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THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE

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I will try to give some idea of the role of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of the West Indies in fostering the development of Agriculture in the Caribbean.

The major role of the University is in training and, in this role, the University offers the Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture and we have six departments in the Faculty - Crop Science, Livestock Science, Agricultural Extension, Agricultural Economics and Farm Management, Soil Science and the Department of Biological Sciences. Now, at the undergraduate level, currently there are about 300 students. At that level, the prime aim is to provide these students with a basic understanding of Agriculture and this basic understanding is largely scientific in the introductory stages and towards the end of the course - mainly in the third year - we try to introduce the students to some more applied types of analysis.

In addition to the undergraduate programme, the Faculty of Agriculture offers postgraduate degrees at both the M.Sc. and Ph.D. level. These postgraduate degrees have tended to be research-oriented and they have provided excellent avenues for students to come to grips with problems in Agriculture in the Caribbean and to help in finding solutions. I do not have any accurate figures on the number of postgraduate students, but I think it is in the region of sixty at the moment in the Faculty of Agriculture.

The academic and research staff of the Faculty of Agriculture engage in research and development activities. For example, currently in the Faculty we have the Grain Legumes Programme, which is funded by IDRC. This Programme seeks to develop new lines or new varieties in pigeon peas in particular and to introduce these varieties to farmers in an attempt to increase the supply of protein in the Caribbean. Also the academic and research staff are engaged in consultancy services with different organisations involved in Agriculture in the Caribbean.

In addition to the Faculty of Agriculture, other Faculties at the University of the West Indies are involved in the development of Agriculture. In particular, in the Department of Chemical Engineering of the Faculty of Engineering, there is a very strong group of food technologists who offer a Diploma and a Master's programme in Food Technology. This programme has done a lot of work on the development of processing techniques for different types of agricultural commodities. Also, I should like to mention the Department of Mechanical Engineering which has done some work on the design of equipment suitable for Caribbean conditions, basically, cultivation and harvesting equipment - and also to overcome special problems such as the extraction of the kernel from the coconut.