

AGRICULTURE UNIT

Dave G. Hutton, BSc UWI, MSc C'nell, Diploma (Nematology)
Universidad Centrale de Venezuela – Agriculture Representative (AR)

WORK OF THE UNIT



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 that 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 HOD.

Relevant to the SoA

- .- 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 coordinated the visits 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.
- .- 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 Dept. of Food Production, SoA, to characterize local, and assess introduced germplasm, and identify, multiply and distribute improved local and introduced cultivars.
- .- The AR taught 16 hours of Economic Nematology to MSc Crop Protection (Course AP 623) students at FSA, St. Augustine.
- .- The AR conducted a five-day workshop on the "Identification of Banana Nematodes" on behalf of the Windward Islands Farmers' Association (WINFA), participants being technical staff from Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. This was part of FSA's response to an appeal from WINFA for assistance to manage destructive nematodes and weeds affecting banana production in those islands.
- .- The External Degree Programme in Agricultural and Rural Development (EPA), and the University Certificate Programme in Agriculture (UCPA).

Both programmes are offered from FSA by distance. Twenty three students were enrolled in the EPA for 2004/2005, 20 in the MSc, two in the Post-Graduate Diploma, and one in the Course Certificate disciplines, and four in the UCPA. The Unit administers these programmes in Jamaica, being the contact point for students, providing information, advice, supervision, counselling or administrative support, and interaction with St. Augustine.

Relevant to UWI/Mona

- .- The AU participated in the 2004 Career Expo.
- .- The AR served as University Examiner for Courses BL62G and BT30K, and University Examiner/Second Examiner for Courses BT37Q and Z32G.
- .- The AR taught segments of the following courses:-
 - BL30K (Soil Biology); 2 weeks;
 - BT37Q (Plant Health); 2 weeks;
 - BL05B (Preliminary Biology); 2 weeks;
 - Z32G (Pest Management); 1 week; BL10M (two lab streams); 3 weeks.
- .- Supervised a student project under course BL39C.
- .- The AU conducted a survey of damage caused to trees on the Mona Campus by Hurricane Ivan of 11th September 2005.

Outreach

- .- The AR collaborated with the Research and Development Dept., Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG) on various research initiatives.
- .- The AR is a member of the National Youth in Agriculture/RADA Schools' Agricultural Programme Committee, whose major objective is to reintroduce and/or reinforce the integration of agriculture into schools' curricula, and to encourage Jamaican youth to recognise agriculture as an honourable and profitable career, and their involvement in the study/practice of it. The Committee staged relevant competitions for schools and youth groups, these culminating at the annual Denbigh Show. From now on the premier prize will be scholarships to the College of Agriculture Science and Education (CASE), the sponsor for scholarships to FSA having withdrawn. Four scholarship winners are currently at CASE. The AR chaired the interview panel for the scholarship awards.
- .- The AU is assisting the School of Hope's efforts to resuscitate soil conservation and agricultural endeavours, firstly by seeking sponsorship from funding agencies.
- .- The AR participated in several events staged by the National Food and Nutrition Co-ordinating Committee of Jamaica (NFNCCJ), which promotes the improvement of household foods availability and the nutritional status, particularly of at-risk groups in Jamaica's population. One such event was a workshop, "Safe Use of Pesticides", held in Pt. Maria, participants being extension officers, farmers, householders, commercial entities, students, etc. This workshop was put on in collaboration with the Food Storage and Prevention of Infestation Division (FSPID).
- .- The AU sat on the panel for the JADF/ Carlton Alexander, 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 address plant nematode infestation of sugarcane fields.
- .- The AR is a member of the HEART Trust/National Training Agency Agriculture Industry Lead Group, a committee which develops specifications, standards and curricula for HEART agriculture trainees.
- .- The AR is a member of The Bureau of Standards/Jamaica Agricultural Produce Technical Sub-Committee which is developing standards for Jamaican agricultural produce under the National Programme for the Certification of Agriculture Produce.
- .- Soil and plant samples were analyzed for noxious nematodes on behalf of farmers, householders, institutions or agencies (including 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, training days, workshops, symposia and other such events hosted by UWI, MINAG, CARDI, IICA, NEPA, the Jamaican Society for Agricultural Sciences (JSAS), etc., and sat on sundry MINAG Committees set up to address topical issues.

PAPERS PRESENTED

- **D. G. Hutton.** “Efficacy of three household disinfectants to treat nematode infestation of plantain – Preliminary Findings”. Sixteenth Annual Conference, The Jamaican Society for Agricultural Science (JSAS), May 2005, Kingston.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

- .- Investigating the nematicidal and herbicidal effectiveness of certain chemicals, e.g., household disinfectants, and soil amendments, e.g., pimento leaf extracted of oil.
- .- Determining nematode damage on canna (*Canna indica*); (in collaboration with Jamaica House).
- .- Determining nematode effects on sugarcane; (in collaboration with the Sugar Industry Research Institute). The first phase of this project is a broad survey to identify nematodes of potential significance on sugarcane.
- .- Determining nematode effects on coffee; (in collaboration with Baronhall Coffee Company).

PUBLIC SERVICE

- .- Life member, the Jamaican Society for Agricultural Sciences;
 - .- Executive member, the National Food and Nutrition Coordinating Committee of Jamaica (NFNCCJ);
 - .- Member, National Youth in Agriculture/RADA Schools’ Agricultural Programme Committee;
 - .- Member, Publications Committee, Research and Development Dept., Ministry of Agriculture;
 - .- Member, Minister of Agriculture Standing Committee on Research;
 - .- Member, 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;
- come of