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# ***Improving local food supply chains for the tourism sector in the U.S. Virgin Islands***

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## **Abstract**

*This study identified key production, marketing and policy constraints and barriers for local food supply chains to enhance agricultural market development for agritourism in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Focus groups and questionnaires were administered to policy decision-makers, farmers, and the hospitality sector to obtain information about these barriers and constraints and to identify appropriate policy responses to improve local food supply for the tourism economy. This information was evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative research methods to determine the relative importance of the constraints and agreement among stakeholders. Key constraints included inadequate production resources (land, irrigation, and credit) and lack of quantity, quality and information of local foods to meet the demand by the tourism sector. Findings were presented and discussed at stakeholder meetings. A pilot project to integrate producers and island restaurants and resorts (Farmer-Chef Connection) was proposed and is being implemented. Legislative proposals to address production and marketing resource constraints are also being developed. Emphasis on active participation of stakeholders and the development of a policy network is viewed as critical to developing sustainable food tourism supply chain linkages.*

Keywords: Sustainable, local, food, chains, tourism, Caribbean