News No. 24
3. Francis, D. 2004. State of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Caribbean
1. Helberg, U. 2004. Draft Policy Proposal for Public and Private Consideration for the Development of a Sustainable Organic Agricultural Industry in the Caribbean Region.
2. IICA.2004. IICA's Contribution to Agriculture and the Development of Rural Communities in Trinidad and Tobago. Annual Report 2004
3. Mitchell, S; Valverde, D 2004. Toward A Regional Agenda for Agrobiotechnology Research, Innovation and Industry in the Caribbean Region
4. Mohammed, M. 2004. Optimizing Post Harvest Handling and Maintaining Quality of Fresh Pineapples (*Ananas comosus* (L))
5. Parke, A; Ramnanan, N. (Eds) 2004. Agriview Volume 10 No.1
6. Parke, A; Ramnanan, N. (Eds) 2004. Tropical Fruits Newsletter
7. Pemberton, C; Harry, E. 2004. A Framework for Agricultural Insurance In Trinidad and Tobago

List of Acronyms

ACP	African Caribbean and Pacific
ADLC	Agricultural Distance Learning Center
AHFS	Agricultural Health and Food Safety
CABA	Caribbean Agricultural Business Association
CANROP	Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers
CARAPHIN	Caribbean Agricultural Information Network
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARTF	CARIFORUM Agribusiness Research & Training Fund
CARIFRUIT	Caribbean Fruit Network
CCGA	Cooperative Citrus Growers Association
CDE	Centre for the Development of Enterprise
CFNI	Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute
CHBA	Caribbean Herbal Business Association
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIPMNET	Caribbean Integrated Pest Management Network
CLAWRENET	Caribbean Land and Water Resources Network
CPEC	Caribbean Regional Human Resource Development Program for Economic Competitiveness
CSME	Caribbean Single Market Economy
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
GPS	Global Positioning Systems
HAACP	Hazard and Critical Control Point Analysis
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
MALMR	Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources
NAMDEVCO	National Agricultural Marketing Development Corporation
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NRWP	Network of Rural Women Producers
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PROCICARIBE	Caribbean Agricultural Science and Technology Networking System
SAQS	Strengthening Agricultural Quarantine Services
SIDALC	Agricultural Information and Documentation System for the Americas
SMCL	Sugar Manufacturing Company Ltd
SPS	Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary
THA	Tobago House of Assembly
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WTO	World Trade Organization