



# Saint Lucia and FAO

## *Building sustainable agricultural systems and food and nutrition security*

Saint Lucia and FAO have partnered since the country joined the organization in 1979. Assistance has been geared towards sustainable agricultural development and food and nutrition security, with a parallel focus on natural resource management. Ranging from national policy support to community-level projects, interventions seek to improve agricultural productivity and local food production as well as income-earning opportunities for rural communities. Other key features of cooperation are disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change.

### Matching FAO's expertise to Saint Lucia's development priorities

FAO assistance in Saint Lucia is currently shaped by the 2016-2019 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF), which addresses three priority areas:

- **Access to land, food and decent employment**, supporting the development of policies and programmes aimed at addressing these issues and rationalizing and optimizing the use of these resources.
- **Natural resource management, disaster mitigation and resilience**, focusing on building resilience in the agriculture and fisheries sectors and adoption of best practices in climate smart agriculture. The promotion of water harvesting techniques and strengthening national capacity for uptake of these techniques as well as support for sustainable land use management and conservation of land for agriculture will also be the focus of FAO's support under this priority area.
- **Improve the performance of the agricultural sub-sectors**, supporting the development of sub-sector specific policies and legislations, the expansion and diversification of the sector, strengthening value chains and improving public food supply.

Jointly developed with the Government and other partners, the CPF supports Saint Lucia's implementation of the **National Agriculture Policy**. It also takes into consideration Saint Lucia's commitments as a member of the Economic Union under the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the **UN Development Assistance Framework for Barbados and OECS**, the **OECS Treaty on Agriculture** and the **St George's Declaration on Environmental Sustainability** in the subregion. The CPF fully reflects FAO's strategic objectives and regional priorities while contributing to the One UN initiative.

### Multiple benefits of improved meat processing facilities

FAO has provided support to the Government of Saint Lucia for the development of a management and operation plan for the country's newly constructed meat processing plant. The aim is to modernize slaughterhouse and meat production facilities with a view to protecting public health and building consumer confidence in locally produced meat products. At the operational level, Saint Lucia butchers have received hands-on training in good hygiene practices and slaughtering techniques for small ruminants and pigs in ten local communities.

An improved meat processing system is a key to stimulating livestock production and helping producers meet the standards required by high-end market segments, including the lucrative tourist industry which currently imports all its meat and meat products.

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## Saving the banana industry – fighting invasive diseases

Crop production is the main contributor to Saint Lucia's agriculture sector, largely owing to the dominance of the banana industry as well as the wide range of crops grown by most farmers. Banana plantations account for the major part of land use, covering an estimated 45 percent of agricultural land area. Like a number of countries in the Caribbean, one of the key challenges faced by Saint Lucia is the incidence of invasive pests and diseases that have a serious impact on food security as well as the economy. Among these are Fusarium Wilt, a fungal disease of banana, and Black Sigatoka Disease, considered one of the most dangerous diseases of banana and plantain. FAO warns that without increased commitment to combat Black

Sigatoka Disease, which has ravaged banana and plantain production in the Caribbean, vulnerable people could face food insecurity if the disease situation is allowed to further deteriorate.

*"When it comes to hunger, the only acceptable number is zero"*

José Graziano da Silva  
FAO Director-General

Saint Lucia benefited from a successful regional project, formulated and implemented under FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme, to develop integrated programmes and an Action Plan for Black Sigatoka management in five countries of the Caribbean. Early on in the process, together with Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia was able to use the Action Plan as a basis for developing specific components and activities under the EU-funded Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM) initiative. National funds were mobilized in each country specifically to deal with abandoned fields and to support spraying and Saint Lucia received additional Taiwanese funding to support disease management efforts across the country. Results were very positive. Indeed, the planned 50 percent increase in plantain production by the end of 2013 had already been achieved by mid-year and projections were for exports to be resumed within two to three years.

## Global knowledge transfer

Saint Lucia's drive to improve national food and nutrition security through School Feeding Programmes has received a considerable boost from the country's partnership with Brazil under FAO's South-South Cooperation Programme.

A regional workshop, which gathered representatives from the different countries in the Caribbean, produced a series of national route maps designed to ensure effective implementation of the regional Plan of Action for the Food and Nutrition Security Policy.

A regional workshop was also held to build national capacities for strengthening School Feeding Programmes already in place. Government representatives from Saint Lucia as well as Antigua and Barbuda and Jamaica received training in analysis and planning, while technical capacity building was provided to more than 20 government staff (from agriculture, education and health departments) involved in delivery of the School Feeding Programmes.

## Strengthening standards and certification systems

Saint Lucia and FAO have been partnering to strengthen standards and certification systems, for example through the introduction of the Farmer Certification programme.

The Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS) – the island's sole recognized body for the development of standards and implementation of certification systems – received assistance in creating agricultural standards using a fast-track approach. Methods included the development of codes of practice for the production of poultry and small ruminants as well as for aquaculture production. Specification standards were produced for dasheen and honey, a code for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) was elaborated for crop production and a general Manual for GAP Certification of farms, production and products was produced.

Overall, 300 farmers and technical staff as well as 40 agricultural certification inspectors were trained and pilot certification audits were conducted on 80 farms of varying types (including aquaculture operations).

