

# CAISNews

*“To facilitate improved access to agricultural technology and marketing information to support competitiveness in the agricultural sector”*

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## **In this issue:**

**Welcome**

**From the CAISIN Moderator**

**CTA Director visit to the Caribbean**

**CTA/CARDI Regional QAS workshop**

**CFTC Adviser end of assignment**

**National Information Network Meetings**

networks that can be used as input for future issues.

## **From the CAISIN Moderator – Pat Thompson**

One of CAIS' major objectives is to assist in the establishment of national agricultural information networks within Member States. In June 2001, CAIS held a regional meeting in Trinidad of stakeholders and members of CAIS national networks. This meeting brought together twenty-four (24) nationals from Member States. The meeting reviewed the lessons learnt from information activities carried out in the region under the aegis of CAIS over the period 1998-2000 as well as determined priority activities for national networks for implementation over the period 2001-2004. One of the outcomes of the meeting was endorsement of the e-forum CAISIN as a mechanism to facilitate communication. It was agreed that CAISIN, which consists largely of coordinators of national networks, would constitute a forum for discussion of issues regarding the development of national networks in the first instance, and would provide, in the longer term, a platform for the ongoing exchange of information among participants. Hence, CAISIN was expanded and re-launched in July 2001 following the stakeholders' meeting. There continues to be very slow response and exchange of information within the Network. It is hoped that CAISNews will act as a catalyst to stimulate further discussion among e-forum members.

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## **Welcome!**

We are pleased to publish the first issue of CAISNews, an electronic Newsletter of the Caribbean Agricultural Information Service (CAIS). The mandate of CAIS is to facilitate the development of capacity in information and communications within the Caribbean agricultural sector. CAISNews aims to be one forum to exchange information as well as to stimulate discussion among readers in the sector. CAISNews will cover items ranging from updates of ongoing activities and projects; new initiatives undertaken by national network members, events such as meetings and workshops to personalities, and publications. CAISNews will be issued bi-monthly. The concept is that each issue of the newsletter should contain contributions from the national network relating to its efforts to develop its information and communications capacities.

We welcome feedback and items of interest particularly from members of CAIS national

## **Visit by CTA Director to the Caribbean Region**

The Director of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) Dr

Carl B Greenidge visited the Caribbean region over the period 23 September - 1 October 2001. He gave an informative and stimulating address at the opening ceremony of the CTA/CARDI regional QAS workshop, and also took the opportunity to present the CTA Strategic Framework 2001-2005 to stakeholders in Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago. Key highlights of the CTA framework will be presented in a subsequent issue of CAISNews. During his visit to the region, Dr Greenidge, a Guyanese national, launched his new book in Guyana. The book is entitled "Empowering a peasantry in Caribbean context: the case of Land Settlement Schemes in Guyana, 1865 – 1995. UWI Press, 2001". Copies of the book are available. Please contact [ic@cardi.org](mailto:ic@cardi.org) or the publisher for further information.

### **CTA/CARDI Regional workshop on Management of Question and Answer Services (QAS)**

Many of you are familiar with the QAS, a mechanism aimed at providing information on demand to members of the agricultural sector. The QAS project is now building capacity of Member States to develop their own local services. The management of a QAS was the subject of a Workshop, which was successfully held during the period 15 September - 5 October 2001. Representatives from 8 countries participated. One outcome of the Workshop was the establishment of an electronic forum ("QASnetwork"). Since the establishment of the forum, the group has met, electronically, between 2 - 3 p.m. every Wednesday. To date these electronic meetings have been very successful and participants have started to implement plans for establishment of their national QAS. It is hoped that the QAS will grow and become institutionalised within participating countries. Development of these services will form part of the CTA/CAIS 2002 Work Programme. The workshop final report has already been sent to participants. Summary reports are available to other interested persons. Please request a copy from [ic@cardi.org](mailto:ic@cardi.org).

### **CFTC Adviser End of assignment**

For the past 3 years, Mr Gabriel Canacoo, Information Resources Adviser to CARDI has been collaborating with CAIS in its development. Mr Canacoo's attachment to CARDI which ended in August 2001, was funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC). Gabriel has returned to his native country, Ghana. He has asked that we convey his very best wishes to all those whom he met during his travels to CARDI countries and continues to hold an interest in CAIS development.

### **CAIS National Information Network Meetings**

One of the last assignments carried out by Mr G Canacoo was facilitating meetings in Barbados, Nevis and St Lucia aimed at establishing national agricultural information networks. The meetings were held with stakeholders from the agricultural sector and plans were put in place for the establishment or further development of the networks. National Co-ordinators- Mark Byer (Barbados), Eric Evelyn (St Kitts/Nevis) Marie Louise Reid, (St Lucia), all participated actively in these meetings and will be preparing plans for the further development of their networks. A meeting was also held with Cesar Martinez of the Dominican Republic to discuss steps to be taken in the establishment of their national information network. The Meeting was held at the CARDI Headquarters in Trinidad and Tobago.

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