



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND & FISHERIES
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT**

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MEDIA RELEASE

ICA and T&T Small Businesses Reviews 2019 and Strategize and Plans for 2020

Port of Spain, 28 January 2020:

A group of micro and small businesses (AgriMSEs) met at the offices of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Trinidad and Tobago, to reflect on the experiences and outcomes of IICA's support in 2019 and to consider IICA's plans for engagement in 2020.



Most of these AgriMSEs participated in promotion and marketing training, and would have also benefited from the product development and business networking provided in 2019, under the IICA International Trade and Regional Integration Program, at the headquarters of IICA in Costa Rica, with full

support from the specialist on AgriBusiness and Value Chains for the Caribbean, Allister Glean, based in the IICA Representation in Saint Lucia.

During the session, IICA Representative to Trinidad and Tobago, Ms. Diana Francis, said that "while IICA is not a donor agency, through well-targeted technical cooperation resources and partnerships with key players,

the organization have been able to leverage our human expertise and institutional positioning to provide tangible support to AgriMSEs”.

Contributions of key local collaborators were also acknowledged, such as ExporTT, Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI), and National Agricultural Marketing Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO), which complemented IICA’s technical expertise and provided access to facilities for business networking and training sessions.

Other recognized collaborator was the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association (TTMA), which enabled participation of 6 AgriMSEs in its annual flagship Trade and Investment Convention.

The AgriMSEs agreed that targeted and tangible support was preferred to generic training and information dissemination. They also confirmed that an important benefit from their engagement with IICA was the fostering and facilitating of more opportunities for mutually reinforcing business-to-business networking with each other.

Indeed, at least two (2) AgriMSEs expressed their obligation to ‘give back’, having benefited from development support from national entities, as well as IICA. An immediate ‘give-back,’ was the offer from House of Arendel, a chocolate products processor to include products from interested AgriMSEs as part of a retail arrangement negotiated with a high traffic establishment to market local agricultural products over the entire month of February 2020.

A similar offer was made to IICA by NAMDEVCO, to extend the use of its select high-traffic farmers’ market sites to host special Market Fairs dedicated to AgriMSEs, an offer which the AgriMSEs fully embraced. This is based on the observation by NAMDEVCO’s CEO, Mrs. Nirmalla Persad, applauded IICAs for creating additional value for AgriMSEs through tangible business opportunities and direct marketing, while simultaneously strengthening existing institutional ties.

About IICA

IICA is the specialized agency for agriculture in the Inter-American system, with a mission to encourage, promote and support its 34 Member States in their efforts to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being through international technical cooperation of excellence.

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