

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 HOD.



WORK OF THE UNIT

Relevant to the SoA

The AR coordinated the SoA's 10-week Internship Programme (Course AG 233) in Jamaica by negotiating assignments for students, interviewing the students and supervisors at their worksites, processing evaluation documents and remitting same to St. Augustine, 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 SoA students and various Jamaican interests.

The AU promoted the SoA and the FSA through exhibitions/presentations outlining courses of studies at FSA and careers in agriculture, at various fora, including the Denbigh Agricultural Show.

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, in collaboration with various Jamaican agencies, to characterize local, and assess introduced germplasm, and identify, multiply and distribute improved local and introduced cultivars not only in Jamaica but the region as a whole.

The AR taught 18 hours of Economic Nematology to MSc Crop Protection (Course AP 623) students at FSA, St. Augustine.

The AR participated in a retreat staged by the Department of Food Production, FSA.

The AR is Reviewer for Tropical Agriculture, the official journal of FSA, re plant nematology articles submitted for publication in that journal.

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. Seventeen students were enrolled in the EPA for 2006/2007, 14 in the MSc and three in the Course Certificate disciplines, and eight in the UCPA. The Unit administers these programmes in Jamaica, being the contact point for students, for receiving/distributing course 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 2006 Career Expo.

- The AR served as University Examiner/Second Examiner for Course Z32G and BL62C.
- The AR taught segments of the following course:-
 - BL05B (Preliminary Biology); three weeks;
 - Z32G (Pest Management); one week;

- BL10M (Plant Diversity); three-week equivalent during Summer 2006, and three weeks, Semester I, 06/07.
- Supervised two student projects under course BL39C.

Outreach

- The AR collaborated with the Research and Development Dept., Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG) on various research initiatives.
- The AR is member, 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 recognize agriculture as an honourable and profitable undertaking, 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 Agricultural Show, the premier prize being three scholarships per year to the College of Agriculture, Science and Education (CASE). Four scholarship winners are in attendance at CASE. The AR served as chief judge, essay competition, and chaired the interview panel for the scholarship awards.
- 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. The AR is Treasurer, NFNCCJ.
- 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) in developing a "Plan of Work" to address management of plant nematode infestation of sugarcane fields. It was agreed by DLS and SIRI that the AR's competence to effectively address sugarcane nematode problems would need upgrading. To this end, the AR proceeded to South Africa, under Study Leave and Study Grant, to interact with various scientists, especially nematologists, at the South Africa Sugarcane Research Institute (SASRI) where much relevant and significant work

has been and is being carried out. Meanwhile, a survey to identify plant nematodes associated with sugarcane crops Jamaica-wide continues.

- The AR is External Examiner, College of Agriculture, Science and Education. Three courses were examined.
- The AR is member of the HEART Trust/National Training Agency Agriculture Industry Lead Group, a committee which continues to develop specifications, standards and curricula for HEART agriculture trainees.
- The AR is member of The Bureau of Standards/Jamaica Agricultural Produce Technical Sub-Committee which is developing standards for Jamaican produce under the National Programme for the Certification of Agriculture Produce. Standards for vegetable and horticultural crops were completed.
- The AR is Chairman, the Bellevue Hospital Foundation of Friends. The relocation/expansion of the Emergency Room facilities, the first activity of the new administration, has been put on hold by Bellevue management despite availability of funding to complete the project.
- 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), RADA, 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, The Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement (JOAM), World Food Day, the Jamaican Society for Agricultural Sciences (JSAS), etc., and sat on sundry MINAG Committees set up to address topical issues.

PAPERS PRESENTED

Hutton, D.G.

- “Nematode-induced Root Rot and Decline of Anthurium”. Caribbean Anthurium Industry Development Workshop, September 2006, UWI, St. Augustine, 8 pages.
- (with M. Bennett-Easy). “Nematodes and Sugarcane Production in Jamaica”. Sixty-ninth Jamaica Association of Sugar Technologists Annual Conference, November 2006, Jamaica Grande Hotel, Ocho Rios, Jamaica. 6 pages.

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, MINAG