



**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**

**Eighteen  
Annual Meeting  
August 22 to 28<sup>th</sup> 1982  
Dover Convention Centre  
BARBADOS**

**Vol. XVIII**

## BARBADOS PRIORITIES IN THE FIELD OF FOOD

B.A. Clarke<sup>1/</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

Barbados' priorities in food production are essentially delineated by the need to feed the nation, concomitant with achieving self-sufficiency in some commodities. This strategy would reduce the food import bill which stood at Bds. 169, 361, 800 dollars in 1981 (Agristat, 1981). Consequently, research and developmental strategies for the agricultural sector have been clearly defined by the Government of Barbados to achieve stated objectives. In this effort, emphasis would be placed on the diversification of the agricultural sector and an integrated approach to amalgamate private and public resources.

### PRIORITY PROPOSALS

For the purpose of this paper, the priority proposals are grouped into seven (7) areas.

#### 1. Sugarcane Industry

Continued support for the Sugar Industry has been deemed necessary, the initiation of institutional arrangements commensurate with a price support system has been alluded to (Cheltenham, personal communication). The industry is earmarked for modernization through the use of appropriate technological and agronomic resources realized locally. Attention will also be directed to diversification within the industry.

#### 2. National Fruit Orchards

The Scotland District, the erosion prone, eastern area of the island, has been declared a National Fruit Tree Zone. However, fruit production will not be confined there. The programme of production of improved varieties of selected fruit tree species, utilizing vegetative propagation techniques, will continue at the Soil Conservation Unit, Haggatts, St. Andrew and at the Central Agronomic Research Station, Graeme Hall, Christ Church. In addition, the institution of tax incentives and subsidies for fruit trees and irrigation equipment has been enacted to support the orchard development.

---

<sup>1/</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs, Barbados.

### 3. Vegetables

Barbados intends to increase the level of onion production in order to provide adequate quantities for local consumption all year around, and to export to CARICOM markets. In 1981 onion production was 396,000 kg from 31 ha, whereas imports amounted to 1,705,601 kg (AGRISTAT 1981). The scope for development is further emphasized by a comfortable potential market for an estimated 800 ha of produce. The existing agronomic, pest management, post harvest, physiological and marketing problems are to be alleviated. This would represent a joint effort between the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs, its related agencies and the Barbados Export Promotion Corporation.

Investigations on traditional vegetable crops will enjoy continued support.

### 4. Root Crops

In addition to emphasis on yam and sweet potato as alternate local sources of carbohydrate, existing export markets for these crops (45,649 kg in 1981), will be expanded (AGRISTAT 1981). Continued irrigation of yam and sweet potato with the sugarcane cultivation system is planned.

Further development of Irish potato through the use of botanic seed will be considered.

### 5. Pulses

Self-sufficiency in peanut production is a vaunted target. Consequently, fifty hectares will be planted on private and public farms in the next season to stimulate production in this direction.

### 6. Livestock

Maintenance of the current, self sufficient, production levels of pork and poultry is essential in addition to increasing the levels of mutton, beef and dairy production. In sheep mutton, there is scope for increased production of up to 60%--current production is 50,500 kg.

### 7. Fish

Expansion of the Fishing Industry (4,037,000 kg) with particular reference to long-term fishing. Aquaculture has been bandied about periodically without specific efforts to investigate the possibilities.

## STRATEGIES

Several activities have either continued or have been initiated by the Government of Barbados in order to achieve its objectives in food:

- i) Reference has already been made to the support for the Sugar Industry and the National Fruit Orchard Development Programme. The latter has significant implications because of the potential of soil conservation by fruit trees.
- ii) Significant institutional strengthening of the Barbados Marketing Corporation (BMC) and the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) has occurred in order to make them more production oriented. Both organizations had functioned for some time without appropriate management.
- iii) The Rural Development Project (RDP) and the Spring Hall Land Lease Project (SHLLP) both under the aegis of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation were established recently. Both are organized farming communities assisting in achieving the national objectives in food production.
- iv) Assistance has been obtained from several international agencies and specific countries who provide technical resources for identified projects.
- v) Provision has been made to stimulate agricultural productivity by offering substantial rebates on the purchase of certain agricultural commodities. Rebates are offered for spraying equipment, tillage, pasture development, irrigation, sugarcane chopped, to name a few areas.
- vi) Development of appropriate seed technology skills in order to produce locally adequate quantities of seeds of suitable quality and to store the same where feasible. This would be integrated with regional efforts under the aegis of the Caribbean Food Corporation (CFC).
- vii) Exploitation of hitherto untapped "brackish" water resources in the Eastern parts of the island to provide for expansion of food crop production. Appropriate irrigation systems would be developed to exploit this resource.
- viii) Definition of appropriate systems of production with respect to all agricultural enterprises, an area which has received little attention in the past.
- ix) Examination of farm machinery and equipment with specific reference to the small farmers.

- x) Continue genetic studies on Black Belly Sheep aimed at combining its high fecundity with the superior mutton production of other breeds.
- xi) Development of cost efficient animal feeds using local resources.

In addition to the above, the Government of Barbados continues to express its support for agricultural development.

In the area of education, the Skills Training Programme has been involved in training personnel in tractor operation and maintenance, in order to satisfy critical demands in the industry. This upgrades the level of skill in the industry which is necessary because of the expanding usage of farm machinery. Furthermore, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and several Secondary Schools (15) train interested students in agricultural science.

The Barbados Agricultural Statistical Information Service (BASIS) has been constituted recently to provide a regular market commentary and a weekly review of wholesale prices of vegetables and fruit. The Agricultural Information System in Barbados will be augmented by new inputs from a new organization--Agriculture Commodity Trading Company (ACTCO)--in addition to inputs from the Barbados Agricultural Society (BAS), the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs (MAFCA).

To stimulate vegetable production a Vegetable Research Centre will be established at the Home Agricultural Station to support the efforts of the Central Agronomic Research Station, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs. With appropriate aid from international organizations, vegetable collection centres will be established at strategic locations.

### PRIORITY CROP RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

<u>Product</u>	<u>Research</u>	<u>Market</u>
1. Sugarcane	1. Mechanization 2. Agronomy - compaction, fertilizer 3. Technology 4. Diversification 5. Pest management - crop borer, thrips	Export, local
2. Fruit - mango Cashew, pawpaw Avocado, Citrus Barbados Cherry Pineapples, Guavas Bananas, Plantains	1. Horticulture 2. Agronomy 3. Marketing research 4. Pest Management 5. Irrigation and Drainage	Local

<u>Product</u>	<u>Research</u>	<u>Market</u>
3. Vegetables - Onion	1. Tropical Varieties 2. Pathology - Onion Blast 3. Entomology - thrips 4. Herbicides 5. Storage and Shelf Life 6. Plant mutation 7. Breeding and selection	CARICOM, Local
Traditional Vegetables	1. Variety selection 2. Pest management 3. Agronomy 4. Marketing and Storage	Local
4. Root Crops Sweet Potato	1. Breeding and selection 2. Agronomy 3. Marketing research 4. Pest management	Local, export
Yam	1. Agronomy of virus free material 2. Marketing & storage 3. Plant nutrition 4. Pest management	Export, Local
Irish potato	1. Evaluation of Botanic seed	
5. Pulses Peanuts	1. Variety selection re rust resistance 2. Agronomy - plant density, cultivation compaction in relation to fruit development 3. Weed control 4. Entomology - peanut redneck worm	Local

The above does not include the studies which will be conducted on other crops, but merely to focus on the priorities for research and development. Furthermore, previous discussions alluded to areas of development which will traverse all activities in the agricultural sector.

## REFERENCES

AGRISTAT (1981). Published, Agricultural Planning Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs, Barbados.