



SOWING SEEDS OF PARTNERSHIP: BUILDING RESILIENT CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURE

A LOOK AT CWA 2025





Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations





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ABOUT CARIBBEAN WEEK OF AGRICULTURE

Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) is the premier event on the regional agricultural calendar. It is a roving event hosted by CARICOM Member States and Associate Members and includes seminars, key meetings, a special meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), and an exhibition.

The CWA was conceptualised by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) as a facility to place agriculture and rural life on the front burner of regional integration activities and in doing so enable:

- the key decision-makers in the public and private sectors to better acknowledge the importance of agriculture and rural life to the economic, social, and environmental stability of the region; and*
- for the major stakeholders in agriculture and related sectors to have an opportunity to dialogue and forge a common vision for the repositioning of agriculture and the enhancement of rural life.*

The CWA is convened under the aegis of the Alliance for Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu (The Alliance). From the inaugural meeting in 1998, the two main collaborating agencies were IICA and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat.

In 2002, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) joined IICA and CARICOM to establish a core group which functions as the Secretariat of The Alliance. Since then, the four agencies have collaborated on the management and logistics necessary for the convening and servicing of meetings of The Alliance as well as the myriad of activities during the CWA.

The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) which was a joint international institution of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and the European Union (EU) from 1983 – 2020, was a major partner and sponsor of the CWA activities from 2003.

To date, there have been 19 successful editions of the CWA. The first CWA was held in Trinidad and Tobago in 1999. St. Kitts and Nevis hosted the 2025 edition of the CWA under the theme ‘Sowing Change, Harvesting Resilience: Transforming Our Caribbean Food Systems for 2025 and Beyond’.



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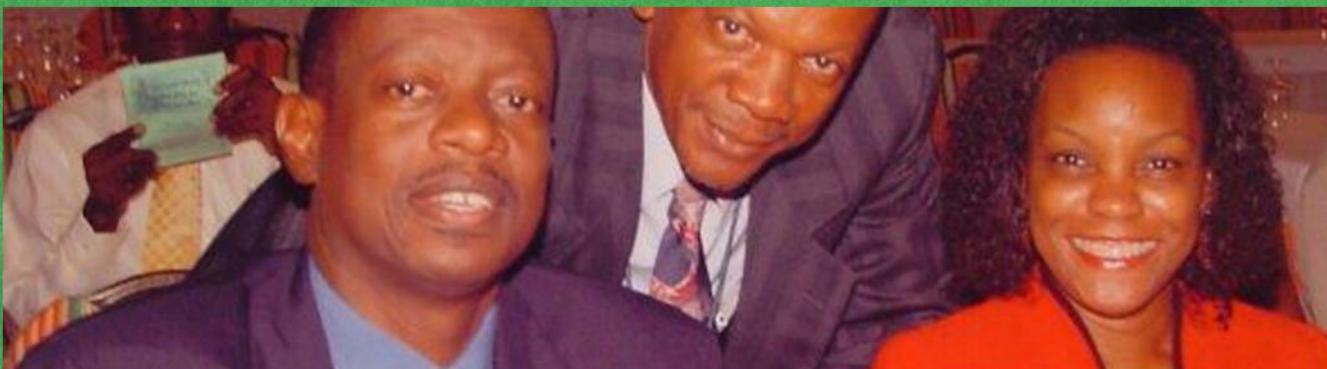
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MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

DR. CARLA BARNETT



For over two decades, Caribbean Week of Agriculture has been the Caribbean Community's premier forum for charting the future of our Region's agriculture and food systems. This year, we gather in the beautiful Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis from 29 September to 3 October, to push toward achieving the 25 by 2025+5 target of reducing our food import bill by 25 percent.

On behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), I thank the Government and People of St. Kitts and Nevis for hosting this important event. I also extend appreciation to our regional and international partners, whose steadfast support makes this annual gathering a consistently impactful opportunity for all involved.

Under the theme "*Sowing Change, Harvesting Resilience: Transforming Our Caribbean Food Systems for 2025 and Beyond*", the 19th CWA (CWA19) will showcase innovation, investment opportunities, and the creativity of our farmers, fishers, entrepreneurs, and agro-processors. It will also provide space for high-level dialogue among our governments, private sector, and development partners.

This forum reminds us that agriculture is not only about food production. It is about building meaningful relationships, creating jobs, empowering youth and women, and ensuring that every Caribbean citizen has access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food.

I invite all stakeholders, including from the public and private sectors, civil society, and farming communities, to join CARICOM for CWA19. Together, let us sow the seeds of change, so that we may harvest a more resilient and food-secure Caribbean.

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

DIKE NOEL, EDITOR IN CHIEF
MICHELLE NURSE, EDITOR/PRODUCER



Welcome to another edition of the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) Magazine!

This year, we made a deliberate decision to publish the magazine after the week of activities to provide you with a more comprehensive and reflective account of the event.

From all reports, the 19th Caribbean Week of Agriculture, held in St. Kitts and Nevis, was a resounding success; bringing together about 500 delegates for 42 sessions, featuring 19 exhibitors at the technical exhibition, and showcasing 175 exhibitors to more than 7,000 patrons at the 30th edition of the St. Kitts and Nevis Agriculture Open Day.

The week also featured an impactful Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), farm tours, and exhibitions that highlighted the dynamism of agriculture in St. Kitts and Nevis and across the Region. It was a week rich with networking, learning, and, of course, great food and entertainment.

In this publication, we reflect on the evolution of the CWA and offer insights in its future as the Region's premier agricultural event. We also revisit some of the memorable highlights from the week in beautiful St. Kitts and Nevis - from inspiring keynotes at the opening ceremony, to the CARICOM Farmers of the Year awardees, and the vibrant cultural expressions that brought the islands to life.

We hope you enjoy this special edition of the CWA 2025 Magazine!



PLANT SEEDS OF DEEPER SOUTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIPS, PARTICIPANTS URGED AT CARIBBEAN WEEK OF AGRICULTURE 2025

The call for stronger South-South partnerships in the agricultural sector resonated throughout the 19th Caribbean Week of Agriculture which was held in St. Kitts and Nevis 29 September – 3 October 2025.

It was a common thread during the opening ceremony on 29 September and this theme was raised during the week of activities as participants acknowledged the current geo-political scenario and sought to identify and capitalise on the emerging opportunities.

CWA attracted farmers, fishers and agripreneurs, ministers of agriculture, heads and representatives of regional and international organisations and partners, delegations from Africa and Latin America, and a range of other stakeholders in the agriculture sector.

“Agriculture today, demands regional solidarity, and global partnerships, especially south-south cooperation. This is why St. Kitts and Nevis has been deepening our ties with our brothers and sisters in Africa. More recently, we have been establishing strong ties with Nigeria. Our partnership though is more than bilateral; it is a demonstration of what south-south collaboration means when you put it into practice. It reflects the understanding that our challenges are shared, and so too, must be our solutions.”

***Hon. Samal Duggins, Agriculture Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis,
CWA Opening Ceremony***



In a strong message to partners, the Minister said: “Together we can exchange knowledge on climate-smart farming. Together we can mobilise investment across various areas of agro-processing; together we can build new value chains that stretch across the Atlantic.

Together, we can forge a bridge between Africa and the Caribbean widening opportunities for trade, technology transfer and widening opportunities for cultural exchanges. This is the spirit of south-south cooperation.”

He added that this kind of cooperation is not optional for the Caribbean but is essential to thrive in a world of shifting geopolitics, fragile supply chains and growing climate threats.



[click to watch presentation on demand](#)

Representatives of high-level delegations from Africa and Latin America made presentations to the 121st Special Ministerial Meeting of the Council of Trade and Economic Development (COTED) - one of the flagship events of the CWA – underlining the importance of building stronger partnerships.

In an interview with the Communications Unit post-Meeting, the Chairman of the 121st Special Meeting of the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) the Hon. Indar Weir, Agriculture Minister of Barbados, framed the issue and the interventions especially in the context of lowering the cost of food for the Caribbean populace and mitigating the impact of the current tariffs regime.





For CARICOM Assistant Secretary-General (ag), Economic Integration, Innovation and Development, Dr. Wendell Samuel, deepening south-south cooperation is an approach whose **“time had come.”**

 click to watch the presentation on demand

His comments echoed the sentiments of representatives of the Nigeria government, who also spoke at the opening ceremony.

Dr. Olufemi Ayokunle Ogunseinde, Executive Director of the Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOFI) of Nigeria said the “time for south-south cooperation is now” and called for planting seeds of a long-term partnership.

“We see several areas where Nigeria, the Caribbean and Latin America can cooperate: one in financing where we can pull our resources together, working with MOFI and other relevant institutions, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and others to unlock and others to unlock blended finance for agriculture.

We also want to look at joint projects where we can establish pilot farms and agro-processing hubs in both regions creating supply chains that reduce losses and boost mutual exports,” he said.



He recommended a platform for south-south collaboration, and a compact between the Caribbean and Nigeria.  click to watch presentation on demand



In a video message played at the opening ceremony, Senator Abubakar Kyari, Nigeria’s Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, said Nigerian investors are looking to the wider Caribbean, particularly for collaboration in sectors such as agriculture.

“Africa is ready, not only to trade with the Caribbean, but to build resilient food systems in the Caribbean,” he said.

 click to watch presentation on demand







Argentina Deepens Agricultural Cooperation with the Caribbean at CWA 2025

Argentina reaffirmed its strong commitment to agricultural cooperation and regional food security during its participation in the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA), held this year in Saint Kitts and Nevis.

As a special guest of the Caribbean Community's Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), the Argentine delegation shared its interest in building stronger partnerships with the region. It highlighted opportunities for collaboration in areas such as dairy industry modernisation, plant health systems, soil and water management, and the use of digital technologies in agriculture.



During a presentation that attracted strong regional interest, Argentina said it is ready to support the Caribbean in advancing smart agriculture, sustainable value chains, and food security.

Argentina is one of the world's top agricultural producers and exporters, and a global reference in agri-innovation, particularly in animal genetics, biotechnology, and seed development. The country brings decades of experience and technical capacity to offer, especially in support of small island developing states working to reduce import dependency and build climate resilience.

Co-leader of the Argentina delegation, Mr. Fernando Brun, Secretary for International Economic Relations (I) at the 121st Special Meeting of COTED on Agriculture

The visit comes as CARICOM intensifies efforts under its **25 by 2025** strategy—an initiative to reduce the Region's food import bill by 25% by the year 2025, recently extended through 2030. Argentina expressed its willingness to become a strategic partner in the initiative by providing technical support, training, and know-how aligned with regional priorities.

The delegation emphasised its long-standing cooperation with Caribbean nations, facilitated in many cases by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). Since 1992, Argentina has implemented knowledge-sharing programmes across the Region. Over the past decade alone, more than 20 projects have been carried out, involving 255 Argentine and 172 Caribbean experts in areas such as crop production, fisheries, and climate monitoring.

One notable initiative is the API-Caribe programme, launched in 2019 with IICA and Caribbean partners to strengthen the beekeeping sector—vital for pollination and food systems. Other projects have supported artisanal fisheries, converting fish waste into animal feed, and using satellite data to manage natural disaster risks, droughts, and floods.



The CARICOM Secretariat team holds talks with the high-level delegation from Argentina on the sidelines of the CWA

As the Region works to transform its food systems, Argentina confirmed it will continue to listen, collaborate, and innovate with the Caribbean to support its goals for greater food sovereignty and rural development.

During the presentation, the Argentine delegation emphasised that since 1992, the country has promoted collaborative programmes in the Caribbean, focused on knowledge exchange and capacity building according to regional priorities.

The Caribbean Week of Agriculture, first held in 1999 in Trinidad and Tobago, is the Region's leading agricultural forum, bringing together government leaders, farmers, private sector players, and development partners to promote investment and innovation in agri-food systems.

The Argentine delegation was led by Fernando Brun, Secretary for International Economic Relations, and Manuel Chiappe, Undersecretary for Agriculture. (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture) 



At the Caribbean Week of
policymakers and agricultural partners re-
vision for driving sustainable growth



"This forum reminds us that agriculture is not only about food production. It is about building meaningful relationships, creating jobs, empowering youth and women, and ensuring that every Caribbean citizen has access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food."

*Dr. Carla Barnett
Secretary-General, CARICOM*



"Agriculture today, demands regional solidarity and global partnerships, especially south-south cooperation. This is why St. Kitts and Nevis has been deepening our ties with our brothers and sisters in Africa. More recently, we have been establishing strong ties with Nigeria. Our partnership, though, is more than bilateral; it is a demonstration of what South-South collaboration means when you put it into practice. It reflects the understanding that our challenges are shared, and so too, must be our solutions."

*Hon. Samal Duggins, Minister of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Marine Resources of St. Kitts and Nevis*

 click to watch presentation on demand

Food for Thought

Agriculture 2025, regional
reflected on shared goals and outlined their
h and innovation across the sector.



Agriculture has always been the heartbeat of our Caribbean story. Long before we called ourselves independent nations, long before we established CARICOM, it was agriculture that first defined our place in the world on the fertile soils of our islands, sugar, cocoa, coffee, banana and cotton grew in abundance."

*Dr. The Hon. Geoffrey Hanley, Deputy
Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis*



[click to watch presentation on demand](#)



Africa is ready, not only to trade with the Caribbean, but to build resilient food systems in the Caribbean."

*Senator Abubakar Kyari, Minister of
Agriculture and Food Security of Nigeria*



[click to watch presentation on demand](#)



At the opening ceremony of the Caribbean Food Security Conference, policymakers and agricultural partners re-affirmed their commitment to the 25 by 2025+5 initiative, a collective vision for driving sustainable growth and resilience in the region.



“Food and nutrition security is not optional; it is essential to the economic stability, social well-being, and environmental resilience of our Community. Let us therefore embrace the 25 by 2025+5 initiative as our collective commitment to sow the seeds of change and to harvest resilience for generations to come.”

*Dr. Wendell Samuel, CARICOM Assistant Secretary-General (ag)
Economic Integration, Innovation and Development*

 click to watch presentation on demand



“We see several areas where Nigeria, the Caribbean and Latin America can cooperate: one in financing where we can pull our resources together, working with MOFI and other relevant institutions, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and others to unlock and others to unlock blended finance for agriculture.”

*Dr. OluFemi Ogunseinde, Executive Director of the
Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOFI) of Nigeria*

 click to watch presentation on demand



“People ask me if I think that agriculture is moving fast enough, what I think of the progress that has been made in relation to the 25X25, and my answer has been that a lot of effort and a lot of progress has been made and much of it has been in re-setting the foundation for a more efficient, productive and sustainable sector, and that my expectation is that the ‘visible’ advances will accelerate in the next five years.”

*Dr. Renata Clarke, Sub-regional Coordinator of the Food
and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*

 click to watch presentation on demand

ood for ought

ean Week of Agriculture 2025, regional
flected on shared goals and outlined their
h and innovation across the sector.



The Caribbean Week of Agriculture has long been a vital platform, but today, it offers us a unique opportunity to strategise and intensify our collective efforts to support transformative initiatives under the framework of CARICOM's 25 by 25 + 5 initiative."

*Mr. Brian Bogart, Representative and Country Director
of the World Food Programme Caribbean Multi-Country Office*

 click to watch presentation on demand



IICA continues to provide support for women and youth in agriculture, recognizing them as vulnerable demographics that require specific attention. In this vein, we continue our support for CANROP, Helen's Daughters and other women's organisations and producer groups in the countries, extending also that support to youths and youth organisations in the sector.

Dr. Manuel Otero, Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

 click to watch presentation on demand



Our farmers are resilient people. They face a host of challenges but remain in this business of producing food for our community."

Mr. Ansari Hosein, Executive Director of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute

 click to watch presentation on demand

FEAST OF LOCAL FLAVOURS



 click to watch The Brotherhood drummers

FROM THE DYNAMIC PERFORMANCE BY THE DRUMMERS, WHO Brought THE AUDIENCE TO LIFE, SHAMAR PEMBERTON'S STEELPAN MEDLEY WAS A WINDOW INTO THE COUNTRY'S CULTURE.

 click to watch Shamar Pemberton's steelpan medley

THE PULSATING RHYTHMS OF THE DRUMS AND THE DISTINCTIVE MELODIES OF THE STEELPAN FILLED THE AIR AS ST. KITTS AND NEVIS SHOWCASED ITS VIBRANT CULTURAL TALENT DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE CARIBBEAN WEEK OF AGRICULTURE.





**DYNAMIC, INTERACTIVE
BY THE BROTHERHOOD
INVITED MEMBERS OF
TO JOIN IN THE BEAT, TO
MORTON'S CAPTIVATING
, THE OPENING PIECES
INTO ISLAND ARTISTRY.**

ighted on the steelpan



Listen to Vakiel Herbert's "Prayer of a Ghetto Youth"



**THE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE
CONTINUED WITH SEAFOOD NIGHT
BY THE RIVERSIDE, WHERE GUESTS
SAVOURED A FEAST OF LOCAL
FLAVOURS.**

**JOIN US ON THIS CULTURAL JOUR-
NEY THROUGH PHOTOS AND VIDEOS
THAT CAPTURE THE SIGHTS,
SOUNDS, AND SPIRIT OF ST. KITTS
AND NEVIS!**

CWA REMAINS A LIVING, ADAPTIVE SPACE FOR REDEFINING PRIORITIES, STRENGTHENING COALITIONS:

A Conversation with Dr. Manuel Otero

By Michelle Nurse

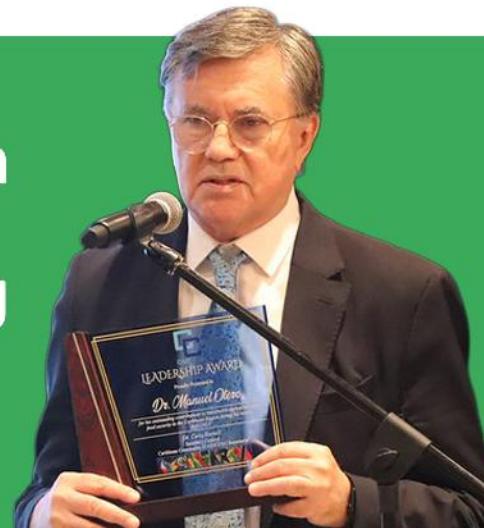
For 25 years, the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) has been the flagship event for regional collaboration, knowledge exchange, and agricultural transformation. Since its launch in 1999, 19 editions of the roving regional agricultural event have been held. The 20th edition will be convened in Jamaica in 2026. The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), which conceptualised and co-pioneered the event, has been an enduring partner from the very beginning.

For Dr. Manuel Otero, Director General of IICA, the journey of CWA reflects more than a timeline - it captures a movement that has placed Caribbean agriculture firmly on the global stage.

In an interview with the CARICOM Secretariat's Communications Unit on the margins of the 19th CWA held in St. Kitts and Nevis, Dr. Otero reflected on the evolution of the event, his organisation's role in regional agricultural transformation, and his personal legacy as his tenure winds down.



The most important thing in my view of these first 25 years, is that we are putting Caribbean agriculture on the map," said Dr. Otero.



Since the first CWA, the event has evolved from a regional gathering to an international platform that draws participation from across the globe.

"It's very important to see people from different nationalities," he noted. "For example, this year, my own country, Argentina, came with a high-level delegation. I saw people from Nigeria. Everybody is becoming aware and beginning to understand the main challenges of Caribbean agriculture."

Those challenges - low productivity, vulnerability to external shocks, and the urgent need to expand agro-processing - continue to shape the region's agricultural agenda. Yet, Dr. Otero emphasised, CWA remains a living, adaptive space for redefining priorities and strengthening coalitions.

Looking ahead, his hopes for the next decade of CWA extend beyond the event itself.

"More important than CWA is the transformation of the Caribbean agriculture sector," he said. "I would like to see increased productivity, a reduced food import bill, diversification of the food basket, expansion of agro-processing, improved quality of life in rural areas, and much better preparation for the climate crisis."

His vision aligns perfectly with CARICOM's food security thrust that is embodied in the 25 x 25 +5 Initiative. He commended regional governments and international partners for their roles in working to reduce the region's food import bill by 25 per cent by 2030, increasing local production of food, diversifying into non-traditional farming and climate-proofing the sector.

Underscoring the importance of collaboration with other regional and international organisations, Dr. Otero said: "We all have to work to increase productivity and create the conditions for agriculture better adapted to the climate crisis," he said. "The agenda is clear: we need political will and more funds. International financial organisations must understand that it's essential to invest in the future of Caribbean agriculture."

Critical to that future are youth and women.

"They are the ones who have the responsibility to lead the transformation of Caribbean agriculture," he said passionately. "Young women are the most important category for understanding and tackling all the possibilities that the new frontier of knowledge offers."



He envisions a new generation of agri-entrepreneurs, supported by governments and institutions.

“They need support to transform their ideas and dreams into business models,” he explained. “We need them better prepared, convinced that agriculture lies at the heart of the world’s future.”

With the global population projected to reach 10 billion by 2050, Dr. Otero emphasised that agriculture must deliver not only more food, but better food that is produced sustainably and responsibly.

“We need agriculture, taking care of natural resources, driving the energy transition, and serving as an instrument for peace,” he said.



Dr. Wendell Samuel, CARICOM Assistant Secretary-General (ag), Economic Integration, Innovation and Development, presents the leadership award to Dr. Manuel Otero at the opening ceremony of CWA 2025

As Dr. Otero prepares to conclude his second term at the helm of IICA in three months, he reflects on his legacy.

“I would like to be remembered as a Director General who looked at the Caribbean region, who was sensitive about the main problems affecting its agriculture,” he said.

His legacy, he added, lies in helping to define the region’s priorities, translating challenges into projects, and securing funding to make them happen.

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Dr. Manuel Otero, Director General, IICA

STEVE MAXIMAY TRADES ON THE CARIBBEAN WEEK OF AGRICULTURE



By Michelle Nurse

When farmers, agricultural experts and policymakers gather each year for the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA), they do more than network and exchange ideas. They trace the Region's agricultural journey, map near-term development, and make predictions about long-term sector advancement and its likely impact on the region's populace.

For veteran agronomist and climate-smart agriculture specialist, Steve Maximay, that journey is deeply personal.

"Agriculture has always been part of who I am," he says, tracing his path from schooldays to his professional life at an agricultural development bank, the FAO and IICA, and launching his own consultancy.

Maximay has seen every major chapter of regional agricultural transformation. His reflections provide a rare window into how far the Caribbean has come and where it is heading.

CARICOM Secretariat's Communications Unit caught up with him during a break in the deliberations of the 121st Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) on Agriculture which was held 2 October.

CWA, he says, holds "a lot of significance for me."



The significance this year lies largely in the fact that back in 2005, he attended the CWA in St. Kitts and Nevis with agriculture stakeholders including Dr. Jerome Thomas, C.S.M., whose contributions to agriculture in his homeland were recognised at the 30th Agriculture Open Day and Marine Expo of St. Kitts and Nevis, one of the activities which coincided with the CWA.

 click to listen to the interview on demand



From left, Steve Maximay, Dr. Jerome Thomas, and Dr. Lystra Fletcher Paul

Maximay proudly shared a photograph of himself with Dr. Thomas and Dr. Lystra Fletcher Paul, a former representative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations in Guyana.

From Productivity to Sustainability: The Shifting Focus of CWA

Looking back, Maximay traces the evolution of CWA through three distinct phases — each mirroring the region's broader agricultural priorities. He says the early CWAs were philosophical, rooted in the desire to transform Caribbean agriculture. Then they became problem-solving, addressing productivity, safety, and sustainability.

ACES THE EVOLUTION OF THE WEEK OF AGRICULTURE

"In the early years," he recalls, "our main concern was **productivity**. Everyone was asking: if the normal yield for sweet potatoes is 20,000 pounds, why are our farmers only getting eight? So, the early CWAs were driven by that urgency - to produce more, to close the productivity gap."

Those initial gatherings focused heavily on boosting yields and increasing production efficiency using technology and chemical inputs. But as production rose, a new challenge emerged.

"Fast forward a few years, and people began to ask: yes, we are producing more, but are we producing safely? Are we feeding people or poisoning them?" This shift marked the second phase of the Region's agricultural awakening, according to Maximay. He points out that the focus then moved to **food safety and human health**. Policymakers began tackling the misuse of chemicals, exploring organic methods, and introducing standards to safeguard consumers.

By 2010, the conversation had evolved once more. Climate change, once a distant environmental concern, had become an urgent regional reality.

"From 2010 onward, the focus turned squarely to climate change," Maximay recalls. Whether addressing water scarcity in Grenada in 2010, exploring germplasm and genetic resources in Guyana in 2013, or promoting climate-smart production, he says CWAs of the past decade and a half wrestled with how to protect both people and planet.



click to listen to the interview on demand

Maximay recalls the days when agricultural discourse was confined to ministers and senior officials under the Standing Committee of Ministers of Agriculture. Those days are long gone, replaced by special meetings of the COTED. "Now, with the expanding rural milieu, CWA has become a much bigger event," he observes.

He highlights the Caribbean Agricultural Forum for Youth (CAFY), launched in 2005, as a pivotal turning point. Out of that movement came a new generation of agricultural leaders, one of the manifestations of what progress looks like.

He recalls listening to one of the presenters at one of the technical sessions during the just-concluded 19th CWA. "I remember him 20 years ago as the youth representative from Dominica. Today, he's a senior development banker. That's progress, human progress!"

Story continues on page 21

WHERE WE GO NEXT: MEASURING THE IMPACT

As CARICOM embraces the '25 by 2025 +5' Initiative that aims to reduce regional food imports by 25 per cent by 2030, Maximay believes the CWA is entering yet another phase, becoming analytical: data-driven, evidence-based, and accountable.

"I think it's going to be more **action-oriented**, more focused on **monitoring and evaluation**," he predicts. "We're now at the point where we need metrics, ways to measure success."

 click to listen to the interview on demand

Maximay's longevity in the sector renders him "one of the old-timers," he says, but he's anything but nostalgic.

"I know the cadre of youngsters taking over the sector now, and the sector is in good hands." He believes they will build on the "steady, incremental" progress of the Caribbean Week of Agriculture. From boosting productivity to ensuring safety, responding to climate threats to empowering youth, the evolution of CWA reflects the region's enduring commitment to food security, sustainability, and shared prosperity.

"If you ask me whether I'm optimistic or pessimistic," Maximay says with a smile, "I'm overly optimistic. The (agriculture) sector never gave up on me — and I've never given up on the sector." 



CWA 2025 IN NUMBERS

DELEGATES/VISITORS



**496 PARTICIPANTS
WERE RECORDED**

TECHNICAL SESSIONS



**42 SESSIONS WERE
CONVENED, INCLUSIVE
OF 4 CLOSED MEETINGS**

TECHNICAL BOOTHS



**19 BOOTHS WERE
SHOWCASED**

OFFICIAL BILATERAL SESSIONS



14 SESSIONS HELD

OPEN DAY EXHIBITORS & ATTENDANCE

**175 EXHIBITORS PARTICIPATED, ATTRACTING AN ESTIMATED
7,664 PATRONS OVER THE TWO-DAY PERIOD.**



CWA THROUGH

1999

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

HIGH VALUE
EXOTIC FOODS

2000

JAMAICA

THE CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURE POLICY,
CHALLENGES FOR REGIONAL FOOD
SECURITY; CARIBBEAN RENEWABLE ENERGY
AND BIOENERGY ACTION PROGRAMME; EFFECTS
OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON AGRICULTURE IN THE
CARIBBEAN

2001

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

TRADE AND INVESTMENT
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
AGRI-FOOD ENTERPRISES

2007

JAMAICA

HARVESTING
WEALTH THROUGH
TOURISM

2008

ST VINCENT AND THE
GRENADINES

INNOVATIVE AGRICULTURE
AND INDUSTRIES - FUELING
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2010

GRENADA

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
DEVELOPMENT TO ACHIEVE
FOOD AND NUTRITION
SECURITY

201

DOMINIC

CARIBBEAN FOOD
NUTRITION SECURITY
CHANGING CLIMATE
NATURE ISLAND

2016

CAYMAN ISLANDS

INVESTING IN FOOD
AND AGRICULTURE

2018

BARBADOS

STRENGTHENING
AGRICULTURE FOR A
HEALTHIER FUTURE IN
THE REGION

2021

VIRTUALLY

TRANSFORMING OUR
FOOD SYSTEMS

202

THE BAHAMAS

ACCELERATING
BY 2022



THROUGH THE YEARS

2003

GUYANA

FACILITATING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF COMPETITIVE
AGRICULTURE IN THE CARIBBEAN

2005

ST KITTS AND NEVIS

EXPLORING AND
ENHANCING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR A NEW AGRICULTURE

2006

THE BAHAMAS

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT OF
AGRICULTURAL AND
MARINE RESOURCES

11

FOOD AND
SECURITY IN A
CLIMATE – THE
EXPERIENCE

2012

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

CELEBRATING YOUTH AND
GENDER IN CARIBBEAN
AGRICULTURE – EACH
ENDEAVOURING, ALL
ACHIEVING

2013

GUYANA

LINKING THE CARIBBEAN FOR
REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

2014

SURINAME

TRANSFORMING CARIBBEAN
AGRICULTURE THROUGH
FAMILY FARMING

23

MAS

VISION 25
5

2024

ST. VINCENT AND THE
GRENADINES

CLIMATE SMART
AGRICULTURE FOR A
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

2025

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

SOWING CHANGE, HARVESTING RESILIENCE: TRANSFORMING
OUR CARIBBEAN FOOD SYSTEMS FOR 2025 AND BEYOND'



Agripreneur Anastasha Elliott Charts Her Path in Health and Beauty

A few years ago, Anastasha Elliott was among a cohort of young people featured in the **'I Am CARICOM: Youth in Agriculture campaign'**, who were exploring agri-business opportunities and were role models for youth participation in the Region's agricultural sector.

Today, the St. Kitts and Nevis native continues her entrepreneurship journey with her **Sugar Town Organics brand**, which produces a vibrant line of health and beauty products, including distinctive items such as papaya jam, as well as hair and skincare products for both men and women.

Her products were on display at the 19th Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA), held in her home country. During the exhibition at the St. Kitts Marriott, Anastasha spoke with the CARICOM Communications Unit, reflecting on her entrepreneurial journey.

She described small business ownership as an opportunity to "explore and have a grand adventure with agriculture," while noting that factors such as the country's small population—just under 50,000—and logistical hurdles remain significant challenges.

 Click to watch her interview here.

Her advice to young people considering a similar path is simple but powerful: "Just do it!" 

 See her advice to youth here.



RICHARD PARIS GROWING A LEGACY IN ST. KITTS AND NEVIS



▀ I had no background in farming, just a dream. Now, on Sundays while most people are relaxing, I am tweaking pH levels and recalibrating sensors!"

On the island of Nevis, Richard Paris is growing a legacy. "Paris' leafy greens" is his homegrown hydroponic business, putting fresh lettuce on plates across the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis.

An architect by training and former hotel food and beverage manager, Richard saw how great meals were missed by reliance on imported lettuce, which was sometimes wilted by the time it reached the kitchen. "I realized there was a real need, not just for farming, but for commercial production of fresh greens," he says.

Richard turned his eyes to farming, particularly hydroponics, after being inspired by Ronald "Bankie" King, a local mentor who had built a small home system. "When I saw his setup, it just clicked", he shares. He secured a loan, farming permits, imported a specialized system and over the course of two years, built Nevis' first large-scale hydroponic greenhouse himself.

Launching in 2019, his product was an instant hit: crisp lettuce with no bitterness due to filtered, mineral-enriched water. It also has a four-week shelf life though it rarely lasts that long. At 7:00am, customers are already waiting in the carpark of some supermarkets for his lettuce. Richard currently supplies lettuce to seven supermarket locations: two in Nevis and five in Saint Kitts. However, the deliveries to Saint Kitts necessitate meticulous planning and coordination, resembling scenes from an action movie.

At 6:30AM, he quickly loads fresh bags of "Paris' Leafy Greens" into crates as the engine hums anxiously. He loads the truck, tires crunching gravel as he checks the clock, and reaches the dockyard by 7:00AM to swiftly haul off the crates. At 7:10AM, the ferry sets off for its 35-minute sail off to Saint Kitts, where delivery trucks await the shipment. They are received and neatly stacked on supermarket shelves by 8:30AM. Mission completed!

To boost yields and meet rising demand, Richard attended the FAO-led workshop "Strengthening Protected Agriculture to Improve People's Livelihoods, Food and Nutrition Security". Here, he received sensors and learned to use them in his daily operations, monitoring key components such as air temperature, relative humidity, water pH and temperature. Now, he can pinpoint critical issues in real time and the data shows that, within six months, productivity leaped from 1098 heads a month to 1555.

Richard isn't stopping there—he's building a second greenhouse, three times larger than the first, to scale up production and expand into herbs like basil. "My goal is to cut lettuce imports, ease the island's food bill, and build a farming legacy for my children," he says. . (*Food and Agriculture Organisation Feature*)



CARICOM FARMER OF THE YEAR 2025 CALLS FOR GREATER INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY

CARICOM Farmer of the Year 2025, Dave Fairman, has underscored the need for greater investment in technology to achieve sustainable agriculture and food security across the Region.



“Investing in technology is critical for sustainable agriculture, and I share the view that across the entire Caribbean, food security must be paramount,” Mr. Fairman said.

He speaks from experience. As Vice President of The Best Dressed Chicken, a division of the Jamaica Broilers Group, Mr. Fairman has first-hand knowledge of applying cutting-edge technological solutions in the poultry industry. The company operates a fully integrated model comprising 73 farms, 249 poultry houses, hatcheries, feed mills, and a processing facility. Its poultry houses are equipped with advanced systems for production and energy efficiency, including real-time digital monitoring, automated climate control, and a biodigester that converts waste into clean energy.



Beyond Jamaica, The Best Dressed Chicken supplies markets across CARICOM Member States and Associate Members, aligning with the Region's thrust to reduce food imports, boost local production, and strengthen food security.

The CARICOM Farmer of the Year 2025 Award was presented to Mr. Fairman by Dr. Manuel Otero, Director-General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and Hon. Samal Duggins, Minister of Agriculture of St. Kitts and Nevis.



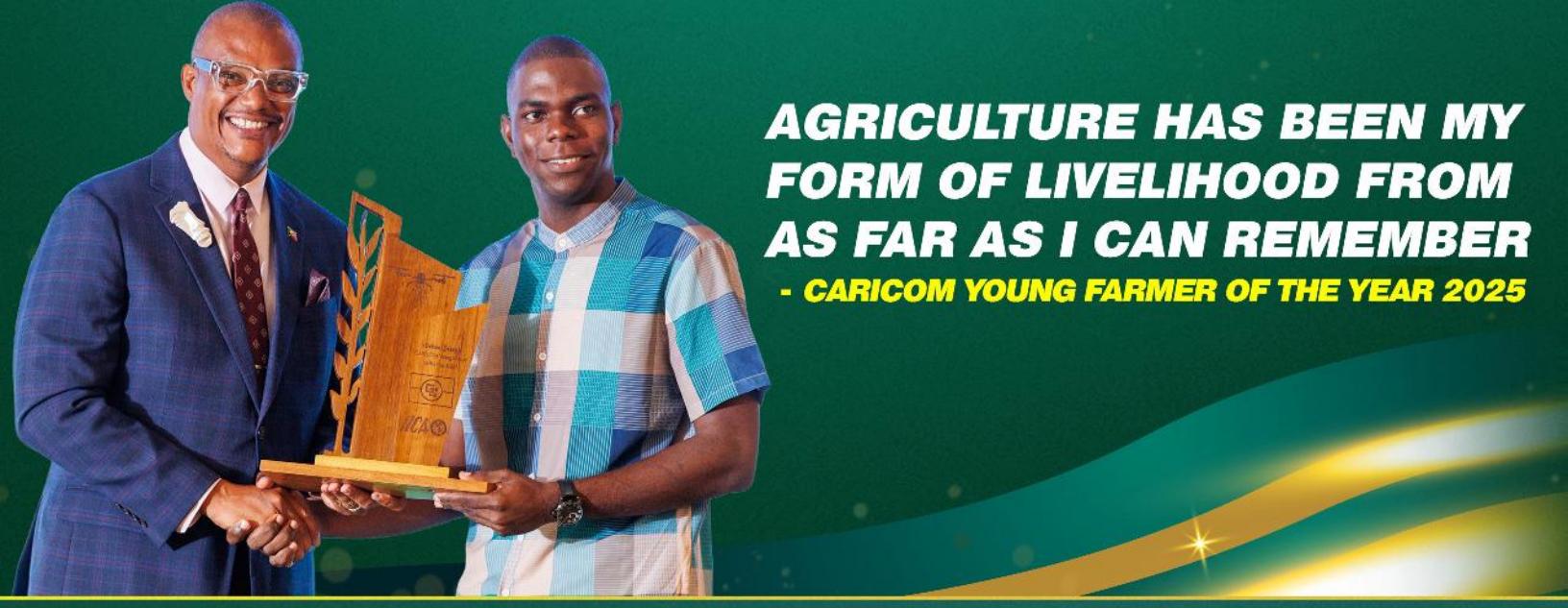
[Click to hear the story of The Best Dressed Chicken](#)



[Click to listen to his acceptance speech](#)



[Click to listen to excerpts of his interview with the Communications Unit](#)



AGRICULTURE HAS BEEN MY FORM OF LIVELIHOOD FROM AS FAR AS I CAN REMEMBER

- CARICOM YOUNG FARMER OF THE YEAR 2025

By Michelle Nurse

Michael Joseph has been farming for as long as he could remember. From sea to soil, he has built his livelihood with resilience, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to modernising agriculture.

A 21-year-old national of Antigua and Barbuda, Michael is the proud recipient of the 2025 CARICOM Young Farmer of the Year Award which was presented to him by Deputy Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, Hon. Dr. Geoffrey Ian Hanley, at the opening of the 19th Caribbean Week of Agriculture in the twin island on 29 September 2025.

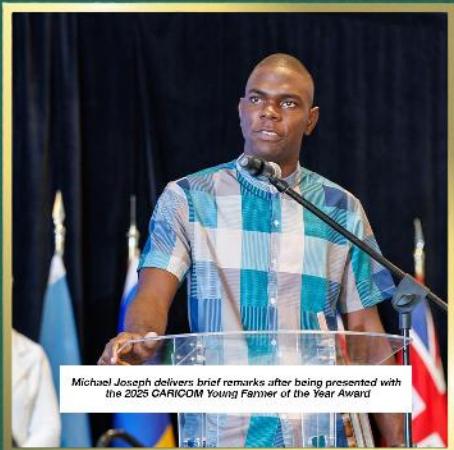
Coming from a household of commercial fishers, it was only natural that Michael's first exposure to earning a living came through the sea working on boats, setting lobster pots, and paying his own school fees. He transitioned much later to crop farming, cultivating just over 1.5 acres of land. He currently produces watermelons, cucumbers, ochroes and tomatoes, but intends to add lettuce to the produce he offers for sale to local supermarkets and vendors.

Driven by a desire to reduce food waste and support local food security, Michael plans to launch a tomato paste line, using surplus or bruised tomatoes that otherwise would have been discarded.

Currently the President of the Antigua and Barbuda Agricultural Forum for Youth, Michael champions the message that farming can be modern, sustainable, and profitable. He pointed out that his model demonstrated how young farmers can move beyond primary production to build full-scale agribusinesses that support food systems, technology adoption, and rural development.

To Michael, agriculture is a "recession-proof business" — one that remains resilient in the face of crises such as the global pandemic. "People still have to eat... and the world population is still growing," he pointed out.

Directing his remarks at young people of the Region in particular, and other stakeholders in the agriculture sector, he said: "Our generation has the responsibility to feed the future, and the ability to do so sustainably. An investment in young farmers is an investment in food, and an investment in food is an investment in life itself."



Click to hear Here's Michael's story



Click to listen to his acceptance speech



Click to listen to his interview

THE AWARDS

The **CARICOM Farmer of the Year Award** and the **Ministers of Agriculture Award for the Young Farmer of the Year** were inaugurated in October 2021 at the 16th Caribbean Week of Agriculture, which was held virtually.

The CARICOM Farmer of the Year recognises farmers who have demonstrated a high level of leadership and commitment to the agriculture sector and who, through their efforts, have contributed to the growing resilience of the sector. The Award was conceptualised to create a positive profile of the Caribbean farmer while promoting farming and agriculture as viable areas for increased investments throughout the Region. Deles Warrington of Dominica was the first recipient of this Award.

The first Young Farmer of the Year Awardee was Citerina Atkins of Jamaica.

The Ministers of Agriculture Award for the Young Farmer of the Year seeks to promote, foster and support young agripreneurs who have excelled and demonstrated the financial viability of the agri-food sector throughout the Region. It seeks to highlight and publicise creativity, innovation and the application of sound business and agriculture practices in all areas of the farming enterprise in achieving sustainability. Additionally, such an award is expected to contribute towards the paradigm shift relative to younger persons becoming new entrants in the agricultural sector.

AWARDEES



Deles Warrington
Dominica - 2021



Peter McConnell
Jamaica - 2023



Alicia Bogues
Jamaica - 2024



Dave Fairman
Jamaica - 2025

FARMER OF THE YEAR



Citerina Atkins
Jamaica - 2021



Diandra Rowe
Jamaica - 2023



Kevorn Vidal
Dominica - 2024



Michael Joseph
Antigua and Barbuda - 2025

YOUNG FARMER OF THE YEAR

Fishers honoured during Caribbean Week of Agriculture

More than 30 fishers, among them a woman, were recognised during the 19th Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) for their contributions to the agriculture sector and food security in St. Kitts and Nevis.

The honourees received their awards on 1 October 2025, from Governor-General of St. Kitts and Nevis, Her Excellency Dame Marcella Liburd, during the Caribbean Small-scale Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum hosted jointly by the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Department of Marine Resources of St. Kitts and Nevis, and the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO).

The fishers have been plying their trade for more than 20 years, making a positive impact on the lives of those in their communities by alleviating poverty, providing food and nutrition security, employment and income generation, economic growth, and social stability and passing on their knowledge to the youths.



The fishers who were honoured during CWA 2025

List of awardees

1. Earlston Warner	7. Todville Peets	13. Joseph Williams
2. James Liddie	8. Jack Spencer	14. Elroy Williams
3. Wilfred Benjamin	9. Spencer Barlette	15. Jermon Smithen
4. Darwin Francis	10. Roger Ottley	16. Berley Francis
5. Sinclair Herbert	11. Ray Liddie	17. Denis Fleming
6. Franklyn Challenger	12. Larry Liddie	18. Robert Nisbett
19. Glenroy Liddie	25. Michael Maynard	31. Franklyn Daniel
20. Sahadeo Nandkishun	26. Dave France	32. Collin Huggins
21. Keithroy David	27. Valon Glasgow	33. Everett Weeks
22. Ameer Ameer	28. Andrew Claxton	34. William Perkins
23. Wallace Simon	29. Juan Modesto	35. Alexis Browne
24. Lionel Jones	30. Jason Brown	36. Merville Claxton

In addition to the presentation of awards, the Forum discussed matters including: Conservation Measures for Sustainable Fisheries Development, Initiatives in Caribbean Aquaculture, Harnessing Fisheries Value Chain Opportunities for Fishers & Processors, Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture: Initiatives and Opportunities, Additional Income Opportunities for Fishers through the Sargassum Value Chain and Addressing Impacts of Tourism on Fisheries for a Sustainable Blue Economy.

Small-scale fishers poised to boost blue economy development - Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism

With an intensifying focus across the Caribbean and the world on blue economic development, the Region's small-scale fisheries and aquaculture sector is well poised to capitalise on the energy and momentum of this push to generate revenue, improve lives, and enhance livelihoods across the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) has provided an unparalleled opportunity for policymakers to elevate the sector's strategic position and direction while bringing together small-scale fishers, aquaculturalists, and a range of other stakeholders and partners to strengthen networking and collaborative action, while sharpening our shared vision and resolve for sustainably developing this essential economic pillar.



Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture Spotlight

Small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Member States make a valuable contribution to poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security, employment and income generation, economic growth, and social stability. Moreover, they provide livelihood security for members of society, including women and youth, employing almost 540,000 people, accounting for 6% of CARICOM's labour force.

Across the seventeen CRFM Member States, almost 130,000 fishers, 10% of them females – harvested an estimated 150,000 tonnes of seafood valued at US\$527 million during 2023.

The fisheries sector was showcased during the 19th CWA, at the Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum, held on 1 October 2025. The hybrid event was co-hosted by the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the Department of Marine Resources in St. Kitts and Nevis. The forum attracted close to 300 people from 40 countries and more than 100 sectors and industries, demonstrating the critical role the sector plays in the lives of people around the world.

This Forum also explored varying dimensions of the actual and potential contributions of the fisheries and aquaculture sector to the CARICOM Heads of Government mandate to reduce the Region's food import bill by 25% by 2030 (Vision 25x25+5). The organisers also emphasised the need for mainstreaming gender and youth participation, in accordance with the directives of the CRFM Ministerial Council.

Research and development fundamental to agriculture support system

- Ansari Hosein, CARDI Executive Director

A clarion call was issued at the 19th Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) for greater public and private investment in research and development (R&D).

Mr. Ansari Hosein, Executive Director of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) made the case for more funding for R&D during his remarks at the opening of the CWA on 29 September in St. Kitts and Nevis.

He said research and development must be a “fundamental part” of the support system offered to the heart of agriculture, the farmers, and warned that “we cannot solve the problems of 2025 with 1986 money.”

For the Farmer, Always

Every conversation about agriculture in the Caribbean ultimately circles back to the farmer. Hosein noted that they are the ones who face the realities of the changing climate, shifting markets, and the daily challenge of feeding our communities.

“Our farmers are resourceful, dedicated, hardworking, and proud. We must do what we can to help them,” he said, pointing out that they “face a host of challenges but remain steadfast in producing food for our communities.”

The Executive Director reminded participants that everything the Institute does is for the farmer. Whether it’s developing integrated pest management strategies to combat pests of economic importance, introducing resilient crop varieties and livestock breeds, or testing post-harvest innovations to extend shelf life and open new markets, CARDI’s research agenda is firmly rooted in empowering producers.

Under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, CARDI is the only regional Institution that is responsible for conducting agricultural research in CARICOM.

“This is your Caribbean organisation. We need investments in R&D to meet the demand for food for an increasing world population, estimated to be more than two billion more people in 2050 than there are today, which will intensify the global demand for food,” he pointed out.

Why R&D Matters Now More Than Ever

For the Caribbean, this projection underscores an urgent truth: the Region cannot secure its food future without strong, sustained investment in agricultural science.

Research has consistently proven to be one of the most cost-effective public investments a country can make. He quoted studies that estimate returns on agricultural R&D at 40–60% per year - a figure that reflects its power to boost productivity, stabilise food prices, and improve livelihoods.

Agricultural research benefits all farmers and consumers. It is a public good justifying public investment,” the Executive Director said, noting that the ripple effects of local innovation also touch national health systems.



“Producing higher amounts of healthy local food can help reduce healthcare expenses for our governments,” he said.

While public investment forms the backbone of agricultural innovation, the private sector has an equally vital role to play. CARDI’s appeal to agri-businesses and distributors was clear: supporting agricultural R&D is not charity - it is strategic foresight.

“There are too few examples of private sector funding for agricultural research in our part of the world”, the Executive Director noted. “But there may come a time when you cannot import due to global conflicts or supply disruptions. When that time comes, local innovation will determine who succeeds.”

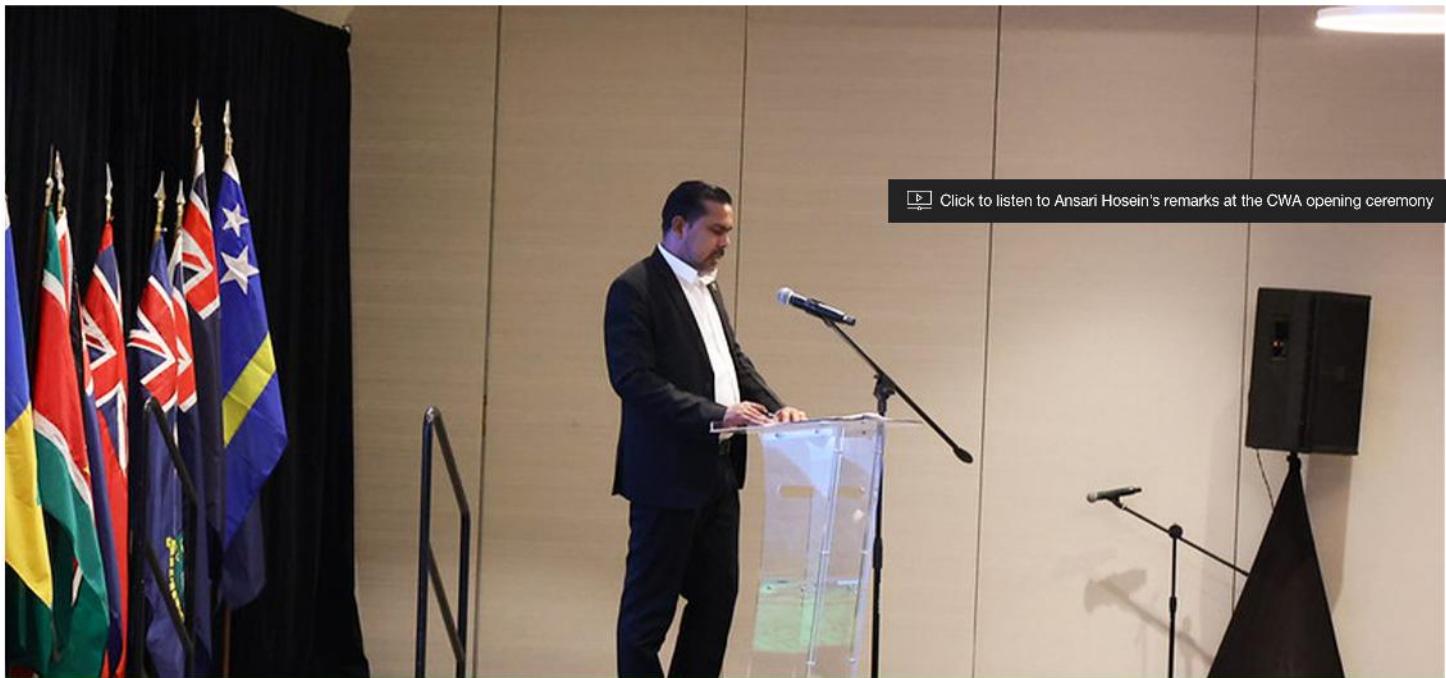
By investing in Caribbean-led research, the private sector can help develop locally adapted technologies, strengthen supply chains, and ensure the Region’s self-reliance in times of global uncertainty.

During the week of activities, CARDI led and co-hosted technical sessions on:

- Roots and tubers – exploring opportunities for food security and export growth
- Digital agriculture – harnessing technology to improve farm efficiency and data use
- Protected agriculture – increasing year-round production through innovation
- Agricultural extension – strengthening the vital bridge between research and farmers
- Building climate resilience – ensuring Caribbean agriculture can withstand the shocks of tomorrow

CARDI participated in the 121st Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) where the Institute presented a research paper on the development of a regional sweet potato industry. Listen as Chair of COTED, the Hon Indar Weir, Agriculture Minister of Barbados highlights the CARDI presentation.

The Institute also convened its 38th Board of Governors Meeting, the highest governing body of CARDI, to set the direction for the years ahead. At its booth in the CWA 2025 Trade Show and Exhibition, visitors explored ongoing projects across the Region and engaged directly with researchers shaping the future of Caribbean agriculture.



CARDI Executive Director, Ansari Hosein delivers remarks at the opening of the 19th CWA in St. Kitts and Nevis

Quick Facts on Agricultural Research in the Caribbean

- **CARDI was established in 1974 and is headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago**
- **CARDI has representation in 14 CARICOM Member States**
- **Every \$1 invested in agricultural R&D yields up to \$10 in benefits**
- **Investments in R&D not only boost productivity, but can reduce national healthcare costs through improved nutrition**
- **The 25x25 + 5 Initiative aims to increase regional food production by 25% by 2030, and research is central to achieving that goal** 

Clear metrics, greater cooperation needed to achieve resilience, competitiveness

- Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim



Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim has lauded CARICOM's 25x25+5 Food and Nutrition Security Initiative and its commitment to food sovereignty by 2030, calling for greater urgency, measurable results, and stronger regional trade links.

"We need clear metrics and more cooperation between countries. Each nation has its own strengths and by working together, we can build resilience and competitiveness," he said in an interview during the 19th Caribbean Week of Agriculture in St. Kitts and Nevis.

Dr. Ibrahim, the CARICOM-endorsed candidate who, on 4 November 2025, was elected Director General of the **Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture** (IICA), has served at the highest levels of leadership in regional organisations with responsibility for agriculture and the environment.

During the interview, he said he will work with governments and partners to enhance the food security initiative and strengthen food systems through science, technology, and collaboration. He reaffirmed his commitment to advancing innovation-led development and regional solidarity.

Partnership and progress

For Dr. Ibrahim, CWA embodies the Region's collective spirit of partnership and progress and has evolved into a cornerstone of regional agricultural transformation. He said,

"CWA has become a high-level platform for sharing innovation, knowledge, and building networks for cooperation." He praised the forum's growing influence, where ideas and technologies presented by farmers, researchers, and policymakers are increasingly being turned into real-world solutions.

The challenge now is transforming innovation into policy and action at scale, he said as he predicted that technology and innovation will continue to be the drivers of change in the food system.



ONWARD TO JAMAICA!

JAMAICA WILL HOST THE 20TH CARIBBEAN WEEK OF AGRICULTURE (CWA).

THE HON. INDAR WEIR, CHAIR OF THE 121ST SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (COTED) ON AGRICULTURE, BROKE THE NEWS AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING, WHICH WAS HELD DURING THE 19TH CWA.



**STAY TUNED TO OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS
FOR THE ROLL-OUT OF THE 20TH CWA CAMPAIGN.**

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