

AGRICULTURE UNIT

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– Agriculture Representative (AR)**



The Faculty of Science and Agriculture (FSA) of The University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, Trinidad is comprised of the School of Agriculture (SoA), and the School of Natural Sciences. The Agriculture Unit (AU) at UWI, Mona i) represents the SoA at this Campus; ii) undertakes outreach to agricultural and related communities in Jamaica, and the region as necessary, on behalf of the SoA; iii) coordinates the SoA's External Programme in Agriculture (EPA) and the University

Certificate Programme in Agriculture (UCPA) in Jamaica; iv) carries out adaptive research; and v) participates in Mona Life Sciences Department's teaching, research, outreach and other programmes as determined by the Head of department.

WORK OF THE UNIT

Relevant to the SoA

The AR coordinated arrangements for dispatch of a SoA Jamaican student to the University of Wisconsin, Madison under an exchange programme between both universities.

The AR coordinated the SoA's 10-week Internship Programme (Course AG 233) in Jamaica by negotiating assignments, interviewing the students and supervisors at their worksites, processing evaluation documents, etc.

The AR facilitated the visit of SoA/FSA staff officially in Jamaica, and gave administrative support to SoA students domiciled in or visiting Jamaica.

Materials, information, etc. from the SoA were routed through the AU to various Jamaican interests.

Two SoA students completed an Agricultural Skills course facilitated by the AU and MINAG Research and Development Department staff at Bodles Agricultural Research Station.

The AU promoted the SoA through exhibitions/presentations on careers in agriculture at various fora.

The AU continues to maintain breadfruit germplasm brought from Hawaii under the “Breadfruit Improvement Project”, carried out in Jamaica by the Department of Food Production, SoA, to characterize local, and assess introduced germplasm, and identify, multiply and distribute improved local and introduced cultivars.

The AR visited St. Vincent to participate in a Workshop addressing plant nematode problems in banana, and also analyzed thirty-six (36) banana soil and root samples from a water grass control trial established by SoA personnel, for plant nematodes. This was part of FSA’s response to an appeal from the Winward Islands Farmers’ Association (WINFA) for assistance to manage destructive nematodes and weeds affecting banana production in those islands.

The AR is Reviewer for plant nematology articles submitted for publication in Tropical Agriculture, the official journal of FSA. Three such manuscripts were reviewed.

The External Degree Programme in Agricultural and Rural Development (EPA), and the University Certificate Programme in Agriculture (UCPA) were offered from FSA by distance.

Twenty three students were enrolled in the EPA for 2005/2006, 20 in the MSc two in the Post-Graduate Diploma, and one in the Course Certificate disciplines, and six in the UCPA. The Unit administers these programmes in Jamaica, being the contact point for students, for receiving materials, providing information, advice, supervision, counselling or administrative support, and interaction with St. Augustine.

Relevant to UWI/Mona

- The AU participated in the UWI/Mona 2005 Career Expo.
- The AR served as University Examiner/Second Examiner for Course Z32G.
- The AR taught segments of the following course:-

BT37Q (Plant Health); 2 weeks;
 BL05B (Preliminary Biology); 2 weeks;
 Z32G (Pest Management); 1 week;
 BL10M (Plant Diversity); 3-week equivalent, Summer 2005,
 and 3 weeks, Semester I, 05/06.

- Supervised a student project under course BL39C.
- The AR interacted with visiting students and Faculty of Ramapo College, N.J., USA on behalf of DLS.

Outreach

- The AR collaborated with the Research and Development Dept., Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG) on various research initiatives.
- The AU is assisting the School of Hope efforts to resuscitate soil conservation and agricultural endeavours, firstly by helping with development of a project document to seek sponsorship from funding agencies.
- The AR sat on the panel for the Capital and Credit Merchant Bank, and National Youth in Agriculture/ RADA scholarship interviews.
- The AU is collaborating with the Sugar Industry Research Institute (SIRI) to develop a “Plan of Work” which will ultimately address management of plant nematode infestation of sugarcane fields.
- The AR is External Examiner, College of Agriculture, Science and Education. Four courses were evaluated.
- Soil and plant samples were analyzed for noxious nematodes on behalf of farmers, householders, institutions or agencies (including Jamaica House/Vale Royal, the Cayman Islands Department of Agriculture, St. Mary Banana, the Sugar Industry Research Institute (SIRI), NEPA, RADA, Baronhall Coffee Estates, etc.) and relevant nematode control recommendations or assistance with addressing plant nematode problems given.
- The AR attended/participated in several conferences, seminars, field days, career days, training days, workshops, symposia and other such events hosted by UWI, various high schools,

MINAG, CARDI, IICA, NEPA, the Jamaican Society for Agricultural Sciences (JSAS), etc., and sat on sundry MINAG Committees set up to address topical issues.

PUBLIC SERVICE

- Life Member, the Jamaican Society for Agricultural Sciences;
- Treasurer, the National Food and Nutrition Co-ordinating Committee of Jamaica (NFNCCJ);
- Member, National Youth in Agriculture/RADA Schools' Agricultural Programme Committee;
- Member, Publications Committee, Research and Development Dept., Ministry of Agriculture;
- Chairman, Bellevue Hospital Foundation of Friends;
- Member, Agriculture Industry Lead Group, the National Training Agency, HEART Trust;
- Member, The Bureau of Standards/Jamaica Agriculture Produce Technical Sub-Committee;
- Member, Plant Health Coordinating Committee.