



GREETINGS BY

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GENERAL MANAGER PROJECT MANAGER AT THE JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

AT

THE PRESENTATION OF

A Study on the State of Readiness of Laboratories Involved In - Vitro Production of Plants

Using Temporary Immersion Technology to Produce Irish Potato Seeds in Jamaica

Northern Caribbean University Manchester Road Mandeville

Friday November 28, 2014 @ 11 a.m.

Salutations:

- **Chair-Mr. Don McGlashan, Director General Ministry Of Agriculture and Fisheries.**
- **Dr. Juan Carlos Perez Guerra, Consultant**
- **Dr. Evelyn Tucker –Provost NCU**
- **Professor G Yorke –NCU**
- **Mr. Alvin Murray –Agricultural Co-coordinator CHF**
- **Other Stakeholders**
- **Farmers Ladies and Gentlemen**

I bring you greetings on behalf of the Board, Management and Staff of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

Over the last 4 years, JSIF through the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) a US\$15 million loan from the World Bank has assisted 76 small groups in obtaining knowledge of market needs, market demand and also improve product quality and production techniques in the areas of agriculture.

In keeping with its thrust REDI, the Christiana Potato Growers Co-operative Society (CPGCS) sought JSIF/REDI assistance to fund their project in an aim to establish the first Irish Potato seed programme, consultancy in tissue culture from a specialist to build the capacity of their membership in the new techniques in tissue culture operation. The overall scope of services was to conduct a GAP Analysis on the local use of In-vitro production in the development of local Irish potato

seeds. It will also include recommendations on the way forward with the use of this technology.

Specifically the research was to assess the current technical, administrative and infrastructure capacity of identified organisations such as CPGA, Bodles Research Facility, Scientific Research Council, UWI Biotechnology unit and the Northern Caribbean University.

The research covered an assessment of organisations on their knowledge and capacity in the use of invitro production of plants. Identify strengths, gaps and weaknesses of current organisations.

Having assessed the entities, a development programme will be created to strengthen the existing systems and also introduce new in-vitro production methodology “Temporary Immersion Technology”

Following on this study, Phase II of the project will address the design and delivery of training in current in-vitro production methodologies to personnel from identified entities as well as the provision of equipment

and associated support. The estimate of the full support to be given under this project is JMD 17 million.

In approving this project, JSIF examined the potential of strengthening the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries drive towards food security, in that the project will establish the country's first Irish Potato seed programme. This will enable local Irish Potato farmers to have disease free nuclear and first generation seeds available all year round. A total of 400 farmers who are members of CPGCS, RADA and JAS will benefit directly from the seeds. The technology and techniques can be used to mass propagate other crops such as; sweet potato, yam and ginger.

A key consideration under the project is its contribution ultimately to the reduction of the country's import bill and its' contribution to support the Ministry of Agriculture's vision to cut dependency significantly of the importation of Irish Potato seeds which cost approximately US\$2million in 2013.

In addition in 2009 Jamaica imported 6.9 million Kg table Irish potato at a value of US\$3.88 million however with the MOAF intervention in 2013 this was reduced to 2.6 million Kg at a value of US\$1.36 million

The organisation was also keen to support the project because the CPGCS has vision to produce seed potatoes from its tissue culture laboratory in Christiana Manchester, which is the first of its kind in the English Speaking Caribbean and can serve as a resource centre and repository of knowledge on tissue culture research on Irish potato development in the region.

Another selling point was that the CPGCS has cold storage facility; in the event they are able to store and release seed potatoes as required by the farmers, while keeping the price stable.

Today we have brought all the stakeholders to share openly and frankly the findings of the assessment by the Consultant Juan Carlos. At the end of today we can some points of agreement and way forward

towards a viable and sustainable potato industry. The consultant will go in depth about the findings and recommendations.

In closing we at the Fund see this as the first step in ensuring that this project is a success and we want to hear your views that will foster workable as well as attainable solutions going forward.

Thank You

