

# **STRENGTHENING NEFO'S CAPACITY TO SUPPLY ROOTS AND TUBERS**

**Funded under the  
European Union All ACP Agricultural Commodities Program**



Implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO),  
Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN)  
and North East Farmers Organization (NEFO)  
in association with Marketing & National Importing Board

**March 24<sup>th</sup> 2010,  
National Stadium, Queens Park Grenada**

*This report has been prepared with the Financial Assistance of the European Union All ACP Agriculture Commodities Programme (EU AAACP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The views express herein are those of the workshop participants and in no way reflect the official opinion of EU AAACP and FAO.*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

The North East Farmers Organisation (NEFO) would like to thank our sponsors and partners for their financial and technical support towards its Grower Buyer Meeting namely:

- European Union All Agriculture Commodities Programme (EU AAACP)
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN)
- Marketing & National Importing Board – Grenada (MNIB)

NEFO also would like to thank the Government of Grenada for its support of this meeting.

Special thanks to:

- Honourable Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister of Grenada
- Honourable Michael Let, Minister for Agriculture Forestry and Fishers
- Honourable Nazim Burke – Parliamentary Representative, St George North East and Minister for Finance and Energy

Special thanks to the workshop coordinating team and contributors

- Executive and members of North East Farmers Organisation
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Evans Goodings
- Magdelene Niles
- Matthew Bobb
- Fitzroy James
- Jethro Greene
- Heiko Bammann
- Reginald Andall
- Roderick St Clair

All participants, presenters, participating organizations and the media who covered and broadcasted the event.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

TOPICS	Page #
Acknowledgements	3
Table of Contents	4
List of Abbreviations	5
Participating Organizations	6
Executive Summary	7
Background to Grower – Buyer Meeting	13
Workshop Outline	14
Meeting Proceeding – Opening Ceremony	15
Meeting Proceeding – Summary of Presentations	18
Meeting Proceeding – Working Groups	26
Meeting Proceeding – Closing and Wrap up	30
Evaluation	31
List of Participants	32

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

---

ACP African, Caribbean and Pacific  
CaFAN Caribbean Farmers Network  
CARDI Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute  
ECTAD Eastern Caribbean Trading Agriculture and Development Organisation  
EU European Union  
EU AAACP European Union All ACP Agriculture Commodities Programme  
FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
GAP Good Agricultural Practices  
GDP Gross Domestic Product  
MNIB Marketing and National Importing Board  
NEFO North East Farmers Organisation

## LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

---

#	ORGANIZATION	# of Per
1	North East Farmers Organization	21
2	Caribbean Farmers Network	1
3	Food and Agriculture Organization	1
4	Marketing & National Importing Board – Grenada	3
5	Ministry of Agriculture – Extension, Pest Management Divisions and Marketing Departments	5
6	Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute	1
7	Renwick Thompson & Company Ltd.	1
8	Food Land Supermarket	1
9	Spice Island Beach Resort	1
10	Coyaba Beach Resort	1
11	Royal Grenada Police Force - Special Security Unit	1
12	Market Vendors	3
13	Other Farmers – Non-NEFO Member Farmers	2

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2010 saw the North East Farmers Organisation (NEFO) hosting a one-day Grower-Buyer meeting at the National Stadium Grenada to get feedback on the critical success factors as set out in its current business model for the enhanced production and marketing of roots and tubers.

This event is the first activity for NEFO under the Regional Roots and Tubers Project that is funded by the European Union All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme (EU AAACP) and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Caribbean Farmers Network in collaboration with Grenada Marketing & National Importing Board (MNIB).

The meeting which started approximately 9:45am with an official opening ceremony and came to an end with the working group presentations at 4:15pm saw just over 50 participants. Participating organizations include farmers from the benefiting organization, NEFO, along with buyers from the hotels, restaurants, public market, supermarkets, MNIB, and suppliers of goods/ services such as agriculture input suppliers, ministry of agriculture extension officers and CARDI.



Photo of Head Table at Opening. L to R: Jethro Greene, Heiko Bammann, Evans Goodings and Hon Denis Lett

The day's proceedings were divided into three sections - an official ceremony, presentations and working group activities. Present at the opening ceremony were government ministers Hon Denis Lett, Minister for Agriculture, who represented Prime Minister Tillman Thomas, Hon Nazim Burke, Parliamentary Representative for St George North East Constituency, Mr Jethro Greene, Chief Coordinator Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN) and Mr Heiko Bammann, Enterprise Development Officer of the Food and Agriculture Organization.

In the welcome remarks, the President of NEFO, Evans Goodings noted that "To long you the buyers have been at our mercy as you had to choose from what we bring to you. We want to include you –give you a chance to tell us what you want us to do to satisfy your needs. Tell us how you want us to deliver what you want. Think of yourself as the most important persons here and leaving us here today with what your needs are."

Making his remarks at the opening ceremony, CaFAN Chief Coordinator, Jethro Greene said, "You (NEFO) must carry out this project according to the goals and objectives and the cooperation must continue. NEFO is a young CaFAN member but you must stick together; and with the support from ECTAD/CaFAN you are expected to be exemplary." He also left some words of inspiration to NEFO membership. "It is a good time for us in agriculture. Just keep your head on and ensure that we are in a position to maximize the opportunities that exists. With these market opportunities you are in the drivers' seat" said Greene.

Representing the Prime Minister Hon. Tillman Thomas, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in addressing the meeting said, "Today's exercise will act as a catalyst that will have impact on the national conversation on the relationships between buyers and growers and this can act as a catalyst for the success of agriculture in Grenada. Our farmers must know what is needed by whom and at what price."

In putting the meeting into perspective, Heiko Bammann, Enterprise Development Officer, FAO said, “Farmers not only have to better organize themselves to get better prices with inputs but they have to become more reliable suppliers where they can negotiate with the suppliers.”

Parliamentary Representative for the North East St George Constituency, Hon. Nazim Burke who also made remarks at the meeting said, “At the end of the day you are only truly empowered when you can stand on your own two feet. What you need is safety, and security of jobs and livelihoods that allow you to support yourself and put your children through schools; to give them the opportunity to do as well as any person in another part of the country.”



Photo showing cross-section of participants at the meeting

The presentations from the various resource persons followed the formal opening ceremony during which the government pledge support not only by their presence but their words of support and encouragement to NEFO and appreciation to the EU AAACP and FAO for this project.

The following were the topics addressed during the presentations with the unveiling of NEFO’s business model to the meeting participants being the highlight. This session of the meeting included the following presentations: Market opportunities for root crops (Jethro Greene, CaFAN), FAO support to NEFO under the Roots and Tubers Project (Mr Heiko

Bammann, FAO), Presentation of NEFO current business model (Mr Evans Goodings, President NEFO), Technical perspective on the production of roots and tubers (Mr Reginald Andall, CARDI Country Representative), and Marketing perspective of roots and tubers (Fitzroy James, MNIB).

In addition to outlining FAO support to NEFO under this project, Mr Bammann presentation went on to discuss the importance of **critical success factors** and how its importance for the day’s proceedings. He noted that the critical success factors are the most important factors affecting buyer decisions and satisfaction with chain products and services. The approach would include the following: Find critical success factors for all chain buyers, a good practice is to start with end users – examples of critical success factors include: price, quality, delivery reliability, conformance to specifications, packaging, safety, perishability.

Under the new way of doing business, Goodings clearly stated NEFO’s expectations as being: Increased production and improved productivity – better yields & quality products; Increased sales to our existing customer segments (institutions, MNIB, hotels/restaurants, supermarkets, vendors); Reduced marketing risk – contracted production and Increased profitability and earnings from enterprises.

As Goodings entered the high point of his presentation on NEFO’s business model he went on to discuss the **critical success factors** that will enable NEFO to achieve the level of successes under the project as well as meeting their expectations. Goodings reminded the meeting that the critical success factors as outlined in table 1 below will be important in the working group sessions later on.

**Table 1 Critical success factors**

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS PRODUCERS	CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS – BUYERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Buyer for product:</b> <i>Producer must be able to sell /trade his/her product</i></li> <li>• <b>Know what buyers are looking for:</b> <i>Must be able to produce to meet buyer/market requirement – Variety, standards &amp; grades, quality, delivery etc</i></li> <li>• <b>Enterprise profitability:</b> <i>Must be able to profitably produce the crop at prevailing market prices;</i></li> <li>• <b>Technology:</b> <i>Must have knowledge of and access to the technology required for successful sustainable production</i></li> <li>• <b>Supply of inputs:</b> <i>The required inputs must be available at affordable cost when required and of the quality required</i></li> <li>• <b>Resources to produce crop:</b> <i>Suitable land, labour, water etc</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide competitive prices</b> – <i>Products must be affordable to the general consumer/customer and they must perceive that they are getting the best value for their money;</i></li> <li>• <b>Assurance of consistent supply</b> - <i>Products must be always available for purchase;</i></li> <li>• <b>Provide standardized quality</b> – <i>Products must always conform to the standards established by the buyers based on market feedback. These standards include cleanliness, uniformity of sizes, absence of bruises, variety, maturity, packaging, etc.</i></li> <li>• <b>Generate consumer confidence through traceability</b> – <i>Buyers must be able to provide customers with the confidence that products are purchased from reliable sources and that they can trace all products to its origin if required.</i></li> <li>• <b>Providing superior service to customers:</b> <i>To gain market edge with generic products buyers need to add to these primary products services such as usage and handling information as well as nutritional and health information. This can form the basis for their product differentiation strategy.</i></li> </ul>

NEFO's President challenged both producers and buyers at the meeting on the issue of technology noting that the knowledge and use of technology is one of the things that will allow for sustainable and successful agriculture. Goodings said, "The only area that has not changed, and that we will change, is farmers practice in agriculture today. If you want a computer you can call Dell and tell them how you want it and they will manufacture it for you; if you want a car, same thing. Why we as farmer and buyers can't get together and say what we want, how to produce it, when to produce, when and how we want it? Why not! This is one of the areas that we want to change." "NEFO will organize itself and improve its planning to be better able to respond positively to these orders; we look forward to be accepted as equal business partners with you the buyers here today," Goodings said as he ended.

Mr Reginald Andall, CARDI Country Representative, in his presentation on technical considerations in the production of root crops disclosed that before you begin to produce a crop, you must identify the market, the varieties, size, quantity, when you want it, the time you want it, the packaging; "All of these should be settled first before you plant", Andall said. Andall ended by highlighting that fact that there need to exist a very good Farmer-Extension-CARDI relationship for the success of the participants in this project and according to him, "You need to have good Farmer-CARDI-Extension relations worked out before hand."

Fitzroy James, General Manager of MNIB, the single largest operations and buyer of fresh produce in Grenada, made his presentation under the caption, Roots and tubers Marketing Issues presented a buyer's perspective. In his presentation James looked at CARICOM Roots & Tubers Production, Utilization & Trade –Findings FAO Market Opportunity Study, MNIB Purchases & Local Market Opportunities, and Potential Interventions to enable the success of this increased production and markets for root crops. Amongst the statistics presented by James was MNIB purchases of root crops. He showed that MNIB purchased 82,157 lbs root crops at value of EC\$142,281 in 2005 as compared to 136,386 lbs at value of EC\$207,947 in 2009 – clearly a growing market in spite of the limited supplies.

He also noted that MNIB from time to time would have imported root crops to augment local shortage on the domestic market.

In his presentation, James proposed possible areas of intervention for the successful improvement in roots and tubers production and marketing in Grenada. He listed them as follows:

- Organization & capacity building of farmer organizations in production planning & marketing
- Establishing standards for grades for the different roots & tubers, improved packaging,
- Development of improved varieties for export marketing,
- Quality assurance systems & traceability,
- Protocols for organic production systems and/or good agricultural practices (GAP), storage technology,
- Value added product development & technology.

The working groups set out to work after the foundation was laid during the presentations. Three working groups was established – Grower/producer, Buyer, and Services/goods providers. The grower working group and the buyer working group reviewed and modified as necessary the critical success factors (as outlined in the NEFO’s Business Model) for the grower and buyer respectively, each group rated critical success factors followed by ranking them in order of priority.

The following is the results of the grower working group where they rated and ranked the critical success factors from their perspective. See table 2 below.

**Table 2 Ranking of critical success factors by growers.**

<b>CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS</b>	<b>PREFERRED AGAINST OTHER CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS</b>	<b>FELT IMPORTANT IN SCALE FROM 1 (LITTLE) TO 5 (HIGH)</b>
<b>1. Consistency</b>	4x	5
<b>2. Quality</b>	3x	4
<b>3. Presentation/packaging</b>	2x	5
<b>4. Price</b>	1x	3
<b>5. Traceability</b>	0	3

The results of the buyer working group where they rated and ranked the critical success factors from their perspective are presented in table 3.

**Table 3 Ranking of critical success factors by buyers**

<b>CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS</b>	<b>PREFERRED AGAINST OTHER CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS</b>	<b>FELT IMPORTANT IN SCALE FROM 1 (LITTLE) TO 5 (HIGH)</b>
<b>1. Quality</b>	8x	5
<b>2. price</b>	7x	4
<b>3. perishability</b>	5	4
<b>4. Confirmation to specs</b>	5	4
<b>5. Safety and food safety</b>	4	5
<b>6. Handling/transport</b>	4	4
<b>7. Packaging</b>	2	5
<b>8. Reliability</b>	1	4
<b>9. Delivery to buyer</b>	0	5

The following can be observed from the Growers and Buyers groups based on the exercises illustrated in the tables 2 and 3 above.

- Growers believe that the consistency of supply and the quality of the produce are the most important factors for buyers to purchase from them, while they do not think that the price is that relevant.
- For the buyers, quality is rated highest but soon followed by price. The consistency/reliability issue seems not to be a high priority but perishability and confirming to the specifications are very important to the buyers.
- Regarding reliability/consistency in supply, one can assume that buyers may find it easy to procure supplies from different farmers; in other words if one farmer can't deliver, they can easily move to another one. This seems to indicate that it is a buyer driven market and the power is with the buyers. For NEFO, this should be a motivation to negotiate contracts with reliable buyers to ensure that they have regular market outlets.
- Food safety (and traceability) is recognised by both groups as a critical factor, but ranked much higher by the buyers!
- In terms of technical assistance: in order to increase market supplies, growers would need to improve productivity of crops in order to be able to supply the market at lower prices without losing out on profits. At the same time quality standards have to be met and some more awareness work is required about the importance of post harvest handling to maintain the quality and the shelf life (perishability factor) of produce.
- Farmers do realise the importance of packaging and presentation of their produce to buyers. However, the exercise showed that some more advisory work is required to familiarise farmers with the specifications and standards buyers expect.
- Overall, there seems to be a good basis for improving the business linkages between NEFO growers and their buyers. Consequently, this will provide a platform for NEFO and also the buyers to close these gaps by understanding each other's needs and working to satisfying each other.

The other working group, Services/goods providers who discussed ways that NEFO can be best assisted by this group in achieving its critical success factors arrived at the following proposed actions.

- **Negotiate market arrangements:** Producers to negotiate price ranges, quantities and market arrangement
- **Input supply:** due to Grenada being a small market, the cost of inputs such as fertilizer is more costly due to the small volumes compared to other countries. Renwick Thompson and Company Ltd. has committed at the meeting to provide NEFO members 15% discount on bulk purchases.
- **Encourage buyers and producers to establish technical information before hand:** examples include standards, varieties, delivery and quality
- **Assist producers to compute cost of production:** Give information to producers on how to reduce cost of production. Example – better use of fertilizer, reduced pesticide use, use soil testing etc.
- **Communicate available technology:** Communicate information on available technologies to the producers and make technologies available

Concluding from the working groups, the dialogue from amongst the participants provided feedback on NEFO Critical Success Factors thus provide useful suggestions for the organization to implement in its attempt to strengthen its capacity and ability to supply root crops to existing and emerging markets.

From the evaluation results, while the organization and presentations were well received by the there existed room for more group interaction and discussions of the reports from the various groups. Over 58% of the participants rated as excellent their understanding of NEFO's root crop project while 33% rated their understanding as good. 48% of the participants rated the working group's discussions as excellent while 39% rated the group report as excellent thus the need for improved interactions and group works sessions in future sessions.

The other activities to follow from this Grower-Buyer Meeting as outlined in the existing Letter of Agreement with FAO include the following:

- 1) Training course on management of farmers organization, group formation and networking;
- 2) Training in improved technologies, production planning, record keeping;
- 3) Setting up of 30 demonstration plots for production of the targeted root crops
- 4) Study tour to St Vincent to observe intensive root crop production systems;
- 5) Support to NEFO's training activities, networking & marketing coordination
- 6) Training in marketing of produce, contracting & post-harvest handling
- 7) Provide secretarial support services to NEFO
- 8) Reporting to FAO at the end of accomplishment of the tasks outlined in this first Letter of Agreement

## **BACKGROUND TO GROWER - BUYER MEETING**

---

This grower buyer meeting held under the theme “Strengthening NEFO’s Capacity to Supply Roots and Tubers” is an activity under the EU funded All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme (AAACP) to improve the livelihoods of producers in commodity dependent ACP countries with NEFO being one of such beneficiary farmer organization.

A consultative workshop for the Caribbean region, Jamaica, June 2008, identified the roots and tubers sector in region as a priority sector for the programme to support. Roots and tubers include produce such as yams, sweet/Irish potatoes, dasheen, eddoes and cassava which are all traditional staples in Jamaica. The selection of this sector was based on a number of factors that include; the large number of smallholders’ dependent on the crop; market growth opportunities for value added products for the national, regional and US markets; national and regional public support for the sector.

A second area of support is to strengthen the capacities of farmer organizations to enhance the capacity of farmer organizations to participate effectively in rapidly changing markets and provide high quality professional services to their members. Under this result area 2, FAO in collaboration with the Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN) organized a regional Farmer Organization workshop which was held in St Lucia in November 2008. Action plans were designed to support the capacity of farmer organizations and to improve the supply of roots and tubers. One of the farmer organizations which is supported and is participating in the EU AAACP activities is the North East Farmers Organisation in Grenada (NEFO).

The Rural Infrastructure and Agro-industries Division (AGS), supports the sector using an inclusive business models approach, with the specific objective of improving the producer-buyer linkages for roots and tubers dependent farmers. Through this support to national farmer organizations it is expected to improve the supply of roots and tubers to existing markets and enable farmers to capture a higher share of the market value of the products.

In the recent past, NEFO has already collaborated with CaFAN to build up the supply of roots and tubers to the domestic market following hurricane “Ivan” and work towards improved national food security. Plans to link agriculture production to tourism project with the aim to open up the tourism markets for more domestically produced products is also under formulation.

Consequently, NEFO has reviewed its current business model and upgrade it based on the outcome of the meeting between producers and buyers which was to agree on critical success factors to increase procurement from smallholders and improve business linkages. The outcome will be the basis for an action plan that will prioritize upgrading activities critical to improving the capacity of NEFO to provide better services to its farmers, improving institutional marketing arrangements and increasing the supply and profitability of produce from smallholders to their buyers.

# MEETING OUTLINE

---

## 1. OPENING CEREMONY

- Prayer—Mr Ernest Murrell, Member of NEFO
- Welcome—Evans Goodings, President, NEFO
- Remarks—Hon. Keith Clouden, Senator for Agriculture
- Remarks — Jethro Greene, Chief Coordinator Caribbean Farmers Network (CaFAN)
- Background of Root Crop Project under the EU All ACP Agriculture Commodities Programme and Purpose of Letter of Agreement—Mr. Heiko Bammann, Enterprise Development Officer, FAO
- Remarks—Hon Nazim Burke, Parliamentary, Representative, St George North East
- Address - Hon. Denis Lett, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

## 2. PRESENTATIONS

- Market Opportunities for Root Crops — Jethro Greene, CaFAN
- FAO support to NEFO under the Roots and Tubers Project, Mr Heiko Bammann, FAO
- Presentation of NEFO Current Business model— Mr Evans Goodings, President NEFO
- Technical Perspective on the production of roots and Tubers— Mr Reginald Andall—CARDI Country Representative
- Marketing Perspective of Roots and Tubers—Mr Fitzroy James, MNIB
- **Working Groups** - To review NEFO's draft upgrading strategy, confirm identified actions plans, including identified critical success factors of NEFO business model.

## 3. WORKING SESSION

Three working Groups

1. Grower working group
2. Buyer Worker Group
3. Suppliers—Goods and services:

### **Mode for Group 1 & 2**

1. Identify Note Taker
2. Identify a Presenter
3. Review Critical Success Factors (requirements for success) and new identify ones
4. Rate each critical success factor and then rank in order of priority
5. **Group 3:** Will review the services required by NEFO and show how these services can be better provided/accessed
6. Report to the workshop

# MEETING PROCEEDINGS

---

## OPENING CEREMONY

### **Evans Goodings, President of NEFO**

Mr Goodings highlighted the fact that NEFO is prepared to do business in a new way. Rather than turning up at the buyers' doors and offering them products NEFO's new approach is to get feedback from the buyers as to how best to serve and satisfy them. Goodings noted that "You the buyers here today must see yourself as the main driving force. To long you the buyers have been at our mercy as you had to choose from what we bring to you. We want to include you –give you a chance to tell us what you want us to do to satisfy your needs. Think of yourself as the most important persons here and leaving us here today with what your needs are."

Senator for Agriculture, Hon. Keith Clouden gave notice the morning of the event, of his unavailability.

### **Jethro Greene, Chief Coordinator CaFAN/ECTAD**

Mr Greene in his remarks noted that CaFAN is happy to be associated with this regional Roots and Tubers project and is good to see that it has come to fruition with NEFO also be part of it. Greene went on further to note that at its planning meeting in St Lucia in 2009, NEFO's work programme was accepted and that is why we are here today with this buyer-grower meeting being its first activity under the project.

Greene said, "ECTAD/CaFAN relationship developed after hurricane Ivan in 2004 when the relationship started with the Grenada Marketing Board sourcing root crops and other produce from St Vincent through ECTAD." He highlighted that emerging out of discussions with the management of the marketing Board, the idea was to get a group of farmers working together to be able to supply the market. NEFO emerged during this period and has proven to have a strong level of cooperation and good leadership thus making them well poised to make their contribution to this project. "Farmers must now work toward controlling their own destiny", Green said as he challenged NEFO and its membership to stick together as they implement this project.

Greene said, "You must carry out this project according to the goals and objectives and the cooperation must continue. NEFO is a young CaFAN member but you must stick together; and with the support from ECTAD/CaFAN you are expected to be exemplary." He noted that NEFO must also look towards youth involvement within the organization.

Under this project, NEFO will be better able to improve its leadership and management capacity and move towards an integrated production and marketing programme and operate as a business. NEFO will be a good example to show how this can be achieved.

Green said, "We are on the cutting edge of a new era in agriculture; we must consolidate our position. See yourselves as business persons and demonstrate this to the rest of Grenada."

### **Heiko Bammann, Enterprise Development Officer, FAO**

Mr Bammann introductory words brought regards from the Ms Florits Kentish, Head of the FAO Sub Regional Office in Barbados. He related that he has experience with working with small islands through his ten years stint in the Samoa Islands and this gives him some understanding of small farmers in of small islands like Grenada. Referencing his visit in January 2010 in Grenada for the CaFAN Youth in Agriculture Workshop, he further expressed empathy with the farmers at this time of prolonged drought in the country. Mr Bammann said, "I have never seen the country so dry and I really feel for you farmers."

He went on to explain that under this project it is expected to linking up smaller producers and buyers and work with farmers' organization to build up their business model. "Farmers not only have to better organize themselves to get better prices with inputs but they have to become more reliable suppliers where they can negotiate with the suppliers" he said.

When this programme started in 2008 with a kick-off workshop in Jamaica, roots and tubers was identify as a key sector for support as well as working farmers' organizations. He was happy that this EU All Agriculture Commodities Programme (EU AAACP) can support and build reliable market suppliers. Bammann said, "NEFO should also focus on getting the youth involved to follow in the footsteps of the elder farmers." He concluded by wishing NEFO every success in the implementation of the project.

### **Hon. Denis Lett, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

Hon Denis Lett delivered the address to the meeting on behalf of the Prime Minister Hon Tillman Thomas who had another activity. Lett commended NEFO for the tremendous contribution that they have been making to the agriculture sectors over the years. He also congratulated FAO, CaFAN and MNIB for assisting NEFO in staging of the meeting and regard the event as another step in the development of the agriculture sector in Grenada.

Lett said, "We (government) pledge to implement an agriculture policy that will bring hope to the farmers and their family and that will stimulate economic activity in the rural areas." He added that we must look inward as to how we as a nation can improve our food security; lessen imports and seek ways to improve the quality.

The basis of this meeting here today he reiterated is "Where producers and buyers can discuss on critical issues on the way forward. We want you the farmers to see this as a viable business activity. Whether you are a producer or agro-processor, you are making an invaluable contribution to a sector that has been the backbone to the economy."

In complimenting NEFO, Lett said that "Today's exercise will act as a catalyst that will have impact on the national conversation on the relationships between buyers and growers and this can act as a catalyst for the success of agriculture in Grenada. Our farmers must know what is needed by whom and at what price."

The address noted government's recognition of the contribution of small businesses operators like NEFO in meeting the employment objectives while sustaining families and communities. "We are committed to make resources available to meet international markets demand", noted the minister. Making reference to the Grenadian and West Indian diaspora, Lett said, "There are key markets in the diaspora that is untapped; this link is essential if we are going to satisfy the concerns and contribution of the agriculture sector to the gross domestic product."

Speaking on behalf of Prime Minister, Thomas, Lett expressed sincere thanks to FAO for seeing the importance of this opportunity for NEFO. "I want u to know beyond any doubt, that you hold the key to the future of the country and that you have the full support of my administration. I wish you every success and look forward to hear of the fruits that will be formed from the activity here today", said Lett, as he ended the address.

### **Hon Nazim Burke, Parliamentary Representative, St George North East, & Minister for Finance & Energy**

Honourable Burke recognized the demonstrated commitment of NEFO to Grenada's to farming and agriculture and to and to the development of the North East, St George constituency. He highlighted the fact that NEFO's membership encompasses many of the villages and community within the constituency and that here is an almost fifty-fifty composition of men and women within the organization. He said, "Most of the women are single mothers trying to put their children to school; they produce food thus improving food security for their country and I want to congratulate the women of the NEFO for their contribution."

Burke highlighted the fact that this project aims at improving the livelihood of small producers in ACP countries and targeting Yams, Dasheen, Eddoes, Cassava amongst the root crops. He continued by saying that “These are all traditional staples and we must take into account the fact that these are important alternatives for our carbohydrates in place of the imported rice, flour and other things.”

Referring to the root crops, Burke said “These are much better foods and we have to find ways of moving beyond what is possible; we have to reduce our imports to what is absolutely necessary. What is inexcusable is to buy things that we can produce.”

Burke noted that he was speaking to the converted and that he is taking the moment to thank NEFO’s for its contribution to the country yet challenging them to reflect on the possibilities. He also highlighted NEFO’s involvement in sensitizing community of the importance of agriculture and assisting the schools in the area with various agriculture projects. He went on to thank FAO and other agencies supporting the project.

Burke ended by saying, “At the end of the day you are only truly empowered when you can stand on your own two feet. What you need is safety, and security of jobs and livelihoods that allow you to support yourself and put your children through schools; to give them the opportunity to do as well as any person in another part of the country.”

## **SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS**

### **Regional and International Market Opportunities for Roots and Tubers**

- By: Jethro Greene, Chief Coordinator CaFAN/ECTAD

Mr Greene reiterated the point that CaFAN is an organization that is based on practicality and its membership is primarily farmers and farmers' organizations that grow food and one of the main focus is to build capacity. For many years, millions of dollars has gone into the agriculture sector and not reaching down to the farmers and farmers' organizations was divided and not organized. CaFAN now creates an enabling environment for farmers' organizations to work and now exist an opportunity to build on the cluster approach already started in Grenada and later if they so desire they can form themselves into a formal organization. In CaFAN, for us the get the volume small farmers must come together to get the volume.

Over the five years of CaFAN's existence, it continues to bring the farmers' organizations together to the extent that CaFAN now has a regional impact. A major corporation who was buying fruits and vegetables from outside the region has approached us and saying "Can you as a network provide 50 to 100 million dollars worth of produce to substitute what they have been importing into the region." "Market is one of the major challenges", Greene said. These people are willing to buy from within the region. A market has been offered to us not because they like us or sorry for the poor farmer. They realize the increase cost of energy, transportation and problems from the food crisis and have now decided that instead of imports it is best to have food security from within the region- at home. This corporation owns super market chains within the region; they control shipping and the tourist market.

It is expected to start with the Windward Islands and Jamaica in phase one as these countries has experience with root crops and catering for the tourist market.

This roots and tubers project under the FAO now offer us the opportunity to build capacity to provide crop forecasting, integrated production and production planning and marketing that will enable us to transfer the same methodology for the crops to that will be grown for this new market.

Crops such as yellow yams, Portuguese yams, white yams, ginger, cherry tomatoes, zucchini, sweet potato, eddoes, lettuce, pumpkin, cabbages, and mango are among the list of crops to be targeted. Green said, "We need to get the younger farmers using green house technology to focus production on some of the high value vegetables also."

Additionally, these people control cruise ships and airlines, and the tourists will need food. The tourism market is another linkage they will help us exploit. After satisfying the import substitution for regional markets, the surplus can overflow in domestic. CaFAN member organization in Jamaica, Barbados and St Lucia has shown successful linkage with the tourist sector.

Greene referenced Minister Lett comments on the targeting the diaspora. He said, "Export like the minister mention to selected Caribbean ethnic market in UK and Canada is an important target market. Crops such as eddoes, ginger, dasheen, yams for the English, French and Dutch Market and later the Canadian market will be our focus."

With the assistance provided to NEFO under this project, NEFO will be a lead organization in Grenada producing for these markets. Soon thousands of farmers in the Windward and Jamaica will benefit.

Greene ended by saying, "It is a good time for us in agriculture. Just keep your head on and ensure that we are in a position to maximize the opportunities that exists. With these market opportunities you are in the drivers' seat."

### **FAO Support to NEFO, under EU AAACP Roots and Tubers Project**

- Mr Heiko Bammann, Enterprise Development Officer, FAO

In his presentation captioned “Enhancement of Roots and Tubers Products in the Caribbean”, Mr Bammann outlined specific areas of FAO support in the project to be: Support to Sectorial Policy, Strategy and Risk Management, Support to Producer-Market Linkages, Support to Value Chain / Commodity Chain Development.

He went on to highlight the work plan for the Caribbean Region. These include the following: Sector Focus: Roots and Tubers, Country Focus: Jamaica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana and Grenada, Cross-cutting / regional Focus: for technical areas which are common to all countries, learn from experiences made at national level and share.

A Two pronged approach is being used for the implementation of the project.

- Support CaFAN and CaFAN associated organizations to enhance the capacity of farmer organizations to participate effectively in rapidly changing markets and provide high quality professional services to their members and
- Support national farmer organizations to improve the supply of roots and tubers to existing markets and enable farmers to capture a higher share of the market value of the products

The advantages of the approach taken were also highlighted during the presentation.

- bottom-up and focused on small farmers and their organizations,
- support to formation of farmer groups and organizations based on market demand/realities and on farmers desire to be organized,
- farmers decide on their support service requirements and are enabled to purchase these services,
- capacity building activities focus on the needs of the farmers and their organizations,
- farmer organizations networking stimulated (CaFAN membership has grown since support activities started),
- efficient way of implementing activities through direct contracts with Farmers’ Organizations
- take advantage of established organizational set-ups, i.e. little operational overhead costs,
- when decisions are taken, fast to implement

Mr Bammann went on to discuss the importance of critical success factors and how its importance for the day’s proceedings. He noted that the critical success factors are the most important factors affecting buyer decisions and satisfaction with chain products and services. The approach would include the following:

- Find critical success factors for all chain buyers
- Good practice to start with end users
- Examples: price, quality, delivery reliability, conformance to specifications, packaging, safety, perishability

### **Presentation of NEFO Current Business model and its Root Crop Project**

- Mr Evans Goodings, President NEFO

The feature presentation of the day was delivered by the President of North East Farmers Organization using the power point technology. The outline of the presentation included: Description of the organization, Current Business Model (products, customers, suppliers, activities, cost & revenue, and expectations), Critical Success Factors, Upgrading Strategy and Project Activities.

Goodings began by informing the meeting by reiterating the need to get the feedback of the buyers present as this is the new way that NEFO wants to do business. We want to hear from you. Tell us what you want us to produce for how; how you want it delivered were some of the sentiments expressed by him.

He brought to light that NEFO was established in March 2005 with a membership of forty-five (19 women and 27 males) and gave introduced the executive members of the organization. Goodings also highlighted the organization’s mission as: “To improve the quality of life of farmers and their families in the St George North East constituency’ and its motto as **“Strengthening the capacity of farmers to improve their livelihoods”**

Goodings also provided an insight into how NEFO operates as an organization to bring benefits to its membership. Services offered by NEFO to its members include:

- Representation of farmers and our members at local, regional and international forums and activities;
- Advocating on behalf of farmers and our members;
- Planning, organizing and coordinating training activities;
- Production planning;
- Bulk procurement of fertilizer;
- Mentoring of other farmer groups in Grenada

Goodings noted that amongst the members they have collectively over three hundred acres with approximately one hundred suitable for farming of which fifty acres are currently in under cultivation. Apart from two large farmers in the organization with holdings greater that one hundred acres the rest of the membership farm on lands between 0.25 to 10 acres. The large farms he said will aid the organization in fulfilling the demands of the export market.

His presentations showed that the current enterprises engaged by members include the traditional tree crops (cocoa, nutmegs and bananas) non-traditional tree crops mangoes, soursop and other annonas, avocados, citrus, golden apples, breadfruit, guava, minor spices, vegetables and root crops (yams, sweet potato, eddoes, dasheen, cassava, ginger) and livestock.

Goodings illustrated NEFO’s root crop products for 2009(Table 4) and the distribution channel market share (Table 5).

**Table 4 NEFO root crop production 2009**

**Table 5 NEFO distribution channels**

Root Crop	No. Farmers	Area (Acres)	Production (kg)	Customers	Percent Sales
Dasheen	11	5.00	20,000		
Eddoes	4	2.00	4,000		70%
Ginger	4	0.50	5,000	Mt. Gay Hospital	
Sweet Cassava	11	9.00	90,000	General Hospital	
Sweet Potato - White Flesh	3	1.00	300	Police	
Sweet Potato - Orange Flesh	3	1.00	300	Coast Guard	
Yam	9	4.00	10,000	NIB	10%
Yams (Total)	8	4.50	45,000	Public Market	15%
Yams (Cuttam)	2	1.13	11,250	Hotels/Restaurants	5%
Yams (Ashmore)	2	1.13	11,250	Spice Island Inn	
Yams (Lisbon)	2	0.90	9,000	Rex Grenadian	
Yams (moonshine)	2	0.23	2,250	Deynas	
Yams (sweet)	2	0.09	900	Doyaba	
Yams (yellow)	2	1.13	11,250		

Reflecting on NEFO’s existing business model, he indicated that currently members of NEFO make independent production and marketing decision. The president said, “In the new upgrading strategy NEFO will negotiate contracts on behalf of members and plan and coordinate the production activities of its members to meet the market requirements.”

Under the new way of doing business, Goodings clearly stated NEFO’s expectations as being: Increased production and improved productivity – better yields & quality products; increased sales to our existing customer segments (institutions, MNIB, hotels/restaurants, supermarkets, vendors); reduced marketing risk – contracted production and increased profitability and earnings from enterprises.

As Goodings entered the high point of his presentation he went on to discuss the **critical success factors** that will enable NEFO to achieve the level of successes under the project as well as meeting their expectations. The critical success factors are summarized in Table 6 below. He noted that these will be key in the working sessions of that day.

**Table 6 Critical success factors**

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS PRODUCERS	CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS – BUYERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Buyer for Product:</b> <i>Producer must be able to sell /trade his/her product</i></li> <li>• <b>Know what Buyers are Looking For:</b> <i>Must be able to produce to meet buyer/market requirement – Variety, standards &amp; grades, quality, delivery etc</i></li> <li>• <b>Enterprise Profitability:</b> <i>Must be able to profitably produce the crop at prevailing market prices;</i></li> <li>• <b>Technology:</b> <i>Must have knowledge of and access to the technology required for successful sustainable production</i></li> <li>• <b>Supply of Inputs:</b> <i>The required inputs must be available at affordable cost when required and of the quality required</i></li> <li>• <b>Resources to produce crop:</b> <i>Suitable land, labour, water etc</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide Competitive Prices</b> – <i>Products must be affordable to the general consumer/customer and they must perceive that they are getting the best value for their money;</i></li> <li>• <b>Assurance of Consistent Supply</b> - <i>Products must be always available for purchase;</i></li> <li>• <b>Provide Standardized Quality</b> – <i>Products must always conform to the standards established by the buyers based on market feedback. These standards include cleanliness, uniformity of sizes, absence of bruises, variety, maturity, packaging, etc.</i></li> <li>• <b>Generate Consumer Confidence through Traceability</b> – <i>Buyers must be able to provide customers with the confidence that products are purchased from reliable sources and that they can trace all products to its origin if required.</i></li> <li>• <b>Providing Superior Service to Customers:</b> <i>To gain market edge with generic products buyers need to add to these primary products services such as usage and handling information as well as nutritional and health information. This can form the basis for their product differentiation strategy.</i></li> </ul>

NEFO’s President challenged both producers and buyers at the meeting on the issue of technology noting that the knowledge and use of technology is one of the things that will allow for sustainable and successful agriculture. Goodings said, “The only area that has not changed, and that we will change, is farmers practice in agriculture today. If you want a computer you can call Dell and tell them how you want it and they will manufacture it for you; if you want a car, same thing. Why we as farmer and buyers can’t get together and say what we want, how to produce it, when to produce, when and how we want it? Why not! This is one of the areas that we want to change.” Goodings continued with noting that **“NEFO will organize itself and improve its planning to be better able to respond positively to these orders; we look forward to be accepted as equal business partners with you the buyers here today”**.

Goodings further outlined the production plan for the root crop production both in terms of volumes and farmers to be assigned to the various crops along with their acreages. See Tables 7 and 8 below.

**Table 7 NEFO production plan**

Crop	# Farmers	Acreage	Est. Yield/Ac	Output (Lbs)	Avg. Price (\$/Lb)	Est. Rev
Dasheen	25	18.50	20,000	370,000	\$1.50	\$555,000
Tannia	16	10.50	20,000	210,000	\$2.50	\$525,000
Yam	14	8.50	20,000	170,000	\$2.50	\$425,000
Sweet Potato	15	7.88	20,000	157,500	\$1.50	\$236,250
Eddoes	6	4.00	12,000	48,000	\$2.00	\$96,000
Ginger	4	0.50	25,000	12,500	\$2.50	\$31,250
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>49.88</b>		<b>1,069,000</b>		<b>\$1,969,500</b>

**Table 8 Production plan per farmer**

Member	Dasheen	Tannia	Yam	Sweet Potato	Eddoes	Ginger	Grand Total
Abbie (Don) Frederick	1.00						1.00
Bain			0.50				0.50
Baptiste	0.50		0.25				0.75
Barry Frank	0.25	0.50					0.75
Christopher McBurnie	1.00	0.50	0.50			0.13	2.13
Desmond Nelson	1.00	1.00		0.25			2.25
Dolores Penny	1.00	1.00	0.25	1.00			3.25
Evans Goodings	1.00	1.00	1.50	0.50	0.50	0.13	4.63
Francis St. Louis	1.00	0.50					1.50
Glenis McBernie	0.25			0.25			0.50
Glenroy Campbell	0.50	0.25		0.13			0.88
Godwin Telesford	0.50						0.50
Henry Primus			0.50				0.50
Hilary Thomas/Oliver Cambridge	1.00	0.50					1.50
James Francis	0.50	0.50	1.00	0.50			2.50
Joseph Mitchell & Family		0.25	0.50	0.50			1.25
Kyron Frederick	0.50	0.50					1.00
Lawrence Amede	1.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50		2.75
Lyndonna Alexander	1.00						1.00
Lynthia Phillips	1.00			0.25			1.25
McDonald Thomas						0.13	0.13
Merle Braveboy			0.50				0.50
Paul Green	0.25	0.25		0.25			0.75
Phillip Mitchell				0.50	0.50	0.13	1.13
Phillip Munroe	0.25		0.25	0.50			1.00
Princess	0.25						0.25
Reginald Penny					0.50		0.50
Robert Branch	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		7.00
Sharon Thomas	0.25						0.25
Stephen Stewart	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		5.00
Sylvia Braveboy	1.00	0.50	0.25				1.75
Ted James				0.75			0.75
Telesford	0.50						0.50
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>18.50</b>	<b>10.50</b>	<b>8.50</b>	<b>7.88</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>49.88</b>

Goodings ended by noting that NEFO is a young organization and is still in the learning stage and that NEFO is happy to be partnering with FAO to implement the activities under the project so that the organization and its farmers will be able to market what is produced.

### **Technical Perspective on the production of roots and Tubers**

- Mr Reginald Andall, Country Representative, Caribbean Agriculture and Research Institute, (CARDI)

Mr Andall's introductory remarks reminded to participants that CARDI has been instrumental in the establishment of CaFAN and is happy to be part of this exercise. As he went on, Andall hinted that he is saying nothing new, but needed to refresh the mind of persons present of considerations from the grower perspective.

Before you begin to produce a crop, you must identify the market, the varieties, size, quantity, when you want it, the time you want it, the packaging; "All of these should be settled first before you plant", Andall said. As a producer, you must know whether the marketer want the produce delivered or collected on your farm.

Andall added, "The market you want to sell your goods to and the pre and post harvest treatments that are permissible are critical." He mentioned the restriction in the use of chemicals for treatment produce which can result in the produce banned from entering the market if the chemical is restricted.

Site selection, is another critical consideration; is the site prone to flooded or it is location inaccessible to tractor service or transport resulting in manual carrying of 20,000lbs plus of dasheen or yams on your head. "These are very important before going into production", Andall said.

Additional planning for soil testing and land preparation is important as some soils may not be suitable for certain types of crops or if the land is inaccessible by tractor, manual land preparation may not be adequate.

The CARDI Country Representative discussed the importance of planting material in terms of having the correct variety, in the correct quantities, quality, the treatment required, and the source of the material. Knowing the size of the market needs is crucial as in the this is linked back to the planting material used, the treatment of the material and the management of pest and disease issues that will come up were also highlighted by Andall.

Andall said, "Adequate research in advance can predict problems; planning can reduce these problems." He continued, "Do you have tec-pac and post harvest handling procedures for the crop. What labour and transportation arrangements do you have in place?"

Time to maturity is another key consideration Andall mentioned. "Knowledge of the time to maturity will assist in production planning and the marketing arrangements as you will know when to plant based on your market arrangements", Andall said.

Andall ended by highlighting that fact that there need to exist a very good Farmer-Extension-CARDI relationship for the success of the participants in this project and according to him, "You need to have good Farmer-CARDI-Extension relations worked out before hand."

### **Marketing Perspective of Roots and Tubers**

- Mr Fitzroy James, General Manager, Marketing & National Importing Board (MNIB)

Mr James made his presentation under the caption, Roots and tubers Marketing Issues presented a buyer's perspective. Marketing and National Importing Board is the single largest purchaser of fruit and vegetables in Grenada and a partner in the implementation is this project. In his presentation James looked at CARICOM roots & tubers production, Utilization & Trade – Findings FAO Market Opportunity Study, MNIB purchases & local market opportunities, and potential interventions to enable the success of this increased production and markets for root crops.

James presented CARICOM Trade in Roots and Tubers and also the local distribution channels as set out in figure 1 below.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Largest category of fresh produce traded in the CARICOM Region
- 19% available fresh produce
- Production - 400,000 MT (US\$395 Million)  
yams (28%), carrots (18%), cassava 12%), sweet potatoes 7%)
- Imports – 80,000 MT (US\$40 Million) -  
English potatoes 83%
- Exports – 20,000 MT (US\$27M) - yams (36%), dasheen (20%), sweet potatoes (14%), eddoes 10%)
- Markets – CARICOM (46%), US (29%), UK (12%), Canada (8%)
- Main exporters – St Vincent (49%), Jamaica (45%), Dominica (4%), Guyana (2%)

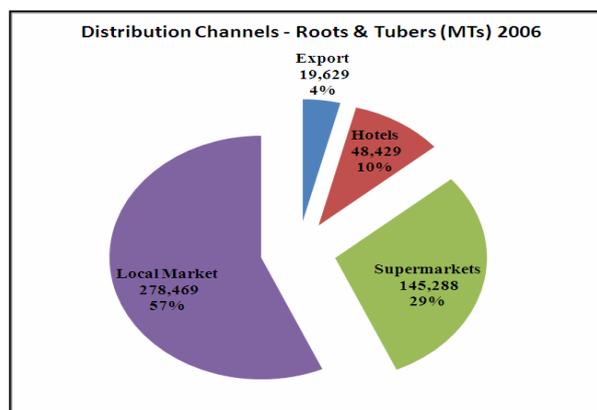


Figure 1

Market opportunities were presented for the root crops as outlined below.

- ▶ Import substitution for French fries with other tropical root fries from cassava, sweet potatoes & locally produced potatoes;
- ▶ Frozen pre-cut and packaged cassava, dasheen & eddoes (soup mix) for domestic market;
- ▶ Increased production of fresh sweet potatoes, dasheen and yellow yam for international export markets (US, UK and Canada) and regional markets (Trinidad, Barbados, Antigua)

In his presentation, James proposed possible areas of intervention for the successful improvement in roots and tubers production and marketing in Grenada. He listed them as follows:

- Organization & capacity building of Farmer Organizations in production planning & marketing
- Establishing standards for grades for the different roots & tubers, improved packaging,
- Development of improved varieties for export marketing,
- Quality assurance systems & traceability,
- Protocols for organic production systems/GAP, storage technology,
- Value added product development & technology.

He also suggested areas of future work in roots and tubers should focus on varietal evaluation, value added product development, improved storage technology, and marketing of value added products.

James further discussed some of the key market Gaps or challenges for the root crops. He identified the following:

- ▶ Input supply: planting material availability
- ▶ Production: Limited cost of production data, absence of competitiveness analysis, little GAP practiced, no quality assurance and traceability systems, non-alignment of varieties with market, extending of availability, production and storage technology
- ▶ Post-harvest: No established national standards for grades; packaging and transport protocols
- ▶ Processing: Conformance to BRC/ EURO GAP/etc
- ▶ Distribution: Contracts; regional transportation
- ▶ Marketing: Market information (standards, varieties, packaging, freight service, etc.)

Tables 9, 10, and 11 show MNIB Roots and Tuber purchase data trend.

Table 9 Roots and tubers purchases by MNIB 2005-2009

Produce	Data	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Sweet Potatoes</b>	Value (ECS)	\$64,307	\$55,105	\$39,967	\$68,718	\$62,772
	Amount (Lbs)	30,839	41,555	24,239	38,784	42,412
	Price (ECS/Lb)	\$2.09	\$1.33	\$1.65	\$1.77	\$1.48
<b>Dasheen</b>	Value (ECS)	\$30,573	\$25,581	\$25,475	\$24,267	\$45,869
	Amount (Lbs)	24,547	18,649	23,014	17,271	44,232
	Price (ECS/Lb)	\$1.25	\$1.37	\$1.11	\$1.41	\$1.04
<b>Tannia</b>	Value (ECS)	\$12,725	\$4,438	\$9,398	\$19,150	\$34,361
	Amount (Lbs)	5,627	1,980	3,951	6,667	13,865
	Price (ECS/Lb)	\$2.26	\$2.24	\$2.38	\$2.87	\$2.48
<b>Gingers</b>	Value (ECS)	\$5,286	\$6,516	\$14,674	\$25,757	\$32,176
	Amount (Lbs)	1,762	3,688	6,261	10,437	12,898
	Price (ECS/Lb)	\$3.00	\$1.77	\$2.34	\$2.47	\$2.49
<b>Yams</b>	Value (ECS)	\$25,812	\$18,939	\$21,547	\$31,657	\$30,949
	Amount (Lbs)	20,372	12,192	14,649	19,787	21,723
	Price (ECS/Lb)	\$1.27	\$1.55	\$1.47	\$1.60	\$1.42
<b>Eddoes</b>	Value (ECS)	\$3,550	\$1,986	\$2,560	\$1,246	\$1,674
	Amount (Lbs)	1,972	1,212	1,522	623	1,060
	Price (ECS/Lb)	\$1.80	\$1.64	\$1.68	\$2.00	\$1.58
<b>Cassava Sweet</b>	Value (ECS)	\$29	\$265	\$755	\$238	\$147
	Amount (Lbs)	38	353	1,007	306	196
	Price (ECS/Lb)	\$0.76	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.78	\$0.75
<b>Total</b>	Value (ECS)	\$142,281	\$112,828	\$114,375	\$171,033	\$207,947
	Amount (Lbs)	85,157	79,629	74,643	93,875	136,386
	Price (ECS/Lb)	\$1.67	\$1.42	\$1.53	\$1.82	\$1.52

Table 10 Imports of Roots &amp; Tubers into Grenada 2004 – 2008 (Amount and value)

DESCRIPTION	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
	Value (\$EC)	Amt (Lbs)								
English Potatoes	\$2,598,324	3,134,166	\$3,211,603	4,092,725	\$3,515,594	3,604,810	\$4,342,934	3,983,452	\$2,325,015	2,882,883
Yams	\$29,914	15,097	\$189,415	116,822	\$11,400	4,079	\$15,518	4,669	\$12,270	35,573
Cassava	\$3,638	4,217	\$5,194	4,733	\$2,842	2,004	\$2,232	1,519	\$3,040	895
Arrowroot	\$959	558	\$3,228	734	\$3,006	769	\$534	214	\$277	152
Other Roots & Tubers	\$89	165	\$15,316	7,004	\$1,794	379	\$141	44	\$38	11
Dasheen	\$35,160	17,304	\$36,036	28,625	\$11,592	4,425	\$2,660	2,105		
Eddoes	\$11,862	5,379	\$11,805	6,817						
Sweet Potato	\$29,924	15,428	\$50,788	20,725	\$3,067	1,175				
Tannia	\$26,132	21,887	\$18,762	7,910			\$263	99		
	\$2,736,002	3,214,192	\$3,542,147	4,286,095	\$3,549,295	3,617,641	\$4,364,282	3,992,103	\$2,340,640	2,919,514

Source: National Statistics Department

**Table 11 Source of purchase of root crops in Grenada**

Source of Purchase	Sweet Potato	Yam	Dasheen	Tannia	Cassava	Ginger	Total	% Survey
Public Market	15%	18%	17%	10%	1%	1%	10%	31%
Supermarket	16%	19%	18%	6%	1%	0%	10%	31%
Village Shop	1%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	4%
MNIB	6%	7%	6%	4%	0%	0%	4%	12%
Road Side Vendors	7%	7%	5%	3%	0%	0%	4%	11%
Own Farm	3%	4%	3%	2%	0%	0%	2%	6%
Multiple Response	3%	3%	3%	1%	1%	0%	2%	6%
Total	51%	60%	54%	28%	3%	1%	33%	100%

*Source: MNIB*

## WORKING GROUPS

With the ground work being set by the proceedings of the earlier sessions where this root and tubers project was put into perspectives, the market opportunities and issues presented, the production considerations discussed and NEFO profiling its self and demonstrating their development and readiness for embracing this project the participants (growers, buyers and service providers) were well briefed for the task ahead in the working groups.



Working Groups listening to instructions for the session

### **The task at hand for the participants included:**

1. Forming themselves into three working groups (grower, buyer and service/goods providers)
2. The grower group would review the critical success factors as presented by NEFO under the grower perspective while the buyers will look at the critical success factors from the buyer perspective. The service/goods providers will look at the perspectives from both the buyer and grower and arrive at solutions and recommendations of ways they would be better able to provide the service and support that NEFO will need to be successful. *The groups had the freedom to modify or add to the critical success factors as presented based on their experience and understanding of the issues to improve the chances for success.*
3. The grower and buyer groups each identify the critical success factors as they discussed and the rate each on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the very important and 1 least important.
4. The grower and buyer groups will then use the technique of peer-wise ranking and arrive at the top five critical success factors from their perspective.
5. The groups were to record their findings on flip chart and make presentation through having a note taker and presenter for each group.

## **Grower working group**

The following is the results of the Grower Working Group where they rated and ranked the critical success factors from their perspective as set out in table 12 below.

**Table 12 Ranking of critical success factors by growers**

<b>CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS</b>	<b>PREFERRED AGAINST OTHER CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS</b>	<b>FELT IMPORTANT IN SCALE FROM 1 (LITTLE) TO 5 (HIGH)</b>
<b>1. Consistency</b>	4x	5
<b>2. Quality</b>	3x	4
<b>3. Presentation/packaging</b>	2x	5
<b>4. Price</b>	1x	3
<b>5. Traceability</b>	0	3

Additionally, the associated notes from the group's discussion are presented below. The bullets are some of the more specific issues to be addressed for the major critical success factor category.

**1. Provide competitive prices**

- Quality of goods
- Quantity(supply/ demand)
- Futures (contracts)
- Presentation of the Products
- Cleanliness

**2. Assurance of consistent Supply**

- Seasonal Crops
- Storage
- Linkage/clusters with the farmers
- Rotation of the crops between the farmers
- Labour
- Equipment
- Technology

**3. Provide standardize quality**

- De- stoning of the land
- Distance between the crops
- Soil type
- Quality of planting materials
- Specie of the plants
- Constant water supply
- Use of fertilizers/ manure
- Seasonal crops
- Pest control
- Farm roads

#### 4. Generate consumer confidence through traceability

- Record keeping
- Id for farmers within the organization
- Farm watch programme
- Inspection of the lands and crops (planting material, soil, species)
- Organic/ Inorganic
- Labelling of the produce

#### 5. Insurance

- Larceny
- Natural disasters

### **Buyer working group**

The following is the results of the Buyer Working Group where they rated and ranked the critical success factors from their perspective as set out in table 13.

**Table 13 Ranking of critical success factors by buyers**

Critical success factors	Preferred against other critical success factors	Felt important in scale from 1 (little) to 5 (high)
1. Quality	8x	5
2. price	7x	4
3. perishability	5	4
4. Confirmation to specs	5	4
5. Safety and food safety	4	5
6. Handling/transport	4	4
7. Packaging	2	5
8. Reliability	1	4
9. Delivery to buyer	0	5

### **Grower-buyer perceptions**

The following can be observed from the Growers and Buyers groups based on the exercises illustrated in the tables 12 and 13 above.

- Growers believe that the consistency of supply and the quality of the produce are the most important factors for buyers to purchase from them, while they do not think that the price is that relevant.

- For the buyers, quality is rated highest but soon followed by price. The consistency/reliability issue seems not to be a high priority but perishability and confirming to the specifications are very important to the buyers.
- Regarding reliability/consistency in supply, one can assume that buyers may find it easy to procure supplies from different farmers; in other words if one farmer can't deliver, they can easily move to another one. This seems to indicate that it is a buyer driven market and the power is with the buyers. For NEFO, this should be a motivation to negotiate contracts with reliable buyers to ensure that they have regular market outlets.
- Food safety (and traceability) is recognised by both groups as a critical factor, but ranked much higher by the buyers!
- In terms of technical assistance: in order to increase market supplies, growers would need to improve productivity of crops in order to be able to supply the market at lower prices without losing out on profits. At the same time quality standards have to be met and some more awareness work is required about the importance of post harvest handling to maintain the quality and the shelf life (perishability factor) of produce.
- Farmers do realise the importance of packaging and presentation of their produce to buyers. However, the exercise showed that some more advisory work is required to familiarise farmers with the specifications and standards buyers expect.
- Overall, there seems to be a good basis for improving the business linkages between NEFO growers and their buyers. Consequently, this will provide a platform for NEFO and also the buyers to close these gaps by understanding each other's needs and working to satisfying each other.



Photo showing Presentation being made by one of the working groups

### Services/goods providers group

Following is the results of the deliberations of the service/goods providers as they discussed ways that NEFO can be best assisted by this group in achieving its Critical Success Factors as presented in the meeting.

- **Negotiate Market Arrangements:** Producers to negotiate price ranges, quantities and market arrangement
- **Input Supply:** due to Grenada being a small market, the cost of inputs such as fertilizer is more costly due to the small volumes compared to other countries. Renwick Thompson and Company Ltd. has committed at the meeting to provide NEFO members 15% discount on bulk purchases.
- **Encourage buyers and producers to establish technical information before hand:** examples include standards, varieties, delivery and quality
- **Assist producers to compute cost of production:** Give information to producers on how to reduce cost of production. Example – better use of fertilizer, reduced pesticide use, use soil testing etc.
- **Communicate Available Technology:** Communicate information on available technologies to the producers and make technologies available

## **CLOSING AND WRAP UP**

The meeting concluded with remarks of thanks to all the participants for showing up and actively participating in the meeting and to those who would have in many different ways contributed to the successful day's event. The end of this event mark the accomplishment of a "Grower-Buyer Meeting" for the current Letter of Agreement with FAO under the EU AAACP funded Roots and Tubers Project.

NEFO must now review the outcome of the working sessions and strategize to reduce the differences between their perception and ranking of the Critical success Factors relative to that of the buyers. It is through this recalibration of thoughts and implementation of strategies would NEFO be better placed to harness the market opportunities that exist for the roots and tubers they intend to produce. Additionally, this exercise should act as a learning process to improve NEFO's capacity that will equip the organization to address other production and marketing issues of other into the future.

The other activities to follow from this Grower-Buyer Meeting as outlined in the existing Letter of Agreement with FAO include the following:

- 9) Training Course on Management of Farmers Organization, Group Formation and Networking;
- 10) Training in Improved Technologies, Production Planning, Record Keeping;
- 11) Setting up of 30 Demonstration Plots for Production of the Targeted Root Crops
- 12) Study Tour to St Vincent to observe intensive root crop production systems;
- 13) Support to NEFO's Training Activities, Networking & Marketing Coordination
- 14) Training in Marketing of Produce, Contracting & Post harvest Handling
- 15) Provide Secretarial Support Services to NEFO
- 16) Reporting to FAO at the end of accomplishment of the tasks outlined in this first Letter of Agreement

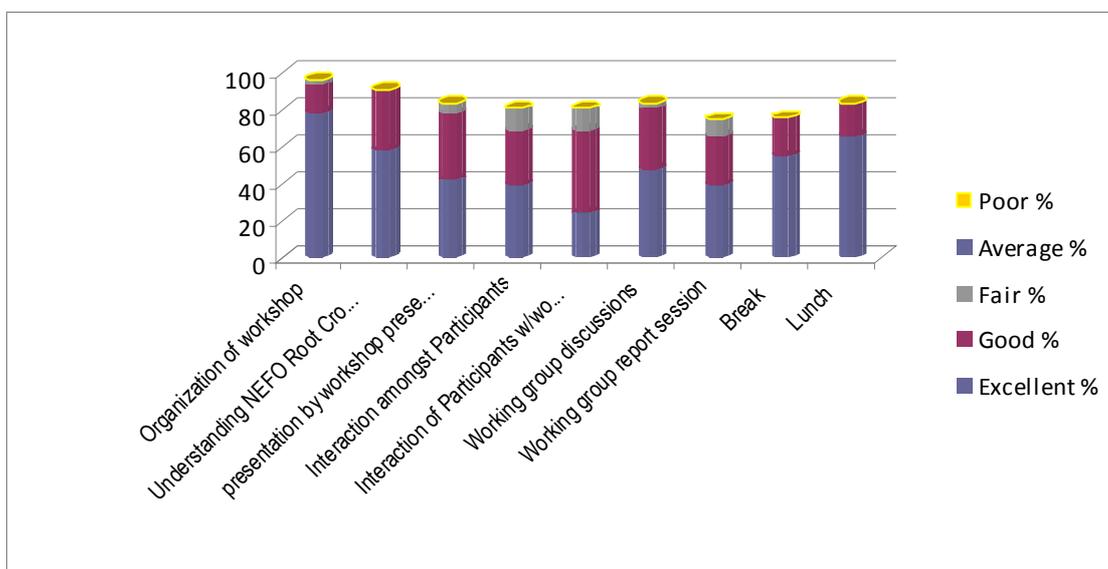
## EVALUATION

Following is a summary of the evaluation of various aspects of the workshop by the participants both in tabular and graphical formats.

From the evaluation results, while the organization and presentations were well received by the there existed room for more group interaction and discussions of the reports from the various groups. Over 58% of the participants rated as excellent their understanding of NEFO's root crop project while 33% rated their understanding as good. 48% of the participants rated the working group's discussions as excellent while 39% rated the group report as excellent thus the need for improved interactions and group works sessions in future sessions.

**Table 14: EVALUATION SUMMARY**

	Excellent %	Good %	Fair %	Average %	Poor %
Organization of Workshop	78.7	15	3	0	0
Understanding NEFO Root Crop Project	58	33	0	0	0
Presentation by workshop presenters	42	36	6	0	0
Interaction amongst Participants	39	30	12	0	0
Interaction of Participants w/Workshop Presenters	24	45	12	0	0
Working Group discussions	48	33	3	0	0
Working Group Report Session	39	27	9	0	0
Break	55	21	0	0	0
Lunch	66	18	0	0	0



**Figure 2: Graphical representation of evaluation of meeting by participants**

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

#	NAME	OCCUPATION	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	MOBILE	FAX	SEX	EDUCATION	ADDRESS
1	Alban Lewis	Buyer	Self	435-2716	409-0085	N/A	M		Beaulieu, St George's
2	Andrea Redhead	Food & Beverage	Spice Island Beach Resort	444-4258	405-3518	429-9416	M		
3	Andrew Cadore	Farmer	N/A	444-9786	N/A	N/A	M	Primary	Concord, St John's
4	Cephas Bain	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	440-1081	533-1942	N/A	M	Primary	New Hampshire, St George's
5	Clive Lewis	Stock Controller	Marketing & National Importing Board	440-9791/ 1791/ 444-7978	533-4311	440-4152	M	Tertiary	Young Street, St George's
6	Desmond Nelson	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	440-7247	538-8856	N/A	M	Secondary	Vendome, St George's
7	Dolores Penny	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	435-2106	420-6385	N/A	F	Primary	Vendome, St George's
8	Earla Baptiste	Retiree	North East Farmers Organization	440-5671	404-3981	N/A	F	Primary	Boca Village, St George's
9	Elizabeth Niles	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	440-9464	538-93392	N/A	F	Tertiary	New Hampshire
10	Evans Goodings	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	414-7884	538-93392	N/A	M	Tertiary	New Hampshire
11	Francis Lewis	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	440-2048	N/A	N/A	M	Primary	Boca Village, St George's
12	Glennis McBurnie	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	440-5719	N/A	N/A	F	Primary	New Hampshire
13	Gloria Cornwall	market Vendor	Self	442-5098	419-8842	N/A	F	Primary	New Hampshire
14	Godwin Telesford	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	440-1956		N/A	M		Vendome, St George's

#	NAME	OCCUPATION	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	MOBILE	FAX	SEX	EDUCATION	ADDRESS
15	Henry Primus	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	N/A	414-7545	N/A	M	Primary	New Hampshire
16	Hilary Thomas	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	456-2755	537-7105	N/A	F	Primary	Vendome, St George's
17	Jimmy Lindsay	Marketing Officer	Ministry of Agriculture	440-2708		N/A	M	Tertiary	Ministerial Complex, Botanical Gardens, St George's
18	Jonathan Francis	Extension Officer	Western Agricultural District	443-3302	533-1289	N/A	M	Tertiary	Blackbay, St John
19	Jude Celestine	Assistant Manager/Purchasing Manager	Foodland Market Square	440-2025	404-9161	N/A	M	Secondary	Grand Anse, St George's
20	Kelly Patrick	Head Western Extension District	Ministry of Agriculture	443-3302		N/A	M	Tertiary	Blackbay, St John
21	Kyron Frederick	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	435-8729	N/A	N/A	M	Primary	New Hampshire
22	Lynthia Johnson	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	N/A	417-6272	N/A	F	Primary	New Hampshire
23	Martin Bartholomew	Police Officer	Camp Saline Dietary	440-1610	538-0887	N/A	M	Tertiary	Point Saline, St George's
24	Martin Peters	Purchasing Officer	Coyaba Beach Resort	440-1207	414-1040	444-4808	M	Secondary	Grand Anse, St George's
25	Merlyn Bain	Farmer	N/A	444-9786	N/A	N/A	F	Secondary	Grand Roy, St George's
26	Paul Graham	Pest Management Officer	Ministry of Agriculture	444-7881	416-2908	440-4191	M	Tertiary	C/o Ministry of Agriculture, St George's
27	Phillip Mitchell	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	N/A	414-4599	N/A	M	Primary	Constantine, St George's
28	Phillip Munro	Electrician/Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	440-6799	406-8554	N/A	M	Primary	Vendome, St George's

#	NAME	OCCUPATION	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	MOBILE	FAX	SEX	EDUCATION	ADDRESS
29	Phyllis Cadet	Vendor	Self	458-0872	417-0633	N/A	F	Primary	Belle Vue, St George's
30	Princess Cambridge	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	440-3965	449-7569	N/A	F	Primary	Vendome, St George's
31	Reginald Andall	Agronomist	Caribbean Agriculture Research & Development Institute (CARDI)	442-2939	420-1394	443-2939	M	Tertiary	P.O. Box 220, St George's
32	Reginald Penny	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	435-2106	420-6385	N/A	M	Primary	Vendome, St George's
33	Renortha Penny	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	435-2106		N/A	F	Tertiary	Vendome, St George's
34	Richard Andrew	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	440-2048	435-9176	N/A	M	Primary	New Hampshire
35	Ronald Baptise	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	440-5671	N/A	N/A	M	Primary	Boca Village, St George's
36	Kenneth Fletcher	Input Supplier	Renwick Thompson & Co. Ltd				M		Carenage, St George's
37	Sylvia Braveboy	Farmer	North East Farmers Organization	440-7981	533-2234	N/A	F	Primary	New Hampshire
38	Verna Phillip	Extension Officer	Ministry of Agriculture	440-9081	416-9640	N/A	F	Secondary	Vendome, St George's
39	Yolanda Carter	Cleaner	North East Farmers Organization	435-9146	418-2599	N/A	F	Primary	Vendome, St George's



---

NORTH EAST FARMERS ORGANIZATION  
New Hampshire, St George's, Grenada West Indies;  
Phone: (473) 435-9531 · Email: [nefo2008@yahoo.com](mailto:nefo2008@yahoo.com)