Directory of Caribbean Agricultural Information Sources

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface vi
Antigua & Barbuda, Federation of 1
Bahamas, The 7
Barbados 11
Belize 17
Bermuda 23
British Virgin Islands 25
Cayman Islands 27
Cuba 29
Dominica, The Commonwealth of 35
Dominican Republic 39
French Guyane 43
Grenada 45
Guadeloupe 51
Guyana 53
Haiti 57
Jamaica 59
Martinique 65
PREFACE

From a thriving industry, agriculture (crop and livestock farming, fisheries and forestry) has fallen in importance and stature as a mainstay of the economy and a valued way of life. Today, recent global events have reasserted the importance of agriculture as a source of food security and export earnings, with noble objectives of poverty alleviation and sustainable development in the Caribbean.

The idea of publishing this “Directory of Caribbean Agricultural Information Sources” arose among its editors and then Director of the US National Agriculture Library, Dr. Peter Young, at a meeting of the Agricultural Libraries Section in the Annual Association of Caribbean University, Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL) Conference held in Puerto Rico in June 2007.

There was no available comprehensive listing bringing together Caribbean agricultural information sources, and it was felt that this type of publication would be extremely useful for all stakeholders in agriculture: policy makers, researchers, extension personnel, information professionals, students and agricultural producers, business and consumers. The countries included are the English, French, Spanish and Dutch-speaking countries which comprise the Caribbean subset of ACURIL’s membership, which is described as “those countries in the Caribbean basin, mainland countries including the Guianas, and the States of United States of America, which
border on the Caribbean Sea or the Gulf of Mexico.”

Initially, a form was designed and distributed via email to collect comprehensive data on each library or documentation/information centre of which the editors were aware. However, few forms were returned despite repeated reminders over several months. The editors also contacted information professionals and colleagues in the various countries to identify additional relevant institutions which could be included. Institutions included were also identified from existing lists of stakeholders or organisations available on the World Wide Web.

This exercise in compiling the directory served to highlight the challenges still being experienced in basic communication between and among agriculture stakeholders in the region, and thus the need for collating basic contact information to support the exchange of information in the agricultural sector in the Caribbean.

The editors considered including details about the nature and type of information available at the various information centres. However, many institutions with agricultural information do not maintain organised collections. So the entries in the directory were limited to the following data in order to be consistent: Title; Mailing Address/Location Address, Telephone; Fax; E-mail address and URL (Web address). Wherever information for any of these fields was not available, the field was not included in respective the entry. Entries were named utilizing more user-friendly, intuitive titles instead of standard versions.

Given the nature of agriculture, a wide range of institutions qualified as potential entries for the directory. For each country the criteria for selection included: local offices of regional organisations, international organisations with local offices, Ministries of Agriculture, and related sections (lands, fisheries, forestry), chambers of commerce, development banks, foundations, farmers’ associations, rural NGOs, libraries and documentation centres, and statistical offices.

Also included are web resources selected based on their relevance to agriculture and their regional nature. Kindly note that all efforts were made to ensure the accuracy of the data at the time of publication.

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