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**Food & Nutrition Security:
The Pathway to Sustainable Agricultural
Development in the Caribbean**

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Communiqué for the 32nd West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference

The 32nd West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference was held at the Ramada Georgetown Princess Hotel, Providence, East Bank Demerara, Guyana during the period 6th to the 11th August, 2017. This year's Conference was themed "Food and Nutrition Security: The Pathway to Sustainable Agricultural Development in the Caribbean". The Caribbean Agro-Economic Society (CAES) partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture in Guyana to host the Conference and its events.

There were 58 registered participants for the Conference ([List of Participants](#)) and there were 53 abstract submissions and 44 presentations. Some presentations were delivered in person while others were presented via a video format to accommodate authors from California State University, Fresno who were unable to attend the event.

The Opening Session on Monday 7th August was highlighted by an address by the Honourable Noel Leroy Holder, Minister of Agriculture, Guyana. The first plenary session was moderated by the Society's President, Professor Carlisle Pemberton and featured presentations on: "Agricultural Insurance, Farmer Security, and Food Security" and "Explaining the Margin between the Bulk and Fine or Flavoured Export Prices for Cocoa".

Session 2 on "Approaches to Attaining Food and Nutrition Security in the Caribbean" was moderated by Ermanno Affuso and included a presentation on "An Ex-Post Evaluation of the CARICOM-EU Banana Trade - Two Decades after WTO".

The Opening Ceremony with a Reception was held at the Impeccable Banquet Hall, hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Guyana. This event featured artistes who gave a cultural display through song and dance. There were brief addresses by Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture Ms. Joylyn Esther-Burrowes and the President of the Society, Prof. Carlisle A. Pemberton. The ceremony was chaired by Mr. Arnold DeMendonca, who was the Head of the Local Organizing Committee for the Conference.

On Tuesday 8th August, Sessions 3 to 6 were held. Session 3 was entitled “Environmental Challenges to Achieving Food and Nutrition Security” and was moderated by Govind Seepersad. The presentations were: “The Effects of Hurricanes on Farm Productivity and Food Security in the Bahamas” and “Dormancy Requirements, and Effect of Moisture and Salt Stress on the Germination of Hairy Fleabane (*Conyza bonariensis*) Seeds”. Parallel session 4A: “Environmental and Sustainability Challenges to achieving Food and Nutrition Security” was moderated by Arnold De Mendonca.

Parallel session 4B entitled “Improving Caribbean Food and Nutrition through Increased Utilization of Local Foods” was moderated by Ida Sealy-Adams. Presentations for this session included “Evaluation of a Community-based Nutritional and Agricultural Intervention in Guatemala”, “Consumers’ Attitudes and Practices to Buying Locally Grown Foods in Trinidad” and “Rethinking Caribbean Food and Nutrition Security Utilising Local Foods”.

Session 5 was a continuation of Session 4B and was moderated by Hazel Patterson-Andrews. The presentations for this session were “Improving the Utilization of Tomatoes through Agronomic Research to Increase Food Security in Barbados” and “How to Enhance the Availability of Local Fruits and Vegetables in New Providence, The Bahamas”.

Session 6 “Propelling Caribbean Agricultural Development through School Feeding Programs (SFP)” was moderated by Carel Ligeon. Presentations included: “Case Study: The Potential Use and Substitution of Locally Grown Produce into Meals Prepared by Lunch Vendors of a High School in New Providence, the Bahamas” and “An Illustrative Example of Seed-to-Supper Programs in Caribbean Areas”.

The Annual General Meeting of the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society was held on Tuesday 8th August which elected the new Executive ([List of Executive](#)) of the Society and appointed local representatives for the various countries. It was also agreed to hold the 33rd West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference in Tobago.

The Field Trip for the Conference took place on Wednesday 9th August from approximately 6:00 a.m to 5:30 p.m. The first site visited was the Blairmont Sugar Estate. Descriptions of the sugar factory and its operations were given by the senior management staff of Blairmont Sugar estate, and they were followed by a tour of the fields and the factory.

The next stop was the Fisherman's Depot/Landing Site at the Berbice River. The President of the Fisherman's Association addressed the tour group and answered questions about the operations of the fishermen. At the Mahaica/Mahaicony Abary Irrigation Scheme, the tour group was given a brief lecture on the current operations. Afterwards the fields and watercourses were toured. Upon arriving at the SAJ Rice Mill – West Coast Berbice, the tour group was greeted and briefed on the company's operations by management staff. The group then toured the factory's operations and its adjacent environs.

Finally the participants visited the Perth Mahaicony Farmer's Association, where products of the association's members were displayed and sampled. Brief addresses were delivered by members of the Association.

On Thursday 10th August Sessions 7 to 10 were held. Sessions 7 and 8 focused on Agriculture in Guyana and were moderated by Edward A. Evans and Jean David. The presentations included: "An Evaluation of the Relative Profitability of Coconut Farming in Guyana", "Case Study: Sustainability of Central Mahaicony Perth Village Farmers' Association" "Food Security and Climate Change in Guyana" and "Supply Response Implications of Trade Liberalization (EU-ACP EPA): The Case of Rice in Guyana".

Parallel Session 9A, "Innovations in Domestic Food Marketing in the Caribbean" was moderated by Edric Harry. Presentations included "Implication of Marketing Strategies to Increase Local Agriculture Support in the Bahamian College Community"

Parallel Session 9B, "Mobilizing Agricultural Development through Technology" was moderated by Winston Ramautarsing. The presentations for this session were "Precision Agriculture Techniques for Crop Management in Trinidad and Tobago: Methodology & Preliminary

Findings”, “Monitoring Spatio-Temporal Changes in Soil Salinity for Validation of “CSUID-II” Hydro-Salinity Model for Optimizing Soil Leaching Fractions” and “Digital Elevation Modelling of Agricultural Fields for Irrigation Management”. Session 10 was a continuation of Session 9B and was moderated by Dave Goorahoo. Presentations for this session included “Envisioning Food Security in 2030 Via New Technologies: The Case of the Caribbean”, “Using Satellite Imagery for Estimating Crop Evapotranspiration”, “Analytics for Smartfarming (Soil Library for Sensors)” and “An Ex-Post Evaluation of the CARICOM-EU Sugar Trade - Two Decades after WTO”.

The Banquet and Awards Ceremony were held from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Conference Hotel, where the Lifetime Contributor Award of the Society was presented to Dr. Carel Ligeon for his longstanding contributions to the Society and its events.

On Friday 11th August Sessions 11 and 12 were held. Parallel Session 11A was entitled “Participation, Perceptions and Behaviour – Impact on Food Security” was moderated by Isabella Francis-Granderson. The presentations for this session were “Factors Influencing the Level of Participation among Users of the Local Farmers’ Markets – Consumers”, “Are Cocoa Farmers in Trinidad Happy? Exploring Factors Affecting their Happiness”, and “Factors Influencing Purchasing Behaviour for Clothing by Adolescents and the Implications for their Food Purchasing”.

Parallel Session 11B was entitled “Climate Change and Agricultural Development” and was moderated by Arnold De Mendonca. Presentations included “The Effects of Climate Change and Aquaculture Production in Jamaica”, “Using Growing Degree Days to Estimate Crop Water Requirements for Processing Tomato”, and “Leveraging Climate-Smart Agriculture for Sustainable Farming Livelihoods: A Caribbean Perspective”.

Session 12 was entitled “Extension and Education: Contributions to Sustainable Agricultural Development” and was moderated by Carlisle Pemberton. The presentations carried for this session were “Impact of National Culture on Food Security”, “Integration of Scholarly Research, University Services and Experiential Learning Opportunities for Teaching Enhancement”, “Student Perceptions of International Education and Study Abroad: A Pilot Study at the Faculty

of Food and Agriculture, UWI, Trinidad” and “Optimizing Crop Water Use Efficiency by Recycling Carbon Dioxide Emissions”.

The Closing ceremony was held from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Conference Hotel. The 32nd West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference was a very successful and enjoyable one and the Society wishes to thank its Co-host the Ministry of Agriculture of the Government of Guyana as well as its generous sponsors for their vital contributions.

