

SUCCESS STORIES

There are hundreds of Success Stories in Caribbean Agri Business. Many entrepreneurs have found this a rewarding sector and continue to do well through constant innovation in production and marketing. These are just a few of them.

1. THE JAMAICA BROILERS GROUP.

The Group which started in 1958 as a Jamaican producer of broiler meat now exemplifies sophisticated, vertical integration in livestock production and processing.

It has a fully integrated poultry operation and has diversified into feed milling, cattle rearing, beef production and fish farming, along with the development and marketing of other value-added products for both local consumption and export.

The Jamaica Broilers Group has also developed affiliated services that support their varied agricultural operations. These include veterinary and nutritional services, the wholesale and retail of a full range of farm products and the premixing of feed ingredients

The Jamaica Broilers Group of Companies is undoubtedly one of the most advanced and diversified agricultural producers in any developing nation today.

Showing considerable foresight, Jamaica Broilers has now embarked on the production of ethanol. Based on its quarterly report, in January 2008, the Group's finances had shown a revenue of J\$5.2 billion – an 88% increase over

the same period in 2007. Much of this was due to ethanol sales.

2. KAIRI BLOOMS AND UWI – THE STORY OF ANTHURIUMS IN TRINIDAD



Over the past decade, the Anthurium industry in the tropical regions of the world has almost gone bankrupt. The reason was because two bacterial diseases that decimate Anthurium plants reduced annual production levels down to 3 or less blooms per plant per year - an unsustainable level. Many growers have left the industry in tropical countries because of this problem.

Most of the Anthurium varieties grown by commercial growers were bred and supplied by Dutch companies. These companies bred most of their varieties in cool temperate climates where the two bacterial diseases concerned were not a significant problem. This meant that many of the varieties they developed lacked resistance to the diseases and, once planted in the tropics, quickly began to suffer.

Dr. Pat Umaharan of the UWI, St. Augustine and his team used an indigenous pool of Anthurium genotypes from T&T, which had strong resistance to these diseases, as the basis of a breeding programme for developing a new range of disease resistant Anthurium cultivars. He also developed a patented bioassay process that sped up identification of the presence of the resistance genes in plants - from 3 years down to less than 12 weeks.

Chris Avey, a Grower of Anthuriums has field tested a wide range of potential genotypes arising from the breeding programme under commercial conditions and contributed his expertise towards selecting a range of exciting new commercial cultivars. T&T is now a world leader in Anthurium cultivar development for the tropical regions. With rising energy costs, tropical production is becoming far more attractive. There is an opportunity to beat the Dutch at their own game, gain revenue streams from Plant Variety Right protection of T&T developed cultivars, and generate revenues from licensing Dr Umaharan's genotype screening process. It's a big commercial opportunity!

Dr. Umaharan and Chris Avey will be participating in the mini display at the Forum.

3. PAT ISAACS-GREENE – LADY FARMER



Pat Isaacs-Greene, a Guyanese by birth who migrated to the United States, came to Jamaica as a Franchise Holder of the McDonald's fast food chain. She

had served as Vice President for the US company for several years. She eventually gave up the franchise and bought into two restaurants in Kingston while starting a farm on the northern side of Jamaica. After traveling regularly from Kingston to her farm in St. Ann, some sixty miles away through hills and vale, she decided to concentrate on her farm and moved to live in St. Ann.

Green Produce Farm, a 300 acre concern produces citrus which is sold to the Citrus Growers Association's manufacturing plant for juice, and vegetables, including baby corn which is exported to the United Kingdom at a very good price. So successful has she been in the UK market that she is now seeking to expand her acreage.

Green Produce prides itself on using sustainable methods of farming, including organic farming on land that has never been compromised by the use of chemicals.

Pat Isaacs-Greene, Farmer, Restaurateur and Business woman par excellence will be attending the Forum.

4. COMBINING RUM AND CHOCOLATE: FROM THE TOBAGO COCOA ESTATE



Duane Dove, Sommelier and Cocoa Farmer, is pioneering a new gastronomic trend by introducing tastemakers in Europe to his newfound passion: combining aged rum with artisan chocolate from the finest Caribbean Cocoa.

Cocoa from the trinitario and criollo strains grown in Trinidad and Tobago is recognized as having a superior flavour. Notwithstanding this advantage, cocoa production has declined considerably over the last decade. This has not stopped Duane Dove from wanting to expand his production in Tobago. He offers estate tours to regional and international tourists who participate in his culinary experiments with cocoa, and recently he opened his own “exclusive” chocolate shop in Sweden, selling the finest dark chocolate flavours of the Caribbean to Europe.

There are other entrepreneurs such as Paul Manikchand who are doing well with T & T cocoa. High-quality chocolates like **Valrhona Gran Couva** are also marketed in Europe and

elsewhere as sourced from Trinidad and Tobago.

Duane Dove will be sharing his passion for cocoa fine rum, and chocolates at the Investment Forum.

5 BARON FOODS LTD

Baron Foods was founded by Mr. Ronald Ramjattan, a Chemist from Guyana who found he had a real talent for developing new product concepts and commercializing them. He moved to St. Lucia and started the business with 25 staff and 12 products. The company now has over 100 products on offer, although most of their sales is from 15 lines. All 15 are made from locally sourced agriculture products.

The company has developed a strong brand of sauces seen on many supermarket shelves in the region, but also manufactures for 35 private labels.

Baron Foods now exports to North America, Europe and some Caribbean countries and is planning to open outlets in other Caribbean countries.

Dr. Ramjattan is expected to attend the Investment Forum

6. A “WHOLLY-OWNED” MARKET INTELLIGENCE AND DISTRIBUTION NETWORK FOR SMALL FARMERS IN ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

One of the constraints to higher profits in agriculture, particularly in the OECS, is the proliferation of small farms and Farmers with little knowledge of how to find and access the best markets.

One of the biggest challenges he faced was the rugged individualism of people living in small island communities. Trying to form cooperatives with a ‘one

size fits all' type of approach was never going to work.

This problem has been solved for the Dasheen Growers of St. Vincent, who with the assistance and support of Jethro Greene, Chairman of ECTAD and Coordinator of the Caribbean Farmers Network. He decided to build the cultivation of the lowly dasheen into a significant export business by building a complete value chain, from producers in small rural communities through to end customers in the UK and Europe, that local growers managed and controlled

With his help, they acquired markets in the UK and Europe, but to fill these orders several Farmers had to consolidate their production and distribution by supplying produce to a central point where washing, grading and packing could take place. So what Jethro and his team did was get some people in these small rural communities together to run this as a separate operation. Growers received volume needs and price information by text messages sent out to the network members and they could then decide whether to supply or not.

The outcome has been a huge success with the price villagers receiving for their dasheen rising from EC\$ 0.30 / lb to between EC\$ 0.60 – 0.90 /lb – up to 200% more. In addition, the area of dasheen grown for export through this network has expanded from a few acres 4 years ago to over 300 acres today.

Jethro Greene will be participating in the Investment Forum

7. TROPICAL FARM PRODUCE - DOMINICA

Bananas have been a major crop for Dominica for a long time. However,

farmers just grew bananas and delivered them to the exporters who then did all the rest of the work. Then along came Darwin Telemaque, a young entrepreneur in his 30's. When quite young he went to the USA and worked in the logistics sector - for 15 years.

In early 2006 his father died. He owned a 26 acre banana farm in the north east of Dominica – large by that country's standards. Darwin was left the farm in his father's will so he came back to Dominica to see what he could do with it.

He discovered it had made a gross profit of more than EC\$ 900,000 over the preceding 5 years and so he decided he wanted to use it as the basis of a business that could turn over at least EC\$ 1,000,000 a year.

To do this he took on another property of a similar size on the west coast north of Roseau. He contoured and drained the property and planted high quality banana planting material.

He also discovered that nobody in Dominica had ever ripened bananas and delivered them from the farm to the door of major customers such as supermarkets, hotels and cruise ship operators. So he set up a ripening room, bought a utility, and offered a daily door to door delivery service.

He now sells 50 – 75 boxes of properly ripened bananas each day to customers within Dominica! When certain cruise ships are in town, he supplies them with up to 200 boxes of bananas each time.

But this is just part of the story. He is now building a substantial business around growing, packing, and delivering fruit and vegetables around the island and to export markets. He currently exports a range of produce, including dasheen and plantain, to St Maarten, St

Thomas, and St Croix and plans to expand this service to a number of other Caribbean islands.

8. DE LA GRENADA INDUSTRIES From Cottage to Commercial in the Spice Isle

De La Grenade Industries is famous for its Morne Delice Nutmeg Syrup and de la Grenade Liqueur which have received a Grand Gold Medal and a Gold Medal, respectively, from the European International Institute for Quality Selections in Brussels.

Pepper jellies and rum punch are also among the agri-foodstuff offered by de la Grenade Industries.

Though the firm itself is just more than three decades old, its early beginnings can be found in a secret recipe passed down to generations since 1773 when, according to family legend, a Dutch missionary gave it to Captain Louis La Grenade in exchange for a passage on his boat.

The historic, award-winning business, created, ironically, on a range of items from pericarp - the one-time waste product of the humble nutmeg - is on the verge of expansion of its products and base employing sustainable energy resources and concentrating on niche markets, particularly in Asia.

It has built its reputation on product quality, exquisite packaging, and targeting the niche market. Matriarch, Ms. Sybil de la Grenade adopted a deliberate strategy to steer buyers towards the product line by providing them with recipes in which the products could be used. `Grand Anse Splash' or the `Nutmeg Brigadier' and `Concord Cream, are just a few of the tantalizing recipes available to patrons.

The business is now managed by her daughter, Dr. Cecile la Grenada, who steered the industry from cottage to commercial in 1991 on the backs of technological advancement in Grenada and new and efficient forms of production. It has moved from producing 3 000 litres of the range of products per year to more than 45 000 litres. The products can be found in gift baskets, gourmet shop jars, cater packs and portion packs in keeping with the niche market thrust. Main markets for the nutmeg-based products are now in New York, Miami, London, Germany and Austria.

Dr Cecile la Grenade envisions that by November 2008, new product lines will come on stream. She is also optimistic of greater market penetration, but has also acknowledged the challenges posed by the inadequate inter-regional transportation linkages, particularly sea freight, and the increasing cost of items and unavailability of others in the Caribbean. De la Grenade Industries currently imports its bottles from the Far East where they are much cheaper.

One of her ongoing projects is the creation of an herb and spice garden on the grounds of the family estate. Already, landscaping is being conducted and various varieties of spices, for which Grenada is renowned, and fruit trees have been planted. In addition to creating a beautiful ambience, the herb and spice garden should see an increase in the number of tourists who visit the family business, tour the grounds and sample and purchase products.

de la Grenade employs 11 persons but provides work indirectly for nutmeg farmers, basket weavers, salespersons.