



JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

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Press Release

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Sorrell juice, jam and jelly factory opens for business in Westmoreland

The Bethel Town Sorrell factory, a joint venture between the Government of Jamaica and the Bethel Town Agricultural Cooperative was today formally handed over to the Cooperative by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF); the implementing agency for the project.

Funded by the World Bank through the JSIF-implemented Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) the total project cost was J\$27.86 million.

The 204 sq. m of agro-processing space is expected to increase earnings and employment opportunities for members of the cooperative and community members alike by facilitating the value added element of juices and jams from the widely produced sorrel. Farmers who supply the sorrel will also benefit from a place in the supply chain. Mrs. Scarlett Gillings, speaking at the official handing over on August 28, 2014, noted that the facility which was constructed to meet standards of good manufacturing practices, would

improve both productivity and employment in Bethel Town and other benefiting communities.

“What we see here today is a modern agro-processing facility which now conforms to food safety standards. For the first 3-4 months of operation the factory will operate at 60,000 units per month but will thereafter move the output to 180,000 units. It is expected that the factory within the next 10 years will move to 280,000 units per month,” she observed.

The Bethel Town sorrel factory was built to facilitate produce of 77 local farmers and features juice processing area, office, store room, drying area, and perimeter fencing. The facility, through REDI, has been fully equipped with a Bag Juice Form Fill and Seal Machine, Mixing Blending Tank, Sanitary Centrifugal Pump, Inline Filter, 100 lbs Cylinder, China Cap Strainer, Colanders, Mixing Paddle, Plastic Buckets, Garbage Bins, Refrigerator, Industrial Pots, Hand Trolleys, Fire Extinguishers, Water Hose, First Aid Kit and Scales.

The community contribution to the project was \$4.64 million with JSIF providing the remainder. Contributions were also made by the Constituency Development Fund, The Digicel Foundation and the Jamaica National Foundation.

Mrs. Gillings also noted, “this project started with RADA and the JAS, and the Cooperative identifying the need to add value year round for the sorrel farmers involved.”

The factory was conceptualized as a consistent market for farmers in Bethel Town and surrounding communities such as Darliston, Holly –Hill, Beeston Spring and Kilmarnock.

Mrs. Gillings noted said that the Cooperative has been able to secure letters of commitment to supply schools, supermarkets & shops within the locale. More specifically the factory will start by supplying five schools.

Cooperative members have also been assisted with marketing and training. The marketing assistance includes business Cards, brochures, flyers, banners, label development and packaging.

Through JSIF and REDI, training was provided in food safety to farmers that will supply the facility, while workers at the facility received fire and safety training, maintenance and disaster mitigation as well as product manufacturing.

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