



**AgEcon** SEARCH  
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

*The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library*

**This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.**

**Help ensure our sustainability.**

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search  
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>  
[aesearch@umn.edu](mailto:aesearch@umn.edu)

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*



**CARIBBEAN  
FOOD  
CROPS SOCIETY**

**22**

**Twenty Second  
Annual Meeting 1986**

**St. Lucia**

**Vol. XXII**

INTEGRATED PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF THE  
ORGANIZATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (ORD)

Jethro Greene

Chief Coordinator, ORD

The Organization for Rural Development began 10 years ago with less than a dozen volunteers, working in three villages. After the first year two full-time persons were incorporated into the staff. Today, ORD has grown to 40 full-time and part-time staff persons, with expanded services and programmes in 30 villages islandwide. It has grown from a core of 20 farmers to over 1,200, in over 900 farm families throughout the rural areas. A recent evaluation of the organization conducted for one of our donor agencies, estimated that approximately 35,000 persons or 1/3 of St. Vincent's population were beneficiaries of ORD's services and programmes. This is pointed out because there is a lot of pessimism surrounding "grassroot" organizations, especially in St. Vincent. This is one success story that I am pleased about, because the activities of ORD and the successes of ORD are built on the ordinary farmer, their children, local housewives rural leaders and volunteers, all working together to build something they believe in. With continued sound leadership in our rural villages, in the next 10 years we will be well on the way towards doing greater things for the economic development of the country.

Ten years ago our objectives were designed in base of our needs. These objectives were the achievement of greater self-sufficiency, improvements in nutrition, increased employment and a raising of the awareness of rural people to achieve their potential. These objectives were the focus of our earlier programs. So with this foundation, we continued to build on these areas, modifying them as needs changed.

As the organization grew our programme focus became more specific, and aimed at utilizing St. Vincent's two key resources: its land and its people.

Three years ago ORD implemented a new approach to attain its objectives. An Integrated Production and Marketing Project was introduced with two principal objectives: import substitution and exporting to gain foreign exchange.

In an effort to produce foods for import substitution, a new project for producing onions was launched. The way it works, is that when it is harvest time we ask the Government to limit the importation of onions so that the farmers can put their onions on the local market.

This project was initiated as a result of an investigation conducted by ORD, which revealed that Government was importing over 1 million pounds of onions annually. Our local onion growers produced over 250,000 pounds in 1985, and are expected to produce approximately 350,000 pounds in 1986.

In this project, ORD provides a credit basis to farmers with the necessary agricultural inputs such as vegetable seeds, fertilizer and chemicals. We work collaboratively with the Ministry of Agriculture and CARDI in this project.

To tie in the marketing component, contact was made with local supermarkets, to establish the quantities they require, and to ascertain their willingness to buy from local producers.

With this information we proceeded to assist the farmers further in post-harvest handling. We provide them with training sessions, demonstrations and field crates for transporting. We are also working with farmers to improve their drying and curing facilities. We have requested overseas agencies for assistance for a revolving fund to help in the construction of dryers and curing facilities.

As we continue to link production and marketing, we focus on crops that have good market potential. One such crop that we have chosen for increased production is ginger. ORD has been offered a contract to provide up to 1 million pounds of Grade A quality ginger for an overseas buyer. We realized that in order to meet the demands and standards of our buyer, we had to have proper planning, and coordination of production and marketing efforts.

With this understanding, we began a program of selecting quality planting materials to eliminate the varieties that are undesirable, and focus on the variety that the buyer requires. To do this, we have contracted selected farmers, whose job is to grow planting materials for ORD, so that by the end of this cropping season, we hope to have only quality materials for distribution to ginger farmers that will give us good yields of Grade A ginger for marketing. The better quality ginger brings a better price and more income for the small farmer.

Under our new crop development program, we have identified other crops with good market potential. For instance, we are now engaged in the production of a new variety of pumpkin and we have obtained a contract for exporting the crop. We have selected farmers to grow these crops under controlled conditions, in order to avoid crossing with our local varieties. We have also taken steps to lease certain portions of lands which will be distributed to farmers to be used primarily for developing seed materials for our next harvesting period.

I have just cited some examples of how we integrate production and marketing, but the objective of our project is to encourage the production of commodities for import substitution and for export. We realized that for this to be accomplished, we must plan effectively.

Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient local technical expertise available to provide adequate support to ORD. We have been able, however, to get assistance from overseas agencies. The International Voluntary Service provided a Marketing Advisor from Jamaica, and another US Agency provided an Agriculture Extension Advisor, a Financial Management Advisor and a Communications Advisor. So most of our technical assistance comes from overseas. We work in close collaboration with CARDI, and the exchange of information has been helpful in this integrated process.

The key emphasis of our marketing programme is to develop adequate and reliable markets for fruits and vegetable crops which are produced by the small farmers of St. Vincent. Although we have been promoting the production

of certain crops since the inception of ORD, and have made some progress in establishing certain markets, there still exist huge deficits between the market required and our production capacity. The underlying strategy is to identify markets and then develop the production to supply the need. This approach seems acceptable to both farmers and buyers.

We also aim to strengthen and expand our relationship with local traders. For instance, we have several local buyers with whom we interact with to organize produce to supply their needs. Some of them trade to Trinidad, USA, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

It is not possible to state specifically the expected outcome of this approach in the near future. However, we are presently negotiating with several organizations, both regionally and extra-regionally to further expand our operations.

Another approach to marketing that ORD is embarking on is a collaborative regional marketing among farmer organizations. What we hope to do is to coordinate our efforts so as to be able to make larger shipments. For example, if there is a large market for a particular commodity that we in St. Vincent cannot fulfil, we would join forces with another island towards supplying that demand.

Presently, we are gearing up our production system, so that within the next six months we will be able to computerize our production data. This will allow us to know how much of each commodity is being planted and what yield and total production is expected. With this information we will be able to tell the buyer within a safe margin what we are able to supply. Once this system is in place, it can be transferred to other Eastern Caribbean countries such as Dominica, Grenada, or St. Lucia. We could then coordinate a marketing strategy which would benefit us all.

I would like to mention, in closing, that the organization has always taken a hard look at the fact that we export raw materials, and unrefined agriculture produce which is then processed and returned to our shores to be sold in our supermarkets at very high prices. We will be looking into promoting small scale agro-processing, under the umbrella of integrated marketing. Local persons are already involved in manufacturing jams, jellies, preservatives and so on from fruits and vegetables. In a small place like St. Vincent we cannot talk about large scale industry, so we must try to support and develop small industries. Currently, our organization has commissioned a private study which will provide information on appropriate small processing equipment and facilities, to process seasonal fruits and vegetables at low cost, to be used on the local market.

We will continue to work with small farm families to encourage them in food processing. So that when resources are available we can consolidate them and provide adequate finance to improve and expand them. Agro-processing as a business has a high growth potential, and could be instrumental in addressing problems of unemployment. When we speak about small businesses, one of ORD's objectives is to increase the entrepreneurial spirit of small farmers. We continue to encourage them to view farming as a business. As with all businesses, proper planning and good record keeping must be a part of successful farming.

Successfully integrating production and marketing, plus continued development in market identification is the key to ORD's future in this area. With the assistance we receive from many organizations, and the linkages we hope to establish, we intend to move towards reaching our goal to improve our production and marketing system, in order to increase the development of our country.