

IICA's Contribution to Agriculture and the Development of Rural Communities in the Commonwealth of DOMINICA for 2004.

1. Introduction

In order to reposition agriculture to ensure that it is sustainable and competitive, the IICA office in Dominica continues to make a significant contribution to the development of the agriculture sector and the rural communities. The achievements of IICA in Dominica for 2004 to reposition agriculture was made possible by the indispensable role played by our institutional partners, the private sector and the public sector in the agriculture sector at the national and regional levels. The collaboration with our partners was particularly outstanding in areas of human resource development and strengthening rural communities to meet the challenges and requirements of global trade. Special tribute must be paid to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment, despite severe staff shortages and an overburden of responsibilities and severe financial constraints, participated fully with IICA in implementation of the technical cooperation activities.

The activities for 2004 took place in the context of the National Agenda developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment, NGO's and the private sector. These activities were implemented against the background of declining contributions of agriculture to economic and social development as reflected in the decline in Gross Domestic Product from an average of 19 % during 1997 – 2002, to 17.5% during 2003. This decline was primarily due to trade liberalisation in banana trading in the UK. In addition, market access requirements particularly compliance to regulatory norms, import substitution, limited human talent in the agricultural sector, food security, and rural poverty are major challenges facing the sector.

The report is presented in the following sections:

- ❖ The state of agriculture and rural life in the Commonwealth of Dominica
- ❖ Summary of the national agenda
- ❖ Results of technical cooperation for 2004
 - Facilitating competitiveness and global trade
 - Promoting food safety and agricultural health
 - Strengthening rural communities
 - Hemispheric integration
 - Developing human capital
 - Environmental management
 - Institutional modernization
- ❖ Inter-Agency Cooperation
- ❖ Support provided in the development of national plans and strategies
- ❖ Future opportunities for cooperation

2. Executive Summary

During 2004, the IICA office in Dominica implemented activities to contribute positively to sustainable agricultural development, food security and rural prosperity. These activities took place in the context of the National Agenda developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment and the private sector. The major results achieved by IICA in Dominica for 2004 can be summarised as follows:

Facilitating competitiveness and global trade

The office organized and conducted a national consultation, under the theme “*Strengthening Agriculture for the Sustainable Growth and Development of Dominica*”. The issues presented included the Conditioning Environment (hemispheric, regional and sub regional), Market Success: beyond WTO Access, Evolution of the Global Food Market and Challenges and Opportunities for Agricultural Repositioning. The consultation identified four major growth opportunities in Agriculture – fisheries, convenience foods, non- Food (cut-flowers and craft), and health and wellness (Ecotourism/agro-tourism, Organic Herbs and spices). Inadequate institutional support, weak human capital and limited capability to implement agricultural health and food safety systems, were identified as the key binding constraints to capitalize on growth opportunities identified.

Promoting Food Safety and Agricultural Health

A National Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NSPSC) is established and became functional in 2004. The NSPSC will be a sub-committee to the National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Committee (NAHFSC) when formalized. The 13 members of the NSPSC include two organizations (IICA and CARDI) with observer status, and three private sector representatives. The other members come from the Ministries of Agriculture (five), Trade (two) and Health. IICA provided technical and financial assistance for support of the Citrus Tristeza Virus control programme under the IICA Agricultural Health and Food Safety Emergencies and Emerging Issues Fund or Investment Funds.

Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, Export Development Unit (OECS/EDU) received funding from CIDA/CPEC to execute a project entitled “In-Plant HACCP Readiness Implementation and Human Resource management Enhancement for Increased Competitiveness of the Agro- business sector in Dominica. Consequently, IICA and the Bureau of Standards provided significant “in kind” contribution in training in Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for exporters, agro-processors, and training in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) inspection and audit for nine extension officers from both the private (6) and public sector (3).

Strengthening Rural Communities

National Development Foundation of Dominica (NDFD) disbursed three loans to successful participants under the UNESCO funded project entitled “*Enhancing the Participation of Marginalized Youth in the Development Process of the Eastern Caribbean States*” on the approval of the IICA office. EU funds (50% grant) and project

funds (50% loan at concessionary rates and without collateral security) provided funding for the three projects. The projects approved were ***Bee Keeping (US\$5,224), Plant Propagation of forest species (US\$4,478) and Agro-processing (US\$5,224).***

The Carib people at a participatory stakeholder workshop attended by 144 stakeholders representing fishermen, producers, craft, artist, boat builders, and civil society endorsed IICA's membership on the Caribbean Regional Environmental Programme (CREP) Dominica Demonstration Activities Board in the Carib Territory based on the record of accomplishment of IICA in rural development within the Carib Territory.

Hemispheric Integration

National Association of Youth in Agriculture (NAYA) promoted and supported by IICA, received a license within the Commonwealth of Dominica on April 01, 2004 and is now a legitimate Non Profit Organization and as such, its name is now National Association of Youth in Agriculture Incorporated. NAYA celebrated one year in existence with an annual general meeting with the theme "*Close Encounters with Agriculture*".

APAD also facilitated the participation of its membership in several national and regional trade shows, national seminars and facilitation of linkages with the tourism sector. Facilitated an evaluative visioning exercise along with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Gender Fund with the Giraudel Flower Group (GFG), to assist them in charting a way forward.

Developing Human Capital

The Entrepreneurial skills of organic producers were enhanced by the organization of a five-day workshop funded by IICA/CIDA/CPEC. The office continued to provide support to key entities (NAYA, APAD, WINFA and NIPPA) in the organization of seminars, courses and workshops to improve managerial skills. The Office also supported the participation of technicians, from the Ministry of Agriculture, to international and regional seminars and meetings organised by IICA.

Environmental Management

IICA in collaboration with FAVA/CA trained 16 participants in beeswax by-products using low technology and local products. The products developed from the training included Beeswax Leather Polish, Beeswax bath bar, Beeswax Tanning Butter, Beeswax Lotion bar, Beeswax saddle soap and Beeswax soap scrub. Participants can now access information from other users of Beeswax by joining the information forum at caribbeansoapers@yahoogroups.com.

Institutional Modernization

Fortnightly press releases were submitted by the office and published in various local newspapers, providing information on the trade negotiations, the conditioning environment, and activities of the Institute.

3. The State Of Agriculture And Rural Life In The Commonwealth Of Dominica In 2004

3.1 *Recent performance in the expanded agricultural sector*

The Agriculture sector continued in 2004 to make significant contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (16 % of GDP), foreign exchange earnings (US\$14.5 million), employment (20 % of labour force) and rural development as well as indirect contributions to the sectors of Tourism, Environment and Culture. The overall performance of the agriculture sector in the Commonwealth of Dominica continues to be influenced by the performance of the banana industry. In 2004 the banana industry exported approximately 12,975 tonnes at a value of US\$6.4 million in comparison to 2003 when 10,558 tonnes was exported at a value of US\$5.1 million. Total agricultural exports increased from US\$12.5 million in 2003 to US\$14.5 million in 2004 as a direct result of the improvement in banana production from 10,558 tonnes in 2003 to 12,975 tonnes in 2004 (23% increase) which led to direct improvements in foreign exchange earnings from US\$12.3 million in 2003 to US\$14.5 in 2004 (18% increase). The reliance on bananas and the failure to develop systems that will achieve sustainable diversification has contributed to the continued vulnerability of the agriculture sector.

3.2 *Critical issues in the international and national context that impact agriculture and rural life*

Based on the importance of bananas to the economy of Dominica, actions taken by the EU to conform with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rulings following the successful challenges to its banana import regime is critical to the future of bananas in Dominica. The latest action by the EU to conform to WTO is the intention to introduce a single tariff at the start of 2006. The EU had notified other WTO members of its intention to enter into consultations and negotiations on the issue of bananas. The Commission announced its proposed tariff level in 2004 and began consultations shortly thereafter. Despite advances in efficiency and improved quality, the differential between the competitive Latin American producers and the Caribbean producers including Dominica remained wide, resulting in the loss of market share and falling exports in the latter. One of the major challenges facing the Windward Islands including Dominica is to ensure, through diplomatic and other means, that the changes to the EU market during the next four years and beyond, preserve the required favourable and preferential access terms essential to their ability to dispose of their bananas in Europe on a remunerative basis.

Critical issues to be pursued in the regional context - Undertaking careful, rigorous and enlightened consideration of the possible measures which, in the current circumstances, would genuinely provide continued secure and remunerative access for CARICOM bananas; and devising and adopting, based on the outcome of the above, a set of aims and objectives and a detailed but adaptable strategy to be pursued by all CARICOM States. This would entail full and active participation in the tariff consultations and negotiations.

3.3. *The status of living conditions in rural communities*

Poverty in Dominica is high in comparison to most Caribbean standards – around 29% of households and 40% of the population. Around 10% of households are indigent, i.e. very poor. Poverty exists in urban and rural areas; however, three quarters of poor households are in rural areas. The remainder are to be found in the main towns of Roseau and Portsmouth. Poverty amongst the Caribs is much higher: 70% of the Carib population are poor and almost half are indigent although they constitute under 10% of all poor households (Dominica Poverty assessment, 2002). Statistically, poverty trends cannot be ascertained with any confidence owing to the lack of comparable surveys in previous years. However, previous studies indicate that poverty was already severe in the mid 1990s. In all likelihood, poverty has increased in the last few years due to the continued decline in the economy accompanied by a pronounced deterioration in government finances. Aside from the concentration in rural areas (where households previously providing labour to the banana plantations have fared worst), poverty disproportionately affects children: 70% of poor households have children as against only 44% for not poor households; around half Dominica's children live in poor households. Although there is little statistical relationship between poverty and single parenthood, the elderly, gender, health, disability and young motherhood, most indigent households exhibit one or more of these characteristics together with an almost total absence of family support.

Rural poverty is a major challenge facing the sector. In an effort to achieve sustainable development of the agriculture sector, the promotion of linkages with the other sectors through various cooperation activities was undertaken in Dominica for 2004.

4. Summary Of The National Agenda

The priority issues identified for the period 2002 - 2006 are shown below:

- ❖ Develop National policies and strategies aimed at modernization and diversification of the agricultural sector with specific attention to production, product development, marketing, investment and sustainable management of natural resources.
- ❖ Establish mechanism for effective coordination between public and private sector agencies involved in agricultural and rural transformation.
- ❖ Generate and access improved appropriate technology for improved productivity in the agri-food sector.
- ❖ Develop national policy consistent with regional policy on GMO, and use of biotechnology in agriculture.

- ❖ Improve potential for commodity exports by meeting requirements for food safety, SPS and product standards through legislation and regulations, improved infrastructure and capacity building.
- ❖ Develop a national agricultural information system.
- ❖ Provide capacity building at all levels of the agric-food through training of the human resource with special emphasis on developing entrepreneurial skills and technical competencies required for modernization of the agricultural sector.
- ❖ Provide the enabling environment to foster growth and development of farmer organizations and rural based community groups involved in developmental activities such as agro-processing, agro-tourism/eco-tourism, commodity production and marketing.

5. Results of Technical Cooperation for 2004

The major results achieved by IICA in Dominica for 2004 can be highlighted as follows:

5.1 *Facilitating Competitiveness And Global Trade*

The office supported the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment in preparing for the design of the agricultural sector and agrifood policy by organizing and conducting a national consultation, under the theme “*Strengthening Agriculture for the Sustainable Growth and Development of Dominica*”. In order to stimulate and facilitate dialogue to contribute to the development of the agricultural policy, the following issues were presented: The Conditioning Environment- globalisation of agriculture, trade liberalisation including the WTO, FTAA and the CSME (hemispheric, regional and sub regional), the Doha development agenda in context of the Draft Agricultural Framework and trade and integration movements. The major Western Hemispheric integration arrangements were presented to highlight the opportunities and range of challenges facing agriculture in the Caribbean. Main Free Trade Agreements (FTA) presented were the 1974 Canadian Generalized Preferential Tariffs (GPT), 1983 U.S. Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery ACT (CBERA), 1986 Caribbean-Canada Agreement, 1991 US Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), 1993 CARICOM-Venezuela, 1995 CARICOM-Colombia, 1998 CARICOM-Dominican Republic, 2000 CARICOM-Cuba Trade & Cooperation Agreement, 2004 CARICOM-Costa Rica. The link between several of the Latin American and Caribbean integration processes was emphasised in terms of both the countries' negotiating skills and opportunities for economic cooperation. Market Success: beyond WTO Access highlighted market access not synonymous with business success due to the application of major standards to agriculture and food. The standards of the future will focus on “no carbohydrates foods”, children’s food, environmental standards, and on farm food safety issues. Evolution of

the Global Food Market was also presented, and focussed on the food market demand and the technologies available to increase agricultural production and supply. The consultation concluded with an examination of the challenges and opportunities for agricultural repositioning in context of the various initiatives linking the Hemispheric, Regional and Sub regional policies and strategies. The consultation identified four major growth opportunities in Agriculture – fisheries, convenience foods, non- Food (cut-flowers and craft), and health and wellness (Ecotourism/agro-tourism, Organic Herbs and spices). Twenty-five (25) participants were strengthened in accessing information essential to the design of agricultural policies. All participants took active participation in the consultation and contributed positively to the development of proposals and policies to alleviate key binding constraints affecting the sustainability of the agricultural sector. The consultation benefited from having fourteen (14) stakeholders from the private sector and eleven (11) participants from the public sector.



Institutional partners, private and public stakeholders in the Agriculture Sector at Consultation

5.2 Promoting Food Safety and Agricultural Health

IICA facilitated the attendance of agricultural technicians to three WTO/SPS committee meetings in Geneva for 2004 in March, June and October. A National Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Committee (NSPSC) is established and became functional in 2004 with the technical and financial assistance from IICA. The NSPSC will be a sub-committee to the National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Committee (NAHFSC) when formalized. The 13 members of the NSPSC include two organizations (IICA and CARDI) with observer status, and three private sector representatives. The other members come from the Ministries of Agriculture (five), Trade (two) and Health (one). Draft terms of reference for the National SPS Committee and the national agenda for SPS in Dominica have been developed and will be endorsed by members in 2005. The National SPS Committee is fairly broad based and remains the principal mechanism for in country reporting on SPS Committee meetings in Geneva and SPS matter in general. However, the extent of active private sector participation remains an area for improvement. The NSPSC met formally for six meetings and identified and prioritized the following technical issues to be discussed on the agenda of the SPS committee of the WTO in 2004. The main issues identified were:

- ❖ Regionalization - The NSPSC is interested in both the use of sterile males in fruit fly control and the establishment of a pest free area in a selected agro ecological zone in Dominica where the incidence of pest has not been reported and is non-

existent. The NSPSC is particularly interested in the experience of Jamaica with Bananas and hot peppers with regards to pest free zones; and has expressed special interest in the Peru initiative concerning the introduction of sterile males for fruit fly control.

- ❖ Trade concerns with regards to new and emerging diseases, diseases of zoonotic importance and other food safety issues such as avian influenza, and BSE were issues prioritised. The NSPSC is particularly concerned with the national capacity (technical, financial and institutional) for monitoring control and eradication of pest and disease in the event that there is an unavoidable introduction of foreign animal and to a lesser extent plant diseases into Dominica.
- ❖ SPS Standards – the committee reviewed five international standards for phytosanitary measures developed by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). The standards reviewed by committee members are:
 1. The guidelines on the concept of equivalence of phytosanitary measures and its application in international trade;
 2. Guidelines for inspection of consignments;
 3. Guidelines for consignment in transit;
 4. Guidelines for the export, shipment, import and release of biological control agents and beneficial organisms; and
 5. Requirements for the establishment, maintenance and verification of areas of low pest prevalence.

The NSPSC is in the process of implementing the national SPS agenda, and development of a public awareness and sensitisation programme to address SPS issues. IICA is actively involved in facilitating these initiatives.

IICA provided technical and financial assistance for support of the Citrus Tristeza Virus (CTV) control programme under the IICA Agricultural Health and Food Safety Emergencies and Emerging Issues Fund or Investment Funds. Resistant planting material to CTV in the form of resistant rootstocks from the USA and certified budwood from Belize made available to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment to re-establish lime, orange and tangerines in affected areas of CTV.

IICA in collaboration with the Plant Protection Unit in the Division of agriculture assessed the technical capability of the national plant protection service to apply sanitary measures and science based procedures. The Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool developed by FAO was utilised to assess the technical capability in the following areas: Pest Diagnostic capabilities, Inspection system at points of entry and exit, and Export certification. The evaluation highlighted significant discrepancies with regard to capabilities of the human resources particularly concerning the use of specialist, equipment and procedures to ensure protection of the local environment. The assessment also highlighted the non-compliance of the existing legislation with regards to the reporting in the event of an introduction of a new pest and disease. The Inspection systems at points of entry and exit have documented procedures and a legal mandate to implement, however, the limited facilities and equipment prevents the application of science-based procedures. The procedures for export certification were

found to be adequate, however, the retrieval and storage of information, the lines of communication and the documentation procedures were limited. Whereas the capability to conduct general surveys was assessed to be adequate, the capability to conduct specific surveys and to manage them effectively was seen to be inadequate from the evaluation tool.

5.3 Strengthening Rural Communities

Options for contractual arrangements in the local fresh produce supply chain explored in Dominica through the conduct of a survey to determine needs of the hotels, tour operators, restaurants and cottages with regards to supply of fresh produce to both stay over tourism and in transit tourism. Results of survey to be collated analysed and disseminated in 2005.

National Development Foundation of Dominica (NDFD) disbursed three loans to successful participants under the UNESCO funded project entitled “*Enhancing the Participation of Marginalized Youth in the Development Process of the Eastern Caribbean States*” on the approval of the IICA Office. EU funds (50% grant) and project funds (50% loan at concessionary rates and without collateral security) provided funding for the three projects. The projects approved were ***Bee Keeping (US\$5,224)***, ***Plant Propagation of Forest Species (US\$4,478)*** and ***Agro-processing (US\$5,224)***. In addition, the office facilitated the participation of the loan beneficiaries (five rural youth) to attend a five-day workshop organized by the Bureau of Standards in collaboration with CARIRI from Trinidad and Tobago in *Packaging and Labelling*. Participant’s knowledge strengthened in the options available for packaging of processed foods and regulatory requirements in domestic and international markets were the main issues highlighted.

The Caribbean Regional Environmental Programme (CREP) is a milestone regional sustainable development initiative authorized by CARIFORUM and financed by the EU (Euro 100,000). The overall objective of CREP is to enhance the contribution of natural areas of biodiversity and economic significance requiring special management interventions (Amenity Areas) to ensure the sustainable development of the Carib Territory. CREP is mandated to meet its objective by undertaking Amenity Area Demonstration Projects to demonstrate a model for sustainable development by combining the objectives of environmental management with promotion of sustainable livelihoods. The Amenity area, the Carib Territory was identified through consultation, poverty assessment report and was also identified by IICA to develop the concept of a Territorial approach to sustainable development of a community. Based on similar goals and objectives, IICA collaborated with the Division of Forestry and Wildlife to ensure effective utilisation of scarce resources to benefit the people of the Carib Territory. An Amenity Area Stakeholder Board was established to advise in project management of the CREP Amenity Area Demonstration Project in Dominica. The Board adequately and equitably represents the interest of all stakeholders in the Carib Territory. The Carib people at a participatory stakeholder workshop attended by one hundred and forty-four (144) stakeholders representing fishermen, producers, craft, artist, boat builders, and

civil society endorsed IICA's membership on the CREP Board in the Carib Territory to ensure transparent and participatory operations of the project. In addition, IICA was chosen based on the record of accomplishment of IICA in rural development within the Carib Territory and the concept of a territorial approach to sustainable development. Decisions regarding the use of resources allocated to the project, direction and relations between stakeholders are some of the functions of the board. The main objective of the CREP project in the Carib Territory includes the development of a participatory land use map, a land use plan for the Carib Territory, a natural resource management plan, a governance system manual, development of a five year operations plan, and the improvement in the human resource capacity of persons within the territory in Participatory Management and Environmental Awareness.

5.4 Hemispheric Integration

National Association of Youth in Agriculture (NAYA) promoted and supported by IICA, received a license within the Commonwealth of Dominica on April 01, 2004 and is now a legitimate Non Profit Organization and as such, its name is now National Association of Youth in Agriculture incorporated. It celebrated one year in existence with an annual general meeting with the theme: "Close Encounters with Agriculture".



Minister of Education, Sports and Youth Affairs donating cheque valued at US\$3,732 to President of NAYA at AGM

Agro Processors Association of Dominica (APAD), the local chapter of CABA received technical support from IICA in the design of a questionnaire to determine the needs of its members by conducting a needs-assessment survey based on priority problems. Members of APAD were made aware of the multilateral trading systems (WTO/FTAA/SCME) by facilitating information exchange among stakeholders. Also, training was provided to members with special emphasis on Good Agricultural Practices, entrepreneurial skills and technical competencies required for modernization of the agro-processing sector. APAD also facilitated the participation of its membership in several national and regional trade shows, national seminars and facilitation of linkages with the tourism sector.

The Office facilitated two members of Giraudel Flower Group to attend the Caribbean Network of Rural WOMEN Producers (CANROP) Strategic-planning Workshop in St. Lucia to enable formation of a national chapter in Dominica in 2005.

IICA Dominica facilitated a member of the Dominica Association of Herbal Researchers and Practitioners to attend the annual general meeting of the Caribbean Herbal Business Association (CHBA) in Barbados to enable establishment of a national chapter of CHBA in Dominica where a proposal of collecting 40% of membership fees collected from local chapter would go towards CHBA to ensure sustainability.

5.5 Developing Human Capital

The office continued to provide support to key entities (NAYA, Windward Island farmers Association-WINFA, National Fair Trade, Dominica Export Import Agency-DEXIA, Coal Pot and NIPPA) in the organization of a five-day workshop to improve managerial skills and entrepreneurial skills of organic producers. The workshop was implemented in collaboration with the Division of Agriculture, CIDA/CPEC and Ross Agric Services. The workshop strengthened the managerial skills of the 15 participants involved in organic production and marketing in the following areas: *Introduction to Management, Goal Setting and Decision-Making, Basics of the Business Plan, Business Plan Linkages, The Financial Plan, Records & Statements, The Balance Sheet, The Income Statement, Cash Flow Statement & Projections, Inventory and Cost of Production, Financial Analysis and Interpretation, Bank Statements and Reconciliation, Business Contracts and Insurance, Credit Management & Loan Requests, Credit and Financing, The Production Plan, The Marketing Plan, The Basics of Marketing, Value-added and/or Diversification, Methods of Marketing and Selling Agricultural Products, Human Resource Management Plan.*

In collaboration with the Regional Specialist in Agribusiness and the Caribbean Regional Intern/Scholarship Program (CRISP), a five-day workshop entitled “Charting A Way To Higher Profits For Agribusiness Entrepreneurs” was held targeting rural women and youth. The workshop provided training to improve the knowledge and business skills of nineteen (19) participants (small agric-



Participants at five-day workshop “Charting a way to higher profits for agribusiness entrepreneurs”

entrepreneurs) in the following areas: Entrepreneurship and Small Business Readiness, Introduction to Small Business Finance, Computer Assisted Tools for Agribusiness, Human Resource Management/Group Dynamics, Marketing Agricultural Products and Trade Related issues with regards to Food and Environmental Safety. A questionnaire was administered to fifteen (15) participants prior to commencement of the training to provide information on the training needs and performance objectives on completion of the training programme by the participants. On completion of the workshop, the evaluation conducted, highlighted the strengths (appropriate content, facility and



Rural women and youth exposed to computers for agribusiness

methodology) and weaknesses (time), and provided information that will assist IICA to improve on the delivery of our services to meet the demands of the small entrepreneurs-entrepreneurs throughout the region. The participants received a Business Management Training Manual to enable them to use the principles taught in the establishment of sustainable businesses and producers groups.

The Office also supported the participation of technicians, from the Ministry of Agriculture, to the Regional Organic Training Workshop in Jamaica from March 22–25, and from DEXIA, to the International Organic Training Session in Costa Rica from February 9–16, 2004. Both training sessions were organised by IICA/CIDA/CPEC in the project entitled “Diversification of Exports in the Caribbean through the Development of Organic Horticulture Phase I: Development of the Organizational and Management Capacity of Stakeholder Organization”. Both training sessions were interactive and participatory, and also strengthened the capacity of both DEXIA and the Division of Agriculture on meeting the requirement for export of organics.

IICA Dominica collaborated with the Caribbean Region Education and Training Programme in the implementation of a pilot study to determine the training and education needs of farmers, extension agents, agribusiness and agricultural financial institutions in the Commonwealth of Dominica to enable them to compete in a liberalized and globalise world. Twenty-nine (29) farmers, eleven (11) extension agents, seven (7) agribusinesses, and three (3) agric-financial institutions were interviewed to design and develop a new model of training and education for stakeholders within the agricultural sector. The total population of farmers participating in the study expressed their interest in participating in training programs that meet their needs, as long as they don't have to leave their productive activities. Majority of the participants (92%) expressed willingness to participate in training programmes that will improve the income derived from agricultural activities. However, a number of factors were identified by farmers that limit the interest of participating in training activities, such as: lack of funds to cover training expenses (40%); lack of time (36%), this is the main problem for females; and the low level of education (27%), in the case of male farmers. One important finding of the study was the willingness of the farmers (91%), to participate in training activities using computers and electronic technologies. In the survey the participants had the opportunity of identifying the priorities areas, they considered necessary for the economical sustainability of their agriculture and business operations. Farmer's priority areas are: organic agriculture, good agricultural practices, marketing, business management, and vegetable production. Extension agents' areas of training identified are: marketing, computer programs, business management, rural development, and organic agriculture. Agribusiness entrepreneurs participating in the study identified the following areas for training: marketing, project management, computer applications in agriculture/business, good manufacturing practices (GMP), HACCP, and business management.

Biotechnology is a new field and the interaction of genetically modified organisms with the various ecosystems are not yet fully known and understood. As a result, the office facilitated the strengthening of seventeen (17) public sector technical officers in the

Division of Agriculture, Division of Forestry, Custom and Excise Division, Fisheries Division and Trade Division in the use of biotechnology in agriculture at a national consultation to review the Draft Biosafety and Biotechnology Management Bill. In addition, the office facilitated and supported the training of twenty-six (26) public officers involved in the safety inspections for the animal, agricultural, food and health sectors. The Environmental Coordinating Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organized the five-day workshop on Biosafety Risk Assessment. IICA facilitated the workshop in the following areas: *Introduction to Biotechnology*- history, nature, scope, benefits, concerns re: health, environment and socioeconomic. *Biodiversity and Biotechnology*- utilization of biodiversity products and its links with the agricultural sector, conservation and utilization of biological diversity, traditional and new techniques for genetic diversity assessment. *Biotechnology applications towards sustainable agriculture*-trends and policy interventions.

5.6 Environmental Management

The Institute promoted technologies for enhancing local production and competitiveness in the areas of organics (Bananas and passionfruit). In addition, the office supported the Division of Agriculture in the training of farmers in the establishment and maintenance of conventional passion fruit using the demonstration plot established in 2003.

The office supported the initiative to increase private and public investment in technological development to highlight the new opportunities available from bee related activities for upgrading the competitiveness of the Bee industry in Dominica. IICA supported the initiative by strengthening the capabilities for technology innovation in Bee related activities. As a result of the above, IICA in collaboration with FAVA/CA trained sixteen (16) participants (Six Rural women:- two from The Coal Pot, one from the Dominica Essential Oils and Spices Cooperative, one from Candle Industries and two from Nature's Touch; Five Young Bee keepers; one participant from NAYA; two participants from the Division of Agriculture:- the Produce Chemist Laboratory and the Livestock Unit; and two participants from the private sector:- President of the Dominica Foundation of Herbal Researchers and Practitioners and the Executive Officer of the Springfield Guest

Participant preparing Beeswax bath bar for packaging



House. The workshop was held in a room with a whiteboard and a projector screen. The participants were engaged in a hands-on activity, and the atmosphere was collaborative and focused.

House) in beeswax by-products using low technology and local products. The products developed from the training included Beeswax Leather Polish, Beeswax Bath Bar, Beeswax Tanning Butter, Beeswax Lotion bar, Beeswax saddle soap and Beeswax soap scrub. Participants can now access information from other users of Beeswax by joining the information forum at caribbeansoapers@yahoo.com. The amount of information available to the participants (Beekeepers, NAYA members, Produce Chemist Lab and rural women) was restricted due to the unavailability of raw materials necessary to conduct the training as a result of air access problems to Dominica by American Airlines. The volunteer from FAVA/CA was unable to develop beeswax by-products for the following: Beeswax Lip Balm, Beeswax Lotion, Beeswax Tapers, Beeswax Container Candles and beeswax T-shirt design. Despite restrictions in the number of products developed, the participants have access to technologies to produce and market at least six (6) types of Beeswax by-products and can be available for project formulation.

5.7 Institutional Modernization

Fortnightly press releases were submitted by the office and published in various local newspapers, providing information on the Trade Negotiations, the conditioning environment, and activities of the Institute concerning workshops and seminars. The office also participated in radio and television programmes raising the public awareness on Food Safety, GAP and Biodiversity.

Twenty-five (25) major stakeholders from both private and public sector institutions involved directly and indirectly with the agricultural sector and rural communities were presented with IICA publications for 2004: IICA News Bulletin; Access Bulletin; AgriView; and CARAPHIN Newsletter.

6. Inter- Agency Cooperation

Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, Export Development Unit (OECS/EDU) received funding from CIDA/CPEC to execute a project entitled “In-Plant HACCP Readiness Implementation and Human Resource management Enhancement for Increased Competitiveness of the Agro- business sector in Dominica. Consequently, IICA and the Bureau of Standards provided significant “in kind” contribution in training in Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for exporters, agro-processors, and training in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) inspection and audit for nine extension officers from both the private (6) and public sector (3).

Supported a three- day workshop organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment in collaboration with the FAO CARICOM/CARIFORUM Food Security Project entitled: “Introduction to Trade Negotiations and Trade Policy Analysis”.

Facilitated an evaluative visioning exercise along with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Gender Fund with the Giraudel Flower Group (GFG), to assist them in charting a way forward.

Participated in the Caribbean Regional Science and Technology meeting entitled: “Enhancing the Science and Technology Dialogue – Innovation for Development” organized by the Caribbean Council for Science and technology (CCST) in collaboration with the CTA. The stakeholders from the Caribbean reflected and discussed science, technology and innovation issues to support the policies and strategies of the CCST and the Caribbean in meeting our national and regional developmental goals.

Collaborated with CRISP/USAID and CIDA/CPEC in the implementation of two five-day workshops for rural women and youth involved in agriculture. Both workshops strengthened the participants in managerial and entrepreneurial skills to enable sustainable agribusiness development.

Supported and promoted the development of a national agricultural information system in collaboration with the Caribbean Agribusiness Marketing and Intelligence Development (CAMID) network through the technical assistance project of the Food and Agriculture Organization and CARIFORUM. IICA is a member of the National Implementation Committee (NIC) to implement both the Product Supply Forecast Service (PSFS) and the Agricultural Marketing and Production Database (AMPD). Document outlining the national operational strategies and implications of adoption for both the PSFS and AMPD will be prepared by the national committee to be circulated among national stakeholders in 2005.

7. Support Provided in the Development of National Plans and Strategies

In Dominica the office organized and conducted a national consultation “Strengthening Agriculture for the Sustainable Growth and Development of Dominica” in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture. The consultation sought to reinforce policy formulation as a “process” that is built on consultation between and among all stakeholders and actors. The consultation which was addressed by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, sought to identify plans, strategies and policies to alleviate binding constraints to agricultural development. This stakeholder consultation was also a part of the preparatory process for the regional workshop in “*Development Policies and Proposals for Alleviating Key Binding Constraints to Agriculture in the Caribbean.*” At the end of the consultation the participants were sensitised on the process and on the range of critical issues and their implications for national agricultural development. The consultation identified the following key critical issues and binding constraints to agricultural transformation at the national level that would become the basis for response to comprehensively address these at the regional level:

- a. inadequacy and inefficiency of the regional transport and logistics services and other critical infrastructure;

- b. outdated and inefficient national agricultural health and food safety systems, services and infrastructure;
- c. continued exposure of the agricultural sector to natural disasters and market induced risks; and
- d. inadequacy of the research, development and technology transfer system and services.

In 2005, the consultation process will continue within the agriculture sector including private sector stakeholders to further plan and prepare to make substantial progress towards economic, social and environmental sustainability and contributing significantly to national and regional development by 2015.

8. Future Opportunities for Cooperation

Promote the use of methodologies and instruments for dialogue and consensus building on a regular basis to identify strategic issues towards the development of a medium-long term vision, plan and strategy for the development of the sector, with built-in short-term mechanisms for review and reorientation as necessary. The establishment of the national alliance and the supporting networks of Rural Women, Research and Farmers, NAYA, APAD and Private Sector will foster systematic consultations among all stakeholders in the agricultural sector on development of a national policy for repositioning agriculture.

Mechanisms for expanding trade in hot peppers, organics and flowers to be designed to increase trade on the domestic and regional markets. Provision of technical assistance in implementing market information processes, and identifying and disseminating requirements for market access of flowers to enter the Barbados market.

IICA Dominica intends to strengthen national capabilities for technology innovation by supporting initiatives to increase public and private investment in technology development, so as to make it possible to address new priorities for upgrading the competitiveness of agribusinesses. Improved capabilities of rural communities in Green House technologies and water management aimed at increasing production and quality of vegetables and flowers will be pursued in 2005.