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I. INTRODUCTION

The Farmers' Forum, coordinated by the Caribbean Agrometeorological Initiative, was held at the Barbados Olympic Association on October 23rd, 2012.

The purpose of the forum was to help farmers become more self-reliant in dealing with weather and climate issues that affect agricultural production on their farms. The overall goal of the farmers' forums is to secure farmer self reliance, through helping them to be better informed about effective weather and climate risk management by sustainable use of natural resources for agricultural production.

(Link to generic agenda)

II. REPRESENTATION

The meeting was attended by farmers, agricultural officers, meteorological personnel and four representatives of the CAMI project.

(See full list of attendees at **Annex 1**).

III. WELCOME

Sonia Nurse - Acting Deputy Director, Barbados Meteorological Service

Ms. Nurse welcomed participants to the forum and apologised to attendees for the cancellation of the first planned forum. She noted that this was the second forum held under the project and that she hoped they would continue post CAMI. She introduced members of the head table – Mr. Adrian Trotman, Project Coordinator; Mr. Hampden Lovell, Director of the Barbados Meteorological Services; Dr. Dennis Blackman, Acting Chief Agricultural Officer; Lisa Kirton-Reed, Technical Officer, CIMH and Shontelle Stoute, Technical Assistant, CAMI Project.

Hampden Lovell – Director, Barbados Meteorological Service

Mr. Lovell noted that CAMI was a three year project, now in its final year and that the farming community in the region will enjoy the benefits as the project will enhance agriculture in the region through the dissemination of information.

He also noted that the national and regional bulletins created under the project are critical to the success of the project and the work of extension officers.

Dr. Dennis Blackman – Acting Chief Agricultural Officer

Dr. Blackman apologised for the absence of Mr. Ralph Farnum and congratulated Mr. Trotman and his team for bringing the CAMI initiative to this stage. He noted that the ministry appreciated the project since it provided an opportunity to train staff, improving their skills and knowledge.

He commented that it was good that someone was focusing on agriculture and not just tourism, and praised the initiative because it will provide information on how the weather will be six months or a year from now, which is information that is required by the farming community.

He however noted that there were no initiatives in place for livestock, but that the emphasis was being placed on crops. He advised that there is also a great need for this climate information in livestock farming.

Adrian Trotman – Project Coordinator and Chief, Applied Meteorology and Climatology, CIMH

Mr. Trotman noted that accountability and responsibility is very important since sometimes persons are not given the requisite tools. Our focus is to make a science which influences agriculture more relevant.

The afternoon session is to receive feedback from participants on the way forward. Their needs, what is available, how does it help.

Mr. Trotman also apologised for the postponement of the last scheduled meeting, while noting the importance of showing the work that was done to date and what was done in each sector, with respect to reducing risks especially those associated with weather and climate.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

The CAMI PROJECT - Lisa Kirton-Reed – Technical Officer (CIMH)

Ms. Kirton-Reed took a brief look at the activities undertaken under the project during the last three years. She gave an overview of CAMI and emphasised the need to know what agriculturalists need. The full presentation is attached at Annex 1.

Mr. Trotman commented on the issue of sustainability noting that the project should initiate action to be followed up when the project is complete. He noted that at the national level, the met services will follow up initiatives started under the project.

Weather and Climate of Barbados – Sonia Nurse, Acting Director, Barbados Meteorological Service.

A review of the weather and its impacts was done for 2011 – 2012. It showed systems so far for the year and their tracks.

Mr. Trotman noted that the region is expected to continue to be warmer than normal. He went on to ask the question – What is meant by a less or more active hurricane season? Also, what about storm days? He indicated that we need to take a serious look at these questions.

Seasonal Forecasts – Adrian Trotman, CAMI Project Coordinator

Mr. Trotman pointed out the need to understand the difference between a changing climate and a variable climate.

Extremes in Weather and Climate – Adrian Trotman, CAMI Project Coordinator

In his presentation Mr Trotman explained extremes and described how forecasts can influence planning and preparations.

Mr. Trotman pointed out that there needs to be discussion of measures that can be put in place to prevent losses by farmers. Ms. Holder queried Mr. Gibbs on his recommendations to reduce the incidence of pests.

Mr. Gibbs advised that he does not agree with periodic application of pesticides, but that it should be applied as necessary.

Dr. Brathwaite noted that there are some things that one can do through common sense but other things need to be informed before plans can be made.

Mr. Williams stated that based on discussions, the island may be in for a below average dry season and posed the following question; ‘What if in January – March where dry conditions are expected and there is a ten 10) day spell of rainfall, what happens?’

Ms. Holder suggested some measures to prevent losses which included spraying and harvesting what can be, depending on the type of crops being grown.

Climate Change and Agriculture – Shontelle Stoute, Technical Assistant, CAMI Project

Ms. Stoute’s presentation showed forecasted changes using various models. She described how yields could be boosted by controlling microclimate.

Steve Skeete - MAFFW

Mr. Skeete noted that microclimate control was all about frontiers.

He defined microclimate as the local atmospheric zone where climate differs from surrounding areas. He also focused on some problems that can be encountered and how they can be dealt with.

Mr Trotman then went on to discuss information dissemination, noting that some countries already did their own belletins. St. Vincent, Dominica

Ms. Nurse also commented on the communication aspect noting that information dissemination should be both national while contributing to the regional bulletin, and identified challenges being experienced by the met service.

Mr, Trotman identified gaps, noting that the met services were limited since their major focus is on aviation. He also highlighted some of the deficiencies with the met services.

V. DISCUSSION

A discussion on information communication and dissemination was led by Clem Williams.

VI. CONCLUSION

Recommendations coming out of this discussion included seeking buy-in from the Government Information Service, continuing with the farmers' forums and developing the monthly bulletins.

Dr. Cyril Roberts delivered the closing remarks and thanked all who participated in the project especially the Ministry of Agriculture, the Met service, CAMI staff, the European Union (EU), the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), CIMH, Caribbean Research and Development Institute(CARDI), farmers the Barbados Olympic association for the use of the room and the H4 for providing refreshments.