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Abstracts

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Responding to the Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture, Fisheries and Tourism in the Caribbean Region Utilising Geoinformatics

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Abstract

The Caribbean region is undergoing rapid economic development associated with a fast rate of industrialization, urbanisation and population growth. These events often lead to environmental degradation and could threaten the sustainability of agriculture, fisheries and tourism. In turn this could eventually slow down and threaten the pace of economic development. In addition the region is living through a number of events such as sea level rise and global climate change. As a result, there is a real need to understand and attempt to manage these natural and man-made phenomena. This paper argues the need for timely policy decisions on a regional basis with immediate effect in order to develop appropriate mitigation strategies to ensure the integrity of these sectors in the future. However, lack of data and understanding of factors controlling processes on regional basis is a problem. A way forward is by adopting geoinformations to collect and manage the necessary datasets and employing plausible scenarios to evaluate possible mitigation strategies to sustain agriculture, fisheries and tourism in the Caribbean region.

Assessing the Performance and Impact of Agricultural Information Products and Services: Development of a Methodology

Ranjit H. Singh¹
and Bruce Lauckner²

Abstract

Effective farm management requires a range of information available on a timely basis for decision-making with respect to planning, investments and operations. Farmers throughout the globe operate in environments of imperfect information with respect to both availability and timeliness. The problem is more acute in the developing world where the farming community generally has limited access to information. Constraints include the limited sources of supply, the quantum and type of information available and the lack of resources and technology of the farmers themselves for accessing information from various sources such as the World Wide Web.

Developing countries attempt to bridge the information gap for their farmers using a range of mechanisms/ institutions. While much resources and emphasis has traditionally been placed on the National Extension Service, research has shown that impact has generally been low.

The real challenge to agricultural information dissemination is therefore to develop instruments/ mechanism that are low cost but with high impact in terms of the number of farmers benefiting and/or the level of benefit from the use of such information.

This paper reports on the development of a methodology for evaluating the impact of agricultural information products and services. To validate the methodology and demonstrate its applicability two case studies were conducted. One of these being a mass communication instrument, and a newsletter, produced and disseminated by the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago (NAMDEVCO). The other is a training workshop for farmers and entrepreneurs conducted by the same organization.

The Model developed identifies four time-dependent phases or levels of response to agricultural information dissemination. These include the initial reaction to the information, the learning and information internalization phase, the trial and adoption phase and the impact phase. Given that each phase represents a longer lag between the initial communication and the response, the model identifies appropriate evaluation methods for each phase. Recognizing the differences between face-to-face activities and information disseminated by distance communication (asynchronous mass media) the methodology proposed separate evaluation methods for each type of communication.

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Economic Asymmetries, Trade Liberalization and Regional Integration: Issues and Policy Implications for Caricom Countries

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and Carlton G. Davis¹

Abstract

Much has been written about the challenges facing CARICOM as a result of the liberalization, globalization and integration phenomena. This paper adds value to the conversation by addressing the nexus between and among economic asymmetries, trade liberalization and economic integration, as it relates to CARICOM as small developing economies. The paper seeks to highlight the salient issues of CARICOM economic adjustment challenges under trade liberalization and integration imperatives, particularly as they may be subjected to the constraints of economic asymmetries. In doing so, it assesses the changing economic landscape in the Region and elsewhere. The issues are indeed very complex and the arguments and conclusions flowing from this type of evaluation may not be in lock step with the conventional wisdom. However, it is our contention that the regional trade and development policy solutions does not lie in denial of the existence of the problems; but rather, in tackling them head-on and incorporating them into existing and proposed systems of economic relations.

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Potential Effects of FTAA on US/CARICOM Fish Trade

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Abstract

This paper explores the possible effects of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) on United States fisheries imports from the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) countries. With proposed adoption by 2005, implementation of the FTAA could have serious repercussions on fisheries exports from CARICOM countries to the United States. Presently non-member countries of CARICOM that may become part of the FTAA are fairly competitive and efficient in fisheries exports. An import demand function is estimated for CARICOM countries and its five major fisheries producing members (Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad/Tobago) for three groups of fisheries products (freshwater fish, marine fish, and shellfish). Indications from the data suggest that most fisheries products from non-member CARICOM Latin countries are potential complements for CARICOM fisheries products indicating no competition between the two exporting regions. But the FTAA could change this position. Therefore, it is essential that CARICOM countries examine their own production efficiency and pay close attention to decreases in competitors' fish product prices since expansion of imports by the United States brought about by a tariff reduction may not necessarily benefit CARICOM countries.

Keywords: Free Trade Area of the Americas, CARICOM

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The Competitiveness of the Caribbean Broiler Industry

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and Sheldon McLean

Abstract

The CARICOM Region consumed 268,540 tonnes of broiler meat in 1998 of which domestic production supplied 65%. Shortfall in consumption was made up by imports, mainly from the USA, and primary comprising of low value (residual) products such as leg quarters and back and neck.

Broiler meat is the most important source of animal protein in CARICOM. In 1998 it accounted for 86.1% of total meat consumed, six times the total of all other meats. This compared to 40% for the United States. With respect to other meats, the share in the total meat consumption basket in 1998 was as follows: beef accounted for 8.6%, pork 3.7% and mutton 1.6%.

This paper analyzes the competitiveness of broiler production in CARICOM countries as well as identifying sources of competition.

The analysis of cost and operational efficiency were conducted for the industries in each of the prime countries based on data for 1998/99 and with respect to the following grow-out, processing and total cost of meat. Total grow-out cost broiler ranged from a low of US\$0.89/kg live weight (lvwt) for Belize to highs of US\$1.69 for St. Lucia and 1.54 for Barbados. Other low cost producers (less than US\$1.00/kg lvwt) also included Jamaica and Guyana, Trinidad, The Bahamas and Suriname had grow out cost ranging from US\$1.00 – 1.18/kg lvwt. Generally, CARICOM producers had costs that were approximately twice that of the US and 2.5 times that for Brazil.

Generally, the results suggest that only Guyana was competitive against imports of whole broilers from the USA. None of the countries examined was competitive against imports from Brazil. The significantly lower border prices for Brazilian products relative to those from the USA, resulted in regional production of whole broilers being more uncompetitive against imports from Brazil than those from the USA. The NPC ranged from 1.24 to 2.27 for Brazil and from 0.92 to 1.74 for the USA.

Closer examination of the NPC values for US imports indicates that four countries are only marginally uncompetitive (NPC <1.25). The least competitive of the group of broiler producers studied were St. Lucia (NPC=1.55) and Barbados NPC=1.74).

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Export Diversification in Latin America and Caribbean Trade with the US

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Abstract

Since the mid-1980s countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have pursued policy strategies based on openness and export diversification. Unilateral initiatives by the U.S. as embodied in the Caribbean Basin Economic Recover Act and its successors in particular have been intended to facilitate these strategies. Although considerable resources have been expended on these strategies, there has been remarkably little research investigating the extent to which export diversification has, in fact, occurred. This paper investigates the structure of Latin American and Caribbean exports to the U.S. over the 1989 to 2000 period. Using 2-digit SITC data, Galtonian regression is used to investigate the degree to which the distribution of exports has changed for 19 countries. The results suggest that the distribution of exports has indeed changed, but that most countries have become more specialized in their exports, rather than more diverse.