



**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND AND FISHERIES
OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY**

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AGR: 5/3/5 Vol IV

May 26, 2023

Ms. Jacqui Sampson-Miguel
Clerk of the House
Office of the Parliament
Parliamentary Complex
Cabildo Building, St. Vincent Street
Port of Spain

Dear Sampson-Miguel

The Ninth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriation Committee on the implementation of the 2021 Budget with emphasis on the 'Green Economy'

Your letter with ref Parl: 5/6/19 dated April 19, 2023 with the subject at caption refers.

Enclosed are the responses to the recommendations on **Pages 23-28** from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) on the *'Ninth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriation Committee (PAAC) on the Implementation of the 2021 Budget with emphasis on the 'Green Economy'* for your attention and consideration.


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Permanent Secretary

PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
LAND AND FISHERIES

Response from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) to Recommendations on pages 23-28 of the Ninth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriation Committee on the implementation of the 2021 Budget with emphasis on the 'Green Economy'

- **Recommendations on page 23:**

The Ministry should provide a status update to Parliament by May 31, 2023 on the research conducted and its findings regarding its commitments under Vision 2030.

Response:

- **Research into the utilisation of fertilisers and irrigation water and Solar Powered Drip Irrigation** – This use of fertilisers and water from irrigation sources is being undertaken under the PSIP *'The Rehabilitation of the Cocoa Industry'*. Land preparation works and the construction of the pond is being pursued to facilitate the commissioning of the Solar Powered Drip Irrigation System. A contract has been awarded for the installation.
- **In Vitro propagation techniques relating to selected root and fruit crops to develop mass propagation techniques** – Work is currently being carried out on the micropropagation of the Lacatan variety of banana and on field establishment, invitro conservation of eleven (11) varieties of cassava and seven (7) varieties of sweet potato.

- **Recommendations on page 24:**

The MALF should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023:

- **the benefits derived from the AIP by the farming community;**

Response: The benefits of the Agricultural Incentive Programme (AIP) to the farming community include:

- a) Assistance to farmers to implement sustainable agricultural practices in areas such as soil management, water harvesting, irrigation technology, access roads and drainage
- b) Provision of economic support to assist farmers in covering costs incurred in land preparation, cultivation and harvesting of agricultural crops, rearing of livestock and inputs such as feed, fertilisers and environmentally-safe chemicals
- c) Support to farmers to combine production and encourage the establishment of co-operatives
- d) Provision of financial assistance for the rehabilitation of abandoned or underperforming estates

- e) Promotion of agriculture entrepreneurship particularly among rural youth as a key element of socioeconomic development in rural communities
- f) Introduction of effective measures to counteract praedial larceny
- g) Continued investment in the sector through the offering of rebates on agricultural items

- **details including data on the benefits derived from the AIP thus far especially with regards to:**

- **Increasing production**

Response: Data relating to the impact on production specifically as it pertains to the agricultural incentive program is not collected.

- **Promoting good agricultural practices**

Response: Data related to the impact on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) via the Agricultural Incentive Programme is not collected. However, in order to qualify for the AIP, farmers must demonstrate the adoption of GAP in terms of crop agronomy, field sanitation, animal husbandry, personal hygiene, and use of environmentally friendly chemicals. This information is documented on the incentive application form which is completed by the Extension Officer during field visits. During these visits, farmers are advised on the requirements for GAP and are encouraged to adopt these practices.

- **Encouraging the preservation of the environment**

Response: Incentives Claims accessed for the preservation of the environment over **October 1, 2022 to April 2023** is highlighted in the **Table 1** below:

Table 1 Incentives to encourage the preservation of the environment

Incentive	Number of Claims	Value of the claim
Contour Drains	1	\$3,730
Environmentally friendly Chemicals	89	\$101,472.30
Shade houses	1	\$23,350.00
Irrigation equipment	32	\$134,852.09
Land Clearing	5	\$11,915.72
Land Preparation	2	\$10,178.35
Pond construction	8	\$96,225.00
Water pumps	23	\$36,763.92

- **The conservation of national resources**

Response: This data is captured in the Table 1 above.

- **The number of youths in Agriculture**

Response: No application was received from young persons between the ages of 17-25 over the last six months.

- **The number of farmers who benefitted from the programme.**

Response: During the period October 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, **1,968** farmers benefitted from the AIP.

- **Recommendations on page 26:**

The MALF should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023:

- **An update on the provision of training for it staff in new technologies**

Response: The Ministry continues to offer training in new technologies through the Regional Administration North and Regional Administration South and in Fiscal 2023 five (5) training sessions were held in new technologies that included training in production systems and the use of appropriate technology.

- **It pursuits of partnership with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the NIHERST in an attempt to identify which of these technologies are most suited to the local condition and it cost effectiveness**

Response: In Fiscal 2023, IICA continue to collaborate with the MALF to determine the pests of mutual concern that forms part of a Regional Pest Prioritisation Exercise. The Ministry does not partner with NIHERST.

- **An update on the implementation of the recommendation made regarding the technical focus on crop production and the benefits derived**

Response: The Ministry offers training courses to citizens of Trinidad and Tobago in the following home gardening and the promotion of high yielding varieties courses listed in **Table 2**.

Table 2 - Home Gardening Courses December 2022 to April 2023

Course	Sessions conducted	Total number of participants
Home Gardening Courses		
Growing tomatoes in containers	2	309
Home Gardening	5	360
Diseases in Home Gardens	5	360

mechanisms that will be implemented to ensure that T&T becomes a food secure nation identifying the benchmarks referred to and submit to Parliament by May 31 2023.

- **Promotion and development of identified staples and other commodities with large earning potential and sustainability.**

Response: The Ministry through the PSIP Project '*Development of Agricultural Niche Products*' is pursuing the development of three (3) critical commodities that includes the Moruga Hill Rice in the upcoming 2023/24 fiscal period. The other two commodities are Honey and Forestry Products.

- **Identification of production constraints and implementation of systems to reduce the production gap in the above commodities through demonstrations, training programs and production models**

Response: This will be undertaken through the PSIP Project '*Development of Niche Products*'. The deliverables of this project will be implemented by the Research Division of the Ministry with identified benchmarks and milestones.

- **Provision of supporting infrastructure to the MALF offices through the Development Programme Projects under the Public Sector Investment Programme, to facilitate farmers and other stakeholders**

Response The following projects are currently being undertaken by the MALF to provide supporting infrastructure to the MALF Offices listed in **Table 3**.

Table 3 PSIP Projects to provide supporting infrastructure to MALF Offices

Project	Objective	Status
J/403 – Provision of Offices and other facilities for South Region	To improve the working conditions of staff in the Regional Administration South (RAS) Division, through the construction of new facilities and infrastructure to enhance the environment to better serve clients. Upgrade of these facilities will address health and safety concerns and is expected to improve performance and delivery to clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of Occupational Safety and Health Facility at County Victoria Office - the upgrade of the Sewage System at the St. Patrick West County Office, with in house labour. Quotations for the project materials are being sourced currently. Construction to be completed tentatively by the end of September, 2023. • Flood mitigation at the Penal Demonstration Station - the procurement of flood barriers is tentatively scheduled for the end of May 2023 and the labour will be sourced in house. The drain construction at the Penal

Project	Objective	Status
		Demonstration Station has been completed.
J/404 – Provision of Offices and other facilities for North Region	<p>The objectives of the project are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide suitable office accommodation and other facilities for the Regional Administration North (RAN) Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF); and • increase the capacity of staff to deliver quality extension services to clients in rural communities of the RAN Division. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical upgrade at the El Reposo Demonstration Station - letters were submitted to the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commissions (T&TEC) with the Ministry of Works and Transport's (MOWT's) recommendation. Electrical engineers from the T&TEC visited the El Reposo Demonstration Station. The Division is awaiting the approval and design. • Electrical upgrade to the County Caroni Office - approval was granted by the T&TEC for an upgrade of electrical supply to the office and the Division is presently in the process of securing requirements for the upgraded supply. The Electrical Engineers from the MOWT are in the process of preparing an infrastructure design for the upgrade and they will provide a Bill of Quantities to be utilized in the tendering process
I/053 – St. Augustine Nurseries – Development and Provision of facilities	<p>To increase the efficiency and effectiveness with which production targets are achieved at the St. Augustine Nurseries, whilst ensuring that a high quality of goods and services are offered to the clients and are of an acceptable standard. The main commodities sold at this station are citrus, avocado and mango, which are crops of strategic and economic importance to</p>	<p>Regarding the importation of newer citrus varieties, internationally recognized and certified suppliers were approached for new germplasm.</p>

Project	Objective	Status
	this country and to the wider citizenry.	
I/141 - La Reunion Plant Propagating Station - Development and Provision of Facilities	To increase the efficiency and effectiveness with which production targets are achieved at the La Reunion Plant Propagation Station while ensuring that a high quality of goods and services are offered to the clients.	For the expansion of the Cocoa Germplasm, in particular, the purchase of new varieties, requests for quotations were sent out to various suppliers,
F/151 - Upgrade of Centeno Livestock Station	<p>The upgrade is designed to maintain genetic diversity on the station and prevent inbreeding in the farming community. It is the goal of the Centeno Livestock Station to obtain new genetics to be used as breeding stock to produce offspring for sale to the farming community.</p> <p>There is a continuous demand for goat and sheep breeding stock from the farming community and current breeding stock on station is insufficient to meet this demand. Crucial to any livestock production is forage production and to ensure that the nutrition of the animals is supported and maintained, the rehabilitation of pastures is necessary.</p>	The Centeno Livestock Station is involved in the purchase of Embryos and Semen however, this activity has been deferred due to a lack of funds.

Project	Objective	Status
F/004 - Upgrade of Infrastructural Facilities at Research Division	To completely refurbish the infrastructural facilities at the Central Experiment Station and to outfit offices and laboratories with furnishings required to conduct accurate research and provide expedient and professional services to the farming community and the general public.	The operationalizing the Analytical Services Laboratory which involves the purchase of new equipment for the prefabricated bench-top island counter; emission flame photometer; laboratory research grade benchtop; and eyewash and emergency shower stations.

- **Development of specific programmes for crops and livestock in alignment with the objectives and strategies of the MALF for a changing food and agriculture systems**

Response: Specific programmes for crop and livestock linked to changing food systems include the following:

a. Commodity focus/sub sectoral programmes and projects:

- **Rice** – Over five million dollars (\$5Mn) have been committed to the revitalization and modernization of the rice industry in Trinidad and Tobago;
- **Coconuts** - The Ministry distributed over 1,000 coconut seedlings to farmers across the East Coast in Trinidad as part of its coconut PSIP Project *'Rehabilitation of the Coconut Industry in the East Coast'*, a project specifically designed to deal with the Pest and Disease issues currently faced by the sector. The Cooperative Republic of Guyana also donated five thousand (5,000) coconut seed nuts as part of a pledge to support this country's programme of Phased Rehabilitation of Coconut Plantations. This activity forms part of the Bilateral Food Development Plan under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for renewed and enhanced cooperation.
- **Cocoa** - The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to supporting the local cocoa sector through the CDCTTL, a special purpose company that was created to focus on the development of the cocoa industry. In addition the PSIP Project *'The Rehabilitation of the Cocoa Industry'* is also being implemented by the Ministry to support the development of the sector.
- **Dairy/Milk** – The Ministry has an approved Livestock Policy which aims to development the Livestock Sector in Trinidad and Tobago with a focus on PPP and development of specific programs/ initiatives.

- **Honey** – The Ministry through the Inspector of Apiaries housed in the Regional Administration North Office provides guidance on the management of day to day activities and to provide training and guidance to bee keepers.
 - **Aquaculture** – An Aquaculture Policy was approved in 2018 and is currently being implemented by the Caribbean Fisheries Training Development Institute (CFTDI) an agency under the purview of the MALF.
- b. Creating the enabling environment for the development of agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago through:**
- **The Provision of Infrastructure** - Access Roads, Upgrading of Fish Landing Sites, Ponds and Water Management in major food basket areas
 - **Farmer Training and Extension Services** - executed through the Regional Offices the Extension Training and Information Services Division of the Ministry in commodity and sub sectoral areas such as Tree Crops, Root Crops, Vegetables and Ornamentals and other technical areas such as Integrated Pest Management and the use of chemicals and pesticides.
 - **Provision of planting materials and seeds** at a subsidised cost to the farmers and the general public.
 - **Updating of Legislation** - the Ministry is presently updating a package of appropriate legislation such as the Fisheries Management Bill the Veterinary Surgeons (Registration) Bill, the Plant Protection Act, and the Plant Protection Regulations in order to create a supportive environment for sectoral development.
 - **Programmes to Management Agricultural Risks** with a focus on the **mitigation of, and adaption to risks** in the agriculture sector through continued implementation of several core programmes including:
 - a. **The Disaster Assistance/ Flood Control Programme** - The MALF utilizes a **Disaster Assistance Model** to assist farmers/ fisher folks to restart their agricultural related activities in the shortest possible time after a natural disaster;
 - b. **The Pest and Disease Management Programme** - MALF conducts controlled spraying exercises; vaccination drives; has implemented a locust management programme; undertakes Giant African Snail sensitization and plant clinics to assist farmers in this regard. In addition, for Cocoa, specific interventions are undertaken by the Research Division to manage Frosty Pod and Black Pod and an IPM for the management of Red Ring Disease in Coconuts and Lethal Yellowing is currently being undertaken.
 - **Support to farmers through the Agricultural Incentive Programme** - The Ministry provides a scheme of incentives through the *Agricultural Incentive Programme, Fisheries Incentive Programme and Forestry Incentive Programme*, to support development of the various sub-sectors in alignment to the changing food and agricultural systems.

- **Provision of Markets and marketing related infrastructure** that include the reforming of markets to facilitate trade and market access through strategies linked to the development of post-harvest storage and Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) undertaken through the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO), a state agency under the MALF. NAMDEVCO provides critical marketing services to stakeholders along the value chain and continue to maintain and manage three (3) Packing Houses and nine (9) Farmers' Markets across the country. In addition, NAMDEVCO also currently manage four (4) wholesale markets:
 - The Norris Deonarine Northern Wholesale Market Macoya;
 - The Southern Wholesale Market Debe;
 - The Orange Valley Wholesale Fish Market; and
 - The Port of Spain Wholesale Fish Market.

The Corporation also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Tobago Agribusiness Development Company (TADCO) recently with the main intent of developing a strategic alliance to assist Primary Producers and Value Added Processors in Trinidad and Tobago to develop agricultural products to meet international market requirements and standards.

- **Access to Finance** - The Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) of Trinidad and Tobago continues to provide financing options for agricultural projects for farmers, fisher folk and citizens through its various loan and outreach initiatives.
- **Interventions to deal with Praedial Larceny through the Praedial Larceny Unit (PLU)** – Through the implementation of various interdiction and suppression strategies including patrols, surveillance, arrests and prosecutions. These programmes and initiatives are executed by the Praedial Larceny Unit.
- **Providing infrastructure for example access roads and offer incentives that will encourage the use or improved technologies on farms such as agro-processing through the AIP**
Response: Table 4 outlines access roads completed over the period Fiscal 2021 by the MALF.

Table 4 Roads Rehabilitated in Fiscal 2021

Location	County	Length (km)	Cost \$
Sakeer Trace	Nariva	0.8	736,312.50
Samlalsingh Trace	Victoria	1.8	757,968.75
Sellier Road	St. George	2.61	533,857.50
Depot Road	Caroni	3	676,603.13

- **Increased monitoring of Land Management Division for optimal use of state lands**

Response: This activity is ongoing. The officers of the Land Management Division currently do field visits and interface with the Ministry's County offices in an attempt to ensure that the obligations are being honoured in the agricultural leases that are given out.

- **Provision of diagnostic services in soil and analytical services, land capability and land use, available to farmers. These services allow for decreasing costs and improving yields on farms while decreasing the deleterious effects on the environment as a result of the indiscriminate use of fertilisers.**

Response: Soil and analytical diagnostic services continues are provided by the MALF. Currently, the laboratory is being upgraded through the procurement of new equipment to investigate the sustainable use of fertilizers for crop production. It is anticipated that a greater number of farmers will be serviced and will be more knowledgeable on the use of pesticide and fertilizer usage.