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Breaking News from Florida's International Volunteer Agency



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CITRUS INDUSTRY IN DOMINICA IMPROVES PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Citrus has been a major crop in Dominica since the decline of the sugar and banana industry. In 1996, there were 5,355 acres of mixed citrus established and a total estimated production of 40,478 tons mostly for the local market. However, over the last decade there has been a 50% decrease in productive capacity in the industry due to pests such as Citrus Tristeza Virus and Asian Citrus Psyllid. As early as May 2012 the dreadful disease hauglongbing, better known as Citrus Greening Disease, was officially confirmed in Dominica. The Ministry of Agriculture's Plant Protection and Quarantine Services contacted FAVACA to identify experts to train on assessing the Citrus Greening Disease and creating a management strategy for the industry.



Dr. Eric Rohrig, Biological Scientist with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Plant Industry in Gainesville, Florida, and Dr. Xiaoan Sun, Plant Pathologist also with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Plant Industry, traveled to Roseau, Dominica December 1-9, 2012 to work with 30 farmers and Ministry of Agriculture extension agents. The volunteers taught the participants to use the vector's natural enemies to combat their populations, rear and keep records of the natural

enemies, monitor vector populations, and share the results. A Polymerase Chain Reaction test and other diagnostic tools were discussed and carried out with laboratory staff. Lastly, the volunteers met with citrus industry stakeholders to create a strategic plan for disease and vector management in Dominica. To date, no country is known to have eradicated Citrus Greening Disease; yet due to Dominica's unique geography, climate, and agricultural systems, the country is likely to achieve eradication, should all recommendations be followed.

GOAT REPRODUCTION METHODS ENHANCED IN HAITI

Makouti Agro-Enterprises and Partners of the Americas have been working with Haitian livestock producers to increase the quantity of livestock available in Haiti and improve livestock nutrition and reproductive health. Goats and livestock in general are important commodities for the Haitian economy. A loss of livestock whether due to poor health or during pregnancy is a significant economic hardship for producers with difficult prospects for recovery. Makouti Agro-Enterprises requested FAVACA's assistance to find an expert to work with producers to increase their knowledge of goat nutrition and improve breeding selection and reproduction.

FAVACA recruited Schauston Miller, Research Professional at Fort Valley State University of Fort Valley, Georgia, to travel to Haiti from September 29-October 14, 2012 and work with Haitian livestock owners. Miller focused on the special care goats need before and after breeding as well as breeding stock selection. Typically Haitian producers do not keep records of breeding dates, kidding or weaning of their goats. There is also no naming or numbering of does and bucks nor any records kept on dates of sale or transfer. Miller taught producers the importance of record keeping and reproduction management.



Similarly, reproductive selection was taught to producers to ensure bucks don't mate with family members. To do this, Miller trained on natural and artificial insemination to improve the genetics of goats while also teaching producers several methods to castrate goats. Miller recommended that Haitian goat producers form a goat meat association to share lessons learned and build the capacity of the industry.

FARMERS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TRAINED ON VERMICOMPOSTING

Protected agriculture systems such as greenhouses and shadehouses are increasingly being used in the Dominican Republic to increase vegetable production for local and international markets. Due to the high cost of fertilizer, greenhouse associations have a great need for technical assistance in the area of homemade organic fertilizers and pesticides as a means to improve the soil quality. SurFuturo, the Association for the Advancement of San Jose de Ocoa (Asociación para el Desarrollo de San Jose de Ocoa), and the Constanza Greenhouse Cluster requested training on vermicomposting to ensure nutritious compost for protected agriculture structures.



First time FAVACA volunteer Rhonda Sherman, an Extension Specialist on Solid Waste Management at North Carolina State University's Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, traveled to the Dominican Republic September 15-30, 2012. Sherman traveled to the towns of El Cercado, Derrumbadero, La Guama, San Jose de Ocoa, Rodadero, El Rifle, and Santo Domingo to provide trainings to farmers and extension agents on producing vermicompost and vermicompost tea and the use of the vermicompost in greenhouses and on crops. Many of the farmers' vermicomposting structures were suffering from pests,

so the volunteer offered best practices on pest management. Sherman also observed that the farmers and technicians were using leachate, a dark liquid from composting piles, as liquid fertilizer for crops, but she advised against this practice as the leachate may contain pathogens and anaerobic microbes that can harm people, animals, or plants. Sherman also visited the Center for Development of Agriculture and Forestry's Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Program and toured a farmer's market and a solid waste transfer station to improve their composting programs.

STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION AND VOLUNTEERISM IN COLOMBIA

Under FAVACA's US State Department-sponsored professional exchange program, Solidarity Organizations (Organizaciones Solidarias), a Colombian government entity designed to formalize nonprofits, associations, collectives, and volunteer groups, and Equilibrium Foundation (Fundación Equilibrio), an organization dedicated to strengthening and building the capacity of Colombian nonprofits, teamed up host four US Professional Fellows and organize a three-day National Symposium on Volunteerism. Colombian Professional Fellows Marcela Aragon (Equilibrium Foundation) and Ricardo Ramirez (Solidarity Organizations) had been working with US Fellows Terrie Temkin, Robyn Perlman and Gail Meltzer of CoreStrategies for Nonprofits and Carlos Zepeda of OMA Consulting since the beginning of 2012. The US Fellows were requested to travel to Colombia October 28, 2012 to further improve organizational impact and capacity and build relationships for international collaboration as well as work with the Foundation for Special Needs Children; Women, Weave, and Knowledge (an indigenous women's organization); and Future for Everyone.



Thousands of volunteer groups active throughout Colombia in creating change in their communities drew the attention of the national government and through strategic partnerships created the National Symposium on Volunteerism in 2008. This year, more than 800 attendees from more than 500 volunteer organizations gathered in Armenia,

Quindío, Colombia, from November 1-4 to discuss ways to share best practices and increase impact. The US Fellows led a panel, roundtables and one-on-one discussions on fundraising, collaboration, and community building. The symposium offered an excellent opportunity to foster mutual understanding between the US and Colombia and added national impact to FAVACA's overall program goals of building capacities and relationships to empower women throughout Colombia.

YOUR SUPPORT IS IMPORTANT TO US!

In light of this month's National Day of Service, FAVACA would like to thank all of our volunteers for everything you have done. We appreciate your volunteer service, which not only makes a huge difference in the lives of our neighbors throughout the Caribbean and the Americas, but also reduces diseases and pests from harming Florida's industries and creates opportunities for Floridians. In the wise words of Sherry Anderson, "Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless." Thank you for your ongoing support! Please [sign our petition](#) if you agree!



FAVACA VOLUNTEER CREATES SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Natacha Yacinthe, a certified urban planner and doctor in Public Administration, served as a FAVACA volunteer providing expertise in urban planning and solid waste management in Jacmel, Haiti. She recently established the *Dr. Natacha J. Yacinthe Scholarship Fund* at Florida Atlantic University, which provides financial assistance on a yearly basis to undergraduate and graduate Haitian-Americans and International Haitian students majoring in Public Administration, Public Policy or Urban and City Planning. For more information, please call (305) 333-8553 or e-mail yacinthe172000@yahoo.com.

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Promoting social and economic development in the Caribbean and the Americas through volunteer service.

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