



Grenada Farmer's Forum

Report

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I. INTRODUCTION

Grenada's farmer's forum meeting was held at Grenada's National Stadium on September 13th, 2012.

II. REPRESENTATION

Representatives from the meteorological and agriculture service, farmer groups as well as farmers were present.

A list of participants is attached at Annex 1

III. WELCOME

Participants were welcomed by Mr. Trevor Thompson of the Ministry of Agriculture. He stated that this is the second forum being held in Grenada and urged participants to give feedback so that useful products can be produced to be used within the farming community.

The Chief Agricultural Officer, Mr. Daniel Lewis, stated that a strong agricultural organization is key to the food sector and that the CAMI project is very important since agriculture is very much intertwined with weather. Information coming out of the project is of critical importance. Mr. Lewis stressed that Grenada is willing to put their support behind the project as they desire to benefit as much from it.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

The CAMI Project – Shontelle Stoute, Technical Assistant (CAMI Project)

The CAMI project is funded by the European Union's ACP Science and Technology Programme. It is a partnership between CIMH, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and ten meteorological services.

The objective of the project is

To increase and sustain agricultural productivity at the farm level in the Caribbean region through improved applications of weather and climate information using an integrated and coordinated approach.

The interpretation and use of rainy season prediction, pest and disease forecasting, newsletters and farmers forums are some of the activities within the project.

At present the project is undertaking its second round of farmer's forums bringing more information on irrigation requirements and crop modelling.

Weather and Climate – Cécil Mitchell (Grenada Meteorological Service)

Presently Grenada's Meteorological service has obtained a climate branch. With assistance from the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH), they have been able to digitize their data. With respect to the weather of 2011, Grenada experienced a very unusual weather pattern which affected the agricultural sector significantly both positively and negatively. While above average rainfall in the dry season (January to May) gave rise to bumper production in some fruit and vegetables, periods of intense rainfall caused flooding and landslides on some areas.

It was also noted that the dry season of 2012 was again marked with occurrences of higher than average rainfall. A positive impact of the "wetter dry season" was the significant reduction of the presence of the pink mealy bug but unfortunately farmers were faced with the over infestation of mongoose and the resulting damages to root crops like sweet potatoes, yams and cassava.

In conclusion Ms. Mitchell stated that for the production of an agro-met bulletin to be successful there must be unwavering commitment from all parties concerned within Meteorological, Agricultural and water services.

Seasonal Forecasts – Adrian Trotman, CAMI Project Coordinator

Mr. Trotman indicated that a forum of regional meteorologists and climatologist, since February 2012 have been producing 3-moth seasonal forecast, which were produced solely by CIMH prior to this. He also indicated that information is provided for up to six months in advance. Similar information is made available for temperature. Mr. Trotman also showed how seasonal forecasts produced by CIMH can be related to the 2009-2010 drought scenarios. The seasonal forecast (3 or 6 months) indicates the probability of receiving above normal, normal and below normal rainfall for the forecast periods. A three-month precipitation outlook map is available and updated monthly. It can be obtained online from www.cimh.edu.bb.

Climate Change and Agriculture – Shontelle Stoute, Technical Assistant (CAMI Project)

In a presentation on Climate Change and Agriculture, Mrs. Stoute showed results for two stations in Dominica with respect to trends and crop yields. A significant increase in temperature is being forecasted by the end of the century as well as an increase in the number of very warm days and nights, which are already being statistically observed from the historical data. There is no clear evidence of decreasing rainfall observed as suggested by global climate models.

V. OPEN DISCUSSION – CIMH

Farmer's Working Groups

In an effort to obtain information on the type of information available from the Meteorological Service as well as the desired means of communication and dissemination of that information and any other types of information required, several questions were asked. Below are the responses to questions.

1. Have the regional or national CAMI Bulletin been available to you? How was it useful to you?
The majority of respondents in the group response was No. They could not determine its usefulness because of a lack of knowledge of the Bulletin.
2. What would you like to see in the bulletin?
 - a. Data from all stakeholders:- NAWASA, Agriculture, Met Office, Farmers
 - b. The whole process must be institutionalize and if possible at the Department level within the ministry.
 - c. Timelines must be set for development and production
 - d. The CAO Ministry of agriculture should coordinate the process and include all relevant departments such as Land Use, Met Office, Extension, Agronomy, CARDI, IICA, Farmers groups, etc to ensure all pertinent information is collected and included.
3. How about a radio or TV program?
 - a. There was general agreement on this. The agreement was to use the Government Information Service (GIS), to educate the public and disseminate the information as news. This can be done just after the nightly weather news.
 - b. Put inserts in the newspapers
 - c. Incorporate information in the daily farmers radio Programs.
 - d. Printing of monthly bulletins
 - e. Community group meetings
 - f. Include teachers in the farmer's forums.
 - g. Approach stakeholders such as Supermarkets, MNIB, and Hotels to sponsor the nightly program.
 - h. Erect billboards in strategic positions around the island.
4. How do you propose to go about having alerts by cell phones for times of bad weather?
 - a. MBIA Met Office is in discussion with LIME to establish this option.
 - b. NADMA should designate community focal persons.
 - c. Setup district farmer's networks.
 - d. Utilize bulletins boards.
5. Would you like to have a farmers Forum with your met service at the Beginning of the Dry and Wet /Hurricane Season? The general Response was YES. The recommendations were to also include NAWASA. This can be organized but a process must be developed for going forward with clear time lines, resources available or required, persons responsible.
6. IICA has a project that is coming on stream that will look at disaster mitigation relating to Agriculture that can be used to help support this initiative going forward.