



**Promoting regional trade and agribusiness development in the Caribbean**

**3rd CARIBBEAN AGRIBUSINESS FORUM:**

**STRENGTHENING THE CARIBBEAN AGRIBUSINESS SECTOR AND EXPANDING MARKETS  
THROUGH SMEs BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

**Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 29-30 January 2017**

## **FORUM/ WORKSHOP REPORT**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

The ACP EU TBT Programme provided support to CABA in the promotion of quality certification schemes for selected agro-food producers. This project is the result of a synergic collaboration with the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) built upon two Agribusiness Forums held on 2014 and 2015 on: “Enhancing regional trade and adding value to Caribbean agri-food products” looking at the potential of tourism, regional and export markets.

The previous Agribusiness Fora were largely focussed on building knowledge and sharing success stories amongst agribusiness. In 2017 the Forum focused on more direct facilitating production and trade and will be a “Business Meeting” involving specific SME firms that have been trained in certification and are working collectively under the CABA sponsored “Collective Regional Export Strategy. The strategy is aimed at facilitating SME’s to act collectively in attacking markets and in procurement of inputs and services.

A critical part of the strategy is the plan to have the firms market and promote some of their products under a common regional Brand or Mark and to share the high cost of brand building. The products will be marketed through the Caribbean Agri-business Export Company (CABEXCO) which has been established for this purpose.

Across the Caribbean, 10 SMEs producing sauces and condiments, frozen foods, staples and spices, fish and seafood products, fresh and processed (frozen, canned etc.) vegetables, fruit and bakery products were trained on critical food safety and standards (Hazard analysis and critical control points / HACCP) that are fundamental to production, processing, preparation and provision of edible consumer goods. These companies are already operating in Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Vincent & The Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago.

Certification under an accredited system which has global recognition and transparent, such as HACCP, is critical for entry into supply chains that are as lucrative and specialised as the tourism and hospitality sector. Most hotels, resorts and cruise ships not only require certification of their suppliers, but are themselves also certified, occasionally in compliance with statutory regulations relating to their respective sectors.

Certification can also have other positive spill over effects, particularly in relation to securing supply contracts, which is an important (often indispensable) factor for attracting investments and securing credit or finance. Additionally, the audit function of the certification process can act as an important resource for the business to be able to identify specific information or data about itself, which may otherwise have been based on assumptions or broad observation, such as identifying specific costs within the business (how much is spent on specific processes or inputs, how long is specific processes and stages of activity take, the businesses own supply chain).

The ten businesses that are part of this project were already serving local consumer markets, with some lines in the bigger agribusinesses serving diaspora markets in North America, and Asia (Japan). In terms of buyers and consumers of the products supplied by these businesses, there is a significant market in the region, including in premium sectors, to whom their products can be marketed, and especially following HACCP certification, allow them to secure bigger purchase/supply contracts.

**Clientele Base/Interest:**

- Supermarkets and food retail outlets
- Restaurants, cafes, bars Caterers, and other eateries
- Hotels, resorts (health, sport, etc.), cruise ships, airports
- Food manufacturers
- Spas, casinos, amusement parks, concert venues and entertainment facilities
- Schools, office canteens, hospitals/infirmaries, care homes

**Objectives:**

To foster exports of locally produced agricultural products and foodstuffs (with a special accent on staples and condiments).

- Assessing certification support to SMEs and next steps
- Identifying new market opportunities in tourism and export markets for the trained SMEs
- Identifying opportunities for the SMEs in the CABA's Regional joint/collective Export Programme-- CABEXCO

**Outputs**

- Report on the outcome and future of the 10 firms supported to acquire HACCP certification
- Report on buyer's evaluation of market opportunity on each firm's 2 selected products
- Market profiling
- B2B meetings

**Participants**

10 SMEs trained by ACP-EU TBT Programme

10-15 buyers from abroad and the region

Other: regional organisations, finance institutions...

The forum will bring together the firms and selected buyers for the following purposes:

1. Discuss their experience after training on HACCP and the way forward to achieving certification
2. Showcase and attract buyers from regional and extra-regional markets evaluate 2 of each firm's most promising products and seek buyer commitments to purchase some or all these products.
3. Discuss and agree on a strategic plan for CABEXCO including the products selected for export.

## **2. FORUM/WORKSHOP REPORT**

## **DAY ONE**

### **Opening and Welcome**

#### **REMARKS - IICA REPRESENTATIVE – GREG RAWLINS**

Mr. Rawlins welcomed all present, with all formal protocols observed. He introduced himself as the country representative for IICA in Trinidad and expressed his honour to undertake the role of chairman for the opening ceremony. He further went on convey his support of the forum, the programme and the purpose of the entire collaboration between all the stakeholders and entities present.

#### **CABA PRESIDENT- VASSEL STEWART**

Mr. Stewart started by welcoming and thanking all the participants for making the effort to attend the Forum. He explained that this resulted from the financial support of the people and the government and European Union through the CTA and the EU-TBT Programme and indicated that the Region, and CABA in particular, wished to have placed on record, the gratitude of the Region and especially of CABA members. He outlined CABA's role in facilitating sector development with emphasis on the SME subsector. He indicated that this was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Agribusiness Forum that was ben supported by the CTA

The previous Fora in 2014 and 2015 were largely focussed on building knowledge and sharing success stories amongst agribusiness. This year's Forum will focus on directly facilitating production and trade and will be a **"Business Meeting"** involving specific SME firms that have been trained in HACCP certification, that are working under the CABA sponsored **"Collective Regional Export Strategy"**.

The strategy is aimed at facilitating SME's to act collectively in attacking markets and in procurement of inputs and services. A critical part of the strategy is the plan to have the firms market and promote some of their products under a common regional "Brand or Mark" and to share the high cost of servicing export markets and brand building. **These products will be marketed through the Caribbean Agri-Business Export Company (CABEXCO) which has been established for this purpose.**

The forum has brought together the firms, selected buyers, regional and international development institutions and other value chain private sector for the following specific purposes:

1. Discuss the food processing firms experience with the CABA sponsored, EU/TBT funded, HACCP Certification Programme for the selected 10 firms and the way forward after achieving certification.
2. Showcase and have buyers from regional and extra-regional markets evaluate 2 of each firm's most promising export product and seek buyer commitments in assisting in getting the products into export markets.
3. Discuss and agree on a strategic plan for the export company (CABEXCO) including the products selected for export.
4. Officially launched CABEXCO.

He further indicated that the goal of the Forum is to develop a strategy for collective exports of Caribbean produced primary and value-added food products with a special focus on herbs and spices and staples by SMEs. He then pointed the participants to the two day programme and expressed his confidence that the goal will be achieved with their active participation.

#### **CTA/TBT/EU REPRESENTATIVE – CLAUDIA SCHIATTARELLA**

Ms. Claudia Schiattarella brought greetings on behalf of the CTA and delivered a short presentation on the background of the ACP-TBT Programme and its support to the selected SMEs from the Caribbean Region, present at the forum. She introduced the experts that worked with the SMEs, Mr. Ricardo Rodriguez and Dr. Andre Gordon, further explaining that the experts will explain in more detail about the project, how they worked with the experts and their progresses. She added that the ACP-TBT Programme, has worked with quality institutions and private sector firms for over four years in all the African, Caribbean and Pacific

countries and then sought to present a short video presentation that depicted various clips about the programme, its impact, beneficiaries and their success stories.

#### EU AMBASSADOR – AMBASSADOR AAD BIESEBROEK

Ambassador Biesebroek spoke a few words about the situation of the Caribbean economy and its often dependence on one main sector. He drew reference to the Netherlands and the 'Dutch Disease' and its similarities to Caribbean countries, Trinidad & Tobago for example with its dependence on the Oil and Gas industries. He spoke of the potential of the agricultural sector in the Caribbean given its advantages given the abundance of arable land, the ability to substitute imports by local production and processing, as well as potential to expand into export markets in Europe. He added that there is also a demand in the sector. In his discussions with persons in Hotel industry in Tobago, they indicated their desire to use more local produce however the reliability of supply remains an obstacle, hence their decision to use imports goods. Ambassador Biesebroek identified key issues that need to be addressed in order to take advantage of the opportunities available.




1. Agricultural Production needs to increase, suggesting stimulus actions from the governments geared towards promoting the potential to invest in agriculture
2. Agro-processing needs to be boosted to meet the increase in production levels
3. The private sector needs to be motivated to undertake investment in the agricultural sector, especially in the area of increasing exports to potential international markets
4. The legislative framework, especially in the area of quality management needs further development to meet the requirements of the targeted export markets.




He closed his remarks in support of the forum and encouraged its use to breed fruitful discussions amongst stakeholders present to grow the agricultural sector and create or strengthen linkages.

#### PROFILES OF SUPPLIERS/ MANUFACTURERS



Five minute presentations were made by the following companies on the products for development and their experiences under the TBT Programme.

Company	Product	Profile Information
<b>Armag</b> <i>Sunbury, St. Philip, Barbados</i> (246) 271-5956 <i>sunburyharvest@caribsurf.com</i> (Ms. Jan Fletcher)		<b>Product: Sweet Potato Fries</b>  Sunbury Harvest sells Naturally Healthier sweet potato products in two formats – as packaged frozen fries in crinkle cut and straight cut versions.

Company	Product	Profile Information
<b>Caribbean Treats</b> 129 Warrens Park, St. Michael (246) 624-7311 info@trycaribbeantreats.com (Ms. Paula Manning)		<b>Product: Jams, Jellies, Sauces</b>
<b>Cemelts Services (Flavour Islands)</b> Unit #11, Freeport Warehouse Complex, Eagle Crescent, Mission Road, Freeport, Trinidad (868) 673-6429 (Mr. Torin Gilalta)		<b>Product: Frozen Cassava and Sweet Potato</b>
<b>Global Seafood Distributors</b> 8 West Ruimveldt Industrial Site, West Ruimveldt, Georgetown, Guyana (592) 672-2431 allisonbuttergrant@gmail.com (Ms. Allison Butter-Grant)		<b>Product: Salted Trout</b>
<b>Grenada Spices Association</b> Grenada (Mr. Marlon Clyne)		<b>Product: Nutmeg, Dried, Mace, Mace Oil</b>


Company	Product	Profile Information
<p><b>Da Silva Healthy Foods</b>  51 Section C, Enterprise, East Coast, Demerara, Guyana  (592) 617-0931  simpsondasilva@yahoo.com  (Mr. Simpson Da Silva)</p>	 	<p><b>Product: Lemon Grass Powder &amp; Moringa Leaf Powder</b></p> <p><b>Lemon Grass Powder:</b> Improves the skin by reducing acne and pimples, helps in flatulence and colic. Reduces fevers, protects the body externally and internally from microbes, prevents colon cancer, tones the muscle and tissues and so many more.</p> <p><b>Moringa Leaf Powder:</b> 25 times more iron than spinach, 17 times more calcium than milk, 0.75 times vitamin C in oranges, 4 times more protein than eggs, 15 times more potassium than bananas, 10 times more vitamin A than carrots.</p>
<p><b>Island Packers Limited</b>  Jamaica  (Ms. Jhenelle McIntyre)</p>		<p><b>Product: Canned Ackee, Bottled Browning</b></p>



Company	Product	Profile Information
<b>Mountain Top Springs</b> <i>St Vincent and the Grenadines</i> (Mr. Kenneth Da Silva)		<b>Product: Bottled Water</b>
<b>Purity Bakeries</b> <i>Jamaica</i> (Mr. Vincent Chang)		<b>Product: Baked Goods, Bottled Jam</b>

Company	Product	Profile Information
<p><b>Tijule Company Ltd</b>  30 Paisley Avenue, May Pen,  Calrendon, Jamaica  (876) 456-7072  tijulecompany@gmail.com  (Ms. Candice Ming)</p>	 	<p><b>Product – Cassava Bammie &amp; Pineapple Pepper Sauce</b></p> <p><b>Cassava Bammie:</b> This is made from one of nature's root vegetables and can be substituted for wheat bread. Packaged as is it can be microwaved and will come out tasting and resembling a bit like the good old English muffin. It is a good accompaniment to fish - steamed, fried or roasted; to soups, or simply heated and buttered.</p> <p><b>Pineapple Pepper Sauce:</b> Made from pineapple, this versatile sauce is superbly flavourful. It is aromatic, tangy, sweet and spicy. A fruit sauce which can be used as a table sauce, basting sauce, seasoning, or dip.</p>
<p><b>Tobago THA</b>  Old Milford Road, Shaw Park  (868) 639-2338/ 639-2842  m2agbeko@gmail.com  (Ms. Mellissa Agebeko)</p>	 	<p><b>Product – Cassava Flour, Frozen/ Dried Sorrel</b></p> <p><b>Cassava Flour:</b> Excellent source of complex carbohydrates, fiber, minerals calcium and phosphorus. Gluten-free and great alternative to wheat flour.</p> <p><b>Frozen/ Dried Sorrel:</b> Great source of anthocyanins (depending on the colour – white, red, black), flavonoids, and polyphenolic acids, all excellent antioxidants. Good source of potassium, which is a vasodilator. Natural diuretic. Rich in vitamin C, and contains Vitamin A, B, and iron. Has anti-cancer properties.</p>



Company	Product	Profile Information
<p><b>Vincy Fresh (Winfresh)</b>  Diamond Industrial Estate,  P.O. Box 841, St. Vincent &amp; the  Grenadines  (784) 458-5005  iabbott@winfresh.net  (Ms. Inga Abbott)</p>		<p><b>Product – Herb Marinade, Pepper Sauce</b></p> <p><b>Pepper Sauce:</b> Winfresh Pepper Sauce is very flavourful and spicy; it is made using fully-aged local Red and Yellow Peppers, vinegar, mustard, papaya, salt, onion and garlic. Our Pepper Sauce is very versatile and adds more zest to just about any dish you are preparing.</p> <p><b>Herb Marinade:</b> The Winfresh Herb Marinade is known as the real secret to our Vincentian Cuisine. It is the key ingredient when it comes to cooking or marinating any meat, fish and vegetable dishes – you really shouldn't cook without it.</p>

## SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

In this session, the 12 firms present gave a brief 30-second overview about their company, highlighting its history, operations, targeted markets, future goals and any obstacles they have faced along the way in establishment. Shared topics among the firms include their aspiration to or establishment of internationally recognized quality management systems.

## Profiles of Buyers/ Market Entry Points

### CANADA MARKET EXPERIENCE - HOLLY BUCHANNAN

Mrs. Buchanan started her presentation by stating the history of Buchanan Trading, being imports and distributors. They take possession of the products, buying in bulk and sell to their buyers in smaller quantities on a 'just-in-time' basis. Their typical buyers tend to be large to mid-sized Canadian based blenders. Their suppliers need to be GFSI (Global Food Safety Initiative) Certified because food safety focus is the cornerstone of their business, with an over 30 year history with zero recalls. She went on to continue by saying that they seek out their suppliers, once connected they then market the products themselves, however currently they typically deal with spices and oleoresins but are seeking to expand their profile.

Currently in Canada, the 'Safe Foods for Canadians' act is being rolled out, with the presentation of 'Safe Foods for Canadian Regulations. These changes mean, that importers would now need to be licensed. As it exists, a number of importers, import a variety of non-related products, whereby this regulation would narrow the playing field resulting in importers being more responsible for various food safety aspects of their operations as they would now be required to have a more intimate relationship with their suppliers so product traceability and reliability would be reinforced.

Another area this new regulatory framework would affect, would be the organic food industry. Previously, it was relatively simple to become organically certified, however this new framework seeks to establish protocols for the certification of the transport and storage facilities used by producers.

In order to access the Canadian market, Mrs. Buchannan stressing that any entity desirous of doing business with Canada need to be FSMA (Food and Safety Modernization Act) Certified. This occurs for a number of reasons:

1. Although dealing with a Canadian based distributor, there is a high chance that your goods would be actually sold in the United States market. The US is their main trading partner and as such, the products need to meet their FDA certification requirements.
2. When approaching a Canadian market, they buyer may actually be owned by an American or European company. The number of local, Canadian buyers are shrinking as they are being overtaken by these international companies. As such, these companies often request the distributors ability to service all markets or regions they are involved in, as well as a the range of products you are willing to supply. They prefer to deal with companies that can sell a portfolio of products that can be sold in multiple regions.

Mrs. Buchannan further explained the necessity of proper labelling to match your market as well as proper quality management systems, especially as it relates to traceability, HACCP Certification and an allergen programme. These are key to market access as all of her customers are more comfortable dealing with products that originate from firms that are GFSI Certified.

### **Finding Your Niche**

Mrs. Buchannan started by exploring the concept of 'finding your niche' and what constitutes a 'niche market'. She gave the example of 'Kampot Pepper', which is a cultivar of pepper grown and produced in the Kampot Providence in Cambodia. It is a certified appellation of origin product since 2010. She further went on to give examples of opening opportunities for products to become high export potential. She added that in considering your niche market, think about the global landscape and its market patterns, with particular opinion about what's being said by the consumer lobbyists. In closing, she encouraged support from the stakeholders to grow the industry.

### **EU MARKET – VASSEL STEWART**

#### **British Agri-Food Consortium (on behalf of Pauline Wade)**

Mr. Stewart began his presentation by excusing Mrs. Wade for her inability to present, due to travelling commitments that coincided with the time of the presentation. He added that Mrs. Wade is from the 'British Agri-Food Consortium' (BAC), which is a private sector arm of the Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce. The Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce has been in existence since 1837, with over 2,000 members and affiliates with linkages to other chambers across the UK and through BAC through other chambers across Europe. The BAC provides technical support to the agribusiness sector across the UK and internationally via consultant services. They have a limited presence in the Caribbean and are seeking to strengthen their Caribbean ties.

Mr. Stewart added that CABA's particular interest in working with the BAC is due to their premier position in the European market. In 2011, a Memorandum of Agreement was established between CABA and the BAC which would allow CABA to work with the BAC in the European market, aiding in the establishment of the Caribbean Agribusiness Export Company Limited (CABEXCO). The BAC would assist CABEXCO to enter the European market and provide technical assistance in commercial operations in the European market, as they would essentially become a representative or arm for CABEXCO in Europe. He re-iterated how critical this relationship with the BAC would be in providing technical support to CABEXCO in its establishment of commercial operations.

#### **HILO Imports, Holland (on behalf of Mr. Janak Gafar)**

Mr. Stewart stated scheduled to make his presentation virtually, however he was unable to do so as currently he is in Uganda and is having some technical challenges. He spoke on behalf of Mr. Gafar, giving a brief overview of Mr. Gafar's experience in the European market and his performance at the past organization, CATCO. Mr. Gafar was born in Guyana, then migrated to Suriname and then to Holland. He was the European agent for CATCO, who ensured presence in Europe on behalf of the company, interfacing with all players along the value chain. Mr. Stewart also indicated Mr. Gafar's interest in working with CABEXCO to gain access to the European market, as well as the vast potential that exists for the company. He gave an example of the high demand for pepper and the challenges that the Trinidad market experiences in meeting this demand. The main challenge being the high production costs, which has resulted in the loss of the competitive advantage given the lower production costs that exists through the African continent.

#### **Katerserve/Allied Caterers (on behalf of the Goddard Group)**

Mr. Stewart started his presentation by giving a brief overview of who Katerserve is. Katerserve is a local buyer with regional connections. He indicated that they were the target of focus due to the arrangements CABA has with CTA to look at the suppliers of the hotel industry, which is part of CTA's strategic intervention in the region. Katerserve is subsidiary of a larger company, Goddards which is based in Barbados. Goddard's is part of a larger regional conglomerate which has recently established a regional joint venture company called the Caribbean Distribution Partners Limited, which are part of a group that includes a Trinidadian company called Agostini's Limited, which is also part of another group that is the largest food manufacturing and food service company in Trinidad. Mr. Stewart added that the Trinidad & Tobago Agribusiness Association (TTABA) through Cemelts Services Limited, has been working with Katerserve in supplying their catering division with a variety of value-added products. Through the existing connects, there is a potential to expand relationships to build a platform to work with these buyers for export. They have indicated their willingness, however the issue of reliability of supply remains a looming area of concern.

#### **OECS MARKET (MASSY STORES) – DUNSTAN DEMILLE**

Mr. Demille, as a representative of Massy Stores in St. Lucia, has indicated that Massy is the largest buyer of produce on the island working directly with farmers and farmers groups. Massy Stores purchases millions of pounds of produce from farmers yearly, with a strong relationship with the farming community. He further shared that in 2010, Massy has started the 'Massy Farmers Loan Programme' where they give loans to farmers with no interest or deposit. It stems out of their relationship with farmers and their understanding of the challenges they face. He continued to share about their close relationship with stakeholder institutions such as Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute (CARDI) with their "Massy Stores Roots & Tubers Programme", where with the help of CARDI they were able to introduce the 'Beauregard Potato' variety of sweet potato as well as various other root crop varieties to St. Lucia, in an effort to help boost local root crop production. He continued to speak about their work with Inter-American Institute for

Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) and their sponsored programme, “Helping Out Our Primary & Secondary School” (HOOPS), where they give the schools a package which includes green houses, chemicals and fertilizers and purchase anything they can produce. In closing, Mr. Demille added that Massy is a company committed to developing the local industry, which has assisted in a number of ways, sponsored a number of projects with the goal towards social development as well as economic development. Agriculture has its challenges but is big business that reaps big rewards.

## **QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND THEIR ROLE IN MARKET ACCESS**

### **EU-ACP TBT Project**

Ricardo Rodriguez consultant delivered a presentation on the EU – ACP Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) implemented by Pryma with CABA as the beneficiary entity. The focus of the project was to develop the export market for locally produced agricultural products, with emphasis on staples and herbs and spices of 10 identified entities. Profiles of the ten (10) companies were assessed and capacity building and training activities that were undertaken focusing on quality management systems for export as well as certification systems. The project included follow up actions on the implementation of the systems in each of the companies. The main results of the activities were:

1. Diagnosis and Advice for the Improvement of Facilities, Equipment and Practices related to Food Safety
2. 10 ready to export SMEs with different food safety systems documented and implemented in different degrees
3. 10 ready to export SMEs supported and oriented to the certification of the systems developed through specific Action Plans
4. HACCP equipment constituted and formed
5. Specific training of staffs in food safety requirements (good practices in handling, packaging and labelling, hygiene and health, cleaning and sanitizing ...)

The main requirements needed to assist companies for exporting include:

1. Promotion of Regional Quality and Food Security Policies
2. Development and Promotion of Good Agricultural Practices (Strengthening aspects such as Control Pesticides and Fertilizers, Organic Production, ...)
3. Improvement of the Quality and Food Safety Structure (Standardization, metrology, analysis, inspection, certification and accreditation)
4. Aid for the Adaptation and Improvement of SMEs Infrastructures
5. Development of Harmonized Regional Standards

### **Role of Food Safety and Quality Management Systems in the Caribbean**

Andre Gordon of TSL Ltd presented the concepts and systems required for Food Quality Systems and its importance in the export of agricultural products. The presentation emphasised the drivers of food safety, the impact it has on buyers of products that are exported using noted experiences in the global export of fresh and processed foods and associated cost implications. The technical implications for processors and the global certification needed and the support systems required to export products were detailed including packaging and labelling requirements and residue guidelines.

The recent release of FSMA regulations and the implications for exporters of food to the United States were also presented. In the Caribbean additional information is required to accompany exports including information on traceability, an area not previously needed in detail. Supplier quality assurance was discussed and its link to the global food safety initiative standards. It was emphasised that a number of guidelines exist to guide suppliers.

The export of experiences of Ackee from Jamaica, Sauces from Barbados, Water from St Vincent and the Grenadines with developing their food safety quality systems. These firms have benefited from establishing food safety quality systems in the following ways:

1. Transformation of the operations, staff competencies and efficiencies
2. Opened up of export markets in Jamaica, OECS, International Hotels
3. Opened up significant contract packaging opportunities
4. Positioning of product in regional marketplace
5. Improved access to financing
6. Growth in sustainable profitability

### **The way forward for HACCP Certification**

The twelve beneficiary companies present at the forum shared their experiences with the HACCP Certification programme, their progress and the way forward.

1. **Vincy Fresh Limited**: Some measures in place already, however the consultant was able to provide measures that were by far simpler and perfectly suited to their operations. Unfortunately, at the point of the project the company was in a period of transition where their new machinery was arriving in phases, so entire lines had not yet arrived at the plant for review of the process flows. They have sought to implement all recommended measures to ensure compliance although full compliance was not possible in the given time frame.
2. **Caribbean Treats Limited**: Thankful to the CTA, CABA and all implementing organizations for the project, hopeful to carry out all measures in due course. Despite the language barrier, the consultant was very detailed and provided a firm direction that is within reach. Only challenge is to seek the requisite funding to accomplish certain aspects, but fully intends to implement.
3. **Tijule Company Limited**: The representative from Tijule presented a short video on the company's quality management systems. Since 2001, Tijule has been under the HACCP recognition programme under the Bureau of Standards, Jamaica. In January, 2017 their factory in Clarendon Jamaica, which is also US Food & Drug Association Approved (FDA), was granted Food Safety System Certification FSSC 22000.
4. **Island Packers Jamaica Limited**: Already implementing HACCP, but just was not official formalized. The FDA had already visited their facility and was approved since 2002, exporting Ackee. This helped to transition them into more applicable food safety systems. In November, 2016 they were certified with the SQF Food Safety Systems.
5. **Purity Bakery Jamaica Limited**: Currently, they possess a general good manufacturing systems that is being implemented but has not been formalized. They were trained for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) Certification, however due to the duration of the project they were unable to complete certification at the time of the forum.
6. **Tobago House of Assembly (THA)**: The facility is a newly refurbished packinghouse, which makes certification challenging compared to implementing during establishment versus refurbishment. The consultant assisted in identification of weaknesses in the systems, recommending potential areas of improvements. Trained staff in basic food systems and implementation of HACCP. Documentation for HACCP certification has been prepared before the end of the project, with the intention to continue completion of all HACCP documentation and procedures towards HACCP implementation.
7. **Armag Manufacturing Limited**: Appreciative timing of the project given the recent completion of another training in quality management systems. The consultant performed an onsite evaluation of physical plant and assessment of documents. The consultant's presence assisted in raising employee appreciation for quality management systems. Additionally, given the consultant's level of expertise and experience, several documentation was provided to the firm that provided a



template for the firm to take the necessary steps and complete the requisite documentation to achieve HACCP Certification.

8. **Global Seafood Distributors Limited**: Had training previously from Cornell University and attempted to implement in their facility. Thankful for the consultant's impact that reinforced and implement the HACCP system and process in the facility. Even after his departure, the staff completed the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Saltfish product at the facility. Global Seafood Distributors has recognized the importance of this certification, especially in being able to access the export market and thankful for the opportunity of having the consultant.
9. **Cemelts Services Limited**: Programme was excellent and highly impactful. Hoped for a longer programme, to provide further assistance. The facility already possessed a number of documentation and systems in place but appreciated the renewed look at the programme, which provided some helpful insights in establishing HACCP systems. Cemelts Services expressed their desire to see the continuation of the programme and looks forward to implementation of HACCP Certification at its new facility.
10. **Healthy Foods Caribbean Limited**: Expressed their gratitude to be a beneficiary of the programme and thankful for the training received. Was able to get their contracted farmers to adopt Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to ensure improved quality of raw materials to their facility. Enjoyed every moment working with the team and hopes to continue to have productive session and impact the Caribbean and international market.
11. **Mountain Top Springs Limited**: Shared the sentiments of the other firms, being also appreciative of the programme. Further elaborated the importance of the relationship between HACCP and profitability. A number a years ago when the company was relatively new and still small, they opted to retrofit the facility to be HACCP compliant. Upon doing so, it proved to be highly profitable for the company as sales immediately spiked following its compliance with increased exports across the region. In closing, the representative advised that HACCP is a business growing opportunity and suggested that growing firms undertake the certification in small size, as the cost to implement would grow as the firm grows in size.

## **DAY TWO**

### **CABEXCO CONCEPT AND OVERVIEW- VASSEL STEWART**

Mr. Stewart began by stating that the Caribbean Agri-business Export Company (CABEXCO) will be established as a for-profit regional company to be publicly owned via the stock market, particularly by SME's in the sector. He went on to say that the establishment of CABEXCO would also need the establishment of marketing and distribution centres in major extra-regional export markets, preferably as joint ventures or in appropriate collaborative arrangements with private sector partners. He further continued that CABEXCO will establish marketing contracts with buyers and supplier contracts with agro-processors and food manufacturers, particularly those with shareholding.

Mr. Stewart indicated that if the Caribbean desires to reduce its US\$4 Billion food import bill and to exploit export market opportunities, it must have "State of the Arts" capacity to continuously develop and test market high level tertiary/complex value-added products made primarily from regional raw materials. It is on this basis that CABA will promote the establishment of a Regional Pilot Commercial Scale R&D Centre for Value-added Agri-products. He added that many individuals, including entrepreneurs, housewives and research students have developed new exciting products at the kitchen or laboratory levels, but lack the resources and infra-structure to produce and commercially test these products. This Centre will provide the service of commercial pilot scale production and test marketing of the new products developed by CABEXCO partners and other private sector or public sector clients, especially those based on use of regional raw material.

Another component of CABA's overall strategy as indicated by Mr. Stewart is the establishment of an Investment Facilitation service. This service will undertake the preparations of investment profiles, projects, feasibility studies and business plans in order to assist clients including CABEXCO's partners in sourcing financing.

The implementation of CABEXCO is the priority component of the CABA's strategy. As a consequence the company has already been registered initially in Trinidad and Tobago and will be inviting those present at the forum to become official partners of CABEXCO as this official launch.

### **INNOVATIVE AGRICULTURE**

#### **H2K Agro-NIGEL GRIMES**

Before starting his PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Grimes began by giving a brief overview about H2K Agro, which is a Canadian based company, with linkages to Innovative Eco-Care in India where a number of the products showcased are manufactured. He continued to his PowerPoint presentation which sought to analyse current farming methods and its impact on a number of variables such as farmers' health, consumer health, productivity, environmental effects and so on. He added that the ultimate objective, in addition to reducing harmful effects, is to achieve increased production yields. He added that many persons are of the misconception that in practicing organic agriculture it is at a cost of decreased yields, however in his experience they have actually experienced instances of increased yields. Throughout his presentation, he displayed how the company's technologies and production techniques can achieve positive impacts on the plant, producing safe and high quality foods.

Mr. Grimes added that some applications of their technology extends beyond just plant health but into the development of compost and waste to energy applications which use microbial technology to break down organic waste to produce energy. He gave examples of some small facilities that actually utilize this technology to generate their own energy. Mr. Grimes continued to share some of the regional projects that H2K is currently involved. One such example is a MOU signed with the University of the West Indies, St.

Augustine where work is being done with PhD students on the technology as well as the introduction of an Organic Agriculture course at the university, where their participation is in terms of providing technology. Another example is work in Jamaica with Grace Kennedy where they would be working with a number of farmers under their purview to increase their productivity. In closing, he continued to give more examples of the extensive work being undertaken by the company across the region.

#### **JAMAICA EXPERIENCE-WINSTON STONA**

Mr. Stona began by saying one of the greatest problem faced in the Caribbean is the issue of trust. He gave an example when working in a consortium where they were able to significantly reduce packaging costs, however this project was derailed because of the issue is a lack of trust amongst members. He added that while collective bargaining can be prudent to success, in the Caribbean it is a challenge because of a lack of trust. In Jamaica for the last 15-18 months, he has been working through a World Bank Programme for a Sauces and Spices Consortium Development Programme, which embraces a structure of mainstream consumers in North America and the European Union. They have met monthly eventually arriving at 10-12 manufacturers/ agro-processors who are also exporters in different forms, forming a consortium. The consortium members manufacture products that are authentic, natural spices in Jamaica with plans to sell and market their products in North America and the EU, protecting and promoting its products under a common market, defining the quality of products and selection of its own brands providing services to shareholders and members. The project has arrived at a point where the costs have been defined. Historically, once programme funding from the agency has come to an end, so does the project. In this case, it has been negotiated that each member contributes USD\$20,000 to the programme for its continuance. A structure has been established by a highly experienced consultant who will assist the consortium in accessing the targeted markets. The Canadian market is certain, but the challenge is it requires large volumes (containers), so they will target the North American/ United States (US) Market as it is more comfortable to access.

Mr. Stona further said that the structure of the US Market is complex. If you are not a co-packer then most sell as an ethnic importer. As an ethnic importer it is limiting in terms of accessing the retail market. The major chains establish relationships with their own approved list of distributors so for entry into the major chain stores, importers need to use the channel of the distributors, who themselves may be unable to take you product immediately due to existing stock that is already in their possession. Provided that entry has been gained, in the Gourmet area, when working with store chains you would be required to supply one free case of product per store, under the agreement that they in-turn would buy two i.e. you give one, they buy two. He explained this was done as a mechanism to limit persons from entry as they were unable to accept every entry. Currently the process has changed where instead of the actually free case, you are required to pay the equivalent of the wholesale price of said case of product as a form of 'fee' to entry. He stressed that we must be clear about the types of volumes required by the market before attempting entry, to ensure the ability to supply as raw material requirements would be necessary to satisfy demand. In the US market, once you fail to meet a store/ distributor's demand, you should not try to target that market again for an average of five years. The market is highly competitive so there is no room for failure.

He continued that perhaps, future exporters should target their own marketplace first before seeking export. The tourist industry is an ever growing sector where the agribusiness sector already has a place within. There is a constant flow of tourists who can become familiar with your product when visiting, so when you have begun to export, persons would have visited would recognize and trust your brand and thus be more comfortable to purchase. In the Caribbean, we have extraordinary products that can fetch a high price depending on where we place the products. The opportunities are greater than imaginable however he stressed that we need to be careful in choosing our packaging and target market. We have markets available to us, however we need to be patient and strategic in our export market entry plans.

### **CATCO EXPERIENCE –DR. ARLINGTON CHESNEY & VASSEL STEWART**

Dr. Chesney and Mr. Stewart began by giving a brief overview of CATCO, stating that it was established through the Caribbean Food Corporation (CFC), as a regional government owned company, to undertake a Joint Regional Agri-food Export Strategy under a common brand. The company had headquarters in Barbados and focused on building its “CATCO” brand in the European market mainly, with agricultural products initially from the OECS, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana, due to the ready access to sea and airfreight service to Europe from these countries, through linkage with the Geest Line banana boat.

The company then undertook the planning and execution of a regional export strategy including agricultural contract production with farmers’ organizations, establishment of quality standards, post-harvest and quality management training of suppliers, co-ordinated shipping, distribution through established importers and promotion of the brand in Europe and Canada. The company established a full time office in Holland to co-ordinate the European marketing and distribution strategy and effectively established its brand of fresh produce in both the ethnic (Spitalfield, Covent Garden Markets) and main stream markets (Tesco, Sainsbury, Waitrose, Marks & Spencer) in the United Kingdom and in the ethnic markets in Canada, Holland and to a lesser extent France. The company also provided free technical support to farmers’ organizations and to lesser extent agro-processors, in terms of advice, training in export quality standards and preparation of business plans to source funding for investment and working capital.

The company which operated from the early 80’s to the mid 1990’s, was closed down due mainly to a change in government policy, which required governments to withdraw from commercial activities which were deemed to be better suited to the private sector ownership and management. This policy was driven by the requirements of international development and financing agencies under the structural adjustment policies and programmes which many regional governments had to adopt.

### **CABA TRADING PLATFORM - KIRWIN NARINE**

Mr. Kirwin Narine of Family Advertising Networks Limited (FANS) began by stating that these platforms were developed as part of CABA’s strategic response to the future. He added that they represent CABA’s plan to embrace the future to change and impact the agribusiness industry. Four essential core pillars were identified that acted as the foundation for development of all the platforms.

1. **Information & Knowledge Management** ([www.cabacaribbean.com](http://www.cabacaribbean.com); [www.agricarib.org](http://www.agricarib.org); [www.dgroups.org](http://www.dgroups.org))
2. **Trade & Commerce** ([www.mycaribbeanshop.com](http://www.mycaribbeanshop.com))
3. **Education & Certification** ([www.agri-educate.com](http://www.agri-educate.com))
4. **Agri-Entertainment** (*which is still being developed, would act as an agro-tourism component that would promote an agribusiness festival across the region*)

Mr. Narine continued to state that linkages with CARICOM and CTA through the Agricarib.org platform and the Dgroups.org platform were identified as CABA’s way of fostering collaboration amongst entities. His presentation continued with an interactive demonstration of the core website [www.cabacaribbean.com](http://www.cabacaribbean.com) and the online marketplace [www.mycaribbeanshop.com](http://www.mycaribbeanshop.com) where all the participants were shown the operational features of the website and navigated the key features/ aspects of the websites, which are all multi-vendor and multi-currency accepting multiple secure forms of online payment.

### **VENTURE CAPITAL OPPORTUNITIES - ANTHONY SANCHO**

Mr. Sancho started by indicating that Venture Capitalists intervene to fund/ finance projects that have already reached an advanced stage of development. They differ from banks, in that most banks request three years financial reports, however they only require the most recent financial report to give a better picture about where you are currently. They would also request a business plan to exhibit your awareness

of the market, i.e. who is/ are your immediate competitors, as well as your long term plans for the business as well as any succession planning strategies that are in place. This plan will also be verified by their team to ensure it meets their internal requirements for funding.

Mr. Sancho indicated that the group's financiers are very selective about what and whom they choose to invest in, making informed decisions based on the information available to them but also by whom you were referred. He added that their financiers are private individuals who are based around the world in the major capital markets such the United States and Europe, who are actively seeking opportunities to invest. He stated that investments are also 'one-off', meaning that once funding has already been accessed, another opportunity will not be provided for additional funding, so he advised that in seeking investment be sure to seek your total financial requirements because another opportunity will not be available. In conclusion, he stated that a good investment idea takes time to develop, ensuring that patience is a requirement.

### **PRODUCT EVALUATION EXERCISE**

One of the most anticipated and exciting aspects of the two day programme was the product evaluation exercise by an expert panel. The panel consisted of major buyers and quality and food safety expert as listed below;

- A Leading Canadian Importer- Ms. Holly Buchannan
- A Major Herbs & Spices Exporter- Mr. Winston Stona
- A Leading Supermarket Chain in the Caribbean- Mr. Dunstan Demille
- A Leading Quality & Food Safety Management Service Provider- Dr. Andre Gordon

These four panellists proceeded to establish a series of criteria for evaluating the products of the 10 firms present, covering issues of its export potential and the market niche in which they best fit, conformity to packaging and labelling requirements and estimated shelf life. In addition to critique by the panellists, the audience was also invited to give their comments on these three major criteria and their view of the readiness of the products for export. The firms representatives were also invited to respond to the comments of the panel and the audience.

This proved to be a very exciting and informative session which provided the firms with very valuable insights on buyers view of their products export market readiness and potential and information on areas that can be improved.

### **CABAEXCO LAUNCH**

The company was officially launched with Mr. Allister Glean a lawyer and an agribusiness development specialist, working with IICA, presenting the objectives and the bye-laws of the company to the potential partners and shareholders. Several questions were asked by the potential partners arising from this presentation and answers and clarification were given by Mr. Glean, Mr. Stewart and Dr Gordon.

Following this the floor was invited to select the first Board of Directors and this process was also managed by Mr. Glean

The following persons were elected to the BOD;



**Dr Andre Gordon –Jamaica**

**Dr. Simpson Perry DaSilv--Guyana**

**Mr. Ramgopaul Roop- Trinidad & Tobago**

**Mrs. Allison Butters-grant--Guyana**

**Mr. Kenneth DaSilva—St.Vincent & the Grenadines**

**Mr. Winston Stona--Jamaica**

**Mr. Vassel Stewart- Trinidad & Tobago**



**3rd CARIBBEAN AGRIBUSINESS FORUM:**

**STRENGTHENING THE CARIBBEAN AGRIBUSINESS SECTOR AND EXPANDING MARKETS  
THROUGH SMEs BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

**Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 29-30 January 2016**

**Objectives:**

To foster exports of locally produced agricultural products and foodstuffs (with a special accent on staples and condiments).

- Assessing certification support to SMEs and next steps
- Identifying new market opportunities in tourism and export markets for the trained SMEs
- Identifying opportunities for the SMEs in the CABA's Regional joint/collective Export Programme--CABEXCO

**AGENDA**

TIME	ACTIVITIES	CHAIR/ MODERATOR
DAY ONE		
8:30am - 9:00am	REGISTRATION	
9:00am - 9:30am	<b>OPENING &amp; WELCOME REMARKS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- IICA Representative – Greg Rawlins</li><li>- CTA/TBT/EU Representative – Claudia Schiattarella</li><li>- CABA President – Vassel Stewart</li><li>- EU Ambassador – Ulrich Thiessen</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Gregg Rawlins (IICA, Trinidad)</li><li>- Rex Collymore (CABA, T&amp;T)</li></ul>
9:30am - 10:30am	Presentation of the profiles of suppliers (10 TBT supported firms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Dunstan Demille (CABA, St Lucia)</li></ul>
10:30am – 10:45am	BREAK	
10:45am – 11:15am	<b>PRESENTATION OF BUYERS PROFILES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Canada - Holly Buchanan</li><li>- EU Market – Vassel Stewart</li><li>- OECS (Massy Stores)– Dunstan Demille</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ena Harvey (IICA, Barbados)</li></ul>
11:15am -11:45am	<b>QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND THEIR ROLE IN MARKET ACCESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Global – Prysma Consultant (Ricardo Rodriguez Casas)</li><li>- Regional –Prysma Consultant (Andre Gordon)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Nigel Durrant (CARICOM)</li></ul>
11:45am - 12:45pm	Agro-processing – experiences with implementing HACCP (10 TBT supported firms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Dr. Fitzroy Fletcher (CABA Guyana)</li></ul>
12:45pm - 1.00pm	The Way Forward for Certification for the (10 TBT supported firms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- CABA &amp; Prysma Consulting</li></ul>
1:00pm – 2:30pm	LUNCH	
2:30pm - 3:30pm	Buyer evaluation of products of 10 firms and identification of market opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Darwin Telemaque (CABA, Antigua Barbuda)</li></ul>
3:30pm - 3:45pm	BREAK	
3:45pm - 4:30pm	Buyer evaluation of 10 firms and identification of market opportunities Cont'd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Darwin Telemaque (CABA, Antigua Barbuda)</li></ul>
4:30pm – 5:00pm	Discussion of evaluation and selection of products	
DAY TWO		
8:30am – 8:45am	Overview of Previous day’s activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- James Paul (CABA, Barbados)</li></ul>

8:45am - 9:00am	Innovative Agriculture - Nigel Grimes (H2k Agro)	- Vassel Stewart (CABA, President)
9:00am –9:30am	CABEXCO Concept - Vassel Stewart	- James Paul (CABA, Barbados)
9:30am - 10:00am	Jamaica Experience (National) -Winston Stona	
10:00am – 10:30am	CATCO Experience - Dr. Arlington Chesney & Vassel Stewart	
10:30am – 10:45am	BREAK	
10:45am -11:15am	Introduction to the CTA funded online trading platform – Kirwin Narine (FANS)	- Winston Stona
11:15am – 12:30pm	Venture Marketing Opportunities - Anthony Sancho	
12:30pm – 1:00pm	Product Evaluations ( <i>Holly Buchannan, Winston Stona, Dunstan Demille, Dr. Andre Gordon</i> )	- Vassel Stewart (CABA, President)
1:00pm - 2:00pm	LUNCH	
2:00pm - 2:30pm	Product Evaluations Continued	- Vassel Stewart (CABA, President)
2:30pm – 3:30pm	<b>Launch of CABEXCO:</b> - Review of CABEXCO Bye-laws - Selection of additional Directors	- Allister Glean
3:30pm - 3:45pm	Closing Remarks	- Vassel Stewart
3:45pm – 4:00pm	BREAK	
4:00pm – 5:45pm	CABEXCO 1 <sup>ST</sup> Executive Meeting	- CABEXCO Board Members
6.00pm – 9.00pm	CABA Board of Directors Meeting	- CABA Board Members