



Agro-Marketer Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 4

April, 2012



Agriculture Minister visits Parika Agro-Packaging facility

Newly sworn in Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture Mr. Alli Baksh in a deliberate effort to better acquaint himself with the mandates and programmes under the Agriculture Ministry's agenda, visited the Guyana Marketing Corporation's (GMC) Agro Packaging Facility located at Parika, East Bank Essequibo on February 18, 2012.



Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture Alli Baksh and GM of GMC Nizam Hassan at the Parika Agro Packaging Facility

This facility has the capacity to pack and process 40,000 lbs of produce per day and is an integral part of the Ministry of Agriculture's "Grow More Food" Campaign as it encourages proper preparation of produce after harvest. Additionally, GMC facilitates agro-processing training for farmers to build their capacity and enhance their development. All the services at the Ministry of Agriculture are linked and the Parika Agro-packaging facility was strategically placed at that location; **Cont'd on Pg. 2**

Food Safety Modernization Act

-Summary of key changes impacting fruit & vegetable industry

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), is the most sweeping reform of the U.S. food safety laws in recent years. It aims to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus from responding to contamination to preventing it.



FDA Inspector

In the previous edition of The Agro-Marketer we looked at the impact this piece of Legislation had on Exporters. This edition will focus mainly on the key changes impacting the fruit and vegetable industry.

In the first year since the FSMA was signed into law, FDA has made significant progress laying the foundation for a food safety system that is grounded in prevention from farm-to-table. The strong support and active engagement from industry, consumers and government partners have informed the agency's thinking and actions. The FDA is confident that the implementation of this law, and strong collaboration with its partners, will reduce the risk of food borne illness and will ensure **Cont'd on Pg. 3**

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About this Newsletter

This newsletter is a quarterly bulletin of the Guyana Marketing Corporation. It provides information and market intelligence in non-traditional agricultural produce for the local and export markets. The newsletter is aimed at strengthening the information base of our farmers, agribusinesses and other stakeholders.

Increasing the Export of Non-Traditional Agriculture Produce



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A view of the Wharf at the Agro Packaging facility in Parika

between the Parika Stelling and the area's market, since it allows for easy access for farmers transporting their produce via the Essequibo River.

During the visit, Minister Baksh held discussions with the GMC's General Manager; Nizam Hassan on the way forward for the facility as it is currently in the process of being extended to better accommodate processing of non-traditional agriculture produce. The minister reiterated that the new GMC has been doing an implausible job of providing assistance to farmers using the means and resources that are available to visit their farms and offer assistance.

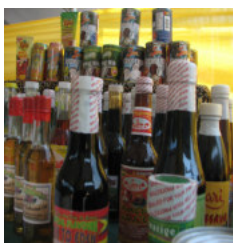
"Right here in Parika there are thousands of acres of farm lands in non - traditional crops and farmers are encouraged to grow more as government has provided them with the necessary capacities to do so such as roads and access to loans... what we are trying to do is to encourage farmers to grow more and provide better facilities, not only a packaging plant but also drainage and irrigation which has been improving over the years," Minister Baksh said. He further stated that government is not only investing through the new GMC to upgrade the facility but is also looking for partnerships with both local and foreign farmers.

"We already have partnership with the farmers of Parika...we are establishing partnership with an individual entity from Trinidad which would see the expansion of this facility...we ideally prefer to have partnerships with locals who produce on a large scale for exportation," Minister Baksh said.

Minister Baksh has already visited the Central Packaging Facility located at the National Exhibition Complex, Sophia and held discussions with the facility's Manager and an exporter.



Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture, Alli Baksh accompanied by GMC's General Manager; Mr. Nizam Hassan as they inspect the Parika Agro Packaging Facility



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Food Safety Modernization Act ***-Summary of key changes impacting fruit & vegetable industry***



FDA Inspectors

the overall safety of foods both domestic and imported. For imported foods, the primary difference under the new law is that, for the first time, importers of fruits and vegetables will be specifically required to have a program to verify that the food products they are bringing into the U.S. are safe.

Increased Authority

Because a high percentage of some foods such as seafood and fresh fruits and vegetables served in U.S. households and restaurants are imported, the law gives FDA new authority to hold imported foods to the same standards as domestic foods. This authority includes:

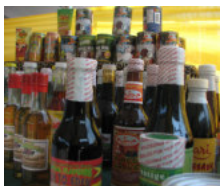
- **Importer accountability**—For the first time, importers have an explicit responsibility to verify that their foreign suppliers have adequate controls in place to ensure that the food they produce is safe.
- **Third-party certification**—It establishes a program through which qualified third parties can certify that foreign food facilities comply with U.S. food safety standards. This certification may be used to facilitate the entry of imports.
- **Certification for high-risk foods**—FDA has the authority to require that imported foods that are at high risk of contamination have a credible third-party certification or other assurance of compliance as a condition of entry into the U.S. The “third party” could be a private company or a governmental entity.
- **Voluntary qualified importer program**—FDA must establish a voluntary program for importers that provides for expedited review and entry of foods from participating importers. Eligibility is limited to, among other things, importers offering food from program-certified facilities.
- **Authority to deny entry**—FDA can refuse the entry of food into the U.S. from a foreign facility if the agency is denied inspection access by the facility or the country in which the facility is located.

Inspections Abroad

The law also directs FDA to develop a plan to expand the technical, scientific, and regulatory food safety capabilities of foreign governments and their industries. Part of the plan includes training foreign governments and food producers on U.S. food safety requirements.



FDA Inspectors



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Food Safety Modernization Act

—Summary of key changes impacting Fruit & Vegetable Industry

Reference Chart Food Safety Modernization Act

Produce Industry Sector	What is new?	What will be different?	What does this mean?	Implementation Timeline
Fruit and Vegetable Importers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires importers to perform risk-based foreign supplier verification to verify that imported food is produced in compliance with applicable U.S. laws and is not adulterated or misbranded. (Sec. 301) 	There are currently no specific requirements for importers of food to establish a verification plan. However, food brought into the U.S. <u>must</u> comply with all U.S. food safety standards.	Importers will need to develop a program that verifies its imported food meets all U.S. food safety standards and is not adulterated.	Guidance and regulation 1 year after enactment. Final rule is effective 2 years after enactment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires FDA to establish a voluntary qualified importer program. (Sec. 107) 	This would be a new program established by FDA that would allow for expedited entry of foods by importers.	Importers who wished to participate in this program would be required to apply for participation with FDA. To be eligible would require third-party certification, consideration of a number of factors related to food Safety programs of the foreign supplier, the country that the food originates from, the risk of intentional contamination.	Guidance 1 year after enactment. Final program 18 months after enactment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorizes FDA to require imported food to have a certification of compliance with applicable requirements. (Sec. 303) 	Certification may be required, based on consideration's, including risk associated the type of food or its place of origin, or a finding by FDA that the Food safety system of the country of origin is in adequate.	This new authority potentially gives FDA a great deal more leverage against imported high risk foods. How FDA defines high risk will be important, but will likely include those foods with a history of problems or countries that have consistently had problems controlling the safety of exported foods.	Upon enactment



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COLD CHAIN SERVICE

Transportation and Storage of Fruits & Vegetables in a refrigerated environment is now easy with the Guyana Marketing Corporation's Cold Chain Service. For safe and secure storage and transportation of your temperature-sensitive cargo. Contact the Guyana Marketing Corporation; increasing the export of Guyana's non-traditional Agricultural Produce.



Refrigerated cargo requires special handling to guarantee that it arrives at its destination in optimum condition. Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, chilled and frozen meats and seafood are typical examples of high perishable cargo that we store and transport in a refrigerated environment.

We offer this service to improve the Post Harvest Management of Non-Traditional Agricultural Produce.

Guyana Marketing Corporation acquired five (5) Refrigerated Forty Foot (40ft) Containers and (6) Refrigerated Trucks.

ColdStorage plays an important role in maintaining marketability by reducing the rate of which perishable produce deteriorates by decreasing the rate of biochemical changes in fresh foods; resulting in higher prices



*******AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC*******



LOCATION 1

Central Packaging Facility
National Exhibition
Complex,
Sophia
Tel.: 219-0085



COST TO USE FACILITY

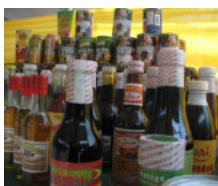
\$- Guyanese Dollar
20ft Container-\$10,000.00
40ft Container-\$13,500.00
Air shipment - \$10,000.00



LOCATION 2

Parika Agro Packaging Facility
Mora, Parika
(Behind the Neighborhood Democratic Council Office)
Tel.: 260-4983

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Minister Ramsammy converge with key stakeholders to discuss frame work for the collection of farmers Production Data

The Ministry of Agriculture is definitely looking to enhance the consistency and accuracy of production data for non-traditional agricultural crops in Guyana. Key stakeholders including Heads of Departments and their technical staff, Crop reporters, the Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Finance met with Minister of Agriculture Dr Leslie Ramsammy at the Ministry's Boardroom, to discuss the Methodology for collecting this pertinent Data.



Minister of Agriculture addressing stakeholders at the meeting to determine Methodology of Collection of Farmers Production Data on March 3ed, 2012

According to recent reports the Agriculture sector plays an important role in Guyana's economy. It accounts for approximately 21% of GDP, of which other crops accounted for 24% of agriculture GDP as well as 1% percent of total export earnings in 2010. Consequently, the methodology implemented to collect this data must reflect consistency and accuracy in order for agriculture's true contribution to national development be recognized, and more importantly for proper interventions be made when necessary.

Recognizing the need for increased collaboration among the agencies within the Agri-Ministry regarding the successful collection of production data, and following the meeting between the Minister of Agriculture and key stakeholders on March 3rd, 2012, a new methodology for enhancing production statistics was agreed to be formulated. This was later followed up with a meeting of technical personnel within the ministry and the Bureau of Statistics on March 23rd, 2012.

Implementation of a new approach was discussed in depth. The two approach discussed included the Proxy; going to the markets and Full Enumeration; collecting data directly from farm. However, both approaches posed a list of challenges. This was agreed upon and the Guyana Marketing Corporation was tasked with developing a framework and coordinating this initiative.



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Implementing the two approaches (full enumeration and proxy) simultaneously allows the advantages of one technique to overcome the disadvantages of the other. This approach recognizes that the best method to collect production data is to enumerate farms. However, given the current constraints, there is need for support by using a proxy (alternative) approach.

These proxy methods of data collection involve conducting interviews at the market, wholesale or retail. The two approaches will be implemented simultaneously to take advantages of the strengths and combat the weaknesses of the other. However, much needs to be done to avoid double counting. Therefore, a technical group with the expertise within the ministry will be established to have a system to validate the data and to ensure there is no overlap. This will lead to a complementary system, where more meaningful information will be acquired with the available resources.



Permanent Secretary in MOA; Mr. George Jervis addressing stakeholders in view of Minister Ramsammy



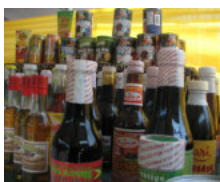
Senior Analyst attached to GMC during her presentation on March 23rd, 2012.

*****ATTENTION***ATTENTION***ATTENTION*****

REFRIGERATED TRUCKING SERVICE

The Ministry of Agriculture through the Guyana Marketing Corporation introduces a new Refrigerated Trucking Service to provide farmers and exporters with the required transport for their produce from one location to another.





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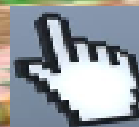


MARKET & ENTERPRISE INFORMATION SYSTEM

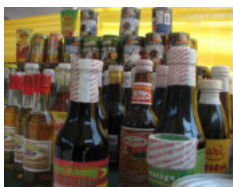
A useful resource for doing business with and from Guyana, in the non-traditional agricultural sector: fresh fruits & vegetables and processed agricultural products. Farmers, agro-processors, exporters and other agri-business investors, will find this website a useful resource for information on proper post harvest handling, packaging, marketing and exporting.

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www.newgmc.com



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AGRO-PROCESSING TECHNOLOGY

In this quarters edition of Agro-Processing Technology we will continue to focus on the Crops selected by the Ministry of Agriculture's Agriculture Diversification Strategy. The four crops selected under the administration's Agricultural Diversification Strategy as you know are pineapples, peppers, pumpkins and plantains also known as the 4P's. The 4P's have been identified to have great potential for cultivation and export which will lead diversification in Guyana.

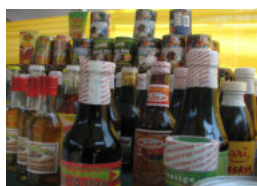
This article will focus on ***ADDING VALUE TO PINEAPPLES***. Pineapples are grown commercially for local consumption and for the export markets. In Guyana the main areas of production are Canals # 1 & #2 Polders and the Soesdyke Linden Highway.

PINEAPPLE IN SYRUP

INGREDIENTS	AMTS	PROCEDURE
Pineapple	1	Make syrup using sugar, water, spices and Lime juice
Sugar	227g	Peel Pineapple and slice as desired
Water	131g	Place Pineapple Slices into syrup and boil for 10-15 minutes
Lime Juice	15ml	Fill into sterilized containers (Glass Jars) and seal
Spices	To Flavor	After cooling containers are dried, labeled and stored

SHELF LIFE: 12 MONTHS













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AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES FOR PRODUCE FOR JANUARY, FEBRUARY & MARCH 2012 AT THE MAIN URBAN MARKETS

Root Crops							
ITEM	Unit	Bourda Market			Stabroek Market Market		
		Jan 12	Feb 12	Mar 12	Jan 12	Feb 12	Mar 12
CASSAVA	\$/KG	220.92	219.08	225.08	219.08	229.17	220.00
EDDO	\$/KG	157.67	154.00	156.54	137.50	141.31	132.00
GINGER	\$/KG	762.67	810.62	804.00	772.00	804.83	789.80
SWEET POTATO	\$/KG	183.33	187.85	176.92	166.83	196.17	173.46
YAM	\$/KG	557.33	493.17	465.67	508.20	511.50	438.00
Condiments & Spices							
ITEM	Unit	Bourda Market			Stabroek Market Market		
		Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12	Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12
CELERY	\$/KG	1,100.00	844.80	690.00	1,112.22	990.00	670.00
ESCHALIOT	\$/KG	330.00	609.23	443.38	324.67	553.38	414.62
PEPPER (HOT)	\$/KG	266.44	255.54	335.08	253.00	214.92	306.31
CHERRY	\$/PT	138.33	125.38	163.85	142.78	115.33	157.69
Vegetables							
ITEM	Unit	Bourda Market			Stabroek Market Market		
		Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12	Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12
BORA	\$/BDLS	50.14	57.21	50.13	48.14	51.07	47.95
BOULANGER (MED)60	\$/PCL	129.17	150.00	161.54	120.83	150.00	135.92
CABBAGE	\$/KG	240.17	397.69	475.54	251.17	380.77	439.15
CAI AL OO	\$/BDLS	48.67	56.58	53.47	38.94	54.80	58.97
CORILLA	\$/KG	339.17	396.00	397.69	296.39	331.69	321.54
CUCUMBER	\$/EAC	35.26	58.72	46.92	33.98	58.05	45.82
OCHIRO	\$/KG	264.00	290.00	286.00	281.42	269.92	269.08
PAK CHOI	\$/RT	51.18	61.86	58.62	47.36	56.03	60.41
PUMPKIN	\$/KG	137.50	144.69	132.00	132.00	123.54	125.58
SQUASH (MED)	\$/EAC	161.72	195.13	156.92	162.08	197.69	147.08
PEPPER (SWEET)	\$/KG	794.44	844.46	886.77	793.83	788.62	820.77
TOMATOES	\$/KG	378.89	467.64	475.54	337.33	392.05	412.92
FRUITS							
ITEM	Unit	Bourda Market			Stabroek Market Market		
		Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12	Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12
LIME (ROUND)	\$/EAC	31.02	32.06	36.13	26.14	18.37	28.13
ORANGES	\$/EAC	34.23	43.18	54.23	30.29	34.26	48.21
PAPAW	\$/EAC	460.00	452.31	470.77	386.36	374.62	393.85
PINEAPPLES	\$/EAC	292.92	312.31	324.72	261.11	267.18	260.77
WATERMELON	\$/KG	182.42	233.54	300.67	186.08	222.00	289.67
COCONUT (DRY)	\$/EAC	54.58	56.92	50.51	53.89	56.03	51.94
COCONUT (WATER)	\$/EAC	120.00	130.00	140.00	120.00	120.00	111.67



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GMC & GUYSUCO COLLABORATE TO SUPPORT LOCAL AGROPROCESSORS

Systems are already developed and soon to be implemented to curb any resale of sugar supplied to local processors. This is according to the Marketing Manager at GUYSUCO; Mrs. Roxanne Greenidge. All Agro-Processors will have to submit a profile of their respective businesses consisting of information such as Quantity and frequency of sugar needed, Business Registration, VAT registration in Business name, location and size of markets, etc. Mrs. Greenidge further stated that in the near future every bag of sugar supplied to local Agro-Processors will be tagged so they can be traced anywhere. This measure as well as strict penalties for defaulters will prove to significantly deter unscrupulous processors from this illegal act of reselling sugar.

Several members of the local Agro-Processing Industry attended this meeting including the president of the Guyana Agro-processors Association; Mr., Rodwell Denny who indicated he would relate the new criteria for receiving sugar from GUYSUCO to his Association members. He also stated that in moving forward sugar will continue to play a significant role in the manufacturing of most local products and a continuous supply will provide local manufacturers an opportunity to effectively compete against imported products and getting local products into more export markets



An Agro-Processor making a point during the meeting between GUYSUCO, GMC and members of the Local Agro-Processors

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