



## **JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND**

**ISO 14001:2004 CERTIFIED**

### **Press Release**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Hounslow Farmers receive Rototillers under REDI Programme**

Farmers in Hounslow, St. Elizabeth are now more equipped to improve their agricultural crop production yields as they were yesterday presented with two rototillers donated by Food for the Poor under the Rural Economic Development Initiative, REDI programme of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, JSIF.

The farmers of the Hounslow Water Users Group are one of 13 water user groups under the National Irrigation Commission's (NIC) Irrigation Development Plan being supported by REDI. The farmers at Hounslow have also benefited from business planning and mentorship by the Competitiveness Company, TCC, to support the utilization of the drip irrigation kits for crop production. Overall in Hounslow a total is 65 half-acre drip irrigation kits with fittings and 65-- 1 thousand gallons water tanks.

At the handing over ceremony held yesterday in Hounslow, Agricultural Specialist at JSIF, Vincent Thompson who has been working with the farmers in educating them in drip irrigation, pointed out that one of the key things the farmers need to improve on is record keeping. He stated that with improved equipment such as the rototillers they need to collect data before and after planting so that they can make relevant projections and compare crop yields from year to year.

Project Manager, Kemeisha Batchan for her part said the rototillers will aid in the farmers productivity and encouraged them to work out a maintenance regime for the machines and impressed upon them the need to treat the equipment with care.

The farmers expressed their appreciation for the rototillers and pointed out that the lessons they have learnt through the programme have resulted in not only improvements in the crop yield but also in the quality of their crops.

According to one farmer Anthony Smith he has seen vast improvement in his peanut crop yield since the use of drip irrigation.

The Hounslow Water Users Drip Irrigation project is being funded by the Jamaica Social Investment Funds (JSIF)-Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI), with funding from the Government of Jamaica through a loan from the World Bank at a cost of approximately 8.4 million Jamaican dollars, 1.1 million of which is being contributed by the farmers.

The main objective of the project is to improve the contribution of farmers from the bread basket parish, St. Elizabeth, to domestic food security. It also aims to promote market-driven production resulting in greater consistency and reduced fluctuations in the price of agricultural produce.

In addition to all this the project has been a welcomed addition to the farmers who have still been reeling from the effects of the prolonged drought brought on by climate change that has significantly lessened their crop production.

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