

Agric Info

The Quarterly Agriculture Newsletter of St. Vincent and the Grenadines



**September - December
2019**

What's Inside?

Pg# NewsArticles

- 3** *Workers Exchange Programme 2019*
- 4** *Forestry Focus Month 2019*
- 6** *Vincentian Fisherman wins Gladding Memorial Award 2019*
- 8** *World Food Day and Agri-Expo 2019*
- 10** *Homecoming Ceremony of the Vincentian Parrot*
- 11** *The National Soil Fertility-Mapping Project*
- 13** *Counter Wildlife Trafficking Workshop*
- 15** *The Establishment of a National Quality Policy*
- 16** *Townboard celebrates 122 years of existence*





Workers Exchange Programme 2019

The Labour Department within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour aims to improve quality of life for

workers by fostering a greater degree of collaboration between Government and the social partners (Trade Unions) and employers thus engendering a peaceful industrial climate.

One programme offered by the department, which many Vincentians have benefited significantly, is the Canada/Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme, which is administered in conjunction with the office of the Eastern Caribbean Liaison services in Toronto/Canada and focuses on the recruitment of Vincentian nationals for placement on various farms in Canada.

On September 17 2019, a media briefing was held at the Ministry of Agriculture Conference room in recognition of the persons that were given the opportunity to be a part of the work training exchange programme. In his Address, Hon. Saboto Caesar, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour expressed gratitude to the staff of the Labour Department for their excellent work. He provided that this group consists of three hundred and eighty one (381) persons and is the largest group to have ever been selected for the programme. He also indicated that initially the programme focused on the agricultural sector but they are now trying to broaden their horizons by branching out into the service and fishing industry.

Persons would be given the opportunity to work on legal marijuana farms with innovative technology, which aids in the production of cannabis products and this will play an integral role in the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines currently ongoing quest to establishing a Medical Cannabis Industry. He concluded by encouraging the participants to work hard and seize every opportunity to learn new skills.



Selected persons for Work Exchange Programme 2019 along with Minister of Agriculture, Saboto Caesar, Icelma Samuel of the Labour Department and Senior Assistant Secretary Mr. Trevor Phills (back, right)

Forestry Focus month 2019

During the month of September, the Forestry Services of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry, Fisheries, Industry and Labour held its annual Forestry Focus. This year's celebration was under the theme: 30 Years of Education, Interacting and Delivering Forest Services. 1989—2019 with a slogan: Knowledge is Always Key

Several activities were held during the month which included the following –

Monday 3rd September

A Church Service was held at the Wesleyan Holiness Church—Campden Park on , to mark the official opening of the month of activities.



On Thursday 5th and Friday 6th September,

The staff engaged in two (2) training workshops. The Training dealt specifically with **Dendrology and Forest Mensuration**. Dendrology is the scientific study of trees, while Forest Mensuration is that branch of **forestry** that deals with the determination of dimensions (e, g; diameter, height, volume etc.), form, age, and increment of single trees, stands or whole woods, either standing or after felling.



Wednesday 11th September

A Field Visit in the South Rivers area in the South Windward Range, which saw a visit to several plantations which were established over the years. This activity saw a number of retired forestry workers who were also a part of the establishment of these plantations, giving an overview of what life was like during their tenure at Forestry.



Thursday 12th September

The North Windward Range hosted a Forestry Fun Day to the Rabacca Recreational site and Kiss Me River on Thursday 12th September. This saw the coming together, in grand style and comradery along with food and drinks among members of staff and the community



Monday 23rd September

Monday 23rd September the Leeward Range team delivered two (2) **School Presentations** to the Layou Government School and the Barrouallie Anglican School. The presentations were geared towards informing the students on the importance of forest ecosystems and environmental protection.



Tuesday 24th September

Tuesday 24th /September the Forestry services hosted a **Seminar** at the Fisheries Conference Room in Kingstown. The theme for this activity was *“The Impact of Climatic Change and Land Degradation on the Urban Environment”*. It was attended by several key stakeholders who saw presentations from the Director of Forestry Fitzgerald Providence and featured presenter Environmental Consultant with the GEF Small Grants Programme Tasheka Haynes – Bobb.



Thursday 26th

The final activity for the month was the **Fitzroy Springer’s Forest Walk**, one of the highlights of the celebration took place on Thursday 20th. This year’s route commenced from Farm to Montreal, and saw the inclusion of a treasure hunt along the path.



Vincentian Fisherman wins the Gladding

Memorial Award 2019

The Gladding Memorial Award is an annual award presented to a selected fisher who demonstrates (as Peter Gladding did) a significant commitment to the sustainable use and long-term conservation of marine resources in the Gulf and Caribbean region. Sponsorship is provided to the winner in order to attend the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) meeting in San Andres to receive his or her award and to participate in the conference.

President of National Fisher folk Organization, Mr. Winsbert Harry was nominated by Mr. Eocen Victory of the St. Vincent and Grenadines National Fisher-folk Organization and after careful consideration of the applicants, The GCFI Gladding Memorial Award (GMA) committee announced Mr. Harry as the Winner of the award. He then travelled to the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute's (GCFI) annual conference in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

During an exclusive Interview with the Communications Unit within the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Harry expressed how proud he was of his accomplishment and encouraged other fisherfolk to join him on his quest to improving the fisheries sector.





**PAYMENT
DUE**

Public Service Announcement



The Farmers Support Company Ltd. (FSC would like to remind all farmers who would have received loans from the Company for the production of various commodities and are delinquent in your loan repayments to settle the outstanding balances immediately

Payments can be made at the Farmers Support Company Office at the Ministry of Agriculture's Headquarters, Richmond Hill Kingstown or at the Bank of St. Vincent and the Grenadines at Account No. 201090 Failure to pay the outstanding balances will result in the Company pursuing legal action against you

WORLD FOOD DAY 2019

The Food and Agriculture Organization for the United Nations consists of 150 countries, which carry out hundreds of events, and outreach activities with the purpose of bringing together governments, businesses, NGOs, the media, and the public. One of these events is World Food Day, which is celebrated every year across the world on 16 October, an annual celebration in honor of the founding date of the Food and Agriculture Organization launched by the United Nations in the year 1945.

On 16 October 2019 the World Food Day opening ceremony and the opening of the National Agricultural Exposition 2019 (AGRI EXPO SVG 2019) was held at the decommissioned ET Joshua Airport. AGRI EXPO 2019 was held under the theme “Repositioning Agriculture for Sustainable Economic Development in St. Vincent and the Grenadines”. The EXPO ran from 16th October 2019 to 20th October, 2019 and aimed to display the agricultural sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

In his feature address, Prime Minister Dr. Hon Ralph Gonsalves expressed how happy he was to be a part of another World Food Day celebration and gave a brief historical background on St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour, Hon. Saboto Caesar expressed how proud he was of the current position of the agricultural sector as it is now the most diversified agricultural sector in the Caribbean. He recognized the presence of former chief Reuben Robertson who played an integral role in the reestablishment of the agricultural sector after Hurricane Tomas destroyed 98% of the banana plantations on the island and the fight against the Black Sigatoka disease. He made mention of a few improvements in the sector and expressed gratitude to the staff of Ministry of Agriculture.

According to the Permanent Secretary Mr. Raymond Ryan, “The national response to climate change today will determine the ability to feed our nation’s population in the future. The transformation of the agricultural sector offers a sound opportunity for achieving national food production and nutrition security, poverty alleviation and increased employment”. He commended the planning committee on its dedication to ensuring the event was a success.

Dr. Renata Clarke, FAO Sub-Region Coordinator for the Caribbean stated, “It is important that we take the time for regular reflection about food; we need to have clear ideas about how we want to see food systems developed as citizens, as parents, as concerned community members or as public servants charged with advancing food and agriculture in the country and in the region.

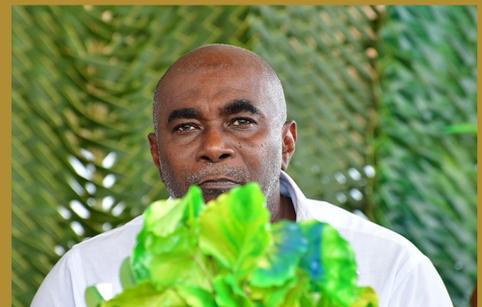
Mr. Cornelius Richards, Chairman of the planning committee for AGRI EXPO 2019 mentioned that despite the fact that the agriculture sector does not play a major role in the Gross Domestic Product of the Country, it still holds a significant position in other aspects of our lives, so there is no reason for unhealthy eating habits.



Prime Minister, Hon. Ralph Gonsalves delivering the feature address



Minister of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour, Hon. Saboto Caesar



Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Raymond Ryan



FAO Sub-Region Coordinator for the Caribbean, Dr. Renata Clarke



Chairman of the planning committee for AGRI EXPO 2019, Cornelius Richards



AGRI EXPO SVG 2019



The Homecoming Ceremony of the Vincentian Parrot

Endemic to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the *Amazona Guildingii*, better known as the Vincy parrot, has faced many obstacles threatening its existence over the years. Some of these include volcanic eruption, hurricanes, illegal trade and the destruction of its natural habitat. In an attempt to conserve this species, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has partnered with the Association for the Conservation of Threatened Parrots (ACTP) by establishing small ex-situ breeding populations to be used for the re-establishment of the population in the event of a catastrophic event.

On Monday 4th November 2019, a celebratory ceremony was held at the Argyle International Airport (AIA) to commemorate the return of three (3) birds used in the program. In his brief remarks, Hon. Saboto Caesar, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour commended the Forestry department in their efforts to conserve different wild life species originating from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, especially the Union Island Geico, which has placed the



Director of the ACTP, Martin Guth accompanied the birds from Germany



Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour, Hon. Saboto Caesar giving brief remarks at the homecoming ceremony

country on the map for conservation. He gave recognition to the ACTP, friendly organizations and other persons who have played a significant role in any quest to conserve any endangered species located on the island.

Director of the ACTP, Martin Guth expressed how proud he was to be a part of such a historical event and thanked all persons who were involved in the execution of the project; he also provided a brief historical background of the project, which began in 2006.

Director of the Forestry Services, Mr. Fitzgerald Providence gave some insight into the duties of the Forestry Service and he expressed his appreciation for the workers of the department who have contributed to ensuring the habitat in which these birds reside is well taken care of. He went on to encourage the citizens to join their efforts in the conserving trees.



The National Soil Fertility-Mapping Project

The National Economic and Social Development Plan has been executed over a period of twelve years and aims to revitalize the agricultural sector through appropriate investment in capacity building, extension, technology and research. The Agricultural

Sector within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour is focused on achieving a significant level of food and nutrition security and economic growth while coping with droughts, and conserving and protecting natural resources. In light of this, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in collaboration with the Kingdom of Morocco has embarked on the Soil fertility-mapping project here, which began in 2016.

In an exclusive interview with Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer, Renato Gumbs, a general overview and status was given on the project. He spoke of the plans to develop a web-based system that will assist farmers in knowing the fertility status of each area and information on the adequate fertilization of certain crops.

Demonstrations on methodology used to carry out sample collections were carried out by the Head of the Plant Protection and Quarantine Unit, Michael Delpeche and Agricultural Instructor for the Plant Protection and Quarantine Unit, Renrick Williams.



Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer, Renato Gumbs



Field sample collection proc-



Agriculture Instructor Renrick Williams of the Plant Protection And Quarantine Unit conducting soil testing exercise.





UNWANTED

Cuban Treefrog

Osteopilus septentrionalis



Why We Need To Get Rid Of Them?

- They prey on native frogs, small lizards, snakes, bird eggs etc.
- Hard to identify because there are several variation of the same frog.
- Their skin secretes a mucus that can irritate eyes and nose and even trigger asthma attacks.
 - Breeding rate is high (4000 plus) especially in water ways.
- They invade toilets and can clog drains; they invade power boxes and cause power outages.
 - Thrive in swampy, wet areas.

If you see the Cuban Tree Frog, call the Forestry Services at telephone 784-457-8594/ 457-8502.

Take photos and email to forestrysvg93@gmail.com

Invasive!!



Counter Wildlife Trafficking Workshop

Wildlife trade refers to the commerce of products that are derived from non-domesticated animals or plants usually extracted from their natural environment or raised under controlled conditions. It can involve the trade of living or dead individu-

als, tissues such as skins, bones or meat, or other products. Internationally, Illegal wildlife trade is widespread and is one of the major illegal economic activities. In the Caribbean region, it is rapidly becoming an issue of concern for conservation authorities as well as law and border enforcement agencies. Wildlife trade is a serious conservation problem, has a negative effect on the viability of many wildlife populations and is one of the major threats to the survival of many species.

The Forestry Department within the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with Fauna Flora International (FFI) hosted a 4-day training workshop on Combating Illegal Trade in Endangered Wildlife Species (CITES) from the Caribbean which was held from 14th to 18th October 2019 at the Methodist Hall Conference room. This workshop aimed to strengthen capacity to conserve biodiversity in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and combat the rising illegal trade in endangered reptiles from the Caribbean.

At the Opening Ceremony, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour explained the role of Fauna Flora International and stressed the importance of protecting the values of our environment.

In her brief remarks, Isabel Vique, Flora and Fauna International Caribbean Programme Officer gave a brief historical background of the relationship with the Forestry department, which began in 2015 with the Union Island GEICO. She commended the Forestry department on showing interest in the matter of Wild life Trafficking and looks forward to working on more conservation projects with them.

Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Consultant, Justin Gosling provided a synopsis of the matters addressed in the Workshop. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that wildlife traffickers do not contribute to high levels of negative environmental factors that are already affecting not only the Caribbean but also Worldwide.



Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Raymond Ryan.



Flora and Fauna International Caribbean Programme Officer, Isabel Vique



Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Consultant, Justin Gosling

Senior Forestry Supervisor, Cornelius Richards and Director of the Forestry Department, Mr. Fitzgerald Providence also provided some brief remarks and mentioned that this workshop was approved by the FFI, which works primarily in the Caribbean to develop programs to control the trade of special species of animals between islands.



Senior Forestry Supervisor, Cornelius Richards



Group photos with the participants of the workshop



Recipe

Cassava Milkshake

INGREDIENTS:

- 8 oz. cooked cassava mashed
- 2 cups milk
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 2 cups water
- Sugar for sweetening
- 1/2 tsp vanilla
- Piece of lime peel

METHOD:

Boil spices in water to extract flavor. Cool. Blend all ingredients together until smooth, sweeten to taste. Serve chilled or over crushed ice.



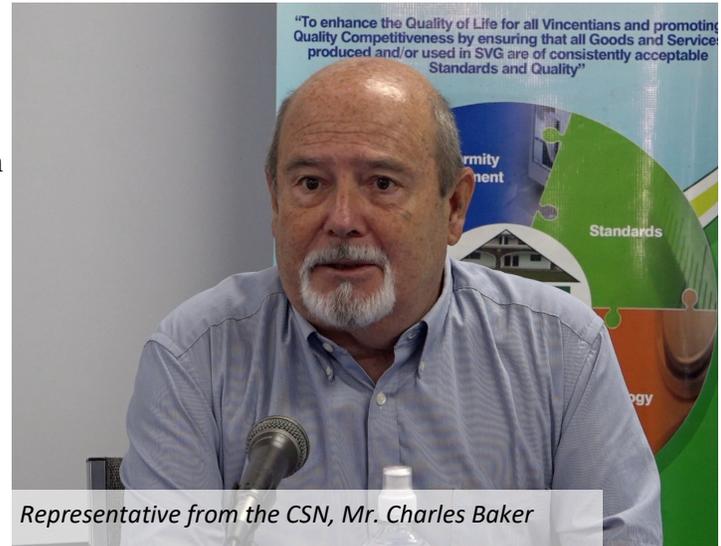



The Establishment of a National Quality Policy

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Bureau of Standards (SVGBS) has embarked on the journey to developing a National Quality Policy (NQP) with the assistance of the Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN) and the British Standards Institution. This National Quality policy aims to achieve accelerated economic growth, increase in exports, ensure supply of safe quality products at competitive prices and contribute towards the protection of the environment. It also provides a framework and other support for the SVGB to create, promote and maintain a National Quality Infrastructure on the pillars of Standards, Quality Assurance and Metrology.

In light of this, a consultation was held on 18th November, 2019 at the Fisheries Conference room with the aim of enabling the public and private sector stakeholders to participate in the process of strengthening/developing the National Quality Infrastructure.

The meeting heard from Ezra Ledger, Executive Director SVGBS, Mr. Charles Baker and Dr. Mike Peet, representatives from the CSN.



Representative from the CSN, Mr. Charles Baker



Representative from the CSN, Dr. Mike Peet

The Agricultural Produce and Livestock (Prevention of Theft) Act 2007 (APLA)

This act is one of the measures used to reduce and subsequently bring to a halt, the high levels of Praedial Larceny affecting the production of crops and livestock in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

More information can be found at <http://www.agriculture.gov.vc/agriculture/>

“Publications”



“Educational Material”



“Praedial Larceny”





Townboard celebrates 122 years of existence with a treeplanting and pruning exercise

In celebration of their 122nd anniversary, the Kingstown board hosted a week of activities under theme “ A time to reflect, reorganize and re-energize”. Two (2) of these activities included a tree planting and pruning exercise which was held on Wednesday 20th October 2019. The Kingstown Board in collaboration with the Forestry Services, held a tree planting exercise at the Kingstown Public Library compound. The activity began with the removal (cutting down) of an old Black Pearl tree and a replanting of a Caribbean pine.

Mr. Marlon Nanton, Accountant for the Town Board and chairperson for the week of activities stated that this exercise was the first of many in joining the Forestry department in their efforts to restore Kingstown to its previous state.

Forestry Officer within the Forestry Services, Shanique Williams-Delpesche encouraged the public to play a role in the revitalization of not only Kingstown but other landmarks across the country.

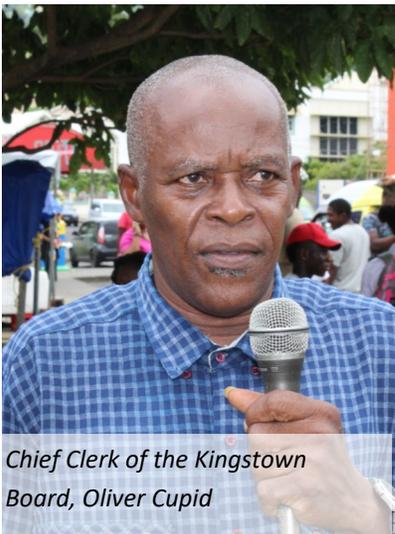
Chief Clerk of the Kingstown Board, Oliver Cupid expressed how elated he was to be a part of the activity and encouraged persons to dispose of their garbage properly.



Group photo with Kingstown Board Members and staff of the Forestry Services Department.



Tree planting Exercise



Chief Clerk of the Kingstown Board, Oliver Cupid



Forestry Officer within the Forestry Services, Shanique Williams-Delpesche



Accountant for the Kingstown Board and Chairperson for 122nd anniversary week of activities , Mr. Marlon Nanton

Plant Quarantine Export Guidelines

Plant Quarantine is one of the first lines of defense against the introduction of unwanted plant pest and diseases into any country. Unwanted pests and diseases could seriously affect agricultural crops of economic importance. The impact of “Moko” and “black sigatoka” on bananas, the mango seed weevil on the mango industry and the fruit fly on a number of different fruits are prime examples of what unwanted pests and diseases could do to the agricultural sector.

One of the responsibilities of the Plant Quarantine Unit is to ensure that the Phytosanitary requirements of the exporting country are met. This is achieved through an export inspection and certification process. For a consignment of produce to meet the required export standard, produce should:



For more information, please contact:

Plant Quarantine Unit
Geest Shed
Kingstown

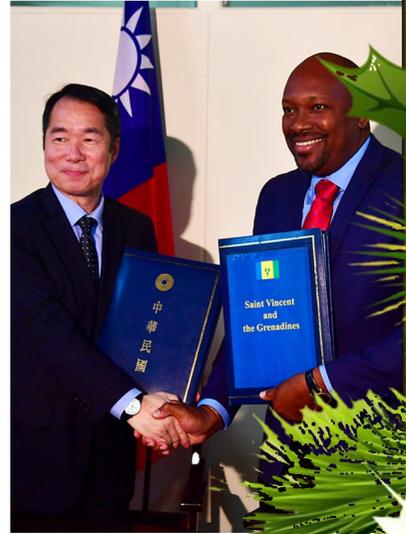
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Telephone Number: 1-784-456-1300
e-mail address: ppq@gov.vc

- Be at a well matured stage to promote even ripening as in the case of fruits.
- Be free from soil, pest, and chemical residue
- Be free of visual signs of mechanical and pest injuries, blemishes and bruises as these do not meet the exportation standard and may contribute to spoilage of the consignment.
- Be neatly trimmed and not broken out in the case of stalks, to avoid insect pest from burrowing within the hollowed area from where the stalk was removed.
- Avoid packing produce that show sign of deformities.
- Avoid over-packing:
 1. Packages should be neatly packed at a level that does not allow produce to be easily bruised or crushed during shipment.
 2. Packages should contain one type of agricultural produce to uphold the phytosanitary integrity of the commodity and to avoid any cross infestation in any given situation.
- All packages should be labelled with a distinguishing mark or shippers' number.

To avoid your consignment being confiscated at the port of entry of the importing country, please note that:

- A. An import permit must be presented for Commercial consignment
- B. The consignment for exportation must be inspected by a Quarantine officer to ensure the Phytosanitary integrity.
- C. A Phytosanitary certificate is issued indicating that the consignment meets the stipulated requirements.

Season Greetings!



**The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries,
Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour
would like to thank our readers
for their support throughout the year of
2019**

**Have a Prosperous
New Year**