



## JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

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### **Nain farmers to double cash crop production with new irrigation system**

Forty six (46) small farmers in the community of Nain St. Elizabeth are now the beneficiaries of a new drip irrigation system which will allow them to overcome the limiting conditions of the long drought periods in that area of the island.

Set to earn more from cash crop cultivation are the members of the Alpart Community Council who secured project funding for the irrigation system through Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) which is financed by the World Bank and Government of Jamaica. REDI is implemented by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF).

Total project cost for the system which has been installed on five acres of land leased from Alumina partners of Jamaica in Nain was J\$9.34 million. The equity contribution by the community was \$2.8 million, or just about 29 per cent.

Pastor Michael Harvey, JSIF Board Member, speaking at the handing over of the irrigation system noted that under drought conditions farming production was severely restricted. The area of St. Elizabeth experiences seven months of low rainfall annually (between January and April and June to August).

Under these conditions of extended drought, ACC members were, "unable to do production planning which leads to frequent gluts and shortages; this ad hoc nature of the production also impact the ability to secure markets as a result of the inconsistency, " Pastor Harvey outlined.

Farmers who are desirous of planting during the dry season, face additional costs as they are forced to purchase water, thereby reducing earnings. The new system will now allow these 46 small farmers within the Alpart Community Council and approximately 152 dependents to reap more from their hard work.

The group of farmers is expected to double production through enhanced nutrient absorption by the plants through a more efficient and precise application of water and fertilizers..

With the establishment of the drip irrigation system, the Alpart Community Council intends to focus on specific crops namely: thyme , cabbage , pumpkin tomato and sweet pepper . Based on projections, the overall marketable yield of produce from seven and a half acres is estimated at 33,240 kilograms valued at \$6.96 million at the end of the first crop.