

REGIONAL TRAINING COURSE IN AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT FOR FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS



Bay Garden Inn, St Lucia, July 26 – 30, 2010

Prepared by the Caribbean Farmers Network



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ABBREVIATIONS

AAACP	All ACP Commodities Programme
ACP	African, Caribbean Pacific
AGS	Rural Infrastructure and Agro-industries Division
BAS	Barbados Agriculture Society
CABA	Caribbean Agribusiness Association
CaFAN	Caribbean Farmers Network
CARDI	Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CPGCA	Christiana Potato Growers Cooperative Association
EC	European Commission
ECTAD	Eastern Caribbean Trading Agriculture and Development Organisation
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FO	Farmers Organizations
GTFS	Government of Italy Food Security project
LOA	Letter of Agreement
MNIB	Marketing and National Import Board
NEFO	North East Farmers Organization
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
PO	Producers Organization
RTFA	Region Ten Farmers Association
TTABA	Trinidad and Tobago Agri Business Association
UN	United Nation

ABOUT THE EU AAACP

The “*All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme*” was launched in September 2007 as an initiative of the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat. Its overall objective is to improve incomes and livelihoods for ACP producers of traditional and other agricultural commodities, and to reduce income vulnerability at both producer and macro levels. Specifically, it seeks to strengthen the capacity of ACP stakeholders all along the commodity value chain to develop and implement sustainable commodity strategies.

With a budget of 45 million Euros, this five-year programme addresses commodity issues in the ACP regions through innovative value chain approaches resulting from pooling the expertise of five leading International Organizations (IOs). In this regard the AAACP is also conducive to promoting the objectives of the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* related to complementarity, coherence and coordination of technical assistance.

The programme mandate focuses on support to:

- *Formulate commodity strategies* (led by the International Trade Centre (ITC), with support from FAO and other IOs)
- *Implement such strategies including through capacity-building of producer organizations, promotion of good agricultural practices, better functioning of markets, etc.* (Common Fund for Commodities (CFC); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); United Nations Conference for Trade and Agriculture (UNCTAD); and the World Bank)
- *Introduce and scale up the use of market-based commodity risk management instruments* (World Bank, FAO)
- *Promote complementarity and synergy in the interventions of implementing agencies.*

In view of increasing the involvement of ACP stakeholders in the programme, and to anchor the latter in the regions, the programme has established regional Focal Points (FPs). Five regional organizations covering the beneficiary regions have agreed to ensure this role. Twinning arrangements have been concluded with three partner International Organizations to provide FPs with the technical support enabling them to carry out their mission, a major component thereof being to contribute to enhanced information flows, broad exchange of programme-related information, experiences and know-how, and to the dissemination of programme results.

ABOUT CAFAN

The Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN) since its inception in 2002 has been mandated to speak on behalf of its membership and to develop programmes and projects aimed at improving livelihoods. CaFAN mission is to enhance Caribbean food and nutrition security, foreign exchange earnings and foreign savings by repositioning agriculture through the capacity building of farmers and the institutional strengthening of farmer organisations. CaFAN focuses on a business driven market led approach to agriculture and it collaborates with all stakeholders towards the strategic advantage of its farmers.

CaFAN has a membership of over fifteen farmers' organizations representing over 500,000 farmers that are directly involved in production and marketing of produce for the domestic, regional and extra regional markets. CaFAN member countries are Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts/ Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago with Haiti and Dominica pending.

CaFAN operates in St Vincent and the Grenadines through its Secretariat the Eastern Caribbean Trading Agriculture and Development Organisation (ECTAD) since 2006. ECTAD is responsible for the implementation and coordination of all CaFAN programmes and activities and works in collaboration with CaFAN focal points of contact in each of its member countries.

The objectives of CaFAN include:

- enhancing the ability of Caribbean farmers organizations to deliver services to members and also increase intra and extra regional trade;
- increase communication and exchange of ideas, experiences, resources, information and technology between and among farmers organizations to impact positively on the competitiveness and sustainability of the agriculture sector;
- raise awareness, improve advocacy and networking to collectively influence decisions on strategic issues affecting regional agriculture;
- mobilize resources for and on behalf of network members;

To fulfil its mandate to its members, CaFAN has partnered with several local, regional and international organizations that provide technical and financial support towards CaFAN activities and programmes. These organizations include the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA-EU-ACP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute, Ministries of Agriculture, Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, Oxfam, Caribbean Disaster Emergency and Management Agency, United Nations Development Programme, and the Caribbean Development Bank.

In November 2008, CaFAN partnered with FAO and held a capacity building workshop funded under the European Union All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme (EU AAACP). The workshop paved the way forward for several of CaFAN farmers' organizations to receive direct support towards strengthening their capacity to provide support services to their members and improve their capacity to produce and market roots and tubers. These projects are having positive impact on the capacity building and institutional strengthening needs of participating members and training materials and lessons learned from the project will be shared throughout network.

ABOUT THE GTFS

The project is the second phase of the “Promoting CARICOM/CARIFORUM Food Security” Project and a core part of the Caribbean Regional Programme for Food Security. As studies undertaken during the first phase of the project show, the challenges faced by CARIFORUM in ensuring food security and addressing broader welfare objectives come from different sources, including smallness, vulnerability to natural disasters, a changing economic environment characterized by a lack of international competitiveness and loss of preferential markets and a rules-based approach to agricultural policy.

The overall objective of the project is to improve the food security situation of the CARICOM/CARIFORUM states at different levels through strengthening the food policy environment and support services to promote efficient and sustainable food systems. The project, which lasts from 2008-2010, with a budget of 4.076 m US\$, and which covers 15 member states of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic, will aim to strengthen:

- Agriculture Development Unit at CARICOM Secretariat
- Institutional framework for agribusiness and enterprise development
- Commodity value chains development
- Partnerships and strategic market alliances
- Farmer based organizations and farmer production and processing skills

The project supports the development of a regional CARICOM/CARIFORUM food and nutrition security policy and the role of the agricultural sector therein by strengthening the capacity of the CARICOM Secretariat in providing food policy advice and guidance to member governments, and by building up regional and national capacities of associations along the value chains of non-traditional agriculture commodities from production to a range of domestic, regional and export markets.

A network of national agribusiness associations is being strengthened in the region to support continued development of value chains in the CARICOM/CARIFORUM countries. The value chain component of the Project focuses on activities in strengthening the participation, capacity and productivity of farmers’ organizations and agribusiness associations leading inclusive business models in commodity value chains. At the national level the project is working with five fresh produce value chains in Belize (hot pepper) Jamaica (ackee), Dominica (pineapples), St Lucia (salad fruit) and Barbados (onions). It is expected that all of the stakeholders along selected value chains will benefit from this support resulting in more sustainable business relationships. The project is benefiting farmers and farmer groups producing non-traditional commodities, traders and exporters to local, regional or international markets, agrifood processors, buyers, retailers, professional and inter-professional associations, marketing organizations and, more broadly, food insecure and poor households. At the regional level the project is, in collaboration with the EU AAACP project, providing support for strengthening CAFAN as a regional farmers’ organization providing services to fresh produce farmers’ organizations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The “Regional Training Course in Agribusiness Management for Farmers’ Organizations” took place over the 26th to 30th of July, 2010 at the Bay Gardens Hotel, St Lucia. It was hosted by The Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN) in conjunction with the Rural Infrastructure and Agro-industries Division (AGS) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) under the European Union All African Caribbean and Pacific Agricultural Commodities Programme (EU AAACP) and the Italian funded “Promoting CARICOM / CARIFORUM Food Security (GTFS)” programme. It was an interactive training course that combined straight forward lessons, individual reflection, cooperative group work and practical field analysis in order to provide a rich and rewarding learning experience for its participants.

The purpose of the training course was to introduce some of the basic concepts of agribusiness with specific focus on value chain development. Farmers require agribusiness skills, in addition to production skills, to meet the demands of modern markets. Participants were guided through a series of sessions and exercises which included traditional lessons and group work that enhanced farmers’ understanding and skills in several modern agribusiness techniques. Topics included: adult learning, business plans, business management, managing finance, enterprise profitability and value chain financing, amongst much more.

Participants were drawn from the CaFAN membership, with an emphasis on younger leaders and important members of the value chain. Thirty-nine (39) participants travelled from eleven (11) Caribbean countries, namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St Lucia, St Kitts, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago, in order to attend this training course. The facilitators came from CaFAN, the FAO in Rome, Italy and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

Some of the major outcomes of the training course were an expanded understanding and appreciation for agriculture as a business. It was reiterated over again by the participants that agriculture must be viewed in a different way across the Caribbean. Farmers must pay attention to market demands, form strategic alliances and maintain proper records in order to grow their businesses. The course was viewed as an excellent opportunity for regional networking and provided a supportive environment for members along the value chain to share ideas and future plans.

The overwhelming consensus among participants was that the training course was a great success. It provided training in business management, marketing, finances, enterprise development and practical business skills, which could be continuously developed, as well as brought home to be imparted on other farmers. The positive feedback on the training course is documented in the participants’ own personal testimony and within the course evaluations. Participants provided feedback on expected future services they will provide to their members, many noting greater emphasis on business/farm management and finances. The group also noted a continued desire to carry out further training sessions at the national level on these same topics, so that these skills can be imparted to greater numbers. In this regard CaFAN welcomed the FAO-GTFS initiative to develop a Caribbean value chain toolkit and offered to collaborate on its development.

A display table with FAO and CaFAN publications, manuals and training materials was well received and copies of most relevant materials for the agribusiness course were handed over to the training course participants. All received copies of CD’s with copies of presentation and most relevant training manuals and materials.

TRAINING COURSE BACKGROUND

Background and Introduction

As farming becomes more commercial and market oriented, small farmers struggle to maintain their share in the market. The formation of farmer groups and organizations and coordinated marketing is one way to overcome the problem of ‘smallness’ and supply produce to expanding markets. Coordinating production and marketing in groups potentially reduces costs and helps to generate sufficient quantities/volumes of supplies to maintain competitiveness at domestic and/or overseas markets.

Farmers’ organizations play a role in linking farmers to input dealers, traders, processors and consumers as well as other actors along the supply chain. This creates opportunities to capture value and distribute benefits to their members as a result of closer integration into competitive value chains. Through farmers’ organizations, members are given greater ‘voice’ and associations of farmers are responsible for advocating the rights and concerns of their members.

National level farmers’ organizations are particularly well placed to assist local level organizations and their member farmers to access seeds, fertilizer and other inputs, engage in bulk buying of inputs, utilize and manage water for irrigation, facilitate farmer to farmer learning, and link farmers to markets. Collective action by farmers’ organizations and cooperatives is fundamental to generating economies of scale, reducing transaction costs, and increasing power for collective bargaining.

However, the above outlined areas of support activities/services require good management and strong coordination and planning skills. Any marketing support activity has to generate profits at the level of the farmers’ organization to cover overhead costs. Overhead costs may include the salary of an additional person to coordinate the production and marketing, communication and other office running costs. It also requires to build up savings at the level of the farmers’ organization in order have sufficient capital at hand to advance marketing related expenses such as packaging material and transport costs.

Farmers’ organizations will have to become more a “professional” agribusiness. To run an agribusiness efficiently, skills beyond the traditional production advisory and advocacy role are required. These skills include, e.g. sound financial management, record-keeping and farm management, marketing and post-harvest handling and group management.

Through the technical support of FAO’s Rural Infrastructure and Agro-Industries Division (AGS), funded under the EU All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme (EU AAACP) and the Value Chain Component of the Promoting CARICOM/CARIFORUM Food Security Project (GTFS/RLC/141/ITA), the agribusiness training programme was designed to strengthen the role and support services provision of national farmers’ organizations in the areas outlined above.

The objective of the EU AAACP is to improve the livelihoods of producers in commodity dependant ACP countries, of which the regional training course was the third regional activity for farmers’ organizations under their EU AAACP support and coordinated by the Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN).

The Value Chain Component of the Promoting CARICOM/CARIFORUM Food Security Project (GTFS/RLC/141/ITA) focuses on activities in strengthening the participation, capacity and productivity of farmers' organizations and agribusiness associations leading inclusive business models in commodity value chains. This agribusiness training was the third regional activity for the five value chains (Belize hot pepper, Jamaica ackee, Dominica pineapple, St Lucia salad fruits and Barbados onions) identified for promotion and development under the project.

Objectives

The Objectives of the regional training course were:

- to strengthen the internal management of farmers' organizations, more specifically in production and marketing coordination,
- to facilitate agribusiness related information exchanges within and between farmers organizations,
- to improve farm business management and marketing skills of farmers' organizations,
- to strengthen post-harvest handling skills to improve produce quality and profitability,
- to strengthen the capacity of farmers' organizations to sustainably support the development of agribusiness.

The training course used both practical examples as well as experiential and participatory learning i.e. by experiencing mostly in interactive groups. Each session of the workshop had specific learning outcomes for knowledge, understanding and/or skill. This enabled the participants to track progress in learning throughout the programme. Participants were also encouraged to participate as much as possible.

There were over forty participants attending this training course, representing national farmer organizations, agribusiness associations with small farmer membership and the private/public sector service providers working with small farmer based organizations.

DAY ONE - MONDAY JULY 26TH 2010

Regional Training Course in Agribusiness Management for Farmers Organizations: Introduction and Overview

Presented by: Mr Jethro Greene, CaFAN, St Vincent and the Grenadines

The presentation began with an exercise to introduce the participants. The rationale for the training course was premised on the fact that farmer's require agribusiness skills, in addition to production skills, to meet the demands of modern markets. Farmers' organizations play an important role in the evolution of the modern farmer by facilitating input supply, production and marketing and thereby overcoming issues associated with the small scale of individual farms in the Caribbean region.

The purpose of the training course was to introduce some of the basic concepts of agribusiness in order to: improve farm management and post-harvest skills, strengthening the capacity and internal management of farmers' organizations to support the development of agribusiness and improve marketing and production coordination.

An Introduction to GTFS/RLA/141/ITA for Regional Training Course in Agribusiness Management for Farmers' Organizations

Presented by: Mr Heiko Bammann, FAO, Rome

There are two phases of the GTFS which cover the period from 2007 – 2011. The two main purposes of the second phase were to strengthen the capacity of CARICOM as it relates to food security policies and support the establishment of institutional mechanisms for increasing the value of food products through the application of the value chain approach, among other mechanisms.

The value chain component of the GTFS/RLA/141/ITA is part of a broader group of FAO-AGS supported projects in more than twenty countries around the world. It encourages a 'demand pull' approach which creates incentives for farmers and contributes to food security through increased employment opportunities and living standards.

Through the identification of value chains in which the Caribbean has a comparative advantage, it will be able to substitute imported foods with local produce which makes the region less vulnerable to external shocks. The value chain actors (private sector, farmers' organizations etc.) in the Caribbean region are receptive to this approach and the GTFS/RLA/141/ITA is presently supporting value chain development for selected crops in Belize, Jamaica, St Lucia, Dominica and Barbados and, in conjunction with the EU-AAACP and CaFAN, in St Vincent, Jamaica, Grenada and Guyana. Business models for producer-buyer linkages and recommendations for replication and scaling-up were also discussed.

Promoting CARICOM/CARIFORUM Food Security: Phase II, Project Update }
Presented by: Heiko Bammann, FAO, Rome on behalf of Robert Best, FAO, Port-of-Spain }

The presentation provided a status report on FAO's CARICOM/CARIFORUM Food Security project. The project is in its second phase and supports activities at both, regional and national levels. Project activities commenced in late 2008 and it will end in May 2011.

At regional level, the project is currently working on two components: the first component is related to strengthening the capacity of CARICOM's Agriculture Development Unit and supports the development of a Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy which is being formulated through technical working groups and thematic studies. Briefs concerning the policy are also being prepared and distributed for comments throughout the Caribbean. The second component involved is the identification and development of strategic value chains. Business model assessments for selected value chains and regional training in the value chain approach have been completed. The next steps at this level include this training course, presentation of related policy and value chain work at the Caribbean Week of Agriculture, market/buyer tours to Europe and a final 'lessons learnt' workshop.

At the national level, value chain coordinating committees are being established in five countries and upgrading strategies and action plans have been prepared. Service providers have been identified and engaged in supporting the implementation of national actions. The actions planned for the next steps at a national level include:

- notifying CARICOM members of the training course outcomes,
- national training courses for each of the five (5) selected value chains,
- implement interventions and actions of value chain upgrading strategy.

It is expected the work started under the project will continue further after May 2011 and facilitated by current national and regional counterpart organizations.

{ **Overview of CaFAN/FAO Collaboration under the EU AAACP**
Presented by: Ms Nyasha Durrant, ECTAD, St Vincent and the Grenadines

A general description of CaFAN and an overview of its focus were presented. This was followed by a review of the history between the collaboration between CaFAN and FAO under the EU AAACP with an update on the four national projects being supported by FAO under the EU AAACP. In 2008, CaFAN and FAO signed a letter of agreement (LoA) under the EU AAACP to host a regional workshop. Five representatives of CaFAN member organizations were selected to receive direct support to improve their management capabilities in the production and marketing of roots and tubers. Since then, two additional LoAs have been signed between CaFAN and FAO.

As for the updates on the national projects, it was explained that the selected organizations will work through Letter of Agreements. Grenada has signed its first LoA and is currently in the process of conducting training sessions with their members on management and leadership, improved technologies, production planning and record-keeping, training in marketing of agriculture produce, etc. Jamaica was in the stage of implementing a second LoA. Guyana had not yet signed a LoA but will do so in August 2010. It was also noted that

CaFAN was given the responsibility of supporting the implementation of national projects and is working with the various organizations to ensure the smooth delivery of activities outlined in the LoAs.

The Value Chain Approach, Inclusive Business Models and the Need for Agribusiness Skills

Presented by: Mr Heiko Bammann, FAO, Rome

The purpose of this presentation was to clarify definitions of the various terms, provide an understanding why they are applied by the various projects and give the rationale why this training course for farmer organizations focuses on agribusinesses.

In the literature, agribusiness is defined as “*all market and private business-oriented entities involved in the production, storage, distribution and processing of agricultural products; in the supply of production inputs; and in the provision of services (e.g. extension or research)*”. It is a component of rural development and forms part of a strategy to improve regional economic development and ensure a safe food supply and aims at:

- address market and private business-oriented entities directly,
- stimulate business opportunities through improved frame conditions in rural areas,
- ensure a safe and high-quality food supply for the consumer.

The guiding principle of agribusiness is the market orientation of all support. Agriculture is a key to rural development. Fundamental to the concept of agribusiness is that many problems related to agricultural production are interrelated and dependent upon political and economic issues affecting the entire value chain (Davis and Goldberg’s: “A Concept of Agribusiness”).

The value chain approach considers the “*full range of activities which are required to bring a product or service from conception, through the different phases of production, transformations, and delivery to final consumers and final disposal after use*”. It aims to bring the value chain to a ‘higher level’ and enables the actors to capture more of the value generated. The five common steps of the value chain approach are: selection of value chain, value chain mapping, participatory value chain analysis, action planning, and stakeholder validation and planning workshops. The final aim is to define an upgrading strategy and action plan acceptable to all stakeholders which would create value and benefits for all stakeholders involved. Typical intervention areas for value chain development were discussed.

Further, business models relevant for small farmers were discussed: producer organization model, buyer driven model, and intermediary model. The drivers and objectives of these different models were then presented. It was emphasized that there must be a business case for working with small farmers. A business model approach has the potential to reduce over-reliance on multi-stakeholder participatory approaches, focus on key value chain problems, and empower real development drivers. Steps to improve business model linkages were presented. Finally, participatory sector value analysis, participatory value chain analysis, and business model approach were compared and contrasted.

Questions were posed to the group: “does the intermediary model play an important role in the value chain? What direct benefits do farmers see?”

- intermediary actors can act to the detriment of primary producers, they have developed a negative reputation, commonly known as the “middle-man”,

- they are specialists and they provide a service, if strategic alliances can be made then they could be useful,
- farmers organizations could provide an excellent alternative to traditional intermediary actors,
- the end goal should realize a value chain that is self-sustaining, for this to happen there needs to be a business reason for maintaining the system,
- there is a need to find creative ways to exploit the value chain, finding post-consumer products which could be transformed into profit (compost, biogas, waste water management).

[Introduction to Adult Learning Methods and Techniques *Presented by Mrs. Alexandra Röttger, FAO, Rome*

Mrs. Alexandra Röttger of the FAO led a brief session on adult learning with the aim of passing on understanding of:

- its key concepts and principles,
- the process and conditions of learning
- to gain a basic understanding of types of non-formal learning approaches.

The group was asked to briefly brainstorm what “learning” meant to them. Answers varied from concepts such as “experiences”, as well as the “collection of knowledge”. Many responded with practical answers such as turning “theory into practices” or “being able to adjust to new environments/situations”. The common consensus at the end of the exercise was that there were many definitions and understandings of what is “learning”.

It was emphasized that the richest resource an adult learner has, is himself/herself. Mrs. Röttger then proceeded into a description of the differences between learning in children and adults, and how it goes through different processes. Primarily, adults are living in an entirely different concept as children. They have children and families of their own, and occupations which may take priority. It is thus important that adult education be focussed and effective so that no time is wasted. Adults largely learn through relating the knowledge to their previous experiences. If they do not have these experiences, they tend to learn from the experiences of others. This concept is known as “experiential learning”. You can only teach people with an open mind who are willing to gain new understandings, so it is anticipated that the participants of this training course will come away with valuable new information and skills, since they enthusiastically decided to take part in this training.

Participants were then asked to reflect upon their own experiences and recall a time when they learned something outside of school. They were asked to reflect upon several key questions, which would highlight for them how they best learned, and how it was done. The discussion which followed varied significantly. Many thought of practical examples like learning how to drive, while others focussed on more conceptual answers like responsibility. The respondents took advantage of the opportunity to reflect on what they’ve learned outside of school and how they learned it.

Agribusiness Management and Enterprise Development

Presented by: Mrs. Alexandra Röttger, FAO, Rome

The presentation made by Mrs. Röttger was meant to address several key issues. It is a fact that the absolute share of agriculture in the global economy has been shrinking. For our use, agriculture is an out-of-date concept. It has become more widely considered “agribusiness”. One of the main purposes of this training course is to demonstrate ways farmers can make agriculture a worthwhile way of making money. In recent years, there has been a significant shift in the Caribbean economy. The service sectors have seen tremendous growth, while the manufacturing and production sectors have declined. The producers have become consumers, and there exists a difficulty in viewing agriculture as a business. In order to survive and prosper in the 21st century global economy, farmers need to become skilled entrepreneurs.

Objectives:

- to understand what is an entrepreneur
- to assess the qualities of good entrepreneurs
- to identify people in group who have aptitude and desire to develop a new business

Two questions were then posed to the participants, “what is an entrepreneur and what is a business?” It was widely accepted that the definition of an entrepreneur is something that owns/runs their own business/company, and is not an employee of anyone. A business is then something that the entrepreneur intends to make money. The participants were then asked to list off special qualities of what makes a good entrepreneur. A good entrepreneur should be: innovative, customer oriented, persistent, re-inventive, strong, bold, responsible, proactive, reliable, competent, committed, focussed, emancipated, positive, disciplined, integrated and a good learner. There was some disagreement over whether a good entrepreneur should be either sensible or a risk taker, and whether they should be aggressive or tactful. It was agreed upon that there are many qualities that make up a good entrepreneur and no single person will possess all these qualities.

The session closed with a brief conclusion on how entrepreneurs should prepare themselves to succeed in the 21st century economy. Farmers need to understand how this is a new ballgame. They need to understand the difference between what it was like then, what it’s like now. What is it that has changed and how do they address that? The answer to this final question is the focus of this training course, how to own and maximize the value chain, getting the most from one’s agribusiness.

Marketing

Presented by: Mrs. Alexandra Röttger, FAO, Rome

This session focussed mainly on a brief overview of agricultural marketing and then followed into a practical discussion of participants’ experiences in marketing and how their strategies could be improved. Mrs. Röttger opened the session by asking the group the simple question of “what is marketing?” It was commonly accepted that marketing was made up of several aspects. It is:

- largely a western and affluent concept that involves creating and satisfying tastes and preferences.
- Marketing involves the selling and buying (exchange) of ideas, goods and services.

- It is only considered successful if the aforementioned is profitable.
- Ultimately it requires the producer or the person selling the service to get their product to the consumer.
- Marketing is a significant issue for farmers, particularly in an economy of competition. When production begins to surpass consumption you need to market so that your produce is selected over others, business is driven by marketing.

How to Start Marketing Management?

Mrs. Röttger proceeded to give a detailed explanation of appropriate marketing procedures. Before the plants are put in the ground it is essential that you start marketing. Farmers must study the market they are trying to enter before they commit to production. It is essential that you know, to the best of your ability, what the selling price of your product will be when you reap. Try to find out who else is planting similar products. Most importantly, you need to know who you will be selling to it is of no use if a farmer reaps the highest quality products, if they have nobody to sell it to.

Participants must also never underestimate the power of creative advertising. While there may be a heavily competitive market, there are ways for products to gain a significant advantage. The example of Red Bull was used, which has well-known ingredients throughout much of the world, but through excellent marketing/advertising has become a giant in the heavily saturated beverage market.

The question was then put out to the participants, “What is the biggest problem in marketing to farmers here?”

Primarily, all farmers found major issues to be:

- The seasonality of costs - certain products were cheaper at different times, creating competition between farmers and driving down the collective price. This problem was seen by the ackee producers who are attempting to follow the same strategy found in Guatemala, where farmers had developed a storage facility. This allowed them to hold back produce for a certain amount of time, avoiding significant gluts in the market. The need to explore affordable refrigeration was widely discussed amongst several types of producers.
- The member from St Kitts described her issues with supplying hotels with hot pepper sauce because of increased competition. She described how improved labelling and a change in the type and size of bottle have helped, but there were still significant pressures. She has explored the option of including her brand of hot pepper sauce in a gift basket of other products from St Kitts as a way of adding value to her product. It was noted by the group that domestic competition often undercuts cooperative action.
- It was stressed by the facilitator that producers need to focus on what makes buying from the Caribbean more attractive. There are several marketing niches which could put the small Caribbean farmer at an advantage. A notable marketing strategy has been the “buy local movement”. Farmers can argue that their produce and production practices are more environmentally friendly, healthier and fresher.

- It is necessary to focus on your strengths and not your weaknesses. It is difficult to try and compete with the United States and Europe when it comes to standardization or packaging. It was noted that in the example of European chocolate which was elaborately packaged. Participants commented that the primary ingredients were probably derived from Caribbean sources, so there should be no reason why products of this region can't be of the same quality, and produced at lower cost. This strategy was also being employed by the organic fertilizer producer from Grenada, who used specialized advertising to differentiate themselves from the artificial fertilizers imported from North America. The question was left up to the participants, what is it about your product that makes it attractive?

There were several issues brought up, many of which were not concerned with marketing which demonstrated that participants needed a more focussed definition on what were "marketing problems" vs. "other problems" that affect the production and sale of agriculture. The participants took full advantage of a visit paid by the purchasing manager of St Lucian Supermarket "Super/Mega J". He provided several insights on the process he goes through to buy local produce from St Lucian farmers. The session closed with a brief comment by Mr Jethro Greene detailing his 8 month plan to establish direct linkages and relationships with supermarkets in the region, and the need for all the participants, and the members of their organizations to be well organized to meet this challenge.

The issues brought up with the representative from Mega J included:

- The value and difficulties associated with establishing contracts with buyers. While contracts provide particular benefits in market guarantees, there are disadvantages for both the buyer and supplier. The representative from the Mega J Supermarket noted that they did not sign contracts because of liabilities and suggested that building a trusting relationship with a buyer was the most effective way to open up a market for produce, rather than through legal obligations.
- The representative from Mega J Supermarkets took several questions from the group. He discussed the way in which they determine the price offered to farmers. They collect information from the ministry of agriculture, and also maintain an in-house database on costs over the year. He briefly elaborated on the computerized system which determines the mark-up on how much produce is sold in store, but refused to speak in-depth about how much mark-up is common. He noted that farmers have come to him demanding a higher price, but has said this has worked to deteriorate their relationships.

DAY TWO - TUESDAY JULY 27TH 2010

Business Plans

Presented by: Alexandra Röttger, FAO, Rome)

The presentation covered the fundamentals of business plans, gathering information, forecasting, financial analysis, strategy and tactics. Good business plans are simple, specific, realistic, and complete. Business plans enable you to make informed decisions, to become more knowledgeable about the business, and to define goals and direction. Various stakeholders will be interested to read business plans as well as management and staff of the organization. The contents of a business plan should be organized according to the functional areas of the business: marketing, production, finance, and human resources. A good place to start building a business plan is with the vision and mission of the organization or a SWOT analysis. The most important components of a business plan are: cash flow analysis, implementation plan, and time frame—typically three to five years.

An exercise was then described in which the participants were divided into groups which were required to draft a business plan for a specified produce. Groups were expected to work outside of regular training hours and these business plans were to be presented at the end of the week.

When asked to present their plans on the final day of the training course each group came to the table with well detailed business plans. The audience played the part of the investor and were expected to give their opinion of whether they would invest in the presented business or not.

The products presented on include:

- Hot Peppers
- Pigs
- Roots and Tubers
- Pineapples
- Services

Presentations given were very detailed, providing several logistical answers about how they would expect their businesses to be run, their projected markets, and potential growth over the next few years. Some notable comments made about all the presentations included:

- Need to keep them brief and appealing, all the presentations got bogged down in specific details and took longer than the original time allotment
- Need to highlight the competencies of each industry, how are the people running this company qualified?
- Important to make a full breakdown of the finances, where does the money come from and where does it go?

The audience and facilitators were together impressed at the level of sophistication the groups put into their business plans, in most cases the groups went above and beyond what was expected of them. Many of the participants noted that they felt much more prepared to develop a business plan which could be brought to financial institutions in the future.

Financial Records & Cash Flow
Presented by: Mr Robert Best, FAO, Port-of-Spain

The presentation began with a brainstorming session on some of the reasons for keeping financial records and a discussion on what types of records agribusiness entities/farmers need to keep in order to be successful. Participants suggested requirements for paying taxes, monitor cash flow, calculate profit or loss and for planning.

Useful account categories include: sales income, general expenses, materials, personnel, marketing, and finance. The definition of record-keeping, in short, is the daily recording of operations in order to obtain information necessary for sound management. Three types of accounts—cash book/general accounts, management accounts, statutory accounts—were defined.

A Profit and Loss account (P&L) is a record that shows whether a profit or loss was made over a defined period which can be used to analyse profitability. A balance sheet is essentially a detailed list of what an organization owns (assets) and what it owes (liabilities). It shows the value of a company at one moment in time and is only a guide to business performance. A list of items included under both a P&L account and a balance sheet were also listed.

The third financial record discussed was the cash flow statement. Potential sources of cash inflow and outflow were detailed.

Cash flow can be defined as the flow of money into the farm from sales and the flow of money out of the farm in the form of expenses (Net cash flow = cash inflow – cash outflow). It must be controlled and positive cash flow must be generated. The ability to generate enough cash flow to meet financial obligations is termed liquidity. Cash flow analysis is conducted to monitor liquidity at a given point in time, for farm planning and management, and to provide solutions to cash shortfalls. The definitions of projected cash flow and actual cash flow were given as well as a list of potential cash flow problems and associated solutions. Some of these issues included low profitability, unexpected cash problems, and high production costs.

The question was asked to the group, “In what ways can we keep track of cash flow and profitability?”

The participants were able to list several suggestions which were both practical and useful:

- Some organizations provide the service for an hourly rate. For farmers, the more detailed records you keep, the easier this can be done, saving you money
- Decide what schedule works best for your organization (daily/weekly/monthly review of records)
- Some cannot calculate the precise amount that is spent on extraneous costs, but maintaining tight enough estimates is better than no record at all. When it comes to record-keeping, the more detailed the information, the better.

- Take into account all types of cost. If you give away some produce to neighbours and friends, take that cost into account. If you have family members providing labour, estimate the cost it takes for them to provide that service.

A role playing exercise was given out to the group. Participants were provided an auditor's report of the financial statements (Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss, Cash Flow statement) of an actual Caribbean small farmers' organization selling produce. Participants were to play the part of the CEO of a farmers' organization and they were required to present the report to the Board of Directors. Based on the report supplied, what was the status of the company and in what ways can we improve the organization's cash flow and profitability?

Upon reviewing the financial statements, the participants noted that the current status of the company was not very healthy. They qualified this conclusion based on that it had a low equity base, it was unprofitable and there was a noticeable negative cash flow.

Participants were then asked how they could suggest that the organization could improve its cash flow and profitability. Through examining the balance sheet, the participants suggested collecting outstanding sales income, reducing overdraft and debts for long-term gains, and selling assets that are not being used efficiently. Participants also suggested looking into grants to bring in further income which could be invested into building capacity.

Through examining the profit & loss statement, participants suggested maintaining tight record-keeping so that decisions regarding the operation of the organization could be fully informed. It was suggested that the organization could look into selling shares in order to bring in further income. Practical examples such as increasing membership or holding special fundraising events were also brought up. Significant changes such as increasing production through diversification, attempting to provide services in-house rather than outsourcing (or vice versa), analyzing the efficiency of operational systems and cuts to administrative costs were also suggested by the participants.

Understanding Costs and Negotiating Prices

Participants were supplied a contract for the production, supply and purchase of green hot peppers. The group was asked to critique the contract and identify positive and negative aspects which could help in their own negotiations. Participants were divided into five (5) groups for a group simulation exercise. Two members of each group simulated "buyers" while the rest played the part of farmers, either organized or not, who were looking to get the best deal for their produce.

When negotiating a contract with the buyers, the farmers were asked to consider several specifics, such as type of packaging, delivery times, issuance of receipts, payment forms, the cost of production and whether there will be a contract. They also were asked to individually establish what their minimum asking price would be because the buyers similarly have a maximum buying price. The objective was for the participants to find a reasonable price in between the two extremes.

The outcomes, observations and lessons which were drawn from this exercise were varied and include:

- There was no general agreement on which form of payment was best, some farmers preferred being paid cash over cheques, but this has added responsibilities in record-keeping

- All contracts negotiated were on a year by year basis, this was done to allow freedom of renegotiation if there were any significant changes in factors leading to price.
- The section on *force majeure* should equally consider the risks taken by farmers as buyers
- The participants noted the strong desire to have binding contracts. There were many experiences when the buyer reneged on their end of the bargain, there needs to be protections for the farmer negotiated into the arrangement.
- The need to be cautious of shell companies/buyers. Buyers should be somehow certified.
- It is important to consider other ways of negotiating and not to be limited to contracts, participants were told by both the hotel and supermarket purchasing managers that they did not prefer contracts
- It is important to have access to more than one buyer. If there is a lack of buyers then there is a lack of leverage for farmers to negotiate.
- It is a cumbersome process for the farmer because they need to take into consideration all of their costs. There may be hidden costs for either side, such as the cost of pack-houses.
- Should consider the establishment of an information system, similar to that used by the supermarket purchasing manager
- An experience brought up by Mr Robert Best was that in Trinidad producers would meet once a year to set the prices of their crops, it is useful to work in groups

DAY THREE – WEDNESDAY JULY 28TH, 2010

Field Visits Introduction

A strong component of the training course was devoted toward first-hand observations and interaction with members along the value chain. Participants were given the opportunity to listen and discuss issues with the purchasing manager from Bay Gardens Hotel, who attempts to buy from local producers as much as possible. Participants also attended a field visit to one of the major fresh produce buyers, Consolidated Foods Limited (CFL) and two producer cooperatives in the South (Belle Vue Farmers and Black Bay Farmers). The field visits were organised to reinforce agribusiness management skills taught over the last two days. The purpose was to observe and report back on the advantage(s) and disadvantage(s) of a coordinated marketing approach. In addition, the field visit was also an opportunity for participants to observe fundamental aspects of the value chain approach, which are market led, participatory, transparent, information sharing and how these shaped the business relationships between CFL and its producers. Participants were provided background information on each of the visit locations as well as a list of key areas of focus for observation (appendix).

Discussion with Purchasing Manager of Bay Gardens Hotel

Lance Lowry, the purchasing manager of the Bay Gardens hotels sat with the participants and gave a description of his relationship with local farmers and answered a series of questions posed by the group. He noted that the biggest challenges he faced as a purchaser is to find a reliable source of local fresh fruit. Cantaloupe, melons, honeydew, grapefruit and papaya were all produce the hotel regularly tried to acquire, as well as fruit which can be used for fresh juice. The juices currently being offered by the hotel were made from frozen concentrate. The clientele was mostly based out of the Caribbean, and as such they want fresh Caribbean fruit.

He noted significant difficulty in getting what was requested from producers. Obtaining an adequate quantity of good quality products was his main challenge. For example, he would order 200lbs of pineapple and fruit the day before delivery. The delivery would arrive the next day and half of the fruit would already be ripe, meaning they would have to be used right away. A large portion of this already-ripe produce gets wasted due to spoilage.

Mr Lowry has been very pleased with the support he has gotten from egg producers in Vieux Fort, in the south of St Lucia. Bay Gardens orders 200 dozen eggs every three days, and have received the best prices they have ever found. Mr Lowry's only issue is that a quarter of each dozen eggs will be cracked or broken. He found that producers were not being reasonable in delivering the quality of produce he was requesting. For example, they have said that they are not interested in dealing with the heads of pineapples, but the producers will deliver them unprocessed. He felt that the level of customer-service could be improved.

Participants then had the opportunity to ask Mr Lowry questions regarding the operations of the Bay Gardens' purchasing:

Q: Does Bay Gardens have the capacity to establish greenhouses or loans for greenhouses in order to establish regularized production and delivery?

A: We do not currently have the funds or capacity to establish that sort of project

Q: Do you communicate with the farmers about what you need for a consistent supply

A: Yes, there has been a regular supply relationship established with 2-3 farmers that can be called up at any time

Q: would you be willing to work with a local producers' organization that can help you serve your needs?

A: Yes, absolutely.

Consolidated Foods Limited – Mega J Supermarket)

The field visit began with a tour of the CFL pack-house and storage facility. CFL is part of a conglomerate company including Super J stores which is the largest supermarket chain with 8 stores on the island with over 50 percent market share. Mr Dunstan Demille, the Purchasing Manager of CFL provided an overview of the company's procurement operation and farmer programme. CFL purchases wholesale produce from farmers which would be distributed throughout St Lucia to other stores in addition to importing from abroad to make good local production shortfalls. Its procurement systems, which are computerized and include a chilled facility, work in two ways. Most of the less perishable product is purchased at a centralized warehouse while some of the more perishable produce is delivered to the individual stores. It offers farmers warehouse receipts and was interested in increasing the percentage of packaged, minimally processed and locally branded products.

Consolidated Foods Limited expects farmers to:

- Participate in an annual buyer – producer meeting
- Be expected to meet demand of the Supermarket within 1 - 7 days of being notified
- Be trained and certified with the Ministry of Agriculture
- Bring high quality produce
- Arrive before a certain time, if there was a problem then flexibility is discussed
- Take technical advice from the Ministry of Agriculture
- Package the products in specially marked crates supplied by CFL on arrival to the receiving bay

Farmers received:

- More reliable farmers could enter into contracts or receive a expected delivery schedule and in return pays these farmers 0.25 percent above the market rate and will offer them an advance to buy inputs
- Payment within 7 days and at special times of year they were paid more quickly

- Soft-loans worth up to EC\$5000 in order to cover costs of inputs and land clearing
- A guaranteed market for their produce. The problem noted by the CFL representative was a lack of consistent quality supply

{ **Visit to Belle Vue Farmers Cooperative Society Ltd**

The group received a warm welcome and an informative presentation by the extension officer Mr Michael Lamontagne and manger of Belle Vue Farmers' Cooperative, Mr Raphael Felix. The participants had the opportunity to explore the cooperative's input supply store and were offered a sample of local produce supplied by the cooperative. Mr Felix detailed the development of Belle Vue and described some of the major challenges they have faced in recent years. The cooperative was formed among 12 small farmers who realized they were facing similar problems. The cooperative has since grown and is now coordinating the activities of 250 small farmers with a staff of 27, in addition to its own farm. They market over EC\$1.5m of fresh produce including an organic line. The services offered to its members include:

- pack house, distribution sales and marketing services
- sourcing of technical assistance (MoA, OXFAM, FAO, IICA, US Peace Corps),
- introduction of new technology including demonstration farm
- input supply, including seedlings,
- negotiation of finance, in addition to tax concessions
- computerized record-keeping for producers in support of the above
- advocacy.

Some notable observations of Belle Vue Farmers' Cooperative made by participants included:

- They owed their success to identifying common problems and working to alleviate them. Overall the participants were impressed with the level of professionalism and organization displayed by Belle Vue.
- That Belle Vue purchased all quality produce from farmers, then found buyers in the supermarket industry in St Lucia
- Constantly improved services. There was an issue of transportation which was gradually improved until they were able to afford a covered truck with a cooling system
- Farmers were unhappy about the quality of fertilizer being used, so they experimented with several types to find one that was appropriate for their climate and soil-type
- The system of growing seedlings for members, avoiding the problem of insects and rainfall carrying away seeds before rooting
- Worked with the extension service to obtain duty-free vehicles for farmers
- Impressed with the relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture, refused to rely on them but worked in cooperation when they could.
- Negotiated with banks and lending institutions to obtain the best possible rates for producers

- The debate arose whether a cooperative should work to coordinate which crops are grown by farmers at a certain time. Belle Vue maintained that it wanted to let farmers choose which crop they should focus on, and while it was against the rules, they allowed farmers the freedom to sell to whomever they liked. No production planning or contracts led the participants to note this may be a weakness of the organization as over-production in one particular crop can work to lower prices, hurting farmers in the end. The need for greater communication between farmers in order to promote voluntary coordination is needed.

Visit to Black Bay Farmers Cooperative)

The second farmers' organization visited by the participants was the Black Bay Farmers Cooperative, which has a membership of 35 farmers.

Black Bay operated in a very different way than Belle Vue, acting as a negotiator for its farmers, rather than a middle-man that purchased from the farmer directly. It is a much smaller cooperative in terms of membership with their farmers cultivating an average of two (2) acres each, some with irrigation. They also accepted produce from non-certified farmers but these farmers needed to be known by the members of the Black Bay Cooperative.

Participants noted that there seemed to have been incredible potential for the Black Bay's farmers based on the terrain and soil that was at their disposal, but the general impression given by the group was of disappointment. Participants were very willing to provide comments on areas of improvement which directed much of the conversation about Black Bay the following day.

Some notable observations of Black Bay made by participants included:

- Participants noted tremendous potential for the Black Bay farmers, their terrain was particularly flat
- Because of a lack of guaranteed markets, farmers either had to accept the price offered or allow their produce to spoil, there was a lack of leverage in negotiating
- The need to improve on post-harvest handling, produce was stored on the group
- The seedling greenhouse was in poor condition
- There was concern amongst the members regarding the acceptance of crops from uncertified farmers (quality/safety issues)
- There was a noticeable amount of disease amongst the crops observed, it was suggested to remove these crops to save the remainder

Many participants noted that seeing Black Bay compared to BelleVue allowed them to see the strides certain cooperatives can go by making simple improvements.

Field Visit Observations

All of these views were brought together the following day when participants summarized the strengths and weaknesses observed in the field trip the day before. Mr Jethro Greene brought the session to a close by speaking of his observations in working with both groups. He was glad to see that the participants noted the same observations he made generally about both cooperatives. Mr Greene commented that in the Caribbean there is a tendency to simply criticize, but CaFAN has shown its strength by not only pointing out shortcomings, but offering up solutions, and legitimate offers to provide a helping hand. This is the solidarity that is being promoted within CaFAN.

The participants found the exercise to be very worthwhile as it allowed them to better understand:

- buyer requirements and identification of the most critical success factors for buyer to enter into a business relationship,
- the importance of production and marketing planning,
- the importance of post-harvest handling, transport and value addition through grading, and packaging,
- quality and food safety standard requirements,
- marketing and branding,
- costing and pricing of fresh and semi-processed produce along value/supply chain,
- the importance of sound production and financial records for price negotiation and profitability,
- the need for feedback mechanisms to producers on quality and volume,
- business models of buyers and farmers' organizations,
- the need to use service providers to support value chain strengthening

DAY FOUR – THURSDAY 29TH, JULY 2010

Introduction to Management of Producers' Organizations and Underlying Principles)

Presented by: Mr Jethro Greene, ECTAD, St Vincent and the Grenadines

The session began with a group brainstorming session on what it means to be a good leader. This was then compared to a similar list that was made regarding what is a good manager. It was noted by the group that there was really not much that separated the two titles, except for a few fine details. The issue that was being pushed across was that a good leader or manager knows how to maximize a team-work approach. If the leader/manager is incapacitated or unable to fulfil their duties, the leader/manager must ensure that the structure can survive and prosper.

The way a farmers' organization is led, is reflected largely in the attitude of its membership. This was particularly evident during the field visits made the previous day. One of the most useful strategies of making sure you have an active and impassioned membership is to keep them involved. This strategy was demonstrated in the experience of having farmers supply hotels. It was expected that the farmer should visit the hotel personally to collect their cheque. They were then required to take that cheque and then deposit it into the bank.

These interactions required the farmer to put on their best business attire, meet with the hotel buyer as well as the banker, giving rise to new relationships. The hotel buyer and banker were then able to see first-hand the farmer as a business-person. These are the relationships that CaFAN is trying to foster. Give the membership an opportunity to participate, even on the smallest insights and interactions and you will see them become active.

Mr Greene then posed the question to the group, "what are areas that farmers' organizations need to improve on?" Some of the suggestions included:

- Providing incentives for supply and quality
- Ensuring farmers know best-practices, examples, success stories
- Continued training in financial skills, production planning and forecasting
- Better access to financing/credit
- Balancing traditional farming with the use of technology

Mr Greene closed this portion of the session by stressing the fact that solutions to these suggestions do exist, most can be addressed through the establishment of strategic alliances. CaFAN members must find the banks that are most open to lending to farmers and fully utilize organizations like the FAO/IICA/CARDI who are there to support small farmers. Relationships need to be created with companies like Mega J where mutual benefits can be gained. Despite the negative perception of government ministries, farmers' organizations must maximize their relationships with the bureaucracy for they are the ones who write the policies for politicians.

Enterprise Profitability, Gross Margins and Farm Management

Presented by Mr Heiko Bammann, FAO, Rome

Mr Bammann led the group in a highly practical lesson on the aspects of modern farm management, calculating gross margins and recording enterprise profitability. The presentation began with situational examples which highlight the importance of building a business through increasing skills in farm management and the proper collection and analysis of financial records.

The distinction was made between larger farms which follow “modern” practices, and smaller farms which have been largely understood to follow “traditional” practices. It was stressed that because of several challenges small farmers face they must learn to adopt the “modern” practices of agriculture, primarily securing profit in their business. Since farmers are both operators and managers, they have tremendous challenges but also control over how their business is run and developed.

The presentation then moved onto a particular section focussing on analyzing enterprise profitability. Understanding enterprise profitability provides farmers with the tools required to develop their business sensibly, thus improving their incomes. The first step in ensuring the proper analysis of profitability is through the collection of data (and/or record-keeping). These data provide the fuel for applying farm management techniques. Through properly analyzing the data collected, the farmer can have greater control over maximizing profit, making adjustments, planning, marketing and understanding risk and uncertainty. When these variables are made clear, the farmer is best placed to make short-to-long term decisions which will affect their business.

Calculating the Gross Margin (or ‘profit’) is one of the most fundamental analytical tools a farmer can use to evaluate the profitability of each one of their enterprises. Knowing this information the farmer can better plan which crops return higher yields or profits. It is of utmost importance that all inputs and costs are taken into account.

In order to calculate gross returns from crops, the shares kept as food and consumed by the farm family as well as crops that are either stolen or given away to neighbours and friends need to be recorded as yield and given a value. In these cases the volumes stolen are valued, they in turn should be recorded as produce losses and appear as costs. This example was given to illustrate how complicated simple gross margin analysis can become and that much emphasis needs to be placed on defining what has been calculated and how.

The participants were then given three exercises to complete.

1. Participants were asked to brainstorm different types of information required to calculate gross margin/enterprise profits

Group answers included:

- Gross income per enterprise, Labour, Seeds/seedlings, Fertilizer, Herbicides, Pesticides, Fungicides and Opportunity costs
2. Participants were asked to think of ways that GM analysis can be used for/why is it important?

Group answers included:

- Gross margins are an important record to keep when attempting to plan future crops
 - Good for assessing what needs to be changed to get better results
 - It allows farmers to decide if they should change enterprises
 - Important part of a business plan which can be shown to banks/investors
3. Three groups were then formed in order for the group to interview one particular member and help to calculate a gross margin based on one of their enterprises. The group presented on three different produce: hot peppers, pineapples and Irish potatoes. Based on the estimates provided by the volunteers, each group was able to complete a gross margin analysis.

Responses received from this exercise included:

- All participants noted that while they knew it was a worthwhile task to maintain these records in order to produce such an analysis, there were many comments on how difficult and tedious a task this could become.
- Some participants admitted ignorance in some of the basic data collecting software (Excel was used), and expressed the need to be trained in these computer programs.
- It was suggested that farmers organizations could somehow ease the burden of producing the templates required to maintain sufficient records or could facilitate training.

Training manuals and materials on farm management and Gross Margin templates on Excel Spread sheets produced by FAO were handed out to each of the participants as hard copies and file copies on a CD Rom at the end of the training session.

Agricultural Production and Marketing Information System (APMIS) Overview

Presentation by: Ms Nyasha Durrant, CaFAN and Ms Sylvia Shakespeare, CPGCA

Ms Nyasha Durrant gave a presentation on the work CaFAN Secretariat has been doing in St Vincent and the Grenadines in marketing its farmers' produce. She spoke of the plans to establish the Agricultural Production and Marketing Information System (APMIS) database system for CaFAN. The final product will work to keep track of what each member of the organization has currently in production, and when it will be ready so that greater coordination can be gained in marketing. APMIS will also be tied into the CaFAN Secretariat SMS project to collect production information.

Data will be collected by surveys. Farmers will also telephone in their production data which will be entered by the data entry personnel at CAFAN Secretariat. The Secretariat upon receiving market requests will provide this information to data entry personnel. This information will then be entered into the database. ECTAD/CAFAN's management will access and make specific production and marketing decisions based on specific queries to the database system. This information will then be shared with the farmers through different

mediums –e.g. meetings, mobile phones etc. The information submitted by the farmers will be checked and verified by farmers’ counterparts/extension officers.

Ideally this database will be accessible regionally in hopes that CaFAN will be able to coordinate trade between countries. If there is a shortage in one country and an order cannot be filled, the farmers’ organizations can access the database to find where there is potentially a surplus to draw from, allowing both parties to benefit. If farmers in one country are aware of what farmers in other countries are producing, this could help them decide what would be the best crop to plant.

The APMIS database will largely reflect the work currently being done by Ms Sylvia Shakespeare’s organization, the Christina Potato Growers Cooperative Association (CPGCA) of Jamaica in an accessible database. Ms Shakespeare highlighted that the project has currently received support from the EU AAACP to move ahead. It intends to collect attributes from growers in their association, including farmers’: names, picture, alias, age, address, land tenure, hectares planted, reaping dates, estimated volumes, pesticides used, GPS location and other important information in order to coordinate production and marketing. The next phase of the project will include the training of trainers who will be able to impart their knowledge to members of the cooperative in basic agribusiness principles and increase the capacity of the organization to facilitate this database system.

Panel Discussion on the Role of Farmers’ Organizations in Marketing

One of the highlights of the training course as a panel discussion chaired by Mr Robert Best (FAO) with a panellists represented several key organizations. They were:

- Mr Heiko Bammann - simulated donor representative
- Mr Jethro Greene – regional farmers organization (CaFAN),
- Mr Sean Black – regional agribusiness organization (CABA)
- Ms Pamela Thomas – national farmers organization (Team Fresh Cooperative)
- Mr Eustace Vitalis – former purchasing officer (Hotel – Sandals Resort)

The question was posed to the panel by the Chair, “What shall be the role of farmers in marketing produce?”

The donor representative opened the discussion by expressing the view that farmers’ organizations should stay out of direct marketing. He Stated:

- Organizations should look to improve the abilities of the middlemen.
- They can focus on facilitating the marketing, but only if you build the buyer than you get a better share of the market.
- The key recommendations coming from the donor representative is to build capacity within the organization to connect buyers to the producers.
- Funds provided by the donors should go toward infrastructure, like improving roads and packing-houses. Loans with excellent interest rates can be given out to governments to facilitate this.

Responses from panel and audience included:

- Farmers organizations can no longer simply act in an advocacy capacity, they must work on several fronts. Organizations need to be directly involved with rural development. Farmers' organizations cannot access loans directly through the World Bank. They have to go through governments, thus it is of utmost importance to keep the pressure on politicians, while searching for solutions independently.
- All panellists agreed that organizations played a role in linking farmers to markets and facilitating trade
- All panellists acknowledged that guaranteeing domestic supply is important but differed on whether organizations should be entirely involved in marketing directly
- The point was made that farmers need to find strategic allies within the value chain. Profiteers will enter the market simply to make quick money, but they may just as easily decide to leave. Farmers need to make partnerships with members of the value chain that have an interest in its success.
- The participants noted the importance of CABA and similar organizations and their need to reevaluate their strategies to pay closer attention to issues affecting the primary producer rather than the large buyers and processors.

Mr Jethro Greene closed the session by stressing the fact that it's time for those who have been involved with agriculture for decades to take their rightful place as owners of the value chain. The opportunity has risen for a new generation of agribusiness-people. If not, then the same greedy interests will move their way in and leave the small farmer behind. The strength of CaFAN as a volunteer organization speaks to the fact that there are committed individuals and groups who are willing to see this vision take place. It is of utmost importance that farmers and farmers' organizations treat agriculture as a serious business, transferring their skills and experiences to create sustainable and profitable enterprises.

DAY FIVE – FRIDAY JULY 30TH, 2010

Value Chain Financing

Presented by: Robert Best, FAO, Port-of-Spain)

Mr Robert Best led a presentation on how to understand Value Chain Finance needs by analyzing the nature of the value chain structure. The structure and relationships are determined types of end markets, vertical and horizontal linkages, supporting markets, and business enabling environments. This determines the demand and supply for financing and the types of organizations which can supply the financing. By becoming aware of how value chains are financed, small producers and producer organizations can build relationships and strategically negotiate access to a wider range of finance options

Five types of financing were explained to the participants who were asked to identify examples of for each type within their own value chains or business experience. Each one of these forms of financing are meant to support each other, some providing more power to the farmer than others.

- 1) Product Financing
- 2) Receivable Financing
- 3) Physical Asset Financing
- 4) Risk Mitigation Financing
- 5) Financial Enhancements

Following the presentation, 3 groups were established and participants were asked to identify the different forms of financing their farmers or organizations utilize and to prioritize their importance to their ability to meet the requirements of the buyer.

Examples of product financing mentioned included input supplier financing (BVFC advance of fertilizers and seedlings to farmers), marketing financing (Mega J Supermarket advances, NAMDEVCOs immediate payment to farmers) and lead firm financing (BAS advances, NDFD / Bello contract farm advances of inputs). Physical asset collateralization (vehicle financial leases), risk mitigation financing (WIBDECO banana disaster insurance) and financial enhancements (government loan guarantees in St Kitts, Cocoa Board bank guarantees) were also discussed by the group as important to their organizations. With the exception of product financing, there was no consensus on what was the next highest priority.

LESSONS LEARNED AND FOLLOW-UP

The last session the group participated in was a reflection and follow-up activity. The participants were asked to organize into country-groups and brainstorm and provide feedback to the facilitators, CaFAN and the FAO in:

- 1) a) Identifying key services your organization is going to provide in the future
 - There was significant overlap in the kinds of services each organization expects to provide in the future

- The most common responses involved providing training in business management, financial planning and production managing
- Distribution of informational material regarding
- There was also significant interest among several country groups in the education of good chemical use and application, as well as the spread of good agricultural practices (GAPs) in general
- Increasing membership in organizations to give them greater influence
- The increased usage of IT was noted by several groups. Specifically they were looking to create “online communities” as well as facilitating the creation of production databases housed in the national farming organization
- Larger organizations focussed on more elaborate plans like focussing on developing infrastructure (roads, irrigation), pack-houses and supporting the development of new cooperatives

b) How to generate funding to realise these services?

- The vast majority of the responses looked to help from donor agencies and grants in order to fund the capacity building activities that organizations sought to run
- The same amount were eager to continue partnerships with CaFAN and the FAO in order to facilitate training workshops for various skills
- Approaching national development/financial institutions with project proposals
- Fundraising activities like festivals, bake sales and raffles were suggested as ways to facilitate some of the capacity building activities
- Some groups suggested that selling shares or raising fees in their organization would improve income and their capacity to provide services to members
- One group suggested their organization retain 5 percent of all sales of inputs and produce facilitated in order to deliver better services to its members
- Alliances with strategic businesses which would be willing to support national development

2) What areas require more capacity building at the national level?

- There overwhelming support for more in depth hands on training in business planning financial management and record-keeping, and in some cases the use of computers in this regard. Most looked to CaFAN to somehow facilitate this training
- Group formation, relationship building, team building, leadership, conflict resolution skills in managing people
- Help in identifying, approaching and working with value chain partners i.e. value chain management skills
- Project planning and proposal writing Continued emphasis on promoting agriculture as a business
- Supply chain management including market-production planning and raining in database management
- Marketing which includes branding and packaging
- Training in post-harvest handling, including solutions for storing/ transforming product during seasonal peaks was noted by almost all the participants
- Continued support to include new youth into agriculture programmes
- Environmental impact assessments

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The floor was opened up to the participants for any closing remarks. Participants took turns thanking both CaFAN and the FAO for giving them the opportunity to participate in the training course.

Mr Heiko Bammann followed this display of gratitude by expressing his happiness to have run his second training course in as many years. He hopes and expects further workshops/training courses will take place in future years that will bring together CaFAN and farmers' organizations across the region. Mr Bammann made special note of how impressed he was with the level of technical specialty that was brought together for this training course. Many of the topics being covered were familiar to many participants as there was already a wealth of experience in the room. Looking back over the week of events, this will give him tremendous insight into how to shape and develop the agribusiness training course for next time.

Mr Robert Best reminded the group that the skills and tools that they had worked with during the week were selected based on needs identified working with the chains receiving support from CAFAN and the FAO projects. Resources have been made available to support the strengthening capacity in these areas. He expressed his hopes that each participant will return to their home organization make a presentation of the lessons learnt at the training course to their own organizations and develop actions to improve them. Lastly he reminded the group that one of the best resources participants had, was to learn from the success of other participants. In this regard, he urged the participants to keep in touch with each other after the training.

The final thanks and conclusion was left to Mr Jethro Greene. Mr Greene commented that the training course was only the beginning of a project that will be in the works over the next eight weeks. He also highlighted some further activities that CaFAN will be doing to further strengthen the capacity of small farmers, these include:

- A series of follow-up e-mails to learn the status of implementation so that CaFAN can move onto the next phase of the value chain development
- Capacity assessments of strategic partners in region which will contribute to value chain development
- Identification of strategic produce each country can produce which shall be integrated into the Agricultural Production and Marketing Information System (APMIS)
- Formation and distribution of instructional material regarding topics of CaFAN expertise, such as: financial management, enterprise development, marketing and production planning, leadership skills and cluster formation. The purpose of this is to give members the capacity to hold individual training seminars. In this regard he said that CAFAN was happy to partner with the FAO to develop a toolkit on value chain management which reflected the experiences of Caribbean farmers' organization.

Thanks were given to the FAO for being one of the best funding partners CaFAN has had the pleasure of working with thus far. CaFAN will be using this opportunity as a launching pad to form new types of corporations, which will be discussed with the FAO for future projects.

CaFAN workshops/training courses have always had a family atmosphere and with the support of its diverse membership, future training courses will only continue to improve. The sharing of information is the lynchpin of CaFAN's success. Farmers' Organizations must distribute information amongst colleagues and amongst other organizations. There is simply too much overlap in the Caribbean; there is a need to know where the information already lies so it can be further developed. The session concluded with the concept being reiterated three times, "Share, Share, and Share!"

EVALUATION

Upon the conclusion of all the sessions, participants were asked to complete a short survey in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the training course. There was resounding enthusiasm for the work that was completed over the five days. The whole group noted that they were satisfied with the training course and an overwhelming majority noted that their initial expectations were met. Informally, many experienced participants noted that this was the most useful and well organized training course hosted by CaFAN thus far. They said they were looking forward to the next opportunity they would have to work with CaFAN and the FAO, either on the regional level or nationally.

Each of the training sessions received very supportive comments and scored well on the survey. The session people found most satisfactory was the training session on Enterprise profitability, gross margins and farm management, which taught the participants practical skills in the use of records which could be applied to production planning. Many expressed interest in carrying these skills home with them and sharing it within their organizations. The panel discussion was also widely enjoyed by participants as it opened up a lively debate concerning the role of farmers' organizations in marketing. Many of the regional leaders gave introductions for their future plans for their national organizations and for CaFAN as a whole.

The field visits were a refreshing change of pace during the middle of the week. Participants were excited to tour the Super J Purchasing Centre/Supermarket and to speak with Mr Dunstan Demille (Purchasing Manager). Participants were somewhat less enthusiastic about the rather long drives to both BelleVue and Black Bay Farmers' Cooperatives, but the vast majority still noted that the chance to tour their facilities was a very worthwhile and informative experience. Participants particularly enjoyed the hospitality provided by BelleVue with their offering of fresh snacks and their "all-St Lucian lunch".

Participants overwhelmingly found that the group work and plenary discussions were very well organized and understandable. The objectives of the group work were clearly defined and respondents noted that they were very useful. Despite some exercises having particularly larger group numbers, participants noted that they still actively participated in the discussions and that the interactions within the group were welcoming and rewarding. The relationships developed while doing group work carried on outside of the formal training sessions as participants regularly convened socially in the evenings and worked together on the business plans assigned early in the week.

Respondents very much appreciated the accommodations provided by the Bay Gardens Hotel. Breakfast, snacks and lunch were promptly served and the staff spared no expense at making sure each individual was taken care of with exceptional service. The accommodations set-up by the CaFAN/FAO team was simply an added benefit to the well organized and rewarding training course set-up for the participants.

PROGRAMME

"Regional Training Course in Agribusiness Management for Farmers' Organizations"

July 26-30, Bay Gardens Inn, St Lucia

DAY ONE: Monday, 26 July 2010

Time	Topic	Facilitator/Presenter
8:00 - 8:30am	Registration	CaFAN Secretariat
8:30 - 8:45am	Welcoming Remarks a. FAO b. CaFAN	CaFAN Secretariat/FAO
8:45 - 9:15am	1. Background to the EU AAACP and GTFS projects CaFAN and FAO will report on national and regional activities implemented under the project and how it links to other on-going activities implemented by other organizations in the region.	Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)/ Mr Robert Best (FAO)
9:15 - 9:45am	2. Training Course Overview and Introduction of Participants a. Objectives and expected outputs b. Introduction of participants and their expectation	Mr Heiko Bammann (FAO) /Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)
9:45 - 10:30am	3. Value chain analysis and development, business models approach and the need for agribusiness skills	Mr Heiko Bammann / Mr Lafaele Enoka(FAO)
10:30 - 11:00am	MORNING TEA BREAK	
11:00 - 12:00pm	4. Introduction into adult training methods and techniques: The session will provide an overview of adult training methods and techniques.	Ms Alex Röttger (FAO)
12:00 - 1:00pm	5. Agribusiness Management 5.1. Enterprise development	Ms Alex Röttger / Mr Heiko Bammann (FAO)
1:00 - 2:00pm	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 - 4:30pm	5.2. Marketing This session focuses on promoting market-oriented farming and strengthens the skills of the participants to identify and assess market opportunities, how to initiate and maintain producer/buyer linkages and how to develop the right marketing mix for a successful farmers' organization enterprise as well as how to calculate marketing costs.	Ms Alex Röttger / Mr Heiko Bammann/ Mr Lafaele Enoka (FAO)
4:30 - 4:45pm	AFTERNOON TEA BREAK	
6:30pm	OFFICIAL CEREMONY	CaFAN Secretariat/ Jethro Greene/ Mr Robert Best

DAY TWO: Tuesday 27th July, 2010		
Time	Topic	Facilitator/Presenter
8:30 - 10:30am	5. Agribusiness Management – Continue from previous day	
	<p>5.3. Business planning: Participants develop skills necessary to work with farmers' organizations and other rural entrepreneurs to develop a road map for a new business or for expanding an old one. Strengths and weaknesses of skills and assets are developed and the participant learns how to develop guidelines for the operation of a rural enterprise. Methods of finding finance from informal and formal lending institutions or investors are discussed. Components of the business plan, including assessment of risks and risk avoiding/mitigation strategies.</p>	<p>Ms Alex Röttger / Mr Heiko Bammann/ Mr Lafaele Enoka (FAO)</p>
10:30 - 11:00am	MORNING TEA BREAK	
11:00 - 1:00pm	<p>5.4. Managing finance: The participants will be introduced to the key financial management concepts needed to run a sustainable business. This includes gaining insights into the importance of keeping financial records, importance of cash flow management; understand how to calculate the cost of a product and how to set prices.</p>	Ms Alex Röttger / Mr Robert Best (FAO)
1:00 - 2:00pm	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 - 3:00pm	<p>5.5. Managing people: As people are the most important resource for any business, this session aims to increase the awareness of farm entrepreneurs to act as managers and leaders and to make best use of the resources. It focuses on identifying good management practices, assessing different management styles and how to identify tasks, allocate key staff to different functions of the enterprise.</p>	Ms Alex Röttger (FAO)/Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)
3:00 - 4:30pm	<p>6. Introduction into management of producers' organizations and underlying principles: In this session the participants gain an understanding on how to successfully manage a market oriented producers' organization. The participants learn about advantages and challenges of associations, their basic characteristics and legal forms. Emphasis is put on principles such as self-sustainability, competitiveness, profitability and service orientation.</p>	Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)
4:30 - 4:45pm	AFTERNOON TEA BREAK	
4:45 - 5:00pm	7. Introduction to field visit	Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)/Mr Robert Best/Mr Lafaele Enoka (FAO)

DAY THREE: Wednesday 28th July, 2010

Time	Topic	Facilitator/Presenter
7:00 - 8:00am	8. Field Visit: Participants will be introduced to the Belle Vue and Black Bay Farmer groups as the main producers and Purchasing Officers of supermarkets and the hospitality industry as the main buyers of fresh fruits.	Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)/Mr Robert Best/Mr Lafaele Enoka (FAO)
	Discussion with the Purchasing Manager of the Bay Garden Inn Hotel	
8:15 - 10:00am	Visit Super J Purchasing Centre/Supermarket: Mr Dunstan Demille (Purchasing Manager)	
10:00 - 12:00pm	Drive to Belle Vue Farmers' Cooperative	
12:00 - 12:15pm	BREAK (SNACKS)	
12:15 - 1:30pm	Tour of Belle Vue Farmers' Cooperative (see nursery, input supply shop, understand operations/loading operations, etc)	
1:30 - 2:30pm	LUNCH BREAK	
2:30 - 3:30pm	Group Session	
3:30 - 4:00pm	Drive to Black Bay Farmers' Cooperative	
4:00 - 5:00pm	Tour of Black Bay Farmers' Cooperative	
5:00pm	Drive to Hotel	

DAY FOUR: Thursday 29th July, 2010

Time	Topic	Facilitator/Presenter
8:00 - 8:30am	Preparation of group field visit presentations	
8:30 - 9:30am	9. Field visit feedback session: Participants will share lessons learnt from the field visit which will be documented and included into the discussions during the following sessions.	Mr Robert Best/Mr Heiko Bammann/Mr Lafaele Enoka (FAO)
9:30 - 10:30am	10. Management and organizational issues of farmers organizations: The objective of this session is to assess and evaluate existing legal structures of producers' and farmers' organizations and to select the most suitable structure for a specific organization. Potential collaboration models between producers and buyers are identified and evaluated.	Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)/Mr Robert Best (FAO)
10:30 - 11:00am	MORNING TEA BREAK	
11:00 - 1:00pm	11. Supply chain management for producers organization: This session includes best practice in good production, marketing planning and coordination to provide consistence in supplies of high quality produce to the market; the role of farm data base for production and marketing monitoring and forecasting and the importance of information exchange and transparency	Ms Alex Röttger /Mr Heiko Bammann/Mr Lafaele Enoka (FAO)/Mr Jethro Greene (CAFAN)
1:00 - 2:00pm	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 - 3:30pm	Supply chain management continued: Farm enterprise profitability and value chain profit margins	Mr Heiko Bammann/Mr Lafaele Enoka (FAO)/Mr Jethro Greene (CAFAN)
3:30 - 3:45pm	AFTERNOON TEA BREAK	
3:45 - 4:30pm	Podiums discussion on the role of farmer organizations in marketing: being a facilitator vs. doing the marketing (attending reps/experts).	Mr Heiko Bammann (FAO)/Mr Jethro Greene (CAFAN)

DAY FIVE: Friday 30th July, 2010		
Time	Topic	Facilitator/Presenter
8:00 - 10:00am	<p>12. Post-harvest and distribution programmes for reliable produce marketing:</p> <p>This session will focus on the importance of post-harvest management in key areas including: post-harvest handling, grading/sorting, storage and handling, efficient transport/logistic and how contractual issues can help</p>	Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)/Mr Heiko Bammann/ Ms Alex Röttger (FAO)
10:00 - 10:30am	MORNING TEA BREAK	
10:30 - 11:30am	<p>13. Introduction into Value Chain Finance – options and tools:</p> <p>Following a presentation, participants will reflect on lessons learnt and discuss experiences made in their own operations with regards to value chain financing</p>	Mr Robert Best (FAO)
11:30-1:00pm	<p>14. Reflection and feedback</p> <p>Country group work, presentation and discussion</p> <p>Based on what we learned in this week’s training course and looking forward, farmer organizations will discuss their a) key roles in service provision and involvement in agribusiness, and b) identify most important technical topics they need to strengthen their capacities and like to get follow-up training at national level.</p>	Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)/Mr Robert Best/Mr Heiko Bammann (FAO)
1:00-2:00	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 - 3:00pm	<p>15. CLOSING</p> <p>a. Participant representative b. FAO c. CaFAN d. Ministry of Agriculture</p>	Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)/Mr Robert Best /Mr Heiko Bammann (FAO)

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FAO AGS TEAM, ROME			
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44.	Mrs. Alexander Rottger <i>Agribusiness Economist, Rural Infrastructure and Agro-industries Division</i>	FAO, Rome, AGS Viale Delle Terme Di Caracalla 00100 Rome, AGS Room B-609 <i>Italy</i>	Tel. #(39)06-570-55458 Cell = (39) 3481537005 Alexandra.Rottger@fao.org

EVALUATION SUMMARY

No	Questions	Percentage of persons Evaluated				
		Excellent/ Strongly Agree	Very Good/ Agree	Good/ Kept my Interest	Fair Somewhat agree	Poor/ Disagree

SECTION 1 GENERAL OBSERVATION

1.1	Overall, you were satisfied with the training course	69%	31%	-	-	-
1.2	Your initial expectations were met	46%	50%	4%	-	-

SECTION 2 WORKSHOP PROGRAMME AND PRESENTATIONS

2.1	Structure of programme was well organised around the expected results of the training course	38%	46%	12%	4%	-
2.2	Training course Introduction was clearly outlined	50%	31%	15%	4%	-
2.3	Adequate time was devoted for each presentation topic	19%	46%	35%	-	-
2.4	The interaction amongst the participants and facilitators/presenters were good	35%	38%	19%	4%	4%
2.5	The topics covered were relevant to course objectives	38%	42%	12%	4%	4%
2.6	The balance between different topics was satisfactory	23%	35%	35%	7%	

Presentations

2.7	Background to the EU AAACP and GTFS Projects – Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN) and Mr Robert Best (FAO)	46%	31%	15%	8%	-
2.8	Training Course Overview and Introduction of Participants – Mr Heiko Bammann (FAO) and Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)	54%	46%	-	-	-
2.9	Value Chain Analysis and Development, Business Models approach and the need for Agri Business Skills – Mr Heiko Bammann (FAO)	35%	53%	8%	-	4%
2.10	Introduction into adult training methods and techniques – Ms Alex	35%	50%	11%	4%	-

	Röttger (FAO)					
2.11	Agribusiness Management and Enterprise Development – Ms Alex Röttger (FAO)	31%	46%	19%	4%	-
2.12	Marketing – Ms Alex Röttger (FAO)	31%	50%	19%	-	-
2.13	Business planning - Ms Alex Röttger (FAO)	35%	38%	23%	4%	-
2.14	Managing finance - Ms Alex Röttger /Mr Robert Best (FAO)	38%	35%	23%	-	4%
2.15	Managing People - Ms Alex Röttger /Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)	35%	46%	15%	4%	-
2.16	Introduction into management of producers’ organizations and underlying principles:	42%	46%	12%	-	-
2.17	Introduction to Field Visit and Field Visit Session – Mr Lafaele Enoka (FAO) and Mr Jethro Greene (CaFAN)	53%	35%	8%	4%	-
2.18	Enterprise Profitability, Gross Margins and Farm Management – Mr Heiko Bammann	53%	23%	12%	12%	-
2.19	Panel Discussion on the Role of FO in Marketing	46%	38%	12%	4%	-
2.20	Value Chain Financing – Mr Robert Best (FAO)	46%	38%	12%	-	4%

SECTION 3 FIELD VISIT

3.1	Discussion with the Purchasing Manager of the Bay Garden Inn Hotel	46%	38%	8%	-	8%
3.2	Visit Super J Purchasing Centre/Supermarket: Mr Dunstan Demille (Purchasing Manager)	61%	23%	-	8%	8%
3.3	Drive to Belle Vue Farmers’ Cooperative	42%	19%	19%	12%	8%
3.4	Tour of Belle Vue Farmers’ Cooperative (see nursery, input supply shop, understand operations/loading operations, etc)	46%	19%	23%	8%	4%

3.5	Group Session	46%	19%	12%	4%	8%
3.6	Drive to Black Bay Farmers' Cooperative	34%	12%	19%	27%	8%
3.7	Tour of Black Bay Farmers' Cooperative	46%	12%	30%	8%	4%
3.8	Snacks	58%	11%	15%	8%	8%
3.9	Lunch	61%	23%	8%	4%	4%
3.10	Drive to Hotel	65%	15%	12%	8%	-

SECTION 4 GROUP WORK AND PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

4.1	There was adequate time allocated for the discussions	53%	35%	8%	4%	-
4.2	Participants actively participated in the discussions	58%	30%	8%	-	4%
4.3	Group work was clearly defined	50%	42%	-	4%	4%
4.4	The interaction between participants was rewarding during the group work	58%	30%	8%	-	4%
4.5	There was clear communication amongst the role of each group member towards their contribution to the group work	54%	23%	19%	-	4%
4.6	Group work presentations were clear	54%	31%	11%	-	4%

SECTION 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1	Workshop methods used were appropriate	54%	26%	12%	-	8%
5.2	Presentations were clear	50%	27%	15%	4%	4%
5.3	Theory and practice were well-balanced	54%	38%	8%	-	-
5.4	The pace during the course was	46%	27%	23%	-	4%

	adequate					
5.5	Intensity was satisfactory	42%	31	19%	-	8%

SECTION 6 LOGISTICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

6.1	Background information was timely and sufficient	65%	19%	12%	4%	-
6.2	The organization of your trip was satisfactory (travel, arrival, welcome)	69%	11%	8%	8%	4%
6.3	Accommodation was satisfactory	73%	15%	8%	-	4%
6.4	In general, the working conditions were acceptable	77%	15%	4%	-	4%
6.5	Training facilities were adequate (equipment, materials)	69%	19%	4%	4%	4%
6.6	Catering conditions were satisfactory	65%	27%	4%	4%	-
6.7	Lunch was satisfactory	69%	19%	8%	-	4%
6.8	Coffee break was satisfactory	65%	19%	8%	8%	-

FIELD VISIT OUTLINE

Purpose

The main purpose of the field visit is to observe and report back on the advantage and disadvantage of a coordinated approach in getting fresh fruits and vegetables from production to retail

Background

The Belle Vue and Black Bay Farmers cooperatives supply the domestic agrotourism market where fresh fruits, primarily melons (watermelon, cantaloupe and honeydew) and vegetables (lettuce, capsicum, tomatoes etc) are sold to main buyers - hotels, supermarkets and restaurants in and around Castries.

Both farmers' organizations are located in the South and they deliver their produce to the North where most of the hotels and supermarkets are situated. Fresh fruits and vegetables are bought from members and marketed through the cooperative. Produce are taken to the pack house for sorting, grading and packaging before delivery.

The field visit is conducted in two parts. In the morning, the group will visit the main markets/buyers to get an understanding of their purchasing requirements and consumer preference. The second part of the visit will be in the afternoon, where the group will visit the Belle Vue and Black Bay Farmers' Cooperatives. The afternoon session will look at each of the cooperatives operation from input supply, production, post-harvest, and marketing.

Structure of the field visit

1. Main markets/buyers and their consumers

Before departure, the group will have a brief discussion with the Purchasing Manager of Bay Gardens Hotel. The discussion will focus on the hotel's purchasing requirements, average supply and demand of fresh local produce, average prices and the challenges of purchasing local produce.

The field visit will begin with a trip to one of the main buyers, Super J stores. The supermarket chain has 8 stores nationwide and is by far the largest in St Lucia. Mr Dunstan Demille, the Purchasing Manager of Super J will provide an overview of their purchasing operation. This will be followed by a tour of the purchasing centre/pack house to observe the supply chain process in action from when produce is unloaded at the pack house until they reach supermarket shelves.

The main focus areas for the group to ask questions on include:

- » buyer requirements and identification of the most critical success factors for the buyer to get into a business relationship,
- » importance of production and marketing planning,
- » importance of post-harvest handling, transport and value addition through grading, packaging and transport,
- » quality and food safety standard requirements,
- » marketing and branding,
- » costing and pricing of fresh and semi-processed produce along value/supply chain,

- » importance of sound production and financial records for price negotiation and profitability,
- » the need for feedback mechanisms to producers on quality, volume etc

2. Input supply, production, post-harvest and marketing

The second part of the field visit involves visiting farmers' organizations - Belle Vue Farmers' and Black Bay Farmers' Cooperatives. The group will observe and discuss with the respective cooperative their operations from input supply through to marketing.

Key focus areas for the group to ask questions on include:

- » Purchasing/payment arrangements with farmers/buyers
- » production and marketing planning,
- » post-harvest handling, transport and value addition through grading, packaging and transport,
- » quality and food safety standard requirements,
- » marketing and branding,
- » costing and pricing of fresh and semi-processed produce along value/supply chain,
- » sound production and financial records for price negotiation and profitability,
- » feedback mechanisms to producers on quality, volume etc
- » business models of buyers and farmers' organizations,
- » use of service providers to support value chain strengthening
- » consideration/arrangement for contracting farming

OPENING CEREMONY NOTES

The opening ceremony began at 8:00pm on Monday July 26th, 2010. The ceremony was chaired by Mrs. Dhano Sookoo, the President of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago and Director of CaFAN. Mrs. Sookoo was joined at the head table with Mr Heiko Bammann (FAO, Rome), Mr Robert Best (FAO, Port-of-Spain) and Mr Jethro Greene (ECTAD/CaFAN). Unfortunately Mr Ezechiel Joseph, the Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries could not attend to make the keynote address, but in his absence Mr Jethro Greene gave a stirring introduction.

Mrs. Dhano Sookoo started off the introductions by emphasizing the need for farmers to work together. They can do this through building and strengthening farmers' organization such as CaFAN. CaFAN helps to build capacity and strengthen domestic organizations to collectively lobby governments to support agriculture. Lastly, she reiterated the main focus of the training course, that farmers and those who work with farmers must agree that agriculture is a business like any other.

Mr Heiko Bammann followed in the same vein as Ms Sookoo, and stressed the point that the FAO is committed to working with small farmers and agriculture development in developing countries. He noted how pleased he was to see the turnout for the training course and expressed expectations that this will be the same quality of past workshops and courses.

Mr Robert Best followed with some brief remarks regarding the CARICOM/CARIFORUM Food Security programme. He highlighted some of the activities of the FAO in the region and detailed expected future developments. He reiterated the expectations and hopes that were expressed by Mrs. Sookoo and Mr Bammann.

Mr Jethro Greene was invited to give the main address to the audience. He began by entering into a passionate speech about the necessity of small farmers to come together in organizations of solidarity to ensure the survival and success of the agricultural sector, especially for small farmers. He gave a brief overview of what was to be covered during the five day training course and expressed his excitement to have CaFAN and its allies come together to strengthen their skills. The opportunity has been raised for farmers to take control of their industry and their destiny, time and effort cannot be wasted.

Other points that were touched upon by Mr Greene included the importance of sharing information across the CaFAN network to help farmers in areas such as fertilizer use, training in new methods and sharing of expertise. There is also a strong need to build technical support system of persons, to help in particular activities like proposal writing. Generally, agriculture must be viewed more like a business. Farmers must present themselves as professional when dealing with other farmers and institutions, like banks and donor agencies. Mr Greene reiterated the importance of farmers to work with CaFAN in order to strengthen their voices.

Participants came away from the opening ceremony invigorated and excited to begin the next day's sessions. A social networking session followed the opening ceremony where participants were invited to mingle, meet and get to know each other.

CaFAN MISSION

“To enhance Caribbean food and nutrition security, foreign exchange earnings and foreign savings, by repositioning agriculture through the capacity building of farmers and the institutional strengthening of farmers organizations”

CaFAN GOALS

“To improve the quality of life for small farm families throughout the Caribbean region”

“To gain economic empowerment and sociopolitical independence in the agriculture sector”

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