



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND & FISHERIES
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

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MEDIA RELEASE

NAMDEVCO commits to delivering 79,000 Market Boxes to Students

December 09, 2020:- In its ongoing effort to bring relief to those persons who have been negatively affected by the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) has committed to the distribution of agricultural produce of 1,300 packages per day to the families of 79,000 students with its Market Box Initiative. Each child registered under the School Feeding Programme, will receive a hamper valued at \$250.00, comprising ground provisions, callaloo bush, pumpkins, a carton of milk, cocoa in addition to, local fruits and vegetables including pineapples, melons, melongene, tomatoes, sweet peppers and cucumbers.

The Initiative commenced on November 30, 2020 and is expected to be completed by February 12, 2021. It is a collaborative exercise, involving the Ministry of Education; Ministry of Social Development and Family Services; Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries; National Dietary Services Limited; Grow Trinbago and NAMDEVCO.

Speaking about the organization's role at its Packing House facility at Piarco earlier today, NAMDEVCO's Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Nirmala Debysingh-Persad, praised the local farming community and its ability to provide a consistent and high-quality supply of fresh, safe and nutritious food. She said that the farmers, whose produce was being utilized in the Initiative, had to be certified by NAMDEVCO based on the Farm Certification and Monitoring Programme, in which the quality standards and practices on their farms are closely observed over a four (4) - six (6)- week period. This is to guarantee that the food supplies from these farms are safe based on international protocols. Ms. Debysingh further stated that the Market Box Initiative is so designed, that fresh produce is delivered to the packing house on a two (2)-day rotational basis, to ensure that both the post-harvest handling and nutritive components of the food are maintained at the point of delivery and beyond.

Also in attendance to observe the packaging process of the market boxes were NAMDEVCO's Directors, Mr. Wayne Inniss (Deputy Chairman), Ms. Ann Marie Dardaine and Mr. Rayber Bowen and the T&T Representative for the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA), Ms. Diana Francis.

To date, students from the following communities, have received their packages: Fyzabad, Mayaro, South Oropouche, Moruga, Rio Claro, Princes Town, Marabella, Pleasantville, Caroni, Couva, El Dorado, Arima, St. Augustine Maloney, La Horquetta, El Socorro, Tacarigua, Aranguez, Blanchisseuse, Carenage, Diego Martin, Sangre Grande, Valencia and Tamana.

The overall cost of the initiative is estimated at \$19.75M.

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