



FREE
COLOR FLIP PHONE

ONLINE ONLY



Get It Now >

Certain restrictions apply. 2-year service agreement required.

Go-Jamaica	Classifieds	Discover Jamaica	Youthlink
Business Directory	Go Shopping	Inns of Jamaica	Communities

- Home
- Lead Stories
- News
- Business
- Sport
- Commentary
- Letters
- Entertainment
- Flair
- Caribbean
- International
- The Star
- E-Financial
- Gleaner
- Overseas News
- The Voice
- Communities
- Hospitality Jamaica



Web
 Jamaica-gleaner.com

Archives

- 1998 - Now (HTML)
- 1834 - Now (PDF)

Services

- Find a Jamaican Library
- Live Radio
- Weather

Subscriptions

- News by E-mail Newsletter
- Print Subscriptions

Interactive

- Chat
- Dating & Love
- Free Email

Agriculture potential, recovery

published: Monday | December 5, 2005



Hugh Martin

THE EXTENT to which neglect, ill-advised policies or just plain shortsightedness are responsible for preventing the full exploitation of the potential of the agricultural sector deserve examination.

What is this potential? Let's take sugar as an example. The Sugar Industry Research Institute (SIRI) sets 75 tonnes of cane per hectare or seven and a half tonnes sugar per hectare, expressed as ton cane/ton sugar (tc/ts) ratio of 10:1, as the minimum any cane grower should achieve to make a profit.

The national average is a ridiculous 50 tonnes per hectare and a tc/ts ratio of around 12:1. On the other hand there are a number of farmers who are producing at more than 90 tonnes per hectare and a tc/ts ratio of 9:1 and better.

What is more, they know that with a little more effort and probably some advanced technology they could improve on that. Indeed, the introduction of the Centre Pivot irrigation system on some estates recently has resulted in cane production of as much as 150,000 tonnes per hectare.

This situation can be applied to every other crop grown in Jamaica. The problem is that only a few farmers have access to the required resources which include adequate financing, technical knowledge on production and post-harvest techniques, and proper marketing arrangements.

There was a time when the Ministry of Agriculture in conjunction with other government departments provided what was known as the Co-ordinated Extension Services.

SUBSIDIES

It was a time when farm subsidies were allowed and those combined with technical assistance gave the farmer the start and the impetus to develop and realise his true potential.

But those were pre-International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation days. With their advent the international lending agencies called the shots and now only first world countries who can afford it can give subsidies to their farmers.

Well, as I said, some farmers were able to hold their own; farmers like Mr. Kenny Lloyd of Hounslow in St. Elizabeth and Mr. Downie Walker of Bog Walk, St. Catherine.

Both men were doing well for themselves with their small holdings until Hurricane Ivan last year hit them and wiped them out.

Find A Jamaica Voter's List SEARCH

JAMAICA Pay your property taxes online from anywhere in the world
www.jamaicatax-online.gov.jm

flags totes and more...
CaribbeanFlags.com

SEND CASH LESS MONEY SERVICE
www.senvia.com

The Finest Pieces of Art
Get Your Piece of Art

Notpu Limited REAL ESTATE RESORT

Show yuh pride!!

Jamaican Business Facilitator

Pick Your Captain

MYERS, FLETCHER & GORDON ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW

[Guestbook](#)
[ScreenSavers](#)
[Submit a Letter](#)
[WebCam](#)
[Weekly Poll](#)
About Us
[Advertising](#)
[Gleaner Company](#)
[Contact Us](#)
Other News
[Stabroek News](#)

The tragedy of agriculture is its susceptibility to extremes of weather. Very few crops can survive a protracted drought. None can recover from a flood. A hurricane is another disaster altogether. And on top of this there is usually no insurance as the risk is so high the cost is prohibitive.

Fortunately, a number of organisations brought assistance. One of them was the Jamaica Business Recovery Programme.

This is a one-year project designed to help restore small and medium-size enterprises that were severely affected by Hurricane Ivan back to their former levels of production or better.

HURRICANE RECOVERY PROGRAMME

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development, it is being implemented by the U.S. Agribusiness firm, Fintrac Incorporated, and the Jamaica Exporters Association. All its activities which began in December 2004 are coordinated with the Office of National Reconstruction, the Ministry of Agriculture and other private and public sector organisations involved with the hurricane recovery programme.

Messrs Lloyd and Walker were among the 176 farmers who became beneficiaries under the programme.

INCREDIBLE RESULTS

They have had such incredible results from adopting the package of improved technical assistance and grants that they have extended their operations beyond the one acre on which they received the assistance.

In both cases production and earnings have been increased by nearly 200 per cent more than they achieved previously.

This level of success is not limited to the selected farmers as to each is attached 10 smaller farmers so the programme already impacts on over 1,700 farmers.

When this is replicated on small and medium- size farms islandwide we will witness the true potential of agriculture.

Hugh Martin is a communication consultant and farm broadcaster who may be reached at humar@cwjamaica.com.

[More Commentary](#)

[E-mail this story](#)

[Print this Page](#)

[Letters to the Editor](#)

[Most Popular Stories](#)

Ads by Goooooogle

Agricultural Property

Search LoopNet for 1000's of agricultural listings nationwide.

LoopNet.com

Dairy Farmers Wanted

Stable Pay Prices, Farmer Owned The Organic Valley Family of Farms

www.organicvalley.coop

Agriculture Careers

Find The Perfect Agricultural Job Search Listings Across The U.S.

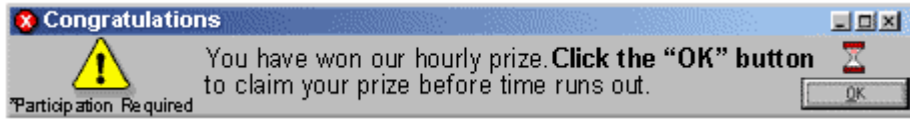
www.Ag1Source.com

Organic - Stonyfield Farm

Learn about the benefits of Organic Get \$30 of E-Coupons and updates.

www.stonyfield.com





© Copyright 1997-2005 Gleaner Company Ltd.

[Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [Letters to the Editor](#) | [Suggestions](#) | [Add our RSS feed](#)