



MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY,
COMMERCE, AGRICULTURE
& FISHERIES



2020 FARMERS' MONTH



We salute our hardworking and dedicated
farmers of Jamaica

A SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

Celebrating FARMERS



Hon. Audley Shaw, CD, MP
Minister of Industry, Commerce,
Agriculture & Fisheries

This year, Jamaica under the leadership of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries and the Jamaica Agricultural Society, observes the 37th Anniversary of Farmer's Month.

This was initiated in 1983 because it was universally acknowledged that our farmers are so essential to our very existence.

That is made even more abundantly clear in this time of the global pandemic occasioned by the COVID-19 disease.

Indeed, our farmers are like the salt of the earth and I join in this historic month of April 2020 in honouring, saluting, and thanking them for their continued dedication to feeding our nation.

As Jamaica continues to strive towards food security and ensuring safe and nutritious food for all, we pause to recognise these men and women of the soil who work relentlessly towards making this a reality.

Again, on behalf of the people of Jamaica, I wish to unreservedly say thanks to our over 230,000 farmers and fisherfolk.

There are many seeds of opportunity in the current crisis that we face. As we celebrate Farmer's Month 2020, we look forward to a robust planting season working together to an abundant harvest ahead. So plough the fields, and spread seeds of goodwill, love and respect so that Jamaica may increase in beauty, fellowship and prosperity.



Hon. J.C. Hutchinson, CD, MP
Minister without Portfolio

I am pleased to salute the over 230,000 strong Jamaican farmers on the occasion of the 37th observance of National Farmer's Month.

I also wish to commend our farmers on the outstanding contribution that you have made, over the years, in feeding our nation, and especially at this time as the nation grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the current challenges, our farmers have exhibited unparalleled resilience in the face of all adversities, and continue to cultivate, nurture, and produce thus contributing to the growth of the agricultural sector, as well as the manufacturing and service sectors and the distributive trade.

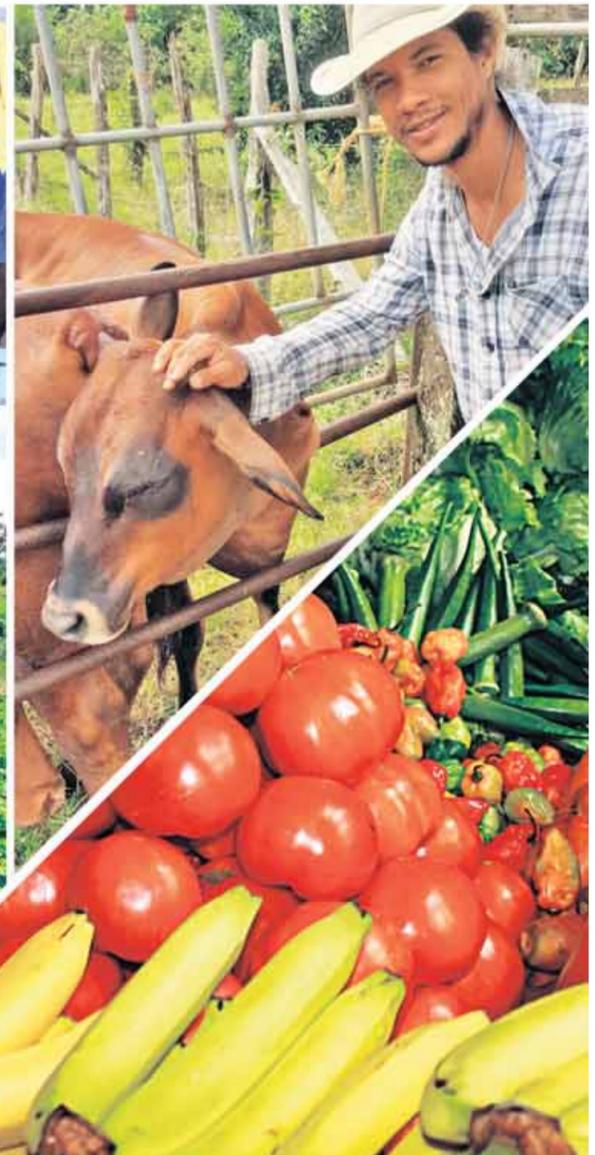
All across Jamaica, these dedicated men, women, and young people fill the soil and tend their crops and livestock to put food on our table. We cannot take this for granted and so it is important that we take time out to focus national attention on them in a special way.

The work and output of our farmers play an integral role in the economy of Jamaica, providing jobs and contributing to community and rural development while advancing food and nutrition security and earning foreign exchange through export.

I want to encourage our farmers to continue their efforts to ramp up production, as our country faces its harshest lessons on the need for national food security. So far, the Ministry has facilitated the redistribution of the excess produce from our farmers who were supplying the tourism sector. The Ministry is committed to assist all our farmers in the marketing of whatever crops that will be harvested in the coming months. Rest assured that together we shall overcome the perils of COVID-19.

As a fitting tribute to their tireless efforts, I invite all Jamaicans to join in the national effort to support our farmers by eating what we grow as they grow what we eat. In addition, I urge us not to let anything go to waste, so let us can what we can't eat as we work towards adding value and expanding our agro-industry.

Farmers now, more than ever, we thank you!



MONTH

2020



Hon. Floyd Green, MP
Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries

It is with a great sense of admiration that I greet the farmers across the length and breadth of our island as we celebrate the 37th anniversary of Farmer's Month, especially at a time when our country and the world at large face the COVID-19 pandemic.

Your hard work, resilience and kindness have certainly not gone unnoticed as you toil to plant and reap to feed our nation. Through your willingness and perseverance, our country is forming new opportunities within the agro-processing and business sectors and we commend you on rising to the occasion to make this possible.

From a grateful nation, we salute you. Let me also take this opportunity to encourage our farmers and agro-based industries to work closer together in order to eliminate wastage. Now, more than ever, is the time to ensure that food is used in the best way that it can be as it enters the stages of the value chain.

As we join together, particularly in this fight against the virus, let us remember to always eat local and 'Say Yes to Fresh'. Fresh fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet.

It is often said that a healthy diet is the best medicine and, in that context, we thank our farmers for being such faithful and committed providers.



Peter Thompson
Chief Executive Officer
Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA)

Farmers are the heartbeat of this nation. In this annual Farmer's Month celebration, RADA continues to highlight and place at the forefront the work of the over 230,000 farmers within the society, their importance and the invaluable contribution that they continue to make to feed the nation.

The impact of COVID-19 has been far and wide in its global onslaught to severely disrupt economies, livelihoods and our health.

On a local level, with the downturn of the tourism and hospitality industries, early close out of marketplaces and other stringent measures to control this pandemic, the traditional markets for our farmers have been brutally hit. The Government of Jamaica, through the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, has stepped up to the task of assisting our farmers to market their produce. During this period, in addition to providing technical advice and extension services to our farmers, RADA has been playing a facilitatory role linking our farmers with suppliers and distributors to market the excess produce and assist with reducing losses and fallout in the farmers' livelihood.

We urge all well-thinking Jamaicans to work with us in celebrating our farmers as we place their work and efforts to the forefront.

We continue to urge our nation to "Grow what we eat, Eat what we grow" in an effort to stimulate productivity. We all have to play our part and work together to build this nation.



Dermon Spence, JP
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries

On behalf of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, I am pleased to hail the farmers of Jamaica as, together, we observe Farmer's Month 2020.

As we are aware, this year has brought unusual circumstances and so our observance will also be somewhat different.

We are also aware that our very survival and the security of our food supply are in your hands.

In these unusual times, what remains constant and what our Ministry applauds is your unswerving commitment to the agricultural sector, supplying fresh food and produce daily for local consumption, the manufacturing and hospitality sectors and the export market.

Be assured that the Ministry and our agencies will be your constant guide and support throughout this difficult year and beyond, providing the necessary incentives, enabling circumstances and the technical assistance required to continue to unearth the wealth of possibilities that resides in this sector.

Continue to be our heroes; your service to Jamaica, land we love, is invaluable!



Lenworth Fulton, O.D., BH (M)
President - Jamaica Agricultural Society

On this 37th celebration of National Farmers' Month, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, we are reminded more than ever of the importance of our local farmers' role in ensuring food security for Jamaica. The Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS) commends our farmers for consistently rising to the challenge of production despite encountering hindrances such as increasing costs of input materials, unfavourable weather conditions, praedial larceny, marketing issues, limited financial access and recently COVID-19.

As we encourage our farmers to continue producing, we implore them to ensure that it is done safely with thorough sanitation practices and proper equipment; and that farm workers practise social distancing in the fields and packaging facilities to reduce the risk of infecting each other and ultimately improving their standard of work as we aim to meet the demand and supply of agricultural produce. The JAS will continue to work with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAF) and will seek for them to provide a meaningful stimulus package to get the sector back on track.

The JAS remains committed to protect the interest of our farmers and lobby for their access to the necessary resources and support; as we aim to enhance farmers' lives and financial viability. We have engaged several input suppliers to include H&L Agro, Newport Fersan Jamaica Ltd, Hi-Pro Feeds, St. Jago Farm Supplies, T. Geddes Grant and Ag-Chem Plant Limited, to provide discounts to our farmers during Farmers' Month.

We recognize the hard work of our farmers and will continue to facilitate programmes and projects that are in their best interest.

Let us all play our role in supporting our farmers, as agriculture is the cornerstone of our economy and the only way we will be able to feed our growing population.



H&L Agro

increases support for national Farmers' Month

Donates agricultural inputs plus discounts to cushion market fallout

WITH SMALL farmers struggling as a result of local and international measures to deter the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), H&L Agro announced that it would provide increased support under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, and Fisheries and Jamaica Agricultural Society's Farmers' Month initiative.

"Farmers' Month takes on a whole different meaning this year as we look to shore up the industry and support the thousands of farmers who have been hit by an unprecedented fallout in the market," said Dermon Spence, permanent secretary in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce,

Agriculture, and Fisheries. "With a relief package of approximately \$10 million, we are thankful for H&L Agro's continued dedication to our mission now, more than ever, which is the viability of Jamaican agriculture and our food security."

H&L Agro will provide \$2 million in agricultural inputs as direct aid to farmers. Farmers will be also eligible for up to 10 per cent in discounts on selected products for April at all five H&L Agro stores. Additionally, the farmers who contributed produce to the Government's welfare programme for infirmaries, children's homes and quarantined communities and market redistribution of

surplus fresh produce will receive discounts of up to 15 per cent through to the end of May 2020.

"We understand the day-to-day challenges that Jamaican farmers face, but nothing could have prepared us for what they are now experiencing in these extraordinary times. The contraction of tourism and restaurant industries, and public health restrictions have impacted the market for fresh produce. Still, we must focus on production for the future needs of our nation. H&L Agro cares, and we want to help," said Olive Downer Walsh, deputy CEO, Hardware and Lumber, the parent company for H&L Agro.



Spring Mount Farms, an Irish potato production unit located in St Ann, has 19.5 acres under cultivation. Majority of products such as pesticides, fertiliser and herbicides, used to facilitate production, are from the H&L Agro portfolio.



Kingsley Palmer (front) Syngenta market development officer, assessing the performance of crops and outlining the importance of cluster pruning and its effect on fruits size to Oneiki Green.



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Millions of dollars in surplus produce redistributed

OVER THE past three weeks, some \$50 million has been allocated to redistributing excess crops and fresh produce held by farmers in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak in Jamaica and the consequent fallout of demand from the tourism and other markets.

The Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries through its agency, the Rural Agricultural Development Authority, working with purveyors in the private sector, has been executing the redistribution of

fresh produce from areas of glut to consumers under the Government of Jamaica's \$240-million stimulus programme for the agricultural sector.

Processors have also been engaged in processing surplus fruits and vegetables for storage and for juice to be used in the School-Feeding Programme. The ministry is also targeting the redistribution of eggs, poultry and fish.

Against the background of restricted

movements in line with the COVID-19 security measures, farmers, purveyors, distributors and other interested parties are being urged to call in to the ministry, which has established a task force to coordinate the redistribution efforts.

In addition to the redistribution programme, the ministry has established other channels to ensure continued production in the sector, with \$100 million allocated to drought mitigation, and \$300 million for the

Production Incentive Programme.

Meanwhile, Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries Audley Shaw has commended farmers across the country for ensuring that there is a consistent supply of food items in the island in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking at the virtual launch of Farmers' Month 2020, at the ministry's Hope Gardens offices in Kingston on April 9, Shaw extended

commendations to those farmers who donated produce to the relief programme led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, valued at some \$7.5 million.

Additionally, Shaw used the opportunity to praise the farmers for their hard work, enabling the agriculture sector, through the Production Incentive Programme, to record an increase of 7.8 per cent growth in domestic crop production in the last quarter of 2019.



Audley Shaw (centre), minister of industry, commerce, agriculture and fisheries, along with Permanent Secretary Dermon Spence (right) and Lenworth Fulton, president of the Jamaica Agricultural Society, at the virtual launch of the 37th commemoration of Farmers' Month on April 9, 2020.



Happy Farmers' Month

Thank you to our farmers!

No matter what, you put on your boots, show up and remain committed to feeding Jamaica.

FRUIT TREE PRODUCTION

– to enhance food security

FOOD SECURITY will become a major challenge for the poor in developing countries in the future. As the world population increases in absolute numbers, with the fastest growth rates being in the poorer developing countries, food security will become a major problem for the poor. This critical food-security issue must be seen against the background of declining soil fertility worldwide due to overcropping, overgrazing of pastures, soil erosion, siltation of dams, the reduction of irrigable lands, desert encroachment, farmlands being converted into housing and industrial estates, destruction of arable land through mining, sea-level rise and saline intrusion, and dynamic weather pattern, among other things.

In the developing countries, the well-to-do will always have access to food because of their superior purchasing power and willingness to pay. Food security is therefore not an issue for the well-to-do. The challenge will be how to feed the poor and marginalised, who have little or no income, low or no marketable skills; the underemployed; the unemployed; and the unemployable.

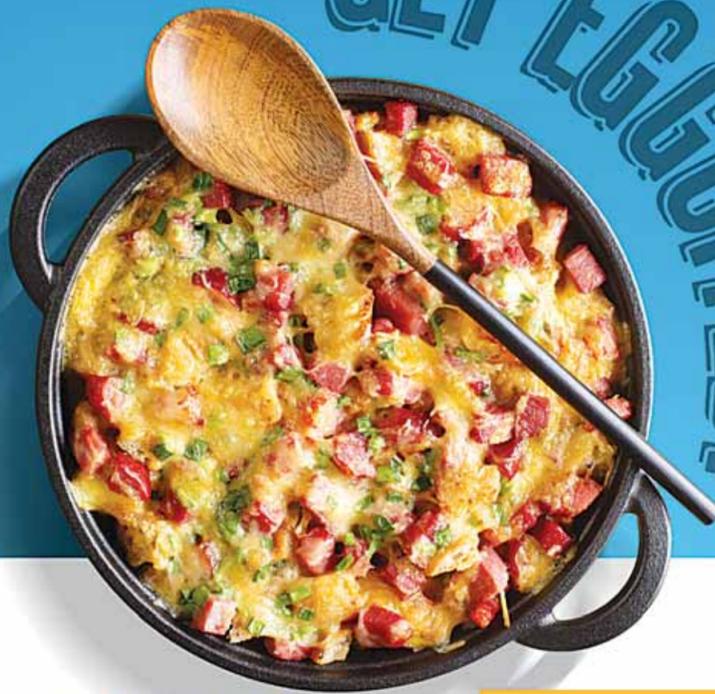
Governments in developing countries will need to pay greater attention to the implementation of systems which will ensure that a reliable, inexpensive

source of food is always available to the relatively poor. While absolute poverty may be reducing, relative poverty could be increasing globally. Also, while the urban rich and well-to-do will always have access to high-quality, imported foods in times of scarcity, the absolute and relative poor could lack the adequate disposable income to gain access to lab foods. In order to mitigate the risk and social consequences, the poor will need to have easy and ready access to inexpensive foods. An important objective of this fruit tree programme is to contribute to food security of the poor, who may be underemployed, unemployed or unemployable. This is a critical factor since the human being must have access to food every day, whether they have income or not, if there is to be stability! Jamaica has a wide variety of fruits, such as breadfruit, ackee, coconut, avocado, mangoes, etc, which are important in food security. This programme is about expanding the production and consumption of local fruits as an important category of food.

Against this background, the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries is currently developing a programme aimed at creating a movement across Jamaica for the growth of fruit trees to protect the environment and support food security.



GET EGGCITIED!



Looking for an affordable meal that's quick and easy?

Thanks to our egg farmers, we've got eggsactly what you need!

Easy Egg Casserole

What You'll Need:

- 1 cup grated Cheddar cheese
- 6 eggs, beaten
- 6 sausages, diced
- 2 slices bread, cubed
- 1/3 green pepper, diced
- 2 onions, chopped
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic (optional)
- salt and ground black pepper to taste

Let's Get Started:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish.
2. Stir cheddar cheese, eggs, sausage, bread, green pepper, onion, milk, garlic, salt, and black pepper together in a bowl until well-combined; pour into prepared baking dish.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until eggs are set, 20 to 25 minutes.
4. Serve and Enjoy!



Grab some eggs and get cracking today!

Why we must appreciate farmers

IT'S FARMERS' Month, and in this Jamaica land of wood and water, farmers are crucial to so many aspects of our daily lives, more than you know. They keep the agricultural industry going but are also valuable to other aspects of our society.

Let's look at some of the reasons why we must celebrate and appreciate farmers, year round.

1. FARMERS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Farmers hold the backbone of the agricultural system. As it is common knowledge that for a country to progress the gross domestic product should be reasonable, agriculture is one of the important parts. The agricultural system will only run if there are crops being grown and harvested, and this is where farmers come in. They help the agricultural sector grow, which not only feeds Jamaicans at home but also gives the advantage to the economy by exporting the given goods to foreign countries.

For exporting, the material must be of good quality, which would be possible when the farmers have been very careful and considerate about the factor influencing the crops. Farmer ensure that these crops are well nurtured so that they can bring high profit for the State. By exporting the goods to other countries, the economy of the State grows, which can be further spent towards the development of the country.

2. FARMERS ARE IMPORTANT IN OUR DAILY LIVES

We might need other professions in our life at different points in our life. For example, if we are sick we will need to see a doctor, and when we need to learn a skill, we need a mentor. These professions are important for

us and life would be very difficult without them, but life without farmers wouldn't be sustainable. We all need farmers every day. For the growth of a sound mind and sound body, we need proper food.

This food is provided by the natural fruits and vegetables grown in crops at different times of year, depending on the seasons. This proves that the importance of farmers is more than we think, although sometimes we take their effort and work for granted. We never think twice about the foods we have for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

They are responsible for the availability of healthy food at our dining table three times a day. Some plants like cotton are used to make fabrics, which are then sewn into clothes, so this indicates that even the clothes we wear have some effort from the farmers in the countryside.

3. FARMERS ARE EXPERIENCED INDIVIDUALS

By spending enough time in countryside, a farmer gains the experience to know what to do in different scenarios. They know what to do when the weather grows unpredictable, how to avoid waterlogging and salinity, and if they occur, how to remedy the situation, and many such things.

Field work makes them more informed and responsive to the issues that need addressing. The more time one spends in a profession, the more one learns. The farmers must plant crops every year, put in fertilisers, and reap the crops when they are ready. The repetitive cycle teaches them which seeds would be better, which fertilisers would give more yield.

In moments of crisis, they know how to minimise the damage to the crops. If there is a fire, they know they have to cut out a certain amount of



crops, even if they are not ripe, so they can disconnect the fire from the bigger part of the field to prevent the destruction of the entire field. Similarly, the experience of farmers helps to deal with similar situations.

4. FARMERS ARE DURABLE ASSETS

One of the main reasons we need farmers is that they are capable of withstanding harsh weathers. A person from a corporate background sits in an office and works in an air-conditioned environment, while a farmer must grind in sun and when it's colder, and this helps them to work in different conditions, making them comparatively resilient to harsh changing weather.

People employed in an air-conditioned office might find it harder to walk out in the sun in summer, or cold breeze in winter, while farmers are acclimatised to the situation. They know their task is at hand and any negligence will affect the annual yield, which can devastate the economy of

the State.

If they are unable to perform their duty or show ignorance in their labour, it might result in famine or inflation. This feeling of responsibility helps them work under harsher conditions, too. After a while they become used to these conditions, hence can do required labour under almost any circumstances. One should acknowledge the importance of farmers as they bear these hardships for their nation.

5. FARMERS ARE DISCIPLINED WORKERS

It will not be wrong to say the farmers go beyond the call of duty to deliver their work, as the weather conditions may change, or the crops might need to be sprayed for insects and pests. They put in their souls to their task, as they know that ignorance can cost them the crops, which will not only cause the depreciation of economy but, more important, there will be no food for the people.

Farming is not only about planting

and harvesting the crops. They must be properly taken care of the entire year, and spraying them timely with pesticides. They are cautious if any natural calamity strikes or in case a fire breaks out. They must be on guard for the crops, as neglect of their duty might result in loss of yearlong hard work, in addition to a fatal blow to the economy, or a possible famine.

6. FARMERS ARE SELFLESS CITIZENS

While a person in a corporate environment might need incentives and constant reminders to work efficiently, a farmer, on the other hand, doesn't need huge monetary rewards for his labour. They only need the required resources to grow crops like fertilisers, seeds and material required to cut the crops in the harvesting season.

Apart from these utilities, farmers do not require much motivation to work, as they have enough sense of responsibility. They know that in order to feed their own family and the entire country, they must give their all to the task at hand. This is enough motivation for them to give their best effort and to be cautious about their duties.

7. FARMERS ARE A SYMBOL OF DEDICATION

Society can look up to farmers as a source of inspiration. Farmers' Day is a public holiday in some countries on different days, October 12 in the United States of America and December 23 in India. In Jamaica, the month of April is celebrated as Farmers' Month.

We use the opportunities to encourage and appreciate the efforts of farmers. Farming communities help the growth of the agricultural sector and keep our hunger satisfied. We recognise their efforts and dedication every year. We acknowledge their importance in our lives.



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Thank you farmers



We have a close relationship with our farmers

We know your spouse

We know your children

We know when you are happy

We know when you are sad

We know when your crop is bountiful

And we know when it is not

We are here for you our farmers, and we stand by you.

Each time a member of the Newport-Fersan family eats, we thank a farmer. We salute you.

We pay tribute to you this month with all our campaigns:

- #Daylight #RunwehCOVID #FersanSundayDinner**
- #FersanFarmerwithFersanProduct #FavouriteFarmStore**
- #SayYesToFresh #BuyJamaicanBuildJamaica**

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