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IICA ECS News



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Inside This Issue

1. [Editorial](#)
2. [IICA Antigua and Barbuda Supports the Annual Christian Valley Mango Festival](#)
3. [IICA Saint Lucia Receives Support of the Private Sector to Implement Second Phase of the Helping Out Our Primary and Secondary Schools \(HOOPSS\) Project](#)
4. [IICA St Vincent and the Grenadines and Other Stakeholders Move to Transform the Vegetable Industry](#)
5. [A Little Humor](#)

EDITORIAL

Reverse Assumptions

Reversing your assumptions broadens your thinking. You may often find yourself looking at the same things as everybody else yet seeing something different. Many creative thinkers get their most original ideas when they challenge and reverse the obvious.

As we go into the New Year let us give thanks, I implore each one to take your challenge of the day or the moment and look for a break through.

IICA ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA SUPPORTS THE ANNUAL CHRISTIAN VALLEY MANGO FESTIVAL

A much anticipated event among agro-processors for the past five years, is the *IICA Most Outstanding Agro-Processor Award Competition*; which has as its aim: “To promote the development of the agro- industry, through the greater utilization of local commodities.” The competition which is held during the Annual Christian Valley Mango Festival in August each year is not limited to the use of mangoes, but promotes local fruits and vegetables. This year eight processors participated in the competition. Each participant entered two products.

Photos of winning products:



1st Sister Glos (Gloria David)



2nd Grandma Aki (Novella Payne)



3rd Picante Peppers (Odella Spooner)

The Prizes were presented by the Governor General on Sunday 15th August during the closing ceremony of the 5th Mango Festival. Each winner also received a solar dryer, compliments of the Peace Corps Partners Project.

High appreciation was commended for the work of the 2010 judging team: Jeannette Hunte, Margaretta Perry, Yolanda Peters and Violet Lake. The competition presents an opportunity for agro-processors to market their products, interact with clients and to gain recognition for their work. The agro-processors are generally pleased with the sales they receive during the festivals. IICA congratulates all the winners and participants of the competition.

Other products on display



IICA Saint Lucia Receives Support of Private Sector to Implement Second Phase of the Helping Out Our Primary and Secondary Schools (HOOPSS) Project

The first phase of the Helping Out Our Primary and Secondary Schools (HOOPSS) Project ended in July 2010, with its main objective "to strengthen and harmonize youth engagement in agriculture and tourism" being achieved. The project provided assistance for the rehabilitation of greenhouses at the Grande Riviere and Blanchard Primary schools, new greenhouses were installed at the newly constructed Marigot and Gros Islet Secondary schools and the strengthening of the agricultural science programme at the Dunnottar, Vieux Fort Technical Secondary and the Ciceron Combined schools.



Students at the End of Project Ceremony of Phase One of HOOPSS



Signing of New Agreement at the Launching Ceremony of Phase Two of the HOOPSS

From the results of Phase One, HOOPSS gained the interest of Consolidated Foods Limited (CFL), a major private sector supermarket network in Saint Lucia. CFL committed a further EC\$75,000 towards the advancement of the second phase. Four new schools have been added to the existing list of seven. The additional schools are Roseau Combined, Soufriere Comprehensive, Choiseul Comprehensive and Babonneau Primary.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries (MALFF) have committed their continued support towards the HOOPSS initiative through technical support from its youth in agriculture programme and extension services division.



Distribution of implements and inputs by SLAFY, CFL and IICA

In the second phase, HOOPSS will provide the participating schools with the necessary implements and inputs. The Babonneau Primary and the Soufriere Comprehensive Schools will receive greenhouses.

HOOPSS has heightened the interest of major agricultural stakeholders and it is the hope of SLAFY that funding for a third phase of HOOPSS will be forthcoming.

IICA St Vincent and the Grenadines and Other Stakeholders Move to Transform the Vegetable Industry

Vegetable Industry stakeholders have agreed to a unified course of action to revitalize and develop the Vegetable Industry of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This agreement came at the hosting of the Second Annual Agribusiness Conference on October 14, 2010 for stakeholders in the vegetable industry. The conference, attended by 62 participants, was held under the theme: **Vegetable Industry Development, Local Partnerships and Innovations for Industry Development**, indicating the orientation of the event towards exploring the opportunities and challenges with a solutions focus and the encouragement of the networking approach to the issues. A wide cross section of industry stakeholders from both the private and public sectors were in attendance; they included farmers, agro-processors, wholesalers, retailers, agricultural input suppliers, finance houses, marketers, technocrats and a number of public sector agencies.



Cross section of participants at the workshop

Participants were treated to five excellent presentations covering key areas of the vegetable industry production chain. These included presentations on production related issues, credit and finance for vegetable production, clustering as an approach to producer organization, proposal for a new approach to marketing of vegetables and a presentation of the work of Mission Taiwan in Vegetable Production in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The conference was rated very successful by the participants, who further committed themselves to continuing the process initiated by the event. A broad-based committee of ten attendees - including IICA personnel - was formed at the conclusion of the conference to examine the issues raised at the conference and to formalize courses of action which are to be vetted and sanctioned at a follow-up meeting of stakeholders in December.

IICA played a pivotal role in this exercise, developing the concept for the conference, chairing the planning and organizing committee for the event and leveraging on existing relationships to get maximum participation and publicity for this most worth-while venture.

A Little Humor

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, *Common Sense*, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

- Knowing when to come in out of the rain;
- Why the early bird gets the worm;
- Life isn't always fair; and
- Maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims. *Common Sense* took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death, by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife Discretion, by his daughter Responsibility, and by his son Reason. He is survived by his 4 stepbrothers; I Know My Rights, I Want It Now, Someone Else Is To Blame, and I'm A Victim.

Extract



Editorial Team

[Una May Gordon](#), Editor-in-Chief
[Merril Philbert-St John](#), Editor
[Deborah Biscombe](#), Design and Layout

Office in Saint Lucia
Email: iica.lc@iica.int

