

GUYANA

2005 Annual Report

The Contribution of IICA to the Development of Agriculture and Rural Communities



Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

FOREWORD

The year 2005 was an extremely challenging one for Guyana's economy as a whole and, by extension, for the agricultural and rural sectors. As a result, programmed activities of the Office were curtailed and efforts made to support the country in mitigating some of these challenges.

*The revised **National Agenda** continued to be the main source of our programmed actions, which reflected the priorities and activities highlighted therein. During the year, however, other activities were added following discussions with the national authorities. For example, an initiative aimed at the revitalisation of the Pork Industry in the country was undertaken at the request of the Minister of Agriculture. The naming of a Committee by the Minister of Agriculture to liaise with IICA boosted the planning and implementation of Office activities in 2005.*

In spite of the many challenges faced by Guyana, the country achieved some notable successes in the export of non-traditional agricultural commodities. For example, increases of export were reported to Antigua & Barbuda, St. Lucia, Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago in the Region and extra-regionally, to Canada, France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

These successes will go a long way towards assisting in the country's diversification efforts, especially with the reduction by 36% of the price paid for ACP sugar announced by the EU late in the year. In spite of these successes, however, much remains to be done to assist the country to realise its potential and take full advantage of the new global market opportunities.

IICA Guyana will continue to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to assist Guyana to develop a highly diversified agricultural and rural sector which will help the country to creatively exploit its vast underutilized potential. We will continue to dedicate resources towards the achievement of that goal.

*Cromwell C. Crawford
Acting IICA Representative in Guyana*

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
AHFS	Agricultural Health and Food Safety
AMCAR	Amazon Caribbean (Guyana) Ltd
BHC/DFID	British High Commission/Department for International Development
CABA	Caribbean AgriBusiness Association
CACHE	Caribbean Council for Higher Education in Agriculture
CANROP	Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CFF	Carambola Fruit Fly
CFNI	Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute
CHBA	Caribbean Herbal Business Association
CI	Conservation International
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CROAM	Caribbean Regional Organic Agriculture Movement
CSME	CARICOM Single Market & Economy
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
EU	European Union
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GDDP	Guyana Dairy Development Project
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFYA	Guyana Forum for Youth in Agriculture
GOAM	Guyana Organic Agriculture Movement
GO-Invest	Guyana Office for Investment
GRDB	Guyana Rice Development Board
GSA	Guyana School of Agriculture
GUYSUCO	Guyana Sugar Corporation
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
IPED	Institute of Private Enterprise Development
IWOKRAMA	Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development
LEAP	Linden Economic Advancement Programme
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFCL	Ministry of Fisheries, Crops and Livestock
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoFTIC	Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation
NARI	National Agricultural Research Institute
NDDP	National Dairy Development Programme
NGMC	“New” Guyana Marketing Corporation

OAS	Organisation of American States
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organisation
POA	Partners of the Americas
PWSCA	Pomeroon Women's Small Cottage Association
RWN	Rural Women's Network
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
SSDTC	St. Stanislaus Dairy Training Centre
UG	University of Guyana
UN-ECLAC	United Nations-Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWC	United World Colleges
WTO	World Trade Organisation

**IICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO AGRICULTURE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF
RURAL COMMUNITIES IN GUYANA DURING 2005**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Guyana, the only English-speaking country in the South-American Continent, is situated on the North-Eastern shoulder of the continent. It is uniquely and strategically situated, since it has the potential of providing easy access to the Atlantic Ocean for South-American countries and can act as a doorway to South America for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries.

The country occupies 216,000 square kilometres of land and has a relatively low population of about 750,000 persons, approximately 63 percent and 37 percent of whom live in rural and urban areas respectively.

Essentially, the country has an agriculture-based economy, dominated by the traditional sugar and rice sub-sectors which together contributed over 30 percent of the 2005 National Gross Domestic Product (GDP), representing over 85 percent of agricultural exports and over 45 percent of total exports.

Both sugar and rice benefitted from preferential European Union (EU) and United States of America (USA) markets until 2005, when the EU announced a 36 percent price cut in the price paid for sugar to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. This move has the potential of reducing the annual revenue of the country by US\$37 million.

This move has caused the country to intensify its efforts at diversifying the economy and consequently it is soon to benefit from a major Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funded Agricultural Diversification Project.

Guyana is both a member of CARICOM and one of the first members to sign the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) Agreement, which took effect at the end of 2005. Guyana is also a member of the Inter-American System of Organisations, with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in particular being present and active in the country since 1975.

In 2005, Guyana acceded to the Presidency of the Rio Group, a position which continues to highlight Guyana's national strategic importance.

The IICA Guyana Office continues to collaborate with other Regional, Hemispheric and International Organisations to support the Government's efforts to develop the agricultural and rural sectors. In particular, it is supportive of efforts to diversify the production. IICA has been able to source external resources - both financial and human - in support of this process.

IICA's activities continue to be guided by the approved Guyana National Agenda, relevant emerging issues, such as threats posed by Avian Influenza, and challenges and opportunities posed by the new global environment.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Towards the end of 2004, the Guyana economy showed some signs of growth after registering relatively flat performances in the previous two years. Real GDP grew by 1.6%. By mid-year 2005, however, the economy again showed signs of slowing.

Three major events during the year had telling effects on Guyana's agriculture and to the economy as a whole. In the first quarter, unprecedented floods inundated sections of the coastline, causing major damage to homesteads, livestock, crops and infrastructure. The effects were still being felt in some areas at yearend.

By mid-year, prices of imported fossil fuel to consumers had doubled those paid in January due to increases on the world market. In spite of measures taken by the Government, including the reduction in consumption tax on fuel, at yearend the price remained substantially higher than at the start of 2005.

By far the event to cause the greatest negative effect on the economy was the announcement by the EU of a 36% cut in the price paid for sugar to the ACP countries. This would result in a US\$37 million annual reduction in revenue to Guyana.

These events pose significant threats to Guyana's agriculture, since sugar contributes almost 30% to the country's GDP and employs over 20,000 persons. The flooded areas account for over 50% of the country's agriculture and the high cost of fossil fuel energy, essential in the process of modernisation of the country's agriculture, would cause setbacks to that effort.

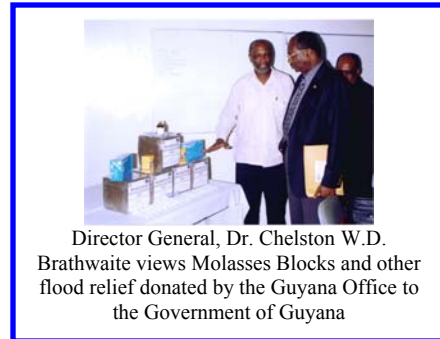
As a result of these challenges, there is a redoubling of efforts locally to diversify the country's agricultural base away from traditional crops and to seek to increase exports of non-traditional commodities to the Caribbean - Barbados, Antigua, Trinidad & Tobago and St. Lucia, Canada, Europe and the USA. In June, the Government of Guyana signed an agricultural agreement with St. Lucia. Other diversification efforts included those in support of beef export, rehabilitation of the pig industry and expansion of production of organic pineapples.

These events significantly curtailed the implementation of the programmed activities of the Office.

Results

The Office provided substantial support in the flood damage assessment and relief and mitigation efforts. Support was provided in the supply of veterinary products, and in the treatment and rehabilitation of livestock and through the regional input in the United Nations-Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC) Flood Damage Assessment. The Office also supported other collaborators who were affected, including the St. Stanislaus College Farm and Training Centre, which the Institute uses for providing training and technology transfer for farmers, technicians and students, the Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA), which is a member of the Guyana Chapter of the Caribbean Council for Higher Education in Agriculture (CACHE) and prepares sub-professional technicians for the Agricultural Sector, the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) and crop farmers.

The contribution of the Office was significantly boosted with the naming of a Committee by the Acting Minister of Agriculture to liaise with IICA for planning and implementation of programmed actions.



Facilitating Competitiveness and Global Trade: The Office promoted the development and improvement of international and domestic markets through information and advice to farmers and agribusinesses on market requirements and preparation of exporters to meet these requirements; supported efforts aimed at ensuring compliance with World Trade Organisation/Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO/SPS) standards by ensuring participation of local technicians at international fora; supported the organisation of a Regional Forum aimed at increasing the flow of finance to Agriculture.



The Office continued support to the Beef Export Committee. Selected farmers have been trained and assisted in developing export-ready products. Efforts were supported at revitalizing the pig industry – a ‘Sondeo’ was conducted, followed by a one-day forum to chart a way forward for the Industry. Operatives from the Pork Association of the Caribbean provided support to this effort. The Office facilitated the participation of Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) technicians to the Caribbean Bee Congress in Trinidad and Tobago. Local and overseas training in Organic Agriculture was supported. The Guyana component of the Agro-Tourism Linkages Project was launched.

Strengthening Rural Communities: The process of testing the Territorial Approach continued in St. Monica's/Karawab and was extended to the Mainstay and Tapakuma Communities in preparation for the Kellogg-funded Project *Supporting the Expansion of Income-Generation Activities in the Lake Communities in Guyana*. The Office supported the Rural Women's Network (RWN) in the training of women in enterprise development in several Regions of Guyana. Implemented four Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI) funded Small Grants Projects.

Promoting Food Safety and Agricultural Health: Crop farmers were trained in Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs). The Office facilitated the participation of technicians in the Avian Influenza Workshop in Brasil. In-service training was conducted for Ministry of Fisheries, Crops and Livestock (MFCL) staff in plant and animal disease surveillance. Support was also provided to the conduct of plant and animal disease surveillance at ports of entry and abattoirs.

Developing Human Capital: The Office facilitated/conducted training in pest and disease diagnosis, enterprise and organisational development, organic production and processing techniques, handling and use of agrochemicals and principles of GAPs and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP). The Women's Group at Charity was trained in fruit and vegetable processing and marketing. Spanish language training was provided to staff members. A review of the Agricultural Education Sub-sector was conducted.

Environmental Management: Farmers and technicians were trained in proper handling and use of agrochemicals and in pest and disease diagnosis and response to mitigate possible threats of invasive species. Training was provided in Hydroponics, using otherwise discarded materials such as cans and plastic bottles and paddy hulls. Training was also conducted in Vermiculture – the use of worms – to convert animal waste into humus. Testing of biotic material in the management of plant pests was done.

Hemispheric Integration: The Office distributed copies of the documents "*The State of and Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas*" and "*More than Food on the Table: Agriculture's True Contribution to the Economy*"; supported Guyana's participation in the process aimed at advancing the Repositioning of Agriculture through the 'Jagdeo Initiative'; facilitated the resuscitation of the Guyana Chapter of the Caribbean AgriBusiness Association (CABA); supported Faculty Student Exchange and other activities of CACHE; and supported the Minister's participation at Regional and Hemispheric Meetings.

Institutional Modernisation: Discussions were held with Government on the need to modernise its institutions related to market intelligence, marketing infrastructure, animal and plant surveillance/response, agricultural health and food safety.

Future Opportunities for Development

The revision of the **IICA National Agenda** in 2006 will offer opportunities for collaborators to provide inputs for IICA's on-going actions in the country.

In addition, opportunities will be provided in view of the efforts aimed at alleviating the Key Binding Constraints identified in the 'Jagdeo Initiative'.

Future opportunities for development exist in the areas of policy formulation and articulation; the execution of activities related to the diversification thrust; the development of new institutions, laws and regulations; and exploring the potential for agro-tourism and product transformation.

The Kellogg Foundation-funded Project "*Supporting the Expansion of Income-Generation Activities in the Lake Communities in Guyana*", which aims at increasing the production of organic pineapple and other crops and improving the general welfare of community members, will be fully implemented. In addition, other opportunities will be provided with the implementation of the Inter-American Development Bank-funded project "*Agricultural Diversification in Guyana*".

3. THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE IN GUYANA IN 2005

3.1 Recent Performance in the Expanded Agricultural Sector

The Overall Economy

The year 2005 was a very challenging year for Guyana's economy as a whole, and in particular its agriculture sector. During the first half of the year, real economic growth declined by 5.9 percent compared with a 0.8 percent increase reported in the corresponding period in 2004.

Major contributors to the contraction were low production levels of sugar, rice, livestock and mining. This was on account of the widespread flooding at the beginning of the year, which severely disrupted production. In contrast, the fishing, logging, manufacturing, transport, communication, engineering and construction sub-sectors registered improved performances.

While increases in the price of fuel have largely contributed towards an inflation rate of 3.3 percent, this compared favourably with the rate of 3.6 percent over the corresponding period in 2004.

Agriculture

The agricultural sector recorded a decline in real growth during the first half of 2005. The real reason for low productivity within the sugar, rice and livestock sub-sectors was the devastating impact of the flooding which occurred in the first quarter, the effects of which were still felt at yearend.

Sugar output at mid-year amounted to 86,906 tonnes, 27.2 percent of the target for 2005 and 31.9 percent below the corresponding period in 2004.

Sugar exports and local sales during the period amounted to 91,540 tonnes and 10,000 tonnes respectively, or 22.5 percent and 11 percent lower than the previous year. To meet sales targets, the industry drew heavily on its inventory for the previous year.

Rice output amounted to 135,887 tonnes, 42.1 percent of the target for the year and 23 percent below the corresponding period in 2004. Paddy yields and acreages harvested declined by 16 and 13 percent respectively, resulting in 37,782 hectares sown or 27.1 percent below the corresponding period in 2004.

Export sales accounted for 89,880 tonnes or 66 percent of total output. This was 33 percent lower than the corresponding period in 2004. Domestic sales accounted for 25,013 tonnes or 18.4 percent of total production.

The fishing sector's output was 2.1 percent higher than the corresponding in 2004. This reflected increases of 1.8 percent and 41.5 percent in fish and prawn catches respectively – the shrimp catch showing a slight decline of 0.6 percent.

The livestock sector experienced an overall decline in production. However, there was a significant increase in egg output when compared with 2004. Egg production was 100.4 percent higher. The more than doubling of egg output was a result of over 180,000 more layers being raised. Poultry meat output declined by 28.3 percent.

Volumes of Produce Exported

Guyana's efforts at diversifying its production and export base continued in 2005. At the Caribbean Regional level, there were increases in exports to Barbados (12.3 percent), Antigua (63.4 percent), St. Lucia (31.7 percent,) and Trinidad (7 percent). The increase to St. Lucia can be attributed to the new agreement signed with that nation for the increased export of agricultural products.

In the case of extra-Regional markets, increases of exports were also registered to Canada, France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

The major non-traditional commodities exported were Heart of Palm, 32 percent of total non-traditional exports, copra, copra meal and crude coconut oil (30.73 percent), watermelons (8 percent), pumpkins (6 percent) and plantains (6 percent). Other significant exports were pineapple chunks, peppers and eddoes.

3.2 Critical Issues in the International and National Context that Impact Agriculture and Rural Life

One major critical issue which affected agricultural performance in 2005 was unprecedented rainfall during the first quarter, which led to widespread flooding of major sections of the coastal agricultural areas. A Flood Damage Assessment Report by a UN-ECLAC Mission estimates the loss suffered by the Agricultural Sector at US\$54 million.

Higher world prices for oil also had a telling effect on the economy, leading to decline in real economic growth.

3.3 The Status of Living Conditions in Rural Communities

Guyana is significantly rural, with over 63 percent of its population residing in rural coastal, riverain and hinterland communities. In fact, over 90 percent of the population reside on the coast.

The riverain and hinterland communities comprise largely the indigenous population, which makes up approximately 7 percent of the national population.

The coastal rural communities are mainly agrarian in nature with significant portions dependent on agriculture – many of whom work as labourers on sugar estates and on large rice holdings. However, large numbers carry out their own farming activities on small farms averaging 2.5 hectares.

There is some agricultural activity in riverain and hinterland areas, with large numbers particularly of the men folk employed in logging and mining enterprises often some distance from their communities.

4. SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL AGENDA

The National Agenda, which was first prepared in 2002 and revised in September, 2003, was utilised to determine the Plan of Action for 2004.

Inputs to the National Agenda were provided during a Review Forum which was held in May, 2004.

The revised National Agenda identified areas for IICA's strategic intervention, as well as the Institute's agreed priorities in support of the Strategic Areas of Focus.

Trade and Agribusiness Development

It was agreed that IICA would collaborate in assisting with the overall reorientation towards an entrepreneurial approach; the provision of international market information on modern agriculture and the rural economy, as well as on standard requirements for identified products, trade barriers and specific export markets; assisting with the maturing of the National Chapter of CABA; exposing farmers and technical personnel to transformation techniques; and providing support to agro-tourism initiatives.

Specifically, IICA's interventions will include examining the feasibility for the development of the apiculture and aquaculture sub-sectors; examining the potential of some plants for use in herbal medicine; providing information on international markets; and continuing training on organisational and enterprise development.

Agricultural Health and Food Safety

Within this area, activities will be focused on a wider implementation of training on GAPs to include additional farmers' groups, the Institute of Private Enterprise Development (IPED) and personnel of the "New" Guyana Marketing Corporation (NGMC); expanded HACCP training for personnel assigned to fisheries, food and marketing facilities; and renewed efforts to have the Animal and Plant Surveillance Unit formed and functional.

More specifically, IICA will be committed to improving agricultural health and food safety institutions and systems to facilitate market access, improving technical capacity and developing human resources; enhancing the ability of Guyana to respond to emergencies and emerging issues; inclusion of the "start clean, stay clean" programme on broiler farms; and administering questionnaires on production practices for beef cattle production with a view to subsequently encouraging the adoption of approved standards.

Sustainable Rural Development

In this area, activities will focus on enterprise development through micro-financing, with women and youth being targeted; continuing support to “pilot project” type initiatives to test viability and emphasise results, incorporating student interns; expanding dissemination of information and articles of interest on topics germane to agricultural and rural development; providing linkages to various donors and advocating the need for investment in the sector; adopting a territorial approach to sustainable rural development (in the St. Monica’s/Karawab communities); and examining the potential for agro-tourism.

Agreed Priorities for Supporting Areas

The supporting area of **Technology and Innovation** would be vital in the implementation of project activities. For example, in the Lake Communities Project, water management technology – specifically irrigation technology – will be tested to help in ensuring year-round production of fruit for the processing facility. Technology for processing of handicraft products will also be examined.

As it relates to **Horizontal Technical Cooperation**, the Office will seek and source from the Region and the rest of the Hemisphere to aid in the successful implementation of programmed activities.

Education and Training will continue to be emphasised in the Office Programme. The *Report of the Review of Agricultural Education in Guyana*, conducted by the Office, will be circulated widely and discussions will be held with national authorities and other stakeholders to develop a plan of action for improving the agricultural education delivery.

Information and Communication in support of agricultural and rural development will continue to be highlighted. Access to IICA’s website and to the Office’s web page will be encouraged and facilitated.

5. RESULTS OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION FOR 2005

The implementation of the Office's programmed actions was severely curtailed because of the severe flooding which occurred during the first quarter of the year and the aftermath. The effects of the flooding were still being felt at yearend. The Office provided substantial support to the flood damage assessment and relief and mitigation efforts.

The Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) Specialist spent six weeks in flood-affected areas, along with counterparts from the Ministry of Fisheries, Crops and Livestock and other Agencies, providing emergency and preventive treatment to livestock in the affected areas. The Office also provided supplies of veterinary products and feed supplements, including molasses blocks, towards this effort.

Other support in flood relief efforts was provided to the St. Stanislaus Dairy Training Centre and Farm, which the Institute utilises for providing training and the transfer of technology to farmers, technicians and students. Financial and material support was provided for the rehabilitation of farm structures, which were severely damaged, replacement of equipment, such as milking machines, and pasture rehabilitation.

GSA, which is a member of the Caribbean CACHE, and which prepares sub-professional technicians for the Agricultural Sector, was also supported in its relief and mitigation efforts. Power washers and cleansing supplies were provided for the rehabilitation efforts. The Office also donated a high-powered microscope as a replacement for those destroyed in the floods.

NARI was assisted with materials, such as plant bags and seeds, to enable the Institute to rapidly provide replacement stock for affected crop farmers.

Logistic and other support was provided to the UN-ECLAC Flood Damage Assessment Team.

The Office's efforts were commended in several fora by the National Authorities.

The contribution of the Office to the development of agriculture and rural communities was significantly enhanced with the naming by the Minister of Agriculture of a Committee chaired by the Director of NARI to liaise with IICA for planning and implementation of programmed actions.



Acting Representative, Cromwell
C. Crawford, presents flood relief
items to GSA Principal,
Ms. Lynette Cunha

5.1 Facilitating Competitiveness and Global Trade

The Office promoted the development and improvement of international and domestic markets through information and advice to farmers and agribusinesses on market requirements and preparation of exports to meet these requirements.

IICA continued to support the Beef Export Committee and has organised a series of training activities for prospective beef exporters early in 2006.

The RWN continued to provide training support to women's groups locally and overseas. Support was provided to women's groups in Trinidad & Tobago and Grenada. Three local training activities and demonstrations to address entrepreneurial and processing skills were held in rural communities. IICA facilitated the participation of the RWN in several exhibitions and displays. As a result, their business activities increased by over 100 percent.

The Office supported efforts aimed at revitalising the Pig Industry. A 'Sondeo' was conducted and the results were utilised in the organising of a seminar to chart a way forward. The Executive Secretary of the Pork Association of the Caribbean participated in the Seminar and provided information about market opportunities and prospects for the development of the Industry.



The Guyana component of the Caribbean-wide Agro-Tourism Linkages Project was launched with participation of the Ministries of Agriculture and Tourism and Private Sector Stakeholders. The project is to be fully operational in 2006.

The Office supported the participation of MoA Technicians at the Caribbean Beekeepers Congress in Trinidad & Tobago. Information gathered will be used towards revitalising the local Industry.

The Office, in collaboration with the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest), facilitated the participation of six (6) Guyanese businesses in the Annual Agriculture and Food Fair in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. The Guyanese participants received an award for the best off-island display.

Additionally, IICA has assisted nationals to increase their level of participation in WTO/SPS and Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) meetings.

5.2 Promoting Food Safety and Agricultural Health

IICA assisted in the implementation of a disease-monitoring and surveillance system at the level of the MFCL and conducted surveys for Carambola Fruit Fly (CFF) and Giant African Snail.

GAPs, including the keeping of farm diaries, were implemented on ten (10) farms in Region 10 identified by the Linden Economic Advancement Programme (LEAP). The farms continue to be monitored by MFCL technicians who previously received training.

IICA facilitated the participation of a technician from the MFCL in a training programme to facilitate improved efficiency in the management of notification and enquiry points.

IICA participated fully in the quarterly meetings of the recently formed local WTO/SPS Committee and continued to facilitate the participation of designated public sector officials at international WTO/SPS meetings.

The Office continued its support of the activities of the Beef Improvement Committee. Activities were concentrated largely on the improvement of production and processing systems of the Rising Sun Farm Abattoir in order to facilitate increased trade. Farm trace-back systems are being designed and farm and abattoir upgrades completed, HACCP system documented and a system for improved record-keeping implemented.

The Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS) approved broiler production and processing standards, and table egg grading standards for poultry meat and eggs were implemented on selected farms and monitoring is on-going.

Assistance was provided in the preparation for prevention of the introduction of Avian Influenza. The IICA Team participated in training and awareness seminars and facilitated the participation of technicians of the MoA and CARICOM Secretariat in workshops in Brasil.

5.3 Strengthening Rural Communities

The process of testing the Territorial Approach continued in St. Monica's/Karawab and was extended to Mainstay and Tapakuma Communities in preparation for the Kellogg Foundation-funded Project "*Supporting the Expansion of Income-Generation Activities in the Lake Communities in Guyana*". This activity was further boosted with visits to the communities by Melania Portilla, Specialist in Sustainable Rural Development from IICA Rural



Melania Portilla visits Agro-Processing Group

Development Directorate and Joseph Peltier, Regional Rural Development Specialist.

The Office assisted in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of four (4) CFNI Small Grants Projects. These include a Beekeeping Project operated by members of the Guyana Forum for Youth in Agriculture (GFYA) at Goed Intent, Region 3; a Poultry-Rearing Project run by a Farmers' Group at Lima Sands, Region 2; a Tilapia (Aquaculture) Project run by a Women's Group at Lake Mainstay, Region 2 and a Duck Farming Project run by an Amerindian Group at Santa Rosa, Region 1.

Two (2) technicians and two (2) farmers were assisted to participate in a one-week Vermiculture training activity in Trinidad & Tobago. Upon their return, they assisted in training other farmers and technicians.



Training in Hydroponics was provided to sundry groups, in particular women and youth. Participants cultivated a variety of vegetable crops using this technique.

Support continued to be provided to the Pomeroon Women's Small Cottage Association (PWSCA) in the improvement of

the quality of their processed products. New equipment was acquired and training activities were conducted on their use.

5.4 Hemispheric Integration

The Office supported Guyana's participation in the process aimed at advancing the Repositioning of Agriculture in the Region. A successful Regional Conference aimed at increasing the flow of finance to Agriculture was held in October. This conference attracted participants from across the Caribbean.



Support continued for the on-going elaboration and fine-tuning of the document "Strengthening Agriculture for Sustainable Growth and Development of the Caribbean Region: Proposed Actions for Overcoming Key Binding Constraints Facing the Agricultural Sector in CARICOM Countries – the Jagdeo Initiative".

Widespread discussions of IICA publications were encouraged. Much interest continued to be expressed in the documents: "The State and Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas" and "More than Food on the Table: Agriculture's True Contribution to the Economy". Stakeholders continue to visit IICA's website and peruse information of importance.

Initiatives aimed at the development of Organic Agriculture in the Region were supported by the Office. Support was provided to the fledgling Organic Movements, Caribbean Regional Organic Agriculture Movement (CROAM) and the Guyana Organic Agriculture Movement (GOAM), by facilitating and participating in meetings of the organisations.

IICA assisted in the formation of the Guyana Chapter of the Caribbean Herbal Business Association (CHBA).

Local Chapters of the Alliance continued to be assisted. The Guyana AgriBusiness Association (GABA) was resuscitated and provided Office space at the IICA Office, the GFYA continued to function and play a significant part in the Regional Forum. The local Chapter engaged in economic ventures, including an Apiculture Project funded under the CFNI Small Grants Programme. The RWN, local Chapter of the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP), provided training and other assistance to women's groups both locally and within the Region and participated in exhibitions, fairs and other national events.

Support was provided for local faculty and students to participate in the Faculty Student Exchange Programme in Puerto Rico, Board of Directors Meeting and other CACHE-sponsored events.

The Office continues to facilitate and support the participation of the Minister of Agriculture in Hemispheric Meetings and to encourage and support the Ministerial Delegate to fulfil his obligations.

5.5 Developing Human Capital

The Office facilitated and conducted training sessions for stakeholders in the private and public sectors – producers, processors, exporters, technicians and students - in several areas, including:

- Vegetable production utilising the Hydroponics technique;
- Vermiculture – for the preparation of organic manures;
- Pest and disease surveillance, diagnosis treatment/response;
- Agro-processing;
- Organic production;
- WTO/SPS standards and requirements;
- GAPs and HACCP principles and requirements;
- Extension and Rural Development principles and techniques;
- Enterprise organisation and management;
- Organisational management.

Training sessions were conducted and/or coordinated by the Agricultural Health and Food Safety and Rural Development Specialists, Regional Specialists, Consultants and Contracted Staff.

The Office commissioned a Review of Agricultural Education in Guyana, the results of which will be used towards enhancing the delivery of Agricultural Education in the country.

IICA Staff participated in the University of Guyana (UG) Staff and Student Review; delivered guest lectures to UG and GSA Students and at Career Days of Secondary Schools; and supported the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) examination preparation process.

5.6 Environmental Management

Training in Hydroponics was conducted with sundry groups. Participants utilised otherwise discarded materials, such as plastic and bags, metal cans and paddy hulls to produce vegetables for home consumption and the market. The Office also provided training in Vermiculture, the use of worms - to convert animal waste into humus.

Organic pineapple producers in Mainstay and Tapakuma were taught to utilise residues from pineapple processing in composting.

The Office continued to emphasise GAPs and HACCP procedures with producers and processors in a number of locations, including Regions 2 and 10. Producers were encouraged to utilise organic techniques and reduce dependence on inorganic agro-chemicals.

Visits were made to poultry producers and processors and training was provided on international standards for acceptable sanitary operation of such facilities.

A Seminar for Pork Producers highlighted, among other things, hygienic standards of pig-rearing to meet export requirements.

5.7 Institutional Modernisation

The Office continued to hold discussions with Government on the need to modernise its institutions related to market intelligence; market infrastructure and trade, animal and plant surveillance and response, agricultural health and food safety, and sustainable rural development.

5.8 Other Activities

In addition to its major support to the country in flood damage assessment and mitigation, the Office provided other support to the national effort at strengthening its agriculture.

IICA continued to support the drive to recruit students for the Simón Bolívar United World Colleges (UWC) of Agriculture in Venezuela. One female candidate was selected from Guyana for the 2005 programme.

At the request of the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI), the Office supported the implementation of four (4) projects under the Small Grants Programme.

Through its contact with the Agricultural Department of St. Croix, US Virgin Islands, the Office collaborated with GO-Invest to facilitate the participation of six (6) agribusinesses in the Annual Food and Agriculture Fair.

The Office facilitated the participation of a local herbal business practitioner at the Caribbean herbal Business Forum in St. Lucia.

6. INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

The Office worked collaboratively with several governmental, non-governmental and private sector entities in carrying out its activities in the country. The MoA, MFCL and NARI were the major public sector collaborators, along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA); Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation (MoFTIC); Ministries of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Amerindian Affairs, Education, and Culture, Youth & Sport.

A Working Committee convened by the Director of NARI was appointed by the Minister of Agriculture to liaise with the Office in the planning and execution of its programmed activities. Participants on the Committee included representatives of the MoA, National Dairy Development Programme (NDDP), Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary/Agricultural Development Authority (MMA/ADA), GSA and Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB).

This strategy helped to move the implementation process and ensured easier access to stakeholder organisations.

The Office continued to pursue collaborative activities with the Guyana Dairy Development Project/Partners of the Americas (GDDP/POA) and the St. Stanislaus Dairy Training Centre (SSDTC) and Farm Committee. The Centre was used for continued training of farmers, technicians and students in such areas as Hydroponics, Vermiculture and Dairy Production and Processing.

Among the International and Donor Community, the Office collaborated with the Office of the Organisation of American States (OAS) in the Launch of the Guyana Component of the Agro-Tourism Linkages Project. Discussions continued with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on the preparation of the Agricultural Diversification Project. The Office collaborated with and supported the UN-ECLAC Food Damage Assessment Mission.

The CARICOM Secretariat continues to be one of IICA's main collaborators. There was collaboration in the activities of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), the implementation of a Financing Conference, participation of CARICOM Technicians at fora, including Avian Influenza Workshops and in hosting meetings of the Alliance for Sustainable Development of Agricultural and the Rural Milieu in the Wider Caribbean (The Alliance).

Other members of the International Community with which the Office collaborated during the year were the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and British High Commission Department for International Development (BHC/DFID).

Other local organisations with which the Office collaborated were Guyana Sugar Corporation (GUYSUCO), Amazon Caribbean (AMCAR) Guyana, Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development (IWOKRAMA), IPED and Conservation International (CI) Guyana.

7. SUPPORT PROVIDED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES (IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN AGRO 2003-2015



The Office fully supported actions undertaken by the Government aimed at advancing the Repositioning of Agriculture in the Region and the development of National Plans and Strategies.

Technicians participated in the MoA's programming and planning meetings and workshops. Assistance was provided in the further development and elaboration of the "Jagdeo Initiative".

The Office participated in and supported national events staged in support of agricultural development, e.g. World Food Day Observances, Guyana Nights and GuyExpo.

8. RESULTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INVESTMENT PROJECTS

The Office did not execute any investment projects in 2005. However, funding approval was received from Kellogg Foundation for implementation of the Project “*Supporting the Expansion of Income-Generation Activities in the Lake Communities in Guyana*”. Plans have been drawn up for its full implementation in 2006.

9. FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION

The revision of the IICA National Agenda in 2006 will offer opportunities for collaborators to provide inputs for IICA's on-going actions in the country. Specifically, attention will be focused on highlighting non-traditional commodities to aid in the agricultural diversification thrust. Commodities already highlighted are pork and pork products, apiculture, pineapple, plantains and pepper. These will be undertaken in collaboration with other stakeholders in the process of implementation of the IDB-funded project "*Agricultural Diversification in Guyana*".

In the continued elaboration of the 'Jagdeo Initiative', opportunities will be presented for the implementation of strategies to alleviate the Key Constraints identified in the Initiative.

In the process of implementation of the Kellogg-Funded Project "*Supporting the Expansion of Income-Generation Activities in the Lake Communities in Guyana*", which aims at increasing the production of organic pineapple and other crops, opportunities will be identified for subsidiary actions to be taken to improve the welfare of selected communities.

In the further development of Organic agriculture, other opportunities will be identified to train local inspectors to assist in the development of policies and regulations. In addition, there will be continued preparation of organic manures using vermiculture and other methods.

10. APPENDIX: PUBLICATIONS

There were no publications from this Office in 2005.