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III. Developing the Region's Fish and Livestock Industry

The Workshop focussed attention on the problems and limitations of development of the livestock and fisheries resources available in the Region.

The pattern being followed in the Region at present is one of individual development of whatever potential exists within the individual countries, without regard to the needs of the Region, as a whole, the sources of potential surpluses and without a regional strategy for development providing the policy framework for individual efforts.

In the fisheries sector, the workshop called for a large scale organisation of the kind suggested for corn/soyabean production in the Region which recognises the needs of all the territories, the potential in particular areas of the Region and also recognises the fact that the greatest resource potential exists near Guyana.

The exploitation of these resources should include also those species such as squid, etc. which are not now consumed in the Region but have high demand in Metropolitan export markets. Thus, self-sufficiency should not be seen simply as defined by the possibilities for substitution but should include these areas of new products.

Included in this concept is the idea that such products, now referred to as *trash fish* may have potential for utilization for fish meal or even for processing into frozen *fish meat* products. The key issue here is that our fisheries resources represent the greatest immediate potential for supplying protein for human consumption and should receive immediate attention.

Similar considerations were found to be relevant for the livestock (beef/dairy) industry. The strategy generally agreed by the group was that the production of feed grains should be concentrated in Belize and Guyana. However, the critical problem was indentified to be the source of breeding animals, and feeder calves for intensive fattening in beef enterprises.

Regional cooperation in this industry was seen as covering not only the production of feed grains in Guyana and Belize, the countries with the greatest potential in this area, but also the exploration of the possibilities of specialisation in particular areas of the Region or within the countries themselves. The experience of Jamaica in the development of dairy and dairy/beef herds by this kind of regional specialization was brought to the attention of the workshop. It was felt that perhaps this is one area in which the LDCs could participate in the regional rationalization effort.

Notwithstanding this, attention was focussed on the potential for tapping more efficient sources of supply of animal protein, in addition to fish and fish products. Rabbits and turtles were considered and the evidence presented suggested firstly, that while rabbits were highly fecund animals, capable of being fed with non-commercial plant material; they also suffered from high mortality rates. Turtles were strongly

recommend as highly efficient converters of feed into protein and also a very cheap source of supply of such meat protein. Sheep and goats were also recommended as more efficient protein sources than the large ruminants, although sheep were identified as the more manageable enterprise.

The conclusion of the Workshop was that more efforts should be focussed on the formulation of a multidisciplinary development strategy for the planning of regional efforts in production not only of fish and livestock industries but in the agricultural sector as a whole. Thus, the Rationalisation programme of the Caribbean Community should be given new impetus at the present time.

The Workshop took a little time to look at the problems of estimating the risks involved in farming by being able to predict probabilities of crop failures for particular crops in particular areas. Such data, if available, could possibly be used in the development of a Regional Crop Insurance Scheme.

Such a crop insurance scheme, while it would be designed to spread risks across the Region, still seems to be plagued with difficulties because of the high degree of association between natural disasters in large numbers of Islands in the Region. Thus, many of the Islands may face severe drought at the same time or may be hit by the same hurricane. These factors make crop insurance, even on the regional level, perhaps prohibitively expensive.

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