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REPORT OF WORKSHOP 3

Subject: Transportation and Marketing

The Workshop met on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning and was chaired by Dr. C. Pemberton. Mr. A. Parris served as the Co-Chairman for the discussion on Transportation, and Mr. Vaughn Thomasos of the Ministry of Planning Division of Agriculture, Lands and Food Production served as Secretary of the Workshop and prepared the document along with the Chairman.

The following lead papers were presented to the Workshop:

- (1) *The Role of the Caribbean Agricultural Trading Company Limited (CATCO) in the Development of Caribbean Agriculture* by Douglas Orane, General Manager, and Trevor Lovell, Development and Trade Brokerage Manager.
- (2) *The Role of WISCO in the Development of Caribbean Agriculture* by Sherman B. Thomas, General Manager.
- (3) *Caribbean Air Cargo Company Limited (CARICARGO)* by George P. McLean, Manager.
- (4) *The Role of Small Vessel Shipping in the Development of Caribbean Agriculture* by Ms. A. Watson-James.
- (5) *A Strategy for the Marketing of Food Crops Produced within the CARICOM Region* by Winston Smith, CARICOM Secretariat

The Workshop agreed to pursue the following objectives:

- (i) to identify the extent to which the existing marketing and transportation facilities and services were contributing toward regional agriculture; and
- (ii) to indicate if any modifications of these facilities and services are necessary to facilitate the developmental goals of Caribbean agriculture.

The Workshop first discussed the existing transportation facilities available to the Region having identified the three major kinds of carriers of agricultural produce in intra and extra-regional trade. CARICARGO and BWIA outlined the air transport facilities offered through their organisations emphasizing the 24-hour service offered at the airports for clearing goods and the frequency of the schedules to three major West Indian markets in New York, Toronto and London (guaranteed delivery within 24 hours).

Agricultural produce also received preferential freight treatment through specific commodity rates. The Companies pointed out that surplus space was available on the north bound flights and that they were prepared to offer incentive rates to exporters of agricultural produce to increase utilisation of their fleets.

The CARICOM Secretariat's paper outlined the role of the small vessels in moving agricultural produce between producer and consumer countries. This is specifically an Eastern Caribbean trade pattern and it was felt that with

the development of simple chilling facilities on these vessels the trade in agricultural produce would be enhanced.

Caribbean Food Corporation's Anne Bramble expanded on the development of mini containers with refrigerated capacity.

West Indies Shipping Corporation outlined its role as fostering regional integration by providing an intra-regional shipping service. Its services are geared to cooperate with and not compete with the small schooner fleet as the food plans of the Region will have to accommodate both large and small scale operators the latter being the prime producers for the small vessels' trade.

In the discussions on Marketing, two papers were presented. CATCO outlined its expected role in relation to regional agricultural development through a system of efficient marketing strategies. CATCO would not be competing with other central marketing organisations but would act as a stimulant for the utilization of new production techniques through *contact farming* and as a parallel agency interfacing with the national agencies with respect to commodities to be traded. To facilitate its operations, CATCO would establish a Regional Marketing Information System to work together with the national counterparts.

The second paper by the CARICOM Secretariat emphasized the supportive systems necessary in developing proper regional marketing infrastructure with particular reference to holding facilities and information systems and also developed a framework for collective marketing by farmers and farmers' groups.

The Workshop in dealing with its second objective accepted from the WISCO paper the following scenario as descriptive of the changing perspectives in Caribbean agriculture.

It is probably reasonable to expect a significant increase in the volume of non-traditional agricultural products from the Region over the next two to five years. This could mean the availability of substantial quantities of exportable produce in the Region during this period.

The primary target market for the surplus produce most likely would be CARICOM, that is, the Region supplying a large part of its needs from its own resources.

The secondary target market for the surplus produce would be non-CARICOM territories - both regional and extra-regional.

Because of the limitation of time the discussions could only generalize on the strategies recommended to develop the necessary marketing and transportation facilities and services within the changing perspectives. The following recommendations were thus made by the Workshop:

- (1) Recognizing the existence of local country production, and the inability of farmers' produce to reach the market, the Workshop recommends that mechanisms be developed to utilize the existing organisational and infrastructural facilities (and to improve these where necessary) to assist in the movement of agricultural produce across national boundaries.

- (2) The Workshop recognising the role to be played by small schooner transport facilities, reiterates WISCO's plan to charter such vessels to operate scheduled trips among the LDCs to move agricultural produce to areas with the best price advantage in association with their regular fleet.
- (3) The Workshop recognising that CATCO has been identified as the Agency for the Regional Marketing Information System recommends the establishment of National Market Information Systems and the identification of national agencies to effect these systems.
- (4) The Workshop recognizing the effect of extra-regional import of agricultural produce on the demand for produce of domestic farmers in the CARICOM Region recommends the effective implementation of import policy measures to favour regional production.
- (5) The Workshop recommends that consideration should be given to bartering trade arrangements to encourage and promote the use of regional agricultural products.
- (6) The Workshop noted the efforts of BWIA and CARICARGO in the provision of air transport facilities for agricultural produce and recommends the full utilisation of these facilities particularly for extra-regional exports.
- (7) The Workshop recognises the emergence of CATCO as a dynamic entrant in the marketing scene in the Caribbean and notes in particular its emphasis of contract production of toxic free produce and recommends that this organisation receives the necessary cooperation for the regional organisations and national governmental agencies.