

# ANNUAL REPORT *2009*

IICA's Contribution to the  
**Development of Agriculture  
and Rural Communities**

## Saint Lucia



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of Agriculture and Rural Communities  
Saint Lucia*

**ANNUAL REPORT 2009**

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This publication is also available in electronic (PDF) format from IICA's web site at <http://www.iica.int>.

Editorial coordination: IICA Office in Saint Lucia

Mechanical editing: IICA Office in Saint Lucia

Layout: IICA Office in Saint Lucia

Cover design: Public Information Unit, IICA Headquarters

Printed: Star Publishing Company, Saint Lucia

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture 2009 annual report: IICA's contribution to the development of agriculture and rural communities in Saint Lucia/IICA – Saint Lucia, 2010

38p; 21.5 x 28 cm

ISBN13: 987-92-9248-210-7

1. IICA- Annual Report I. IICA. II. Title

AGRIS

DEWEY

E14

630

Castries, Saint Lucia  
2010

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# Acronyms

<b>AAP</b>	Annual Action Plan
<b>ACPs</b>	African, Caribbean and Pacific States
<b>AGIL</b>	Banana Commercialization and Agricultural Diversification in Saint Lucia – SFA 2004
<b>AHFS</b>	Agricultural Health and Food Safety
<b>BIT</b>	Banana Industry Trust
<b>CARDI</b>	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>CFLI</b>	Canadian Funds for Local Initiatives
<b>CGPC</b>	Coordinating Group of Pesticides Control Boards of the Caribbean
<b>CHoG</b>	Caribbean Heads of Government
<b>CIDA</b>	Canadian International Development Agency
<b>COLPOS</b>	Colegio de Postgraduados
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ECS</b>	Eastern Caribbean States
<b>EPAs</b>	Economic Partnership Agreements
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GAPs</b>	Good Agricultural Practices
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GMOs</b>	Genetically Modified Organisms
<b>GOSL</b>	Government of Saint Lucia
<b>HOOPSS</b>	Helping Out Our Primary and Secondary Schools
<b>IICA</b>	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
<b>IPPC</b>	International Plant Protection Convention

# Acronyms

<b>MALFF</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries
<b>MFN</b>	Most Favoured Nation
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NAHFSS</b>	National Agricultural Health and Food Safety System
<b>NEMO</b>	National Emergency and Management Organisation
<b>NIC</b>	National Insurance Corporation
<b>NTCA</b>	National Technical Cooperation Agenda
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>OFDALAC</b>	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>SFA</b>	Special Framework of Assistance
<b>SLAFCH</b>	St Lucia Agri-Food Clearing House
<b>SLAFY</b>	St Lucia Agricultural Forum for Youth
<b>SLDB</b>	St Lucia Development Bank
<b>SLHTA</b>	St Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association
<b>SLMB</b>	St Lucia Marketing Board
<b>SLNRWP</b>	St Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers
<b>SLU</b>	Saint Lucia
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFAO</b>	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization



## Foreword

In 2009 Saint Lucia celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence and the shared responsibility for the development of agriculture and rural life was demonstrated by all as we executed our programme of work.



Many agencies, institutions, companies and individuals answered our call to action, and as Representative I take this opportunity to publicly thank all those who



continue to answer, partner and support the Institute's work, notwithstanding the challenges to their own development.

The staff of the office also takes this opportunity to thank the Director General Dr. Chelston WD Brathwaite for his vision and leadership over the past eight years as we bid him farewell. At the same time, we congratulate the Director General Elect Dr. Victor Manuel Villalobos on his victory to lead the Institute for the next four years and look forward to welcoming and introducing him to the community of Agriculture and Rural Life in Saint Lucia.



*Una May Gordon*  
**Representative in the ECS**

# Introduction

**T**he context in which agriculture is developing in Saint Lucia is changing rapidly. The global financial crisis is forcing a rethinking of the development strategies and creating an avenue for agriculture to once again accede to a strategic sector of the socioeconomic system for generating prosperity. So, in 2009 agriculture in Saint Lucia seemingly moved away from the cross roads and continued to show encouraging signs of growth and development.

Despite agriculture's relatively low contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the contribution to rural employment and rural prosperity in Saint Lucia remains significant and the positive performance of the sector in 2009, despite the tremendous challenges, can be attributed the key interventions implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries (MALFF) in collaboration with friendly governments and international development agencies.

The draft agriculture policy was presented to the Cabinet of Ministers for review and endorsement; a strategic management plan for the sector was drafted and a blueprint for the establishment of a new marketing clearing house was completed.

Many new programmes were initiated and the sector continued to benefit from the disbursement of funds from the European Union (EU) Special Framework of Assistance (SFA) and implementation of programmes being funded by friendly governments and a number of related agencies. However, the absorptive and coping capacities of the MALFF and the sector as a whole need to be monitored periodically to ensure efficiency in programme delivery and impact.

Notwithstanding the gains made in 2009, the prolonged drought being experienced coupled with the threat of the black Sigatoka disease to the bananas industry signals another challenging year ahead for the MALFF and the agriculture and rural sectors.

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) with its vast experience, operational advantage and network of offices across the hemisphere will continue to seek out new partnerships, nurture the old and stand ready in continued support to the MALFF and the community of Agriculture and Rural Life in 2010 and beyond.

The report contained herein documents the contribution of IICA to the development of agriculture and rural life in Saint Lucia in 2009. The programme of work was executed in line with our Medium Term Plan 2002-2010 and the priorities agreed to by our Member States. The results achieved focused on cooperation, partnerships and shared responsibilities for the development of the agriculture and the rural sectors.



## Executive Summary

Despite agriculture's relatively low contribution to GDP, the contribution to rural employment and rural prosperity in Saint Lucia remain very significant and the positive performance of the sector in 2009, despite the tremendous challenges, can be attributed the key interventions implemented by the MALFF in collaboration with friendly governments and international development agencies.

In 2009, the Agro Matrix tool was used to guide the redesigning and refocusing of the Agriculture policy framework for Saint Lucia. Through an expanded National Accountability Seminar convened with the MALFF a forum was created for discussion and feedback on the draft National Agriculture Policy 2009-2015.

A diagnostic assessment of the agricultural sector in Saint Lucia was conducted by a delegation of four (4) Mexican agricultural experts. This mission was facilitated by IICA and the Embassy of Mexico to Saint Lucia and was designed to strengthen collaboration between the two countries in an effort to continue developing the institutional capacity of the MALFF and to build sustainability in the agricultural sector. Following up on the assessment a collaboration agreement to provide technical support to the MALFF and the agricultural sector in Saint Lucia was subsequently signed between the Government of Saint Lucia and the Government of Mexico.

In continued support of the MALFF initiative to streamline the marketing of agriculture produce, efforts were directed at re-producing a comprehensive Business Plan which will provide the blueprint of a feasible framework for the development and operation of an efficient, effective, financially viable and sustainable marketing infrastructure for non-banana produce.

Cocoa, Pineapple and the Horticulture industries were targeted for rapid assessments to guide development assistance under the EU funded SFA 2005 Programme in partnership with the Banana Industry Trust (BIT).

The promotion of agriculture as a viable business options for the youth, as well as the demonstration of opportunities for growth in the sector through the establishment of linkages with tourism continued during the year.

These efforts were strengthened with the launching of the project "*Helping Out Our Primary and Secondary Schools*" (HOOPSS) which is funded jointly by the United Kingdom Travel Foundation and IICA and supported by five Ministries of Government and the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA). Three (3) secondary and five (5) primary schools are participating in the first phase of the project.



Saint Lucia's capacity to maintain the availability of safer food to consumers and protect the environment was enhanced through IICA's leadership and participation on the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board and the countries participation at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Coordinating Group of Pesticides Control Boards of the Caribbean (CGPC).

The capacity of the members of the Latanye Broom Producers Association was strengthened with the implementation of a service contract, *Institutional Support for Latanye/Mauby Producers in Saint Lucia*, funded under the EU SFA 2005. A plant nursery with capacity to produce ten thousand seedlings was constructed and twenty one (21) members of the group benefited from training in entrepreneurial and business skills, as well as nursery and farm management.

In commemoration of International Day of Rural Women 2009, IICA in collaboration with its partners, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Banana Commercialization and Agricultural Diversification – SFA 2004 (AGIL) Project, as

well as private sector donors, hosted a major exhibition to highlight the contribution of rural women to the development of Saint Lucia. The Exhibition provided a platform for rural women engaged in a wide array of income generating activities to promote their enterprises and to engage in social networking.

The capacity of forty-five (45) members of the Saint Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers (SLNRWP) was strengthened through the hosting of two training workshops, one on Social and Networking Skills held in partnership with the AGIL Project and the other on Food Safety Management hosted in partnership with the UNDP. In order to better understand the challenges facing the SLNRWP, a training and technical assistance needs assessment was conducted with the aim of tailoring future actions and setting priorities for more effective delivery of services towards the sustained growth and development of the group and its membership.

Horizontal cooperation efforts to build capacity and transfer adaptable technology into the agriculture and rural sectors of Saint Lucia continued with the ongoing training in Costa Rica of eleven (11) farmers and technicians from the MALFF in the construction and installation of low cost biogas digesters.

# The State of Agriculture and Rural Life in Saint Lucia in 2009



## Context for Agriculture and Rural Life

In 2009, with the worsening economic conditions mainly due to the shocks from the global economic crisis combined with high national food prices and high unemployment rates, inflation levels were propelled to the highest levels in more than a decade in Saint Lucia. This scenario resulted in a marginal economic growth rate for 2009.

Generally, there was a decline in the overall contribution of the agricultural sector to GDP in 2009 as exhibited by the decrease from 4.1 percent in 2008 to 2.4 percent in 2009.

However, despite the external economic shocks and the rising cost of inputs, the limited access to financing, and other structural and cultural factors, the agricultural sector recorded a marginally positive growth rate of 4.4 percent in 2009, as opposed to 21 percent in 2008.

The sector created employment for approximately 6,360 persons in 2009 in comparison to 8,562 in 2008.

The global crisis also led to a reduction in tourist arrivals forcing several large hotels either to consolidate actions or request public support to maintain operations.

This ultimately led to a reduction in purchases of agricultural goods from the rural communities which has negatively affected the livelihoods of vulnerable groups of youth, and women, particularly in communities strongly influenced by the production and marketing of bananas.

The change in preferential access to the United Kingdom (UK) market for bananas led to increasing levels of trade liberalisation and competition resulting in a reduction in prices and causing a slight decline in the number of rural producers involved in the Banana industry.

Many remaining producers have started a process of rethinking their strategy to move in the direction of value addition and agro processing as opposed to the current singular focus on primary production.

Reduced remittances and a projected decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) to agriculture will further challenge the ability of Saint Lucia to access investment capital for sustaining agricultural production and creating safety nets and social protection schemes for these producers and rural residents.

The Caribbean Heads of Government (CHoG) endorsed agriculture as a priority in all country strategies. The deliberations and agreements of the 5th Summit of the Americas held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009 provided a strong mandate for the Fifth Hemispheric Ministerial Meeting of Agriculture and Rural Life held in Jamaica. The meeting focused particularly on enhancing short and long term investments for food security, under the theme “Building Capacity for Enhancing Food Security and Rural Life in the Americas.

*“...agriculture is a critical factor for poverty reduction because the majority of poor people lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture for their sustenance”.*

The Director General of IICA, Chelston WD Brathwaite, asserted in 2009, that *“agriculture is a critical factor for poverty reduction because the majority of poor people lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture for their sustenance.”* Furthermore, he warned that *“agriculture will not be able to make an appropriate contribution to poverty reduction and the elimination of food insecurity unless food security is given the highest priority in the national, regional and international agendas by the promotion of greater investment in agriculture to accomplish social and political stability.”*

The Minister for Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Forestry, Hon Ezechiel Joseph, gave a commitment at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) World Food Security summit to increase public

investment in agriculture by about 50 percent a year in order to alleviate food security issues in Saint Lucia. The primary areas recommended for investments include crops and livestock production, storage facilities, market facilities and food processing.

Investments in agricultural research and development sectors strongly linked to the agricultural productivity and growth such as, extension and agricultural institutions and non agricultural investments to enhance rural life like health and education particularly of women

were also recommended by the summit.

Greater private sector investment needs to be encouraged in Saint Lucia at all stages in the value chain from production to marketing. Changes are also needed in the investment climate such as the lending policies of commercial and development banks to agriculture, to bring significant improvements in producer confidence and motivation to enhance production and productivity.

The development and introduction of disaster risk transfer measures including insurance for agricultural loans, will contribute immensely to the confidence of the rural communities to invest for agricultural development and growth.

Despite agriculture’s relatively low contribution to GDP, the contribution to rural employment and rural prosperity remain very significant. The positive performance of the sector in 2009 despite the tremendous challenges can be attributed to certain key interventions

implemented by the MALFF in collaboration with friendly governments and international agencies directly related to rural development. These include, but were not limited to promotional activities in Agri-business/Enterprise development, Cocoa industry revitalization, assistance for greenhouse vegetable production, assistance to the livestock subsector and assistance for feeder road maintenance.

In order to maintain market share in the existing UK market and establish new international markets, efforts were made to enhance institutional capacity to access those international markets by promoting the recommendations of the study of the National Agricultural Health and Food Safety System (NAHFSS). This is necessary to ensure interactions within the public sector agencies and with the private sector in the management of the Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) issues. Slow progress was however made in 2009 to advance the process and implementation of the NAHFSS.

The importance of regulations of pesticides and toxic chemicals continues to be recognized by Saint Lucia through the activities of the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board. However, the monitoring of these chemicals has to be moved beyond the ports of entry to include sale and every day use in the farming communities.

## Changes in agri food production

The overall performance of the agriculture sector in Saint Lucia continued to be influenced by the performance of the banana industry despite the many efforts of the Government to diversify the production base in the sector.

In 2009, the banana industry exported nine percent less than 2008. Approximately 33,892 tonnes, at a value of EC\$56.31 million, in comparison to 2008 when 37,375 tonnes were exported at a value of EC\$58.91 million. Thus bananas accounted for approximately 82 percent of total exports in comparison to 91 percent of total exports in 2008.

In view of the EU's announced phase-out of preferred access to its markets by banana producers from the Windward Islands; agricultural diversification is presently a major priority of MALFF.

Unfortunately, the slowdown of the world economy has negatively affected the exports of non-traditional crops as reflected by 53 percent decline in avocados; 63 percent decline in mangoes; 15 percent decline in breadfruits; eight percent decline in cocoa beans and a 5 percent decline in exports of plantain.

Table 1.1 shows an increase in food exports from EC\$65.8 million in 2008 to EC\$70.3 million in 2009 brought about largely as a result of increases in banana exports of 120 percent in 2009 over 2008 to regional and sub regional markets.

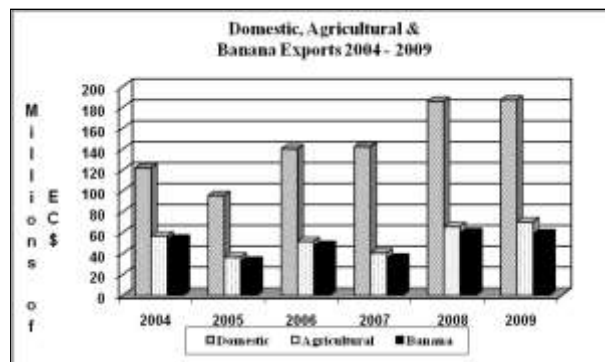


Table 1.1

While there was a slight increase in exports to non-traditional markets, a corresponding reduction in imports of selected vegetables was recorded for 2009

as a result of increased supply from rural producers and the reduced demand created by the reduction in both stay over and cruise tourist arrivals.

Reduction in the imports of tomatoes and sweet peppers realized for 2009 was due to increase supply and reduced demand by the general population.



A concerted attempt is being made by the MALFF in collaboration with a number of regional and international agencies to promote agricultural diversification by encouraging the rehabilitation and/or establishment of tree crops such as mangoes, cocoa, golden apples and avocados. A variety of vegetables are also being promoted for production and domestic consumption in collaboration with the supermarkets, hotels and restaurants.

Notwithstanding the efforts of diversification that are being rigorously pursued by MALFF and its strategic partners, the scheduling of production to meet market requirements, particularly the supermarkets must also be placed on the priority agenda of stakeholders within the vegetable food chain to ensure sustainability.

Also, while reductions in import volumes of selected vegetables were recorded in 2009, the value and cost of food continued to rise over 2008 figures as indicated in the Table 1.2 below.

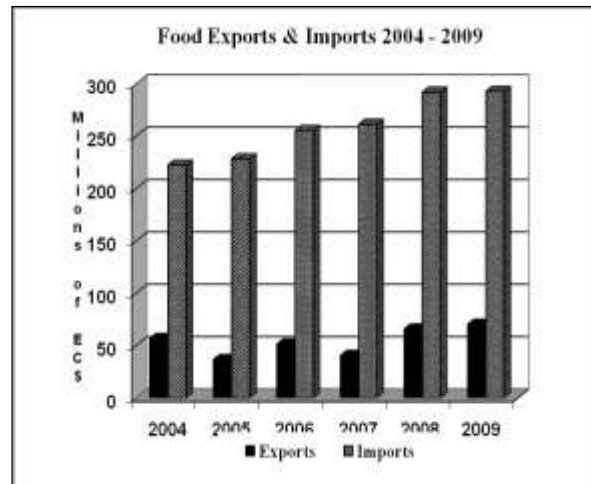


Table 1.2

### Changes in Policy that affect agriculture and rural life

In keeping with the national objectives “*towards economic growth and job creation*” the Government of Saint Lucia sought to establish a national policy framework for agriculture in early 2009. The policy development process which started in 2004, continued throughout 2008 with technical assistance from IICA.

The policy aims to create the new institutional framework that includes rationalizing the MALFF in a manner that will allow for efficient administrative and technical management of the agricultural growth and development process 2010 through 2015.

The Cabinet of ministers endorsed the Policy Framework in early 2009 and a Strategic Management Plan was commissioned and drafted by a team of consultants with funding from the European Union.



which deviates from the generative or conventional method of “cutting, layering, budding and grafting”.

The Minister indicated that the Tissue Culture Laboratory is expected to become “a Centre for cut flower and potted orchid plants for the regional market and beyond”.

### ***Changes in the Institutional framework for agriculture and rural life***

The Minister for Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries highlighted “technology and innovation” as critical elements in the national policy for a “*new Development Model*”, for agricultural development beyond 2009.

In this regard, in 2009 and with the assistance of friendly governments and development agencies the government made a concerted effort to introduce technologies to help producers in managing the risk and uncertainties as they relate to climate change, high input prices and mounting production costs.

The rapid transformation of the Union Agricultural Station with the financial and technical support of the Taiwanese technical mission to include the Tissue Culture Laboratory, Orchid Farm, Aquaculture Project, Demonstration Plots, Hatchery and Greenhouses, in addition to an EU-funded vibrant Eco-Tourism Park will all contribute to the development of the new model for agriculture beyond 2009.

The introduction and establishment of the Tissue Culture Technology will further enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of propagation techniques in Saint Lucia



The Windward Islands Banana Export and Development Company (WIBDECO), which has been responsible for packaging and shipping bananas produced in the Windward Islands to the EU market, particularly the UK market re-branded itself as WINFRESH and the company will now focus on a broad spectrum of fruits other than bananas. In addition, WINFRESH intends to expand its reach to source products from outside the Windward Islands.

As the fall out in the banana regime continues, the competitiveness of the Windward island agriculture needs urgent repositioning to ensure survival and sustainability of producers with limited capital and inadequate skilled sets.



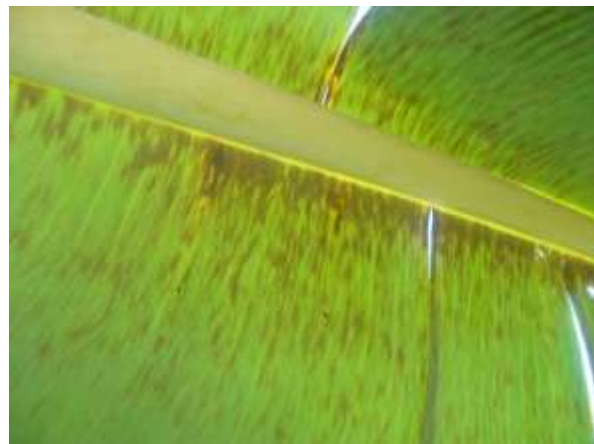
## Major developments in the thematic areas that affected the performance of agriculture and rural life

### Δ *Agricultural Health and Food safety*

Saint Lucia was placed on alert for the entry of the *Black Sigatoka* disease which was declared to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) as being present in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

A rapid detection survey was commissioned by the MALFF and in order to enhance capacity of technicians, policy makers and advisors on the management of Black and Yellow Sigatoka, a study was undertaken by IICA and BIT under the EU funded “*Banana Commercialization and Agricultural Diversification Programme – SFA 2005*”.

The study recommended a reorganization of procedures to facilitate effective management of the Sigatoka diseases in Saint Lucia.



The project also facilitated a study to improve environmental management in the banana industry by determination of sustainable methods in waste disposal. This study highlighted the indiscriminate disposal of plastic diothene used for bunch protection as the most prevalent contaminant negatively affecting rural



communities in the main banana production areas of Saint Lucia and strongly recommended the recycling of the plastic as the most sustainable course of action in waste disposal for the banana industry.

### ▽ *Trade*

The view that the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) would shield Saint Lucia banana preferences from further WTO challenge was one eagerly anticipated by the Saint Lucian government. However, in 2009, the WTO continued to file complaints against the EU's banana-import regime and pressured the European Commission (EC) to reinstate the July 2008 World Trade Organization (WTO) deal on bananas.

This greatly reduced the Most Favored Nation (MFN) duty charged on Latin American exports of bananas to the EU market, thereby increasing the price-competition faced by African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACPs) suppliers, including Saint Lucia.

In 2009, the erosion of the market share for bananas in the UK continued for Windward Island bananas due to this strengthened position of Latin American suppliers. Such reductions in duties for Latin American bananas will severely hamper the ability of Saint Lucian producers to compete in the EU market beyond 2015.

There is the need for urgency in the repositioning of agriculture to achieve

improved competitiveness in the domestic, regional and international markets.

### ▽ *Agribusiness*

In 1967, the Government of Saint Lucia established the St Lucia Marketing Board (SLMB) to stimulate, facilitate and improve the production, marketing and processing of produce on the island. Under the St Lucia Marketing Board Act (1967), the Board was given a wide range of powers to ensure that it fulfills its mandate. However, after more than forty (40) years and numerous reviews, a current assessment of the Board describes its performance as mixed. It is now generally felt that in its current form the SLMB is not an effective instrument to facilitate and advance the Government of Saint Lucia (GOSL) agricultural diversification efforts.

The MALFF also recognizes that the absence of an agency or an established marketing infrastructure to take advantage of market opportunities for non-banana agriculture has contributed to a gap in the development of that sub-sector.

As a result, in 2007, the Ministry requested of IICA to review the marketing situation and to make recommendations with regards to a national marketing infrastructure that can serve as a catalyst to drive its agricultural diversification efforts. A number of recommendations emerged out of that study.



After broad consultation with the major stakeholders in the farming community, the tourism sector, supermarkets, and a number of Ministries and Agencies, a consensus emerged that what was needed at this time was the establishment of a central clearinghouse to handle all fresh fruits and vegetables.

At that facility, produce would be sorted, graded, packaged, value added packs could be prepared based on market demand and distributed to wholesalers, supermarkets, hotels and restaurants.

The area known as Cul de Sac, located south of the capital, Castries, has been identified for the location of the entity. In this regard, Cabinet has vested some 6.94 acres of land in the MALFF for that purpose.

A draft Strategic Business Development Plan for the Saint Lucia Agri-Foods Clearing House (SLAFCH) has been developed for approval. Implementation should begin early in 2010.

### ▽ *Natural Resources and the Environment*

Saint Lucia's fulfilled its obligation to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with the completion, submission and acceptance of the fourth national report. In addition, the Country's ability to identify and monitor the entry of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) at the ports of entry was strengthened by the conduct of training activities.

### ▽ *Investment and Financing*

Saint Lucia Development Bank (SLDB) was formally opened and became operational in 2009. Access to agricultural credit was strengthened to facilitate the production and marketing from Saint Lucia of nontraditional crops and livestock to the domestic, regional and international markets.

## Results of the Implementation of the National Technical Cooperation Agenda



### **IICA's Contribution to Repositioning of Agriculture and Rural Life**

The inclusion of Agriculture and Rural Life on the Summit of the Americas Agenda in 2001 was an important milestone for the community of agriculture and rural life. With this in mind and in preparation for the Fifth Summit of the Americas to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in October 2009, IICA collaborated with the Organization of American States (OAS) Representation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Saint Lucia to convene a Civil Society Dialogue

to engage the agriculture stakeholders in the review and discussion on the Draft declaration.

In 2009, the Agro Matrix tool was used to guide the redesigning and refocusing of the Agriculture policy framework for Saint Lucia and through an expanded National Accountability Seminar convened with the MALFF a forum was created for discussion and feedback on the draft National Agriculture Policy 2009-2015.

The national accountability and consultation with agriculture and related stakeholders held each year in collaboration with the MALFF was

convened in March 2009. This year the Department of Agriculture presented their achievements, plans and progress in agriculture for 2008/2009 and the proposal for Agriculture development in 2009/2010. The IICA staff presented the report on the contribution of IICA to the development of agriculture and rural in Saint Lucia.



The Minister for Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries in outlining the policy framework for agriculture development 2009-2015 that was presented to the Cabinet for review, accepted the report of IICA from the Representative and publicly acknowledged IICA's commitment to transparency and accountability. The feedback received from stakeholder was used to adjust the National Technical Cooperation Agenda (NTCA) and refine interventions in the Annual Action Plan (AAP) for 2009.

IICA was invited to participate in a National Advisory Committee, established as a think tank to advise the Minister on emerging issues critical to the development of agriculture in Saint Lucia.

The Committee will also propose strategies for intervention and monitor the implementation of the policy framework for agriculture.

A critical challenge facing the MALFF in 2009 was the poor utilization of grant funding due mainly to the lack of a clearly articulated strategic plan for the sector.

This deficiency severely hampered the sectors ability to efficiently utilize grant funding in a timely manner. To correct this deficiency and to strengthen the capacity of MALFF to take advantage of future sources of funds a consultancy was awarded under the EU SFA 2002. IICA provided support to the consultancy team to develop the *“Five-Year Strategic Management Plan for the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries”*.

The Budhram Report, which was an institutional review of MALFF conducted by IICA in 2007, was used as reference for the development of this strategic management plan. The implementation of the strategic plan is expected to improve holistically the efficiency of MALFF and the agricultural industry in Saint Lucia and contribute to improved competitiveness.

Efforts to build relationships which seek to balance and build knowledge capacities towards efficient management of the sector continued throughout 2009. IICA sought ways for Saint Lucia to establish technical relationships and share experiences with countries with more advanced systems of agricultural production.

To this end, IICA Saint Lucia and IICA Mexico coordinated a visit of four Mexican officials under a trilateral project entitled: *“Strengthening agricultural activities, through the implementation of Crop Management Techniques and Livestock Health Systems”*.

A diagnostic assessment of the agricultural sector in Saint Lucia was conducted by the delegation of four (4) Mexican agricultural experts. This mission was facilitated by IICA and the Embassy of Mexico to Saint Lucia and was designed to strengthen collaboration between the two countries in an effort to continue developing the institutional capacity of the MALFF and build sustainability in the agricultural sector. The mission was funded by the IICA Office in Mexico and the Government of Mexico.

Following up on the assessment a collaboration agreement to provide technical support to the MALFF and the agricultural sector in Saint Lucia was subsequently signed between the Government of Saint Lucia and the Government of Mexico.

The agreement has the following objective:

*“To provide the development and implementation of sustainable policies in the framework of bilateral exchange between Mexico and Saint Lucia which would help increase the production, maximize the use of similar advantages of the agriculture sector, integrate the rural activities to the productive chains and stimulate the collaboration of the producer organizations with specific programmes and projects with the aim and objectives presented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries of Saint Lucia.”*

IICA Saint Lucia also assisted with the formulation a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MALFF and the Postgraduate College in Mexico, which is expected to be signed in the first quarter of 2010. This MOU will establish

a procedure for training of farmers and MALFF technicians in various agricultural disciplines to improve the efficiency of agricultural service delivery in the Saint Lucia. IICA Saint Lucia and IICA Mexico will work closely with the Governments of both countries to ensure effective implementation of the Agreements.



The Office received twenty-one (21) students and teachers from Guadeloupe from January 21 to 23, 2009.



This pedagogical visit was organized in collaboration with the Chambre d'Agriculture de la Guadeloupe and involved high school students whose areas of interest were biophysical aspects of Saint Lucia, specifically climate, fauna, flora, hydrous resources and influence of physical features on agriculture development. They were also interested in agrarian history looking particularly at the history of settlements and systems of culture.

# IICA participated in Saint Lucia 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence National Exhibition



## Promotion of Trade and Competitiveness of Agri-business

### Special Framework of Assistance 2005 Grant:

In December 2008, IICA Saint Lucia entered into partnership with the Banana Industry Trust to implement a grant under the European Union Special Framework of Assistance 2005. The grant entitled: SFA 2005 Banana Commercialization and Agricultural Diversification Programme, aims to increase the profitability of farm enterprises and provide support to increase agricultural production and marketing through niche markets so as to improve the social and economic well being of the country.

During 2009, a number of industries were targeted for support under the project. These include the cocoa, pineapple, horticulture, cassava and bananas industries. Increase productivity and profitability in these industries are expected to significantly increase the agricultural contribution to GDP in coming years.

Rapid assessments were conducted for the cocoa and pineapple industries as a precursor to the implementation of major actions to strengthen these industries. A public awareness and sensitization programme was also launched to support the programme.

### Saint Lucia Agri-Foods Clearing House (SLAFCH):

In continued support of the MALFF initiative to streamline the marketing of agriculture produce, efforts were directed at re-producing a comprehensive Business Plan with the objective of providing the blueprint of a feasible framework for the development and operation of an efficient,

effective, financially viable and sustainable marketing infrastructure for non-banana produce.



IICA identified and facilitated a Consultant to develop the draft Strategic Business Plan for the establishment of the clearing house.

The goals of the Business Plan are for the SLAFCH to be the premier exchange for agri-foods in Saint Lucia and the Windward Islands and for the facility to contribute to food security, poverty reduction and the sustainable livelihoods of the 9,000+ small famers in Saint Lucia by 2015.

### Helping Out Our Primary and Secondary Schools (HOOPSS) Project:

The promotion of agriculture as a viable business options for the youth, as well as the demonstration of opportunities for growth in the sector through the establishment of linkages with tourism continued during the year.

These efforts were strengthened with the launching of the HOOPSS Project at the IICA Saint Lucia Office on June 5, 2009. The project is funded jointly by the United Kingdom based charity, the Travel Foundation, and IICA and supported by five Ministries of Government and SLHTA. Three (3) secondary and five (5)

primary schools are participating in the first phase of the project.



HOOPSS aims at strengthening the linkage between agriculture and tourism through engagement of students in primary and secondary schools.

The Travel Foundation, a UK based registered charity, which works with the outbound travel industry to promote responsible tourism to destinations frequented by British travelers provides partial financing and the MALFF, provides technical support through its Extension Service and Youth in Agriculture programme. The Ministry of Education and Culture is assisting with the coordination of the project activities in the schools, the St Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA) is acting as the liaison between the schools and the hotels and the St Lucia Agricultural Forum for Youth (SLAFY) is assisting with direct implementation.

In addition to exposing students to agricultural science and agri-business

training, the Project is also designed to support the School Feeding Programme in the primary schools and students will be engaged for internships at the various hotels participating in the Project to expose them to careers in the tourism sector and build the linkage with agriculture.

**Rural Women Exhibition:** IICA continued to strive to bring about improvement in the livelihoods of vulnerable groups such as rural women and youth in Saint Lucia. In observance of the International Day of Rural Women celebrated annually on October 15, the office partnered with UNDP and the AGIL Project funded by the European Union under its SFA 2004 programme to finance an exhibition of products and services from rural women in Saint Lucia.



The MALFF and a number of private sector partners made material contributions to the hosting of the event. The exhibition was a first of its kind to be held on the island.





The exhibition held under the theme: *“Valuing the Contribution of Rural Women to the Development of Saint Lucia”* had as its main objective to highlight the contribution that rural women are making to the development of Saint Lucia as well as provide a platform for rural women engaged in a wide array of income generating activities to promote their enterprises and to engage in social networking.

The activity provided the participants with national exposure through radio and television interviews before, during and after the exhibition as well as created opportunities for linking buyers with rural women producers.

The opening ceremony for the exhibition was addressed by women of various organizations which attend to women social and economic affairs while the Governor General of Saint Lucia, Her Excellency Dame Dr. Pearlette Louisy presented the feature address.





**Solar Driers:** During 2009, IICA assisted the MALFF with the identification of need for small rural agro-processors to benefit from the SFA 2001 programme. This resulted in three solar driers being constructed for three small cocoa processors. These solar driers to be used primarily for the drying of cocoa will also be used for the drying of other fruits and agricultural products which require desiccation.

## **Strengthening Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems**

Despite the work done in 2008, there are still challenges to establishing the Coordinating Mechanism for the AHFS System in Saint Lucia. The mechanism is considered very important to building competitiveness in the sector and IICA continued to assist the MALFF in indentifying and crafting strategies for the removal of the constraints preventing its implementation.

Saint Lucia's capacity to maintain the availability of safer food to consumers and protect the environment was enhanced through IICA's leadership and participation on the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board.

The CGPC received the support of IICA to convene its Fourteenth Meeting in Guyana in July.

The Yellow Sigatoka or Leaf Spot Disease as it is commonly called continues to pose a serious threat to the viability of the banana industry in Saint Lucia, and constitutes one of the biggest components of the costs of production for the crop.

Although, the last survey carried out did not report the presence of the Black Sigatoka on the island, its presence has been confirmed in the neighbouring island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia has been placed on alert for its attack.



Copies of the Black Sigatoga Action Plan developed by IICA was recirculated to the community and under the BIT/IICA SFA 2005 Grant, a consultancy contract was awarded to establish an appropriate management system for Black and Yellow Sigatoka Leaf Spot diseases of bananas on the island.

## Promoting the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment



**Latanye/Mauby Project:** The Latanye palm plays a very important economic role in the lives of many rural communities in Saint Lucia because it has traditionally been used to manufacture brooms which are sold both locally and regionally. Traditionally, the palms have been harvested from wild stocks but overharvesting, and changes in land use have meant that in the last two decades the plant has been under the threat of extinction.

The capacity of the members of the Latanye Broom Producers Association was strengthened with the implementation of a service contract, *Institutional Support for Latanye/Mauby Producers in Saint Lucia*, funded under the EU SFA 2005. A plant nursery with capacity to produce ten thousand seedlings was constructed and twenty one (21) members of the group benefited from training in entrepreneurial and business skills, as well as nursery and farm management.

The project, funded under the EU SFA 2005, was successfully implemented over a ten months period during 2009.

Conceptualized in an effort to address some of the challenges facing the local broom industry, one of its main objectives was the establishment of a mechanism to reduce the pressures on the wild Latanye stocks and ensure the conservation of the species.

The Project had two main thrusts, to build the capacity of the Broom Producers Association and to address the threats posed to the Latanye species (*Coccothrinax barbadensis*) in the wild. IICA was the implementing agency for the Project with supervision provided by the Forestry Division of the MALFF.

The broom producers provided in-kind contribution to the Project with the labour for construction of a nursery having the capacity to produce 10,000 seedlings per crop cycle and complete with office facilities from which the group will operate.



Twenty one (21) members of the Broom Producers Association also received small business/entrepreneurial skills training with the aim of boosting their capacity to manage the business activities.

The nursery constructed as part of the project has the capacity to produce 10,000 seedlings and will supply plants to the members of the Broom Producers Association for the establishments of Latanye plantations. Mauby (*Collubrina elliptica*) will be intercropped with the Latanye palms as shade plants but will also have the potential to generate income for the farmers as the branches and stems are used in the manufacture of a commercial beverage.

It is expected that the cultivation of the palm on private plantation will reduce the need to harvest the stocks in the wild but also improve broom quality as greater control can be exercised on harvesting times, leaf maturity and plant growth.

**Farm Waste Disposal:** The disposal of solid waste on farms, especially farms with remote access pose a serious environmental threat. Solid waste gets into rivers and springs and contaminates the water supply, destroying fragile aquatic flora and fauna. New market requirements speaks to more environmentally conscious approach to banana production.

To this end, under the EU SFA 2005 Grant, a consultancy was issued to develop and establish an appropriate system for the collection and disposal of non-biodegradable farm waste (plastic bags, support material such as strings, plastic tapes and agrochemical containers) that will not pose future environmental hazard. The completed report submitted in August 2009 was distributed to the relevant stakeholders. IICA will continue to work with the national authorities to establish a fully

operational system for farm waste collection and disposal.

## **Strengthening Rural Communities based on the Territorial Approach**

**Capacity Building for Rural Women:** During 2009, IICA continued its work of strengthening the capacities of rural women to deal with the challenges to their income generating activities and improve their standards of living.

The capacity of forty-five (45) members of the Saint Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers (SLNRWP) was strengthened through the hosting of two training workshops, one on *Social and Networking Skills* held in partnership with the AGIL Project, an EU SFA 2004 funded project, and the other on *Food*



*Safety Management* hosted in partnership with the UNDP.

In order to better understand the challenges facing the SLNRWP, a training and technical assistance needs assessment was conducted with the aim of tailoring future actions and setting priorities for more effective delivery of services towards

the sustained growth and development of the group and its membership.

IICA also collaborated with the UNDP and the EU AGIL Project to conduct training workshops in Agro-processing, Building Entrepreneurship, Social Networking Skills and Food Safety Management specifically for the Babonneau and Micoud clusters of the SLNRWP.

Two strong clusters emerged in 2009. With respect to the Babonneau Cluster of the SLNRWP, thirty-five (35) members received training in Agro-processing, twenty-five (25) members received training in Building Entrepreneurship, and twenty-five members received training in Social and Networking Skills.

In the Micoud Cluster of the Network, thirty-five (35) members received training in Agro-processing, thirty (30) members received training in Building Entrepreneurship and thirty (30) members received training in Social Networking Skills.

In September 2009, sixteen (16) members of the Babonneau Cluster of the SLNRWP achieved a significant milestone when they completed a course in Food Safety Management and received certificates from the Society of Food Hygiene and Technology of the United Kingdom. The training was hosted by IICA Saint Lucia Office with funding from the UNDP.

SLNRWP increased its membership during the year with the incorporation of the Anse Kawet Crafters Association to the organization. The Anse Kawet Crafters Group is a womens group engaged in the manufacture of craft and handmade soap. It currently has fourteen (14) members.



**Support to Canabelle Cooperative Society:** IICA Saint Lucia with financial contribution from the hemispheric agrotourism programme provided support to the Canabelle Cooperative Society to purchase a semi industrial heavy duty coloured printer to enhance the quality and preparation of labels for their products.

The Cooperative is principally a women based organization and its members are affiliated to the SLNRWP. The Cooperative is engaged in the manufacture of hand made soap using local herbs. This direct intervention is in response to demand on the Cooperative from some hotels that requested improved labels as a conditions for the purchase of the soap. The printer will therefore significantly improve the quality of the labels and potentially lead to an expansion of their markets within the local hotel industry.





**Youth Support:** IICA provided support to the Lancers Football Club in the preparation of a proposal for a project linking youth in sports to agriculture.

The project will be submitted to the Canadian Funds for Local Initiative (CFLI) and if approved, it will be implemented by IICA and the Club. The project will attempt to engage the unemployed members of the Club in productive agricultural activities from which they can raise income to advance the Club and themselves.



SLAFY increased its membership by ten members during the year and had five(5) meetings.

SLAFY continues however, to require support if its is to achieve its full potential. There is need for greater resouces to be expended to strenthen this organization.



**IICA Field Day and Community Outreach:** In November 2009, the staff of the Office embarked on its first field day and community outreach.

The concept emerged as it is felt that the support staff of the Office needs to increase their level of appreciation and understanding of the actual work taking place in the field.

The community outreach included meeting, on their own holdings, with a number of farmers, agro-processors and other persons who have or are benefiting from the work and interventions of IICA.

This activity is also a deliberate strategy by the office to foster greater acceptance of the participatory approach to rural development in Saint Lucia. The activity seeks to strengthen the relationships between the Insitute and its beneficiaries, and also promotes the IICA national agenda and expose more persons to the work of the Insitute and the entire staff complement.

## **Introducing Technology and Innovation for the Modernisation of Agriculture and Rural Life**

### **Greenhouse Hydroponics Training:**

The need for greater diversification in the agricultural sector especially with the current challenges facing the banana industry, has led the MALFF to aggressively promote protected agriculture in an effort to boost agricultural production.

In January 2009, IICA Saint Lucia and the Mexican embassy to the Eastern Caribbean States (ECS) collaborated to bring to Saint Lucia one of the foremost experts in Mexico on green house and hydroponics technologies, from the Colegio de Postgraduados (COLPOS).

Dr. Manuel Sandoval conducted training workshops for farmers and Extension officers of the MALFF. Dr. Sandoval also made a presentation to the agricultural science students of the Marigot Secondary School where IICA Saint Lucia established a Hydroponics Project in 2007.



### **Greenhouse Production under HOOPSS Project:**

Under the HOOPSS Project, six (6) out of the eight (8) schools participating in the Project will produce under green houses. Two new green houses will be constructed, while four already exists but will be rehabilitated for the production of vegetables. All the green houses will be equipped with drip irrigation systems. The Project will thus provide a unique opportunity for students to gain knowledge of the cultivation of crops under green house conditions.

**Biogas Technology:** The IICA Saint Lucia Office followed up its successful visit by pig farmers to view biogas operation in Costa Rica in 2008, by exposing another contingent of pig farmers accompanied by the Director of Agricultural Services of MALFF in 2009. Eleven (11) farmers from Saint Lucia, accompanied by their counterpart pig farmers from Dominica and Grenada, participated in the tour. It is hoped that the exposure to biogas technology will

allow farmers to adopt the technology to reduce their onfarm energy costs, but more importantly to reduce the large quantities of harmful pig pen effluent which enters rivers and springs on the island.

### **Commercial Banana Production:**

Approximately 95% of the 1500 farmers who remain active producers in the banana industry in Saint Lucia produce under the Fair Trade label. In recent times, the introduction of Global Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) standards and the Fair Trade label has meant that farmers need to move away from the high input models of banana production used in the past to more environmentally sustainable methods of production.

Under the BIT/IICA SFA 2005 Grant, a consultant was hired to establish three demonstration plots for banana production in three different sites in the island. The aim here is to demonstrate and train farmers in mangement and technological combinations of banana production which could add to the profitability of the industry given the current market demands.

There is need for a more accurate forecasting and scheduling system for bananas so that proper marketing arrangements can be made to not only maximize the prices which can be obtained for local farmers, but also to ensure that all the fruits produced can be sold.

Under the same Grant, a consultant was engaged to develop a scheduling and forecasting production system for banana production for Saint Lucia. With implementation of the system, it is hoped that the farmer will not incur unnecessary



losses especially with the prevailing conditions of the industry.



# Results of Inter-Agency Cooperation

**IICA/BIT:** IICA and the BIT commenced implementation of the Programme of Work with the formation of a multi stakeholder Monitoring Committee. A number of meetings were held and the first draw down of funds was received by the BIT in May 2009. A technical Project Manager was identified and is assisting IICA to fulfill its obligation to this partnership.



**IICA/CIDA/CFLI:** The two (2) CFLI projects were successfully completed and the reports of the implementation and impact submitted and accepted by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).



**IICA/CARDI:** IICA and Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) continued its successful partnership under cooperation to highlight the links between research and the development agenda in Saint Lucia.



The two projects which commence in late 2008 under the IICA/CARDI cooperation agreement were executed with and results shared with the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries and the general public at the CARDI Open Day held at the CARDI Field Station in LaRessource, Dennery.



**IICA/UNDP:** Throughout 2009, IICA and the UNDP continued to work to strengthen the capacity of the rural women in an effort to address the poverty situation in the rural communities of Saint Lucia. The UNDP provided financial support for training, for the establishment of a Revolving Fund for the Babonneau Cluster of the SLNRWP and also supported the participation of women in the National Exhibition.



**IICA/UK TRAVEL FOUNDATION:** The Travel Foundation provided partial funding for the implementation of the HOOPSS project.

# **Result of Horizontal Technical Cooperation**

## **Support from the Centre for Leadership**

Horizontal cooperation efforts to build capacity and transfer adaptable technology into the agriculture and rural sectors of Saint Lucia continued with the ongoing training in Costa Rica of eleven (11) farmers and technicians from the MALFF in the construction and installation of low cost biogas digesters.

The Centre for Leadership in IICA Headquarters once again provided support in organising the visit. The training was conducted by Armonia Natural Farm.

## **Support from the Office in Jamaica**

The Representative in Jamaica accepted the kind invitation of the Office and supported the execution of the National Exhibition held for Rural Women in Commemoration of the International Day of Rural Women on October 15.

# **New Opportunities for Technical Cooperation**

## **USAID/OFDALAC Initiative**

The goals of the national Hazard Mitigation Policy are to: develop social, economic, and environmentally sustainable measures that minimise the risks of hazards and to incorporate hazard risk reduction in everyday activities at every level of society.

IICA participated in a meeting hosted by the National Emergency and Management Organization (NEMO) to seek proposals for Disaster Risk Reduction in Agriculture. Funding for the projects will be made available through the United States Agency for International Development/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance for Latin American and the Caribbean (USAID/OFDALAC). IICA will prepare a proposal for submission to the organization for executing a Project in a rural community in Saint Lucia.

## Main Activities Supported by IICA

<b>Official Name of Event</b>	<b>Date Held</b>	<b>Site of the Event</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Place and Date of publication of the Report of the Event</b>
<b>Annual Accountability Seminar</b>	March 31	National Insurance Corporation (NIC) Conference Room	58	Office in Saint Lucia/May 2009
<b>Launching of HOOPSS Project</b>	June 8	IICA Office	20	N/A
<b>Biogas Mission to Costa Rica</b>	July 13-19	Costa Rica	11	N/A
<b>Training of Agriculture Science Teachers/Green House Farmers</b>	September 16	Ministry of Education Conference Room	25	N/A
<b>Rural Women Exhibition</b>	October 15	Micoud Multi-Purpose Centre	100	Office in Saint Lucia/October 2009

## **List of Publications**

IICA's Contribution to the Development of Agriculture and Rural Communities, (2007, Castries, Saint Lucia). 2008 Annual Report. 38p.

IICA Rural Women Exhibition: SLU (Saint Lucia) Oct.2009. CD-ROM.

*After 25 years of dedicated service to the Institute, the staff of IICA across the ECS bid farewell to Mr Everton Ambrose in July 2009.*



Castries, Saint Lucia  
2010

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