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**caribbean  
food  
crops society**

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

Vol. XVIII

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CARIBBEAN FOOD CROPS SOCIETY**





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## CARIBBEAN FOOD CROPS SOCIETY

### Report of the XVIII Meeting - Barbados

The meeting of the Caribbean Food Crops Society was held at Bridgetown, Barbados, from August 22-28. The meeting was attended by 104 members with 54 from overseas, representing Antigua, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, St. Croix, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Venezuela.

The meeting was held at the Dover Convention Center. The meeting was opened by a welcome speech from Mr. Ronald Baynes, Vice-President, acting as President of the CFCS and a feature address from the Hon. R.L. Cheltenham, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs. Forty papers were presented covering various aspects of food crops production and marketing. Most of the papers were from scientists from Barbados and the surrounding Islands. Several papers were presented also by scientists from Venezuela and the U.S. Virgin Islands. On Wednesday, an all-day field trip was conducted to several research and crop production sites. In addition, fruit and vegetable workshop sessions were held on Thursday and Friday. The meeting was closed with a banquet on August 27 at which Dr. Hugh Miller, from Jamaica, delivered the keynote speech after being honored by the Society with the presentation of a scroll in gratitude for his services during many years to the Society.

On Wednesday, we travelled through some dry parts of the South Coast in Christ Church and St. Philip to the higher rainfall areas of St. John, then to the limestone escarpment descending to the volcanic areas of the Scotland District and the East Coast.

We visited the research plots at the Ministry of Agriculture Research Center where we observed sugarcane, sweetpotatoes and other experiments. In the Diamond Valley, St. Philip, we visited the CARDI Virus-Tested Yam Propagation Unit. In Hillview, St. Philip, we visited the Hydroponics Unit (private enterprise) where several varieties of tomatoes were growing satisfactorily under one screenhouse structure. In St. John, we visited the Wakefield Limited area with a total arable acreage of 546; of which 400 acres are planted in sugarcane with the remainder in a number of vegetable crops, such as tomatoes, carrots, beets and pumpkins. Finally, we visited the Back River project in the Back River Valley in the Scotland District of Barbados. This district covers 22,000 acres of land or one-seventh of Barbados and is famous for its history of landslides, landslips, slumps, gullies, mudflows and beach erosion. The government has started an ambitious Agro-Forestry project. In cooperation with the Scotland District Soil Conservation Unit and other government agencies they are implementing several soil conservation operations, such as road building, terrace construction, weir construction, etc., to render it suitable for agricultural production.

### **Status of Constitution and By-Laws:**

Progress on the revised Constitution has not been achieved according to the planned schedule. However, the Board of Directors instructed the new President to take care of this matter during the present year. It was approved that the revised Constitution with all the modifications made by the Ad-hoc Committee, Past President J. Jeffers, Dr. A. Pinchinat, Dr. M. A. Lugo-López and those that could be proposed by the new President be circulated to all members by December 1982. The members will have up to February to reply giving their views or comments. The final Constitution will be presented to the members during the next annual meeting in Puerto Rico, hopefully.

### **Local Chapters: |**

During the business meeting of the Board of Directors it was informed that the first two local National Chapters in Jamaica and Puerto Rico were organized. It is expected that a local chapter will be organized in every country with 10 or more members. The possibility of a combined chapter (2-3 countries) was also mentioned. The main purpose of these National Chapters is to strengthen the Society and improve communication between the Board of Directors and the members.

### **CFCS Proceeding:**

This is the first time that publication of Proceedings are up to date, with the exception of those of the Caraca's meeting, which are in preparation. The Proceedings of the Guyana meeting are already published, thanks to Vernon A.L. Sargeant from Barbados, Miguel A. Lugo-López, Carlos Cruz and the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus.

### **New Members: |**

More than 50 persons have joined CFCS recently, most of them during the Barbados Meeting. We extend a most hearty welcome to all of them.

### **The new President: |**

The new President of the Society is Dr. Alejandro Ayala, Dean and Director of the College of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez. Dr. Ayala is an outstanding nematologist with many years of experience in tropical agriculture. He is a very

active scientist participating in several professional activities. We expect a very fruitful year for the CFCS. In his acceptance speech he expressed his hope to see all CFCS members in Puerto Rico next year.

**Future meetings:**

The 1983 annual meeting will be held in Puerto Rico. The exact place and date will be given in a future communication.

In 1984 the meeting will be in St. Croix, USA, Virgin Islands.

We will welcome invitations for meetings in 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Yours truly,

Carlos Cruz  
Secretary

October 22, 1982

## WORKSHOP REPORT CFCS XVIII ANNUAL MEETING 1982 BARBADOS

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The fruit and vegetable industry in the Caribbean is undoubtedly a very important one. There are a number of problems which have resulted in limited exploitation of the opportunities in this area. These problems relate to the following broad areas:

- Regional policies
- Production
- Processing
- Marketing
- Transportation
- Consumer behaviour

This serious problem has been existing for some time now and it was the subject of a workshop entitled "Traditional and potential fruit tree development" in November 1980. This workshop, which was held in Grenada and sponsored by IICA dealt in great detail with the situation and several recommendations resulted. Although this workshop only dealt with fruits, it should be noted that many of the principles that came out transcended both the fruit and vegetable industry. Despite the findings of the above mentioned workshop only a very limited improvement has been achieved in the industry. Against this background CFCS has decided to review the present status of the industry with a view of identifying critical areas of constraints and deriving practical solution to alleviate the same.

### 2.0 PAPERS PRESENTED

Eight presentations were made (See Appendix) and members discussed the issues raised. It was the general consensus that because of the special nature of agricultural products timeliness of operations is important.

There is a need for more structural and conceptual reorganization within the industry and the need for more private sector participation was stressed.

### 3.0 MAIN ISSUES

#### 3.1 Regional Policy

There must be a system which allows for free movement of all fresh agricultural produce within the region and there was some concern



about the CARICOM act which deals with area of origin. The group felt that this act should be accompanied by the implementation of restrictive trade policies with extra regional sources.

Strategies for allocation of subsidy not only to farmers but for infrastructural development should be considered and regulations aimed at discouraging praedial larceny should be implemented. There should be a review of tax concessions for farmers by local governments.

### 3.2 Production

3.2.1 Planting Material: Material being used presently can be improved. Research in this area is required. Varieties developed should be tested regionally for appropriateness.

#### 3.2.2 Crop Husbandry

Participants felt that the levels production technology being employed need some modification. Work is needed in soil management, pest management, site selection and cultural techniques. An integrated approach is recommended.

3.2.3 Information Flows: There seems to be limited exchange and in some cases a lack of information. Participants agreed that an efficient information network is necessary.

3.2.4 Training: The shortage of trained personnel is a most serious constraint. Every effort should be made to have persons trained especially in the areas of horticulture, extension and farming systems.

#### 3.2.5 Production volume:

The volume of many fruits and vegetables produced in the region is too small to justify economically any significant processing. In addition to this, the cost of production is usually high.

Expansion of the production bases where necessary should be undertaken. The availability of land reform policies needs consideration at this point.

### 3.3 Processing

3.3.1 Technology: The processing technology presently available in the region should be adapted to satisfy present

needs rather than importing technology from outside the region on a "wholesale" basis.

- 3.3.2 Cottage Industries: This type of activity should be encouraged especially to utilize available technology. However, for purposes of trade there must be a given set of standards to which they must conform. This "commercialization" would need organization and business management.

3.2.3 Equipment

As far as possible equipment for processing must be capable of handling a wider range of fruits and products. They must also be appropriate and economical and when needed spare parts should be readily available. An inventory of processing equipment present in the region should be done and further imports only effected after careful consolidation and rationalization.

3.4.4 Light Industries

The feasibility of operating light processing industries eg. products for use on airlines should be investigated. At present most of the items in this product line utilized regionally are produced outside the region.

3.4.5 Training

Training is needed at all levels of fruit production, processing and marketing. It is felt that farmers can also be trained locally so as to enable them to produce a product which would not only be well suited for the fresh market/processing industry but also one that will increase his income.

3.4 Marketing

3.4.1 Marketing Strategy, Intelligence

Marketing strategies have to be carefully worked out. To this end a well planned and sustained net work of information is required. This market intelligence stream must be available to all relevant institutions within the region.

3.4.2 Marketing Corporations

The terms of reference of the present marketing corporations need to be critically reviewed with a view to updating their functioning and making them more

structurally relevant to the present needs of the region. These institutions should be more all embracing and should be more active in areas such as contract production warehousing and product standardization. These corporations can thus play a pivotal role in organizing the cottage industries.

#### 3.4.3 Small Operators

There are several of these operators within the region. They have been and still continue to be very effective in providing certain types of services.

These middlemen, as they are sometimes referred to, can be even more effective if given certain facilities eg. credit which would make them more equipped to carry out their roles.

#### 3.4.4 Conservation: Every effort should be made to cut down on the losses of fruit and vegetable which occur at all stages in the production system.

### 3.5 Transportation

3.5.1 Shipping must be appropriate. The volume and type of product being handled as well as the docking facilities that exist in some territories are some of the points that will have to be considered. Small vessels (Schooners) which would serve the smaller territories should link up with bigger vessels (mother ships) which would then ship produce further on. Adequate refrigeration both on ship and on farms (containers) must be available.

3.5.2 The logistics of transportation is very important. Because of the perishable nature of agricultural products their movement from the farm to processing plants or directly to markets must be almost immediate. Available transport must be ready on the spot when required. Production must also be planned with transport logistics in mind.

#### 3.5.3 Farm Roads

In order to move produce from the farms access roads need to be maintained in good order. Regional governments need to ensure this.

#### 3.6.0 Consumer Protection

There must be a two way flow of information between consumer and producer. Regulatory measures must be taken

to ensure and monitor quality standards which are set. The pricing policies must also reflect a harmonious producer/consumer relation.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, we saw the need for an integrated organization which will have control over all aspects of a chain of activities leading from the production of the crop to the delivery in the most appropriate form to the consumer.

Such an organization has to have financial autonomy. It must be involved in ensuring production of the primary product by contract farming, shipping, processing and marketing.

A regional intelligence network is required to enable both producers, technician and consumers to appreciate the importance of their position in the chain of activities.

It is important that CFCS members on their return here should make every effort to implement some of these suggestions or at least inform their local counterparts of these decisions so that next year the status can be critically evaluated.