



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Lead Story	1
PROPEL Business	2
Field Reports	7
PROPEL People	17
Case Study	18
What's Next	20

Lead Story

ON TRACK TO MEET OUR GOALS

As PROPEL approaches its final 12 months of implementation, we have been assessing how we have been doing in terms of reaching our targets on various fronts. Some indicators of progress using data collected for project reporting up to the 31st of March, 2017 are provided below.

PRODUCERS DIRECTLY SUPPORTED: 9,907

This represents an 86% achievement of the overall target to support 11,500 producers. Of those producers supported, 30% are female and 22% are youth.

VALUE OF PRODUCE TRADED: \$96,580,253

New linkages and production capacity supported through PROPEL have contributed to CAD \$96,580,253 in trade/sales of produce and agro-processed products through intermediaries. This represents a 96% achievement of the overall PROPEL target to reach CAD \$100,000,000.

NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN PRIVATE SECTOR BUYERS AND PRODUCERS: 78 NEW LINKAGES ESTABLISHED

The project planned to establish 40 new contracts or other arrangements between private sector buyers and producers. As of March 2017, a cumulative total of 78 productive linkages have been established between buyers and producers. Project staff remain focused on strengthening and deepening the effectiveness of these linkages to create the maximum value for all market actors and to enhance the sustainability of these market relationships.

USE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE, GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Based on results of PROPEL's mid-term data collection survey, the majority of PROPEL-supported producers (80.7%) are applying environmentally sustainable, good agricultural practices (GAP). Marginally more males (81.4%) than females (79.0%) and more youth (85.5%) than adults (79.9%) have adopted GAP.

'TINGS A GRO'

RADIO SHOW A HIT AROUND THE REGION

WUSC Caribbean began airing its new weekly radio series **"Tings A Gro"** on June 5th 2017.

The show airs in Jamaica on NCU FM 91 at 1:30 PM on Mondays, and Mello FM at 5:40 am on Thursdays. It is also hosted on our facebook page @ [wusccaribbean](#) and has attracted fans across the Caribbean. While created for the Jamaican farmer/producer, the informative show is just as relevant to producers across the region. The 15 minute programme was conceptualized by PROPEL's Coordinating Radio Producer, Rosamond Brown in consultation with David Mowbray of Farm Radio International, and in collaboration with relevant stakeholders in a series of workshops and consultations, including representatives of groups such as RADA, MICAFA, Ja Reeach II (ACDI-VOCA), NCU, Jeffrey Town Farmers/JET FM; Abeng FM and ROOTS FM.



Rosamond Brown, Coordinating Radio Producer, interviewing a stakeholder during a farm field tour held in St. Ann.

The programme is delivered in segments, beginning with the popular **"Money Dirt"**, a radio drama which is written by Winston Bell of the popular Caribbean comedic duo Bello and Blacka. The drama follows the story of Farmer Bougsie, his son Lazeroy, his daughter Prim, and others in their farming community. The evolving drama highlights their trials on the farm and the interpersonal relationships of this community of characters, and then links them with technical support and information from RADA, a key partner agency for PROPEL in Jamaica. It is followed up by an interview segment **"Ask The Expert"** where a leading agricultural specialist speaks to the technical and good agricultural practices relevant to the issues arising out of the "Money Dirt" lead-in.

The final section is a short interview with a local Jamaican farmer, entitled **"Tings a Gwan"**, and is intended to share practical information with other farmers, as well as share their experience in a way that encourages others to consider farming as a viable profession. To date, 12 radio shows have aired in Jamaica - if you missed any of them, you can access the recordings on our facebook page @ [wusccaribbean](#).



Rosamond Brown, Coordinating Radio Producer, in consultation with representative stakeholders during a 3-day workshop held in the Mandeville Hotel, January 10 -12th, with David Mowbray as lead facilitator.





Various stakeholders from the region gathered in Kingston, Jamaica, to discuss PROPEL's results to date, as well as future directions and sustainability of the programme.

PROPEL'S STRATEGIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC) MET IN JAMAICA

PROPEL stakeholders from around the globe met in Kingston, Jamaica on March 22nd. Governmental officials, private sector, and civil society representatives from Barbados, Canada, Dominica, England, Guyana, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia reviewed project progress and results, and provided input and feedback on the work activities planned for this fiscal year.

The SAC meeting began with words of welcome from Jane Palmer on behalf of the Government of Canada and Global Affairs Canada, which provides most of the funding for PROPEL. Jane welcomed the SAC attendees and outlined key priority areas for Canada's programming in the region. These include: Sustainable Economic Growth; Governance and Disaster Risk Reduction; Engaging Women and Youth; and Addressing Climate Change. After a presentation by Windward Commodities' Chris Docherty on **"Connecting local producers to global and regional consumer markets"**, there was robust dis-

ussion on the competitiveness of Caribbean agricultural production. This was followed by a discussion on an import substitution strategy to ensure markets for locally produced commodities, by promoting the value of fresher local produce, albeit at a higher price.

With the PROPEL project due to come to an end in December 2018, sustainability was seen as a key component of the meeting. The committee was tasked with looking at the work plans and market systems approach being used by the project, so as to provide guidance for exit strategies that can ensure the aims of the project extend well beyond its conclusion.

The following day, members of the SAC were invited to

visit a number of the partner organizations working with PROPEL, including the Bodles Research Institute and the HEART training institute (where certificates for participants in a greenhouse management training course were handed over). Participants also visited a demonstration plot, where the project was carrying out climate-smart technology trials, and another site, where Irish potato variety trials were being conducted.



WUSC/PROPEL staff and SAC participants visit potato trials being carried out in Ebony Park in conjunction with producers, MICA, and private sector stakeholders



High Commissioner Marie Legault (center) with project partners Dunstan Demille, Perishables Manager at MASSY (center left), potato producer Clarence Rambally (center right), and the Saint Lucia PROPEL team

CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER VISITS PROPEL PROJECT BENEFICIARIES IN SAINT LUCIA & DOMINICA

In late March 2017, the High Commissioner of Canada to Barbados & the OECS travelled to Dominica and Saint Lucia to visit a number of project stakeholders in the OECS. In Saint Lucia, High Commissioner Marie Legault visited a series of farms to have a look at the PROPEL onion trials, potato production, and other areas of programming.

Finally, she made a stop at an aquaponic farm established by young agri-preneur Jameson Alphonse to view the process at work. PROPEL had supported Jameson as well as other youth to participate in an aquaponic study tour to Antigua, where these youth were able to learn from a successful aquaponics operation on that island.

In Dominica, the High Commissioner visited the DEXIA pack house, Dominica State College, and had a meeting with representatives of Dominica Youth Business Trust (DYBT). In an interview, High Commissioner Legault expressed,

“I am very happy to see there are lots of very successful stories coming out of Dominica with the Youth Business Trust”

To see a video report and interview, check out this [link](#) from the High Commission of Canada to Barbados and the OECS.



Youth-led aquaponics facility in St. Lucia



Youth shows PROPEL volunteer Salif Djire the aquaponics system



Staff sorting through produce in the Dexia packing house

SUPPORTING KEY MARKET ACTORS ACROSS THE REGION

DOMINICA

DOMINICA YOUTH BUSINESS TRUST (DYBT)

PROPEL is supporting DYBT's Champion Youth Ambassador Outreach Program to hold 4 town hall meetings across the island. The program is intended to provide useful information from peers to potential youth agri-preneurs.



Dianna Henry, PROPEL's agricultural extension facilitator in Dominica, with the DYBT team



Aaron Emmanuel, Farmer Relations Facilitator, DEXIA

DOMINICA EXPORT IMPORT AGENCY (DEXIA)

A Letter of Agreement was signed between DEXIA and WUSC Caribbean to support the provision of a Farmer Relationship Facilitator for a period of 9 months. Aaron will continue to assist the agency in building relationships between buyers and producers through communication, contracting, and assessments of farm-gate pricing for a basket of locally grown fresh produce. His tasks also include providing assistance in the formalization of a forecasting mechanism for exporting produce to Barbados, and to aid the pack house in the logistics required for those exports. In addition, Aaron will provide DEXIA support to meet the quality control standards required by various buyers.

GUYANA

GUYANA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY



Munish Persaud, Deputy Project Director (left) with Mr. Lance Hinds, Past President of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry

PROPEL supported a credit forum for agri-business development which took place in early March in Georgetown. The Credit Forum, entitled "Access to Finance for Small and Growing Enterprises" was a 2-day forum which attracted over 50 entrepreneurs. Interactive sessions were held by financial partners, the Republic Bank (Guyana) Limited, Scotiabank Guyana and the Institute for Private Enterprise Development (IPED). The forum not only allowed these financial institutions to guide on credit limitations and opportunities for improving financial transactions but also for participating SMEs to offer

recommendations. The 2-day session included a networking opportunity for SMEs to exhibit their products and receive constructive feedback from other key private sector partners. WUSC also linked the Montreal-based Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade (FAST), to the new Guyana Marketing Corporation (new GMC), through which discussions with Guyanese agro-processors are ongoing.

JAMAICA

BODLES RESEARCH UNIT



One of Bodles Research Unit's tissue culture labs

PROPEL provided grow lights for the tissue culture growth room to facilitate and speed up the production of in vitro clean planting materials for ginger, sweet yam, sweet potato and Irish potato tubers/plantlets. Plans are in place to provide further technical assistance through the placement of a WUSC volunteer with highly specialized skills.

NORTHERN CARIBBEAN UNIVERSITY (NCU)

PROPEL is collaborating with NCU in the production of clean planting materials of crops in Jamaica (Irish potatoes, sweet yams, sweet potatoes, onions, ginger and greenhouse vegetables) to supply producers and companies. PROPEL is also working with NCU in identifying opportunities for youth and women in agriculture to engage in value-added market opportunities.



Tissue culture lab at NCU



Signing of MoU between POPA and WUSC Caribbean

POTATO & ONION PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION OF JAMAICA (POPA)

PROPEL is supporting POPA's increased human resource capacity by temporarily co-financing a Farm Manager/ Agronomist to oversee the production of onions and potatoes by POPA and their member producers/producer groups.

PROPEL has also supported POPA by assisting in the procurement and purchase of much needed mechanized equipment, including 2 two-row potato planters, 2 two-row potato harvesters, 3 onion transplanters with seedling trays, and 3 vacuum seeders with appropriate plates. This equipment will help POPA achieve its production goals for onion and potato crops.



Demonstration of the two-row potato planter in Devon, Manchester, Jamaica

REGIONAL PROGRAMMING

MULTI-COUNTRY INITIATIVES



Plantain Producers in Guyana undergo Cost of Production training

PREPARING PRODUCERS AND AGRI-PRENEURS TO BECOME BUSINESS READY

In the last few months, PROPEL has been engaging producers across the region and providing them with cost of production business training. This training has been carried out in partnership with local agencies and NGOs, and is aimed at better equipping farmers and agro-processors with the knowledge that would enable them to identify and compute input costs for their farming or agro-processing initiatives. As with any other business, it is important to determine the cost of production to be able to make informed business decisions about pricing, crop mix, market-channel mix, scale, production practices and capital investments.

In July, a two day “Preventative Control Qualified Individuals (PCQI)” workshop was hosted by DEXIA with support from PROPEL and IICA. Participants included individuals from the Ministry of Agriculture, DEXIA, exporters, agro processors and manufacturers. The aim of the workshop was to prepare both public and private enterprise to be able to comply with stringent new FDA/USDA regulations regarding food safety. These requirements are part of the Food Safety and Modernization Act (2015), which seeks to regulate imported foods into the US to protect consumers from food-borne illnesses. USDA representatives were present to facilitate the workshop. Dominican food producers and exporters will now be better prepared to access markets in the US.



PCQI Workshop prepares Dominican stakeholders to export produce to the US



RADA Extension Officers attend a TOT session on Farmer Field School (FFS) methodology facilitated by PROPEL

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION OFFICERS ATTEND TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT) WORKSHOPS

PROPEL continues to collaborate with and to provide support to the Ministries of Agriculture and their agricultural extension agencies across the region with capacity building training to better meet the needs of producers. Aligned with key crops, the training-of-trainers (TOT) methodology is shared with extension officers and is augmented by study tours and farmer field schools to provide real world training, work experience and positive interactions with producers. The TOT programs have been supported extensively in Jamaica and Guyana, and have also taken place in the OECS.



PROPEL FACILITATES GENDER & YOUTH SENSITIVITY TRAINING

WUSC Caribbean has been providing Gender Awareness and Inclusion Training for all PROPEL staff and to Agricultural Extension officers of partner institutions. Custom designed sessions were facilitated by a WUSC volunteer, and topics discussed included gender awareness, integrating gender into workplans, and inclusivity for a successful farmer field school. In Guyana, training included the presence of NAREI and new GMC's extension officers, and included discussions between the PROPEL team and extension officers regarding their experience of working with women and youth farmers through onion pilots. The pilots targeted women and youth to promote empowerment and showcase their agricultural talent. Agricultural extension programmes provide farmers with a lifeline of information about new technologies, plant varieties and market opportunities. It is therefore important that agricultural extension systems reach female farmers and address women's priority needs.

This capacity building initiative is being replicated in other countries where PROPEL is active, with the participation of partners from government, cooperating institutions, and the private sector.

PROPEL RECEIVES VISIT AND TRAINING FROM GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA GENDER SPECIALIST

PROPEL received a visit and training from Global Affairs Canada Gender Specialist Shawn Hayes in both Barbados and Jamaica. In February and March, representatives from WUSC along with representatives from other regional Global Affairs Canada (GAC) funded projects attended gender equality training sessions facilitated by Shawn Hayes at the Canadian High Commissions in Jamaica and in Barbados. The information provided allowed for an interactive discussion on GAC's gender equality objectives and the need for gender mainstreaming in all project activities. During a field visit with the PROPEL team in Jamaica, Ms. Hayes was able to meet with 15 women from the Cascade Women's Group in Trelawny, who were attending capacity building sessions at an Irish potato demonstration plot being supported through PROPEL, RADA, and Carib Agro (an input supplier). The women were able to share their



Members of the Cascade women's group pose alongside PROPEL staff, Gender specialist Shawn Hayes, and Carib Agro representative

learning from the training provided and speak of their experiences as women producers. A total of 25 similar demonstration plots were established across Jamaica. Ms. Hayes was also able to meet Olive Johnson, a major woman producer from Mile Gully who is the president of her producers group. The day ended at the WUSC Caribbean office in Mandeville, with a presentation on gender equality by Ms. Hayes to 9 members of the PROPEL Jamaica Team.

JAMAICA HIGHLIGHTS

ENCOURAGING YOUTH AND WOMEN AGRI-PRENEURS

PROPEL Jamaica partners with the Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) to facilitate training of youth producers in business development. In May, the JBDC funded and facilitated a networking and information session themed “Youth in Agriculture: Ready, Tech, Grow”.

The aim of this initiative was to enable youth working in the agriculture sector to learn about emerging trends in agriculture, and for youth to pitch questions to a team of experts who participated in the panel discussion. The main topics covered in the pres-



Panelists share their knowledge at the “Youth in Agriculture – Ready, Tech, Grow” session

entation were the importance of marketing, climate smart agriculture, establishing linkages to support production and seedling production. The importance of youth producers forming linkages with input providers and other high value market actors was also

stressed by WUSC representation on the panel, which included Mr. Alvin Murray, Senior Agricultural Coordinator (regional) and Mr. Damion Campbell, WUSC’s Gender Equality and Youth Programme officer for Jamaica.

HOME ABOUT US WHAT WE DO MEMBERSHIP ACHIEVEMENTS CONTACT US

POPA
POTATO & ONION PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION OF JAMAICA
A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADVANCEMENT OF THE POTATO AND ONION SECTORS
"GIVING THE INDUSTRY AN ORGANIC MATTER FOR THE BENEFIT OF PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS"

AGRICULTURAL MEMBERS
Large Producers and Small Farmers' Groups

- Can vote at AGM in electing Board, review & accept annual audited statements
- Can propose resolutions at AGM & participate in adhoc working groups created by the Board
- Annual membership fee TBA
- Membership application will be gradually opened

Benefits:

- Preferential treatment for POPA services (seeds, technology, extension services)
- Share of best practices, knowledge and expertise

Visit the POPA website at www.popajamaica.com

PROPEL FACILITATES POPA WEBSITE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Recently, three WUSC volunteers provided technical assistance to the Potato and Onion Producers Association of Jamaica (POPA) in organizational management and structure, as well as in the development of a website.

Following the completion of Juliet Kaye and Jean-Marc Mangin’s mandate with POPA, which facilitated the building of a business plan for POPA, the Regional Communications Advisor for the project, Lais Vieira, assisted POPA with the completion of a website for the newly formed non-governmental group, and facilitated capacity building sessions, where employees and members of the board were trained on social media and website maintenance.

Visit the POPA website at www.popajamaica.com. Also visit POPA’s [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Potato-Onion-Producers-Association-of-Jamaica-1357402300953141/) page!
<https://www.facebook.com/Potato-Onion-Producers-Association-of-Jamaica-1357402300953141/>



Field Study Tour in the parish of St. Ann, Jamaica (February 2017)

JAMAICAN PROPEL OFFICE FACILITATES FIELD STUDY TOURS

MICAF, RADA, and PROPEL jointly implemented 4 study tours for Irish potato and onion production for the 2017 Season. During an April tour in St. Elizabeth, approximately 200 farmers turned out to gather information and learn technical skills in post-harvest handling for Irish potatoes. To facilitate wider information-sharing, producers from Portland were among those transported to the event to get a first-hand experience of Irish potato production. As a major part of the activities, a practical demonstration of Irish potato harvesting was conducted, using harvester machinery newly acquired through PROPEL to further support producers across the island. Among the key stakeholders present to participate in the activities were Hon. J.C. Hutchinson – MP/Minister without Portfolio MICAF, Floyd Green – MP South west St. Elizabeth, Mr. Peter Thompson - CEO RADA, Mr. Dermon Spence - CTD MICAF, Mr.

Nathan Samuels - Acting Parish Manager St. Elizabeth, Mrs. Andrea Tucker - POPA General Manager, Mr. Clifton Campbell - POPA Treasurer, and Mr. Sherman Campbell – Fresh N Direct.



Floyd Green, M.P South West St. Elizabeth (center left) alongside the Hon. J.C Hutchinson, M.P/Minister without Portfolio (center right) , examine the potato harvester provided through PROPEL

Producers were able to exchange thoughts and information with these individuals to better support their onion and Irish potato production activities.

PROPEL will continue to facilitate the implementation of such learning opportunities throughout the year as a means of connecting producers with input suppliers and buyers to ensure further sustainability of production.

Similar field tours, encompassing a variety of agricultural activities, have been carried out across the countries being by supported by PROPEL. The project views these study tours along with demonstration plots and capacity building for extension officers from the ministries as key activities to help producers improve and increase production.



Jamaican producers learn more about onion seedling sowing and management



PROPEL staff with partners participating in Denbigh 2017

PROPEL PARTICIPATES IN DENBIGH 2017

PROPEL partnered with 16 organizations to show off the best of Jamaican agriculture at the Denbigh Agricultural, Industrial and Food Show this year. The 3 day show in early August was a great success where PROPEL and its partners demonstrated climate smart technologies, agricultural best practices, leading edge technologies and much more. The president of The Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers (JNRWP) described the experience:

“The opportunity was a rewarding one. Our ladies had the chance to showcase their produce and products. We were able to share our organization’s mission with over 600 persons that visited our booth. This will aid us in increasing our membership, a goal we are constantly working on, as we strive to encourage more female participation in agriculture. The opportunity also linked us to a number of stakeholders, including buyers, input suppliers, research institutions and others.”

The RADA Parish Manager said “Manchester ‘shone like a star’” and lauded the support of the WUSC team in enabling them to win the Rudolph Burke trophy for the best parish pavilion and sectional prize trophies for Youth Involvement, Adaptable Technology, Marketing Potential, and Educational Input.



PROPEL Admin Asst. Schera Findlatter-Stewart delivers the first place trophy to Dianlee Tyndalein, from Knox College, in the Business Plan/Business Model category

PROPEL PARTNERS WITH THE JAMAICA 4H CLUBS IN SUPPORTING YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

In April, PROPEL participated in the 4-H National Achievement Exposition 2017, which displayed booths showcasing to youth producers and patrons from all across the island the various opportunities for youth in the agricultural sector. WUSC provided technical information to participants in relation to the production of onions, Irish potato, sweet potato, ginger, sweet yam, and mushroom – all major areas of focus for PROPEL in Jamaica. Producers were particularly interested in the potential for the production of mushrooms and the production of onions. Participants were provided with small amounts of seedlings for trials at home.



Theoretical tractor and land preparation training session held at the 4H training center in Denbigh, Jamaica

PROPEL, RADA, 4H clubs, and HEART also collaborated in the delivery of a five day tractor operations training to cover areas such as: land preparation (plough, harrowing, furrowing/bedding); customer service; and tractor maintenance. PROPEL Jamaica will continue to work with local partners to target the inclusion of youth in key agricultural activities.



Producers in Region Six of Guyana reap onions for the first time

GUYANA HIGHLIGHTS

POTATO AND ONION PRODUCTION ON THE RISE IN GUYANA

Despite setbacks due to flooding during the crop season, both the potato and onion trials, carried out in partnership with NAREI in Guyana this year, have proved to be very encouraging.

The harvest of these crops was followed by a taste-testing event at the Georgetown Pegasus Hotel, which saw the presence of key stakeholders of these value chains, including hoteliers and restaurateurs, government representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, new GMC and NAREI, input providers, investors, and producers, as well as local media.

Both WUSC and NAREI remain committed to scaling up and improving the market systems for these two crops. Following the successes and lessons derived from these initiatives, WUSC has further aided in the facilitation of a national stakeholders forum for onions in collaboration with NAREI, which was carried out this August, and will be facilitating the national potato stakeholders' forum in conjunction with NAREI in the near future. To read more about these initiatives in Guyana as covered by the media, see:

Guyana to begin large scale production of onions: <https://www.kaieteurnewsonline.com/2017/08/28/guyana-to-begin-large-scale-production-of-onions/>

Onion trials prove large-scale production feasible: <http://guyanatimesgy.com/onion-trials-prove-large-scale-production-feasible/>



High Commissioner to Canada in Guyana, Pierre Giroux, partakes of prepared Irish potatoes during taste-testing event held at the Pegasus Hotel



Producers assist in the reaping of Irish Potatoes from a demonstration plot in Region Five, Little Biaboo

[scale-production-feasible/](#)

Onion trials prove large scale production feasible – despite challenges: <http://gina.gov.gy/onion-trials-prove-large-scale-production-feasible-despite-challenges/>

Large-scale onion cultivation feasible here: <http://guyanachronicle.com/2017/08/28/large-scale-onion-cultivation-feasible>

Onions, potatoes to be produced on large scale locally: <http://guyanatimesgy.com/onions-potatoes-to-be-produced-on-large-scale-locally/>

EQUIPMENT FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

UPPER CORENTYNE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING CENTRE (UCITC)

PROPEL partnered with Farfan and Mendes Limited (FML) to offer a one-week Training of Trainers (TOT) programme for instructors at UCITC in January 2017. In addition, STIHL equipment was provided to UCITC to provide tutors practical training on the most commonly equipment used by farmers in the region. PROPEL support procured the equipment at a discounted rate for UCITC, and paid for the cost of the tutors to deliver the program. In March, UCITC was in turn, able to offer the 'Repair of Small Machinery Course' to students/youth to begin their training. It is anticipated that upon completion of



Students receive training at UCITC

the course, students/youth will take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities to open their own repair businesses or secure employment with others to offer the much needed maintenance and repair services for small agricultural businesses in the Upper Corentyne area.

SAINT LUCIA HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENT OF IRISH POTATO, SWEET POTATO & ONION MARKET SYSTEMS

WUSC, in collaboration with Massy, the Ministry of Agriculture, IICA, CARDI, Renwick & Co. Ltd. and Fond Asau Women's Group, continues to develop market systems for onions, sweet potatoes, and Irish potatoes in St. Lucia.

Under the watchful eye of project agronomist Julius Polius, the potato and onion trials have been



Interview with Dunstan Demille, Perishables Manager, Massy Stores



One of two research plots for onions in Saint Lucia

very successful, and the project continues to provide technical support to farmers around the roots & tubers programme.

Check out this recent HTS St. Lucia video report on the launch of the roots and tubers programme: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSSMnI3b_OQ&feature=share

PROPEL selected Saint Lucia as the flagship site for onion research trials for the region. Trials of 9 varieties of onion were carried out, with different modalities to determine the best type and production process for onions

in this region. The comparative study included the assessment of parameters such as: planting from seed vs. transplanting, and the use of traditional chemicals vs. organic fertilizers and pesticides. A full report on the trials and the results will be available in the upcoming months.



Irish Potato production continues in Saint Lucia

PROPEL SUPPORTS THE YOUTH AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM (YAEP)

PROPEL has been partnering with the Ministry of Agriculture, Massy Stores, and input suppliers to facilitate the strengthening of the capacity of YAEP youth producers (M/F) to enter and operate businesses serving high-value markets. Through this linkage, YAEP youth producers have leveraged the costs of growing approximately 5 acres of parsley, technical support for cultivation,

and have guaranteed access to a market through Massy Stores. Through partnership, youth are getting first-hand experience in farming as a business, while utilizing sound agronomic practices and improved soil management and planting technology. The YAEP pilot initiative is demonstrating to youth that they do not have to use low tech farming systems that are extremely labour intensive. Participating youth are recognizing that they do not have to stick to traditional agricultural practices, and that by establishing the right linkages, they can access support services that allow



YAEP youth producer sows Parsley with mechanical seeder

them to adopt improved methodologies for increasing production, productivity, and profitability.

DOMINICA HIGHLIGHTS



Tasha Nathanson, Gender Equality and Youth Empowerment Advisor for PROPEL, stands alongside two students of the DSC on internship at DEXIA, and Aaron Emmanuel, Farmer Relations Facilitator for DEXIA

BRANDING AND QUALITY OF PRODUCE IN DOMINICA

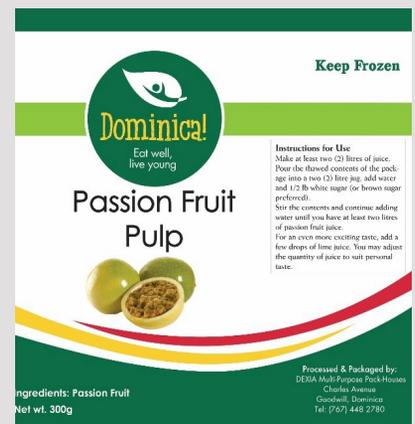
PROPEL FACILITATES EXPANSION OF DOMINICA EXPORT IMPORT AGENCY (DEXIA)

PROPEL continues to support DEXIA pack houses to improve its ability and readiness to export quality fresh produce and agri-processed foods.

In addition to facilitating the recognition of DEXIA distributed local produce in Dominica, aiding in the growth of consumption of locally grown produce, the newly developed brand has been used by DEXIA for export of its local produce in 4 shipments to Barbados so far this year. DEXIA is also exporting to the neighbouring French islands, and will be using the brand to further develop those markets as well.



Locally sourced, pre-packaged Dasheen in Dominican supermarket



Labelled product information for Passion Fruit Pulp

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE

PROPEL FACILITATES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SEEDLING NURSERY AND ONION DEMONSTRATION PLOT AT DOMINICA STATE COLLEGE (DSC)

In support of youth in agriculture, PROPEL has assisted the DSC to construct a seedling nursery and put in an onion demonstration plot for training purposes. Project Agronomist, Julius Polius has also provided a two-day training session on onion production with students pursuing an associate degree in agriculture. Also in attendance were lecturers, head of faculty and women from the North East Women Farmers Group who have been growing onions for the last few years. More than 40 persons benefited from the training (including 12 women). The sessions included a theoretical and a practical component and topics covered included the growth



The onion demonstration plot at the DSC college

cycle of onions; best practices for growing the crop; the incorporation of organic agricultural input principles; and seedling preparation. At the request of the DSC, Mr. Polius also delivered a soil fertility and plant nutrition lecture with participation from Rex Sookoo of H2K, who spoke of the application of H2K's organic products for yielding better results as per plant nutrition. PROPEL has also provided support to the DSC for incorporating an irrigation system to their training fields.

BARBADOS HIGHLIGHTS

AGROPROCESSOR GETS MARKET-READY



New packaging versus old packaging

After months in product development, ARMAG Manufacturing Company in Barbados is relaunching their frozen sweet potato fries in new improved packaging designed to meet international standards. The new packaging is being rolled out in September starting in Massy Stores with promotional activities including taste testing and research to



New packaging hits shelves across Barbados

determine market acceptance. PROPEL has provided support to ARMAG to improve their packaging and marketing. This will in turn increase demand for locally grown sweet potatoes.



Sunbury Harvest Sweet Potato Fries make their way to market

PROPEL PARTICIPATES IN AGROFEST 2017



Angela Isaac, Project Accountant (left), stands alongside Micah Gittens, Project Facilitator for Barbados (center), and Doug Graham, Director, WUSC Caribbean (right)

PROPEL once again participated in the annual agricultural show with its key partner the Barbados Agricultural Society (BAS). The 3 day event was well attended by schools and the general public. PROPEL's booth was also visited by the High Commissioner of Canada to Barbados and the OECS, Marie Legault.

LEADING THE WAY WITH DATA LOGGING TECHNOLOGY



PROPEL staff record data in St. Lucia's onion trials

To help farmers gain awareness of how significantly weather and climatic conditions affect their yield and production efficiency, PROPEL partnered with Rx Pro Inc. to carry out an onion trial in Barbados. The HOBO Micro Station Data Logger, a monitoring device, was used in the demonstration

plot in St. George, Barbados to capture rainfall and soil moisture data. Data-logging occurred every 5 minutes and was analysed weekly by WUSC staff. The data collected from this device is expected to create a better understanding of how weather conditions, in particular moisture content in the soil and rainfall, affect onion production over its life cycle. Onions are a water-intensive crop, and small variations in the water content in the soil can greatly affect the bulb size and quality of the onion. The trial has recently been completed and a report will be disseminated to the agricultural community, interested farmers and the public who can benefit from the research findings.

Data logging technology was also used during the onion research trials in St. Lucia.



Micah Gittens, Project Facilitator for Barbados, records rainfall and moisture content information in St. George, Barbados



Representative from Caribbean Aerial tests drone technology in Barbados

In collaboration with PROPEL, Caribbean Aerial mapped the onion fields throughout the trials in Barbados using an unmanned aerial device (i.e. drone). Across the 20-week life cycle of the crop, a drone using photogrammetry technology was able to identify and check growth patterns against standards. The premise of this initiative is that early detection of issues will allow the producer to make timely corrective measures in irrigation, fertilization, pest and weed control to improve the yield of the crop. The technology was also able to check chlorophyll levels for plant stress and to

CARIBBEAN AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDES DRONE TECHNOLOGY TO ONION FIELD TRIALS

establish irrigation patterns (checking for pooling, even distribution of water, wastage, and loss). The remote device is GPS enabled, which allows the technicians to pinpoint problem areas so that any corrective measures taken are precisely applied. David Lewis of Caribbean Aerial explained,

“By zeroing in on a specific problem and with early detection, you can apply fertilizer or pest control exactly where it is needed, rather than across the whole field. This will save the farmer time and money. The technology can definitely help to improve yields.”

The drone was also used to map the field, in terms of contouring, to assist with land preparation and in the creation of an appropriate plan for hilling and irrigation.

MEET SOME OF THE HARDWORKING MEMBERS OF THE PROPEL TEAM

EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHT KRYSTEN SEWETT MARKET SYSTEMS FACILITATOR FOR GUYANA

Krysten Sewett takes a vision and makes it reality through sound strategy development. Her partial knowledge in law, coupled with her extensive training and work experience in business development, positions her to see the threads of opportunity in an organization where she helps others extend their thinking and provides progressive solutions to problems.

In her current position as PROPEL's Market Systems Facilitator for Guyana, Krysten's role is cross cutting and involves assisting fellow team members in ensuring the soundness of a project activity, while also facilitating innovative linkages between market actors and high-value markets.

Prior to this, she held the post of Executive Director at the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry, where she has been described as the 'operational energy' behind the Chamber's growth and success.



Camille Merritt
Junior Project Accountant
Barbados & OECS



Patrick Mullin
DYBT Volunteer
Dominica



Jason Persaud
Agricultural Extension
Facilitator
Guyana



Patrick Lam
Driver & Logistics Officer
Guyana



Alicia Carr
Finance & Admin. Assistant
Jamaica



Leon Samms
Market Systems Facilitator
Jamaica

MEET SHADAYLIEA DIXON

PROPEL'S SUMMER INTERN FROM THE EBONY PARK HEART ACADEMY DREAMS OF BECOMING A NURSERY OPERATOR AND AGRONOMIST IN JAMAICA



Shadayliea Dixon, 17, aspiring agronomist in the making

Shadayliea Dixon is a 17 year old first year student at the Ebony Park Heart Academy, where she is pursuing a Level 2 Certificate in General Agriculture. Based on her passion for the field, her assessors recommended her to WUSC Caribbean. In March 2017, Shadayliea joined the PROPEL project as a technical lead for the Office Nursery. She works with the PROPEL team under the supervision of Mr. Alvin Murray, the Senior Agricultural Coordinator for PROPEL. Shadayliea's main responsibility is for general nursery management, and her duties include seedling propagation for onions and 2nd culture ginger, plant fertilization, and integrated pest and nutrient management through the use of pH & EC meters.

Shadayliea has always been interested in agriculture from a tender age. She started her

home garden planting seeds from her mother's kitchen and then found great interest in agricultural science while attending high school. Like many females interested in agriculture, some of her family members discouraged her from entering the field.

Today, Shadayliea has proven those individuals wrong, as she performs her duties in agriculture at an exceptional level. Due to her dedication, she has received commendations and support from her family, friends, and colleagues.

At Ebony Park Heart Academy, Shadayliea has placed a major focus of her studies on animal science. However, since interning with PROPEL, she has acquired additional skills which have encouraged her to cross over to crop production. She has gained useful training in good

agricultural practices, including seedling production, assessment and treatment of the Beet Army Worm, application of soluble fertilizers for various crops, and propagation of tissue culture plants.

While working with PROPEL, Shadayliea has successfully produced over 50 trays of onions (14,400 seedlings) and 180 trays of 2nd culture ginger (9,000 plantlets). These seedlings and plantlets will be used by the project to provide training to producers on demonstration plots. This pilot seedling initiative supports our work in the onion and ginger market systems by demonstrating the viability and importance of propagating clean planting material and seedlings to increase the productivity of these crops in Jamaica. The plantlets will be made available to producers, who through contractual arrangements with buyers will ensure the fresh produce will end up reaching high value markets and consumers. Shadayliea also prepared potting mixture, sowed seeds and cared for seedlings, most of which were used to create a live model farm in the PROPEL pavilion at the recent 65th Denbigh Agricultural and Industrial Show, held on August 5-7, 2017.

When asked what motivates her, Shadayliea shares her lifetime philosophy.

“Never underestimate the power of a strong black woman”.

She believes that dedicated young women such as herself have a great role to play in the agricultural sector, especially in relation to adhering to good agri-



Plants in PROPEL's office in Jamaica are maintained by Shadayliea prior to their transfer to demonstration plots

cultural practices, which result in meeting the quality and quantity demands of high value markets. She acknowledges that these tasks are time-consuming and require significant attention to detail, but the outcome is worth it. She also believes that more organizations, like WUSC Caribbean, should provide similar opportunities for other women to expose them to modern agricultural practices and technologies. That exposure and training will see them contributing more to the sector.

Shadayliea now sees herself as a champion for other women in agriculture. She now plants similar crops on her farm at home and is able to share her knowledge and experience as a young woman agri-preneur.

As her next step, Shadayliea plans to complete her studies in agriculture and then start her own greenhouse operation supplying producers with disease-free planting materials, and selling her fresh produce to high value buyers and consumers. Shadayliea also plans to grow crops to feed her own livestock, and sees this happening within the next ten years. Her supervisor at PROPEL, Mr. Alvin Murray had this to say about this ambitious youth agri-preneur:



Shadayliea cares for ginger seedlings, which will be used in demonstration plots to train producers on best practices for this crop

"I have compared her to myself at her age and I am humbled by her commitment, zest, eagerness to learn, willingness to put into practice what she has learned and her response in reacting to urgent situations. The entire staff and visitors alike frequently use the following adjectives to describe her: proactive, adaptable, hardworking, enthusiastic, and a team player. We wish her all the best as she works towards achieving her goals in agriculture".

By volunteering for work experience at the WUSC Caribbean PROPEL office, Shadayliea is now better equipped to successfully operate her own nursery as a sustainable and financially successful business.

Youth empowerment and gender equality are two cross-cutting themes of the PROPEL project. To that end, PROPEL is working with various youth and women's groups to help create opportunities for them in agriculture. In Jamaica, PROPEL is providing technical support and capacity building to the Knox Community College, Knockalva Agricultural School, the College of Agriculture Science and Education, and the 4H Clubs.

Through internships, PROPEL seeks to engage more young women like Shadayliea to help support and facilitate their participation and development. The sustainability of the project's outcomes can be ensured through the offering of similar experiences to young women and men in nursery operation and other areas of fresh crop production.

PROPEL

FORWARD PLANNING

- Promotional launch of Sunbury Harvest Frozen Sweet Potato Fries in Massy, September 2017, in Barbados.
- Potato trial to be carried out in Barbados with the Ministry of Agriculture.
- Third and final DYBT Ambassador Road Trip - 21st September 2017, in the South of Dominica.
- In St. Lucia, over of 1000 pheromones traps and an ID machine will be provided to the MOA through PROPEL as part of their farmers certification programme.
- In Jamaica, demonstration plots will continue to be carried out in collaboration with key market actors to endorse best agricultural practices.
- A mushroom initiative in collaboration with Isratech and NCU is to be carried out in Jamaica.
- National potato stakeholder's forum will be carried out in Guyana with the support of key market actors, including the Ministry of Agriculture, NAREI, new GMC, the private sector, and PROPEL.
- Training of Trainers (TOT) will continue in Guyana for NAREI and new GMC officers on Farmer Field School methodology and various agricultural topics.
- In Guyana, PROPEL will continue to work with local partners, including input suppliers and NAREI, in the establishment of onion pilots.
- New WUSC volunteer Communications Advisor takes up post in Guyana in November.
- Health 2000 (H2K) trials will continue across the region.



World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a leading Canadian non-profit organization in international development, committed to building a more equitable and sustainable world. We work with a unique and powerful network of post-secondary institutions, private-sector partners and volunteers to improve education, employment and empowerment opportunities for youth, women, refugees and other marginalized people around the world. To learn more about WUSC and to support our work, visit us online at www.wusc.ca.

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PROPEL DIGEST is a publication of WUSC Caribbean Inc. We welcome your comments/feedback. Please write to us at: caribbean@wusc.ca



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