

# **Summary Budget** **Speech**

**2013 - 2014**



**Hon. MOSES JN BAPTISTE**

**Minister for Agriculture, Food Production,  
Fisheries & Rural Development**

The agricultural sector must play its role in job creation, economic growth, financial stabilization, fiscal rebalancing and social equity at a time of continued global economic uncertainty.

### **REHABILITATION OF FARM DRAINS-\$750,000.00**

As it relates to ravages caused by Hurricane Tomas and its impact on the agricultural sector, this Ministry continued with its program of desilting of main drains and waterways in the agricultural valleys across the island.

**Action Taken:** desilting of main farm drains were undertaken in all the major farming valleys on the island. Canelles, Vollette, Mabouya Valley, Bexon, Deglos, Varnard, Roseau, Marquis.

This covered over 1400 acres and involved the hiring of forty two contractors, some of whom were farmers.

#### **Results:**

- This has provided assistance to farmers in affected areas to overcome a major challenge of water logged fields.
- The quality and production of banana and plantain has improved.
- This has assisted with the fight to manage black Sigatoka diseases by reducing on the damp condition under which the fungus thrives.
- Improvement in the overall field sanitation and by extension plant health.

### **NATIONAL MARKETING INFRASTRUCTURE**

This project was envisaged to be the premier exchange facility for agri-foods in Saint Lucia. Status: Physical facility has been relocated and is operational in Cul-de-Sac beginning this year, food will be marketed under a national brand.

### **AGRO PROCESSING FACILITY-\$375,000.00**

This facility has not been operational because of structural defects. No allowances were made for the equipment to be fitted in these structures. This will be addressed with the allocation

### **AGRI ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECT-\$500,000.00**

This is funded by the CARICOM Development Fund (approximately EC\$3.7 million) The second phase will be funded under EU Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM) Agricultural Transformation Programme (approximately EC\$6.2 million)

**Progress:**

Six weeks of foundation training program with the participation of 78 persons in life skills, agricultural science (technical) and business.

Through the NICE Programme a short term business consultant was hired to assist and guide participants towards completion of their plans. To date, 42 business plans (south) have been completed and reviewed with a remaining 36 to be reviewed.

Through the support and assistance of Invest St. Lucia, Ministry of Planning, including Crown Lands and Surveys and Mapping Departments, the Ministry is proceeding with the establishment of a lands/asset administration mechanism (Holding Company/Corporation) to manage the lands. (Roseau, River Doreen, Beausejour, and Mabouya Valley) to be leased.

Meanwhile, an additional 164 young persons have registered and await a call to be incorporated into project.

Impact: 150 new jobs will be created directly. 500 new jobs will be created indirectly.

355 acres of previously idle lands will be utilized in agricultural activity. Linkages between agriculture and tourism will be strengthened.

**MANAGEMENT OF BLACK SIGATOKA**

Thanks to the Prime Minister and Cabinet of Ministers as well as the Republic of China (Taiwan) for the prompt response and financial assistance.

This initiative was proposed as a response to the presence and devastating effect of this disease in the Banana and Plantain sectors of Saint Lucia.

**Action taken:**

- Coordinator was appointed
- B.P.M.U. Officers transition into the Black Sigatoka Unit
- Plan of Action Developed and approved by Cabinet
- Allocation approved in the 2013/2013 Budget
- Task Force established comprising all main stakeholders

Four cycles of spraying materials distributed to Banana and Plantain Farmers free of charge

Additional five cycles distributed to Banana and Plantain Farmers at 50%

## **TOTAL COST: \$1,592,680.00**

- One application of fertilizers distributed to Banana and Plantain Farmers-\$1,444,000.00
- Two applications of fertilizers subsidized by government (50% subsidy)-\$1,200,000.00
- 2000 (25kg) bags of fertilizers distributed to small farmers (non bananas)-\$125,000.00

## **RESULTS**

Stabilization of Banana production and exports. Production continues to increase with the average weekly export of 286 tonnes for the period January-March 2013. Quality has also improved.

Currently there are 923 active banana farmers who are committed to continued production of bananas.

Plantain has rebounded with the availability of plantain both for local consumption and the export market.

Based on current trends and barring any major disruptions, it is anticipated that approximately 22,000 tonnes of bananas will be produced in 2013.

## **AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME (ATP) FUNDED UNDER THE EUROPEAN UNION'S BANANA ACCOMPANYING MEASURES (BAM)-\$5.884 million**

Focuses on policies and strategies to boost competitiveness, promote economic diversification and address the impact of adaptation on employment, education and healthcare, land use and the environment.

## **PROGRESS**

The Action Fiche (proposal) was prepared comprising of four interventions and was submitted to the EU Delegation and has since been approved.

## **IMPACT**

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Create sustainable rural livelihoods and incomes for communities in some of the poor communities.

Establish a network of agri-enterprise incubators on the island.

## **LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

Through the support of the Government of Taiwan, the Meat Processing Facility is now nearing completion and is scheduled for commissioning in or about September 2013.

Action taken during the year under review:

Construction work continued

After much deliberation and collaboration with the Government of Brazil and the FAO, the following was undertaken:

- A. The equipment list were completed
- B. Tender document sent out to prospective suppliers
- C. Tenders evaluated
- D. Recommendation for contract awards approved
- E. Contracts signed with two suppliers
- F. Procurement/manufacture of equipment is at an advanced stage

Management and operation plans completed with the assistance of the FAO, detailing the management and staff structure for the entity.

## **LIVESTOCK REPOSITIONING PROGRAMME**

Action to date:

- Improvement to livestock station at Beausejour have commenced with the following:
  - Renovation to the existing swine pens.
  - Renovation to existing small Ruminant pens.
  - Fencing of entire front station. A total of seven contractors were employed in this phase of the project.
  - Architectural drawings completed for Veterinary Station and new small ruminant pens
  - New bloodlines for sheep and goat identified and currently being selected. Shipping arrangements are being finalized pending the settlement of the invoice.
- Assistance given to seventy-nine (79) poultry farmers at the height of the feed crises to avert a total collapse of the subsectors.
- Semen ordered for the administration of artificial insemination for the same commodity.

## **FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT**

Activities to date:

Assistance to fishers in the last financial year was \$464,325.78

- Fisher Training Programme-consultations conducted with the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, fisher cooperatives and other industry stakeholders.
- Fisheries sector census completed
- Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)
- FADs were deployed in Micoud, Vieux-Fort, Gros Islet, Soufriere, Dennery, Choiseul, Laborie, Micoud, Anse La Raye.

It is estimated that 100 new jobs will be created in the Fisheries Sector. Increasing employment in the fisheries sector through processing/value-added, marketing, distribution and quality assurance services for locally generated fish products.

## **MARI-CULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

This involves the cultivation of marine plants or animals. Saint Lucia focuses mainly on “seamoss” on ropes in Praslin, Bois Chadon, Cannelle and Laborie.

- Assistance was provided to farmers in the form of a project “Enhancing Opportunities in Mariculture”
- It is anticipated that there will be an increase in employment of at least 70% within the sub sector.
- This will also assist in diversifying the income base of fishers/farmers.