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Tomato farmer breaks new ground

published: Thursday | April 13, 2006

George Henry, Gleaner Writer



Doreen Williams of Carby district, south-east St. Elizabeth, for 'Farmers Weekly'. - PHOTO BY GEORGE HENRY

MALVERN, St. Elizabeth:

AFTER NINE years on the farm, Doreen Williams has found a way to improve her production of tomatoes.

On a visit to her eight-acre farm at Carby in south east St. Elizabeth, Miss Williams said she was happy with the results of using greenhouse technology to produce tomatoes. She said the fruits were of a high quality. So far she has reaped over 23,000 pounds of tomatoes. Tomatoes have been reaped from the same plants twice per week since November, she added.

Miss Williams told **Farmers Weekly** that she was introduced to the new concept by a friend through the Jamaica Business Recovery Programme following Hurricane Ivan in 2004. The programme, which was sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), assisted her with training in using greenhouse technology to produce crops.

BETTER ADVANTAGES

"The planting of tomatoes in the greenhouse is different from when it is planted outdoors and there are advantages," Miss Williams explained "For one, the trees last longer, which means you do not have to go planting new seedlings for quite a long while, as these trees can last for up to a year," she further explained.

The female farmer, who is a past student of St. Elizabeth Technical High School and the holder of a diploma in Business Management, said the concept is very cost effective, but her only difficulty is that it takes a lot of water to work properly. Using greenhouse technology has resulted in less use of insecticides, fertiliser and less use of labour.

The success with tomatoes is now encouraging her to plant cucumbers and lettuce



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using the new technology. She said she is encouraged to continue farming. However, Miss Williams emphasised that "the Government needs to address the importation of onions, tomatoes, carrots and other crops that are being produced here in abundance."

"With systems like the one I am now using we can produce quality crops in abundance, so we do not have to import and we can save well-needed foreign exchange," she added.

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