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PREFACE

St. Lucia "Helen of the West" hosted the 35th Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Food Crops Society (CFCS). A group of over one hundred scientists from 14 countries converged on the island to engage in professional dialogue and to share ideas.

This small island state, with a blend of British and French Cultural influence, seemed an appropriate location for the society to gather, because of its efforts in redirecting its agricultural sector and its relationship with its fellow sister Caribbean countries, as well as its two former colonial masters, Britain and France.

The meeting began on July 27, 1999 at the Francis Compton Building on the Castries Waterfront, where the Chairman of the Board of CFCS and the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries in St. Lucia addressed the gathering. During the meeting participants presented papers on topics such as Crop Production, Natural Resource Management, Livestock Production, Genetics, and Aquaculture.

St. Lucia's post-colonial achievement is reminiscent of its pre-colonial history, in one respect: everything seems to occur in pairs. The island has developed two airports, one international and the other regional; two main harbours, one in the north and one in the south; there are two pillars of economic growth, Agriculture and Tourism; and most proudly the island has produced two noble laureates, Sir Arthur Lewis (Economics) and Derek Walcott (Literature).

Delegates were able to see for themselves the opportunities presented in the Agricultural Sector, complemented by the recent development in our Tourism Industry. They witnessed Eco-tourism enterprises as a strategy for economic and agricultural diversification as well as developments in agricultural training through the efforts of the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College.

A tour around the island is incomplete without seeing our pitons and a visit to the world's only drive-in volcano. These sites were included in the field tour, which covered much of St. Lucia's coastal landscape.

The meeting culminated with the farmer's forum, which allowed interaction among participants and stakeholders in a consultation on the five-year agriculture policy for St. Lucia.

Dunley Auguste
President