

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT
CAR. BBEAN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION PROJECT
US/AID PROJECT #5380017
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Regional Agricultural Extension Coordinating Committee

The Regional Agricultural Extension Coordinating Committee (RAECC) met on St. Vincent, April 27-29. Representatives to RAECC included chief agricultural officers, directors of extension, farmer representatives, participants from regional and international organizations, and project staff. In addition, the external evaluation team consisting of Marv Alkin from UCLA, Kay Adams from Ohio State University, Marlene Cuthbert from the University of the West Indies-Jamaica, and Jerry West from the University of Missouri participated. A copy of the program for RAECC is attached. The sessions focused on evaluation criteria for the project, contributions to project success to be made by various participants in the project, and discussion of critical project components and activities. All cooperating countries were fully represented at RAECC. A summary report of RAECC proceedings was produced immediately following the meetings. That summary report is attached. Also attached is the evaluation plan which emerged from RAECC.

CAEP staff were very pleased with the high level of participation and discussion, and the great enthusiasm shown by host country participants. This was a major launching point for Phase II of CAEP. This was the time to re-establish momentum, to bring participants up to date on the Phase II project plans, to make clear their responsibilities, and to engender commitments to project success. This was also an opportunity for CAEP staff to meet the participants from various countries, and for those participants to meet our staff.

All aspects of RAECC went very smoothly. The University of the West Indies support staff did an excellent and efficient job handling finances in support of participant travel and per diem. The evaluators were well received and the evaluation focus provided an important mechanism for dealing with project expectations and requirements. The only disappointment in RAECC was the relatively low level of US/AID participation. US/AID was represented by a temporary duty officer who was not well informed about either the project or other RDO/C activities. US/AID lost an opportunity to see firsthand how participants are reacting with enthusiasm to this extension project, and participants in RAECC lost the opportunity to hear from informed US/AID officials about US/AID efforts and concerns in the Region.

Implementation of National Extension Improvement Plans

The National Extension Planning Committees are all active. Every participating country held a meeting of the National Planning Committee this quarter and in several countries the Committees are meeting monthly to get the project off to a firm start.

In conjunction with technical assistance workshops on program planning sponsored by CAEP (the technical assistance component is described below), all participating countries engaged in the processes of reorganization according

to their national plans, the writing of job descriptions, the preparation of annual work plans for individual agents, and planning for in-service training. It is expected that early in the next quarter all participating countries will have completed job descriptions and annual work plans. Most countries will have completed their reorganization. CAEP staff have prepared a format for officially reporting to US/AID on the implementation of National Extension Improvement Plans on a country-by-country basis in accordance with project implementation letter #1 specifying that progress in implementing National Extension Improvement Plans must be certified before procurement of vehicles can proceed. Early the next quarter we expect to submit to US/AID documentation certifying that at least five of seven participating countries have met the requirements for implementation of their National Plans so that vehicle procurement can proceed.

A major activity of this quarter was identification of candidates for participation in long-term training at ECIAF for front-line extension agents and the University of the West Indies for postgraduate Diploma training. To preserve and to make the best use of project resources, project staff have been working with participating countries to make sure that other sources of funding for ECIAF scholarships are fully used before CAEP supports such training. In particular, a concerted effort has been made to have countries fully use CIDA scholarships for ECIAF before CAEP support is requested. This approach takes on added importance because of substantial increases in the tuition costs at UWI for the coming year. These tuition increases of more 40% will substantially increase the costs of the postgraduate Diploma program. CAEP staff at UWI are still in the process of negotiating the actual costs of the postgraduate Diploma program and are seeking a reduction in costs for CAEP-sponsored participants.

A cloud hanging over the long term training component of the project as this quarter ends is the possibility that the government of Trinidad and Tobago will close ECIAF or will temporarily suspend admissions until a full review of ECIAF finances and purposes is undertaken. An announcement was made by the Minister of Agriculture of Trinidad and Tobago that a review of ECIAF by the Cabinet was eminent, and that such a review might lead to the closing of ECIAF either permanently or temporarily. Since the Jamaica School of Agriculture has already closed for financial reasons, the closing of ECIAF would present severe problems in efforts to provide high quality training for frontline agricultural agents. CAEP staff, therefore, are reviewing alternative training possibilities elsewhere in the Region, in the United States, and in Central America.

Linkage Between Research and Extension

At the end of the RAECC the first meeting, officially, of the Technical Joint Action Committee occurred. That meeting included representatives of CARDI, CARDATS, UWI, TEJAC and CAEP. The first meeting was devoted to discussing the purposes of TJAC and outlining the expectations of participants. The minutes of that meetings are attached to this report.

In addition to this formal linkage, research subcommittees of National Extension Planning Committees have been established to guarantee collaboration at the national level between research and extension. In addition, CAEP participated in discussions with technical staff involved in preparing the

Project Paper for Phase II of CARDI. In Trinidad the CAEP and CARDI staff are now interacting more often as a result of increased activities and the sharing of the new building on the UWI campus.

The linkage between research and extension was much in evidence at the Annual Extension In-Service Workshops held in April and May in the Windwards and Leewards. These annual in-service workshops bring together extension staff for refresher sessions with researchers. In the Windwards CARDI, WINBAN, and UWI faculty made technical presentations. In the Leewards, CARDI and UWI staff made presentations. MUCIA staff also made presentations in collaboration with UWI/CAEP participants.

Technical Assistance

During May and June consultant Eugene Pilgram provided technical assistance on program development and administration to extension services in the Windwards and Belize. This followed the sessions he had done in February and March in the Leewards. Program development workshops were conducted in St. Vincent, Dominica, and St. Lucia. All extension staff participated in these workshops which focused on workplans, job descriptions, and program development. Pilgram also worked with key extension officials and staff in each country prior to and following the formal workshops. In June similar workshops were offered in Belize in three different areas of the country. In total there was approximately 20 days of formal workshop training with nearly 250 participants averaging two days per participant. Formal evaluations were collected from all participants at each workshop. The evaluation results were highly favorable. Eugene Pilgram's full report is attached as an appendix to this quarterly report.

Communications Units

By the end of this quarter MUCIA communications specialist Ray Woodis had visited all participating countries. In each country he made an assessment of the national communications situation. Woodis was also involved in completing the production facilities and capabilities at UWI in Trinidad. He has updated a list of needed communications equipment and will make recommendations for national communications and regional communications procurement at the July staff meeting of CAEP. Woodis also assisted with development of the post graduate Diploma program and recruitment brochures. CAEP co-director P.I. Gomes and Ray Woodis have outlined a schedule for production of extension technical brochures through the end of 1983. These bulletins will be produced in the 3rd and 4th quarters of this year.

The UWIDITE satellite communications project is not yet operational in Trinidad. The Trinidad connection has been plagued by technical problems. A representative from the US/AID project funded out of Washington spent six weeks in Trinidad attempting to solve the problem. It is expected that the system will become operational during the next quarter and that CAEP staff will begin using the system for staff meetings and long distance teaching. CAEP has agreed with US/AID-Washington and the UWIDITE program director in Jamaica on a plan of collaboration for the use of the system by extension and the faculty of agriculture in Trinidad. Unfortunately, the system will not be

of optimal utility to CAEP because hookups will not be available in either Antigua or Belize.

Excellence in Extension

During this quarter all participating countries undertook a program to identify and recognize excellence in extension. The initiative for this program came from CAEP. In each country the National Planning Committee developed criteria and implemented a selection procedure for nominating and selecting the single extension person who has contributed most during the year to agricultural development through excellence in extension. By the end of this quarter all selections had been made. In August the identified extension agents will meet at UWI in Trinidad for a three day workshop. That session will lead to the selection of a single representative of excellence in extension for the Region. The person selected will be featured in the UWI newsletter of the Department of Agricultural Extension, will participate in the Annual Conference of the Department of Agricultural Extension at the University of Minnesota, and will participate in RAECC in 1984. The purposes of the excellence in extension effort are to increase professionalism among the extension agents, recognize professional contributions, and develop role models of extension work that are performance-based.

Procurement

Vehicles for CAEP staff were procured and delivered in Belize, Dominica and St. Lucia. The communications van for Trinidad has not yet been shipped because of difficulties obtaining permission to import a left hand drive vehicle. New restrictions have been placed on the importation of left hand drive vehicles by the government of Trinidad and Tobago. The procedure for obtaining permission for importation required action by Cabinet. It is expected that this matter will not be resolved until well into next quarter. This delay is creating considerable difficulty for the MUCIA communications specialist in Trinidad who is handicapped by lack of transportation. The first communication equipment has been procured and delivered including slide projectors, overhead projectors, and screens.

CAEP staff has spent a considerable amount of time working in each country to develop a current list of needed agricultural equipment and communications equipment. The target for beginning procurement for participating countries is following the July staff meeting. At that time procurement plans will be reviewed and the procurement process will be outlined in detail. With the source and origin waivers for vehicles it is expected that the vehicle procurement will proceed rapidly since it is possible to purchase vehicles locally.

During RAECC the project campus coordinator representing MUCIA had a very fruitful conversation with US/AID representative Don Yemen on procurement issues. Yemen emphasized the desirability of purchasing as much equipment as possible locally in order to guarantee warranties and to establish direct linkages between the countries and supplies. These direct linkages will increase the possibility that equipment will be replaced and spare parts will be available as needed. In that regard, the procurement procedures will

emphasize local purchases. This will be particularly helpful and useful with regard to vehicle procurement and the procurement of agricultural equipment.

In April MUCIA Team Leader George Saksa wrote to US/AID with a proposal for the St. Vincent vehicle loan scheme. To date no reply has been received. This innovative and important component of the project urgently needs RDO/C action to permit implementation.

Evaluation

As noted at the beginning of this report, four external evaluators participated in the RA ECC meeting. The evaluators also met with US/AID officials RDO/C in Barbados prior to RA ECC. Based on those discussions the evaluators, under the direction of Chair Marvin Alkin, developed an evaluation proposal. That proposal will be reviewed at the July staff meeting. It has been sent out to all RA ECC participants for comments. Following those reviews and any final revisions, the proposal will be officially submitted to US/AID for approval. The major evaluation fieldwork will take place in May and June, 1984.

Plans for the Next Quarter, July-September, 1983

All CAEP staff will meet in Dominica July 15-17. This meeting will permit reports on project progress from each staff member and will allow the annual workplan to be updated. A new workplan format has been developed based on the evaluation plan. That revised plan will be submitted to US/AID following the July staff meeting.

The excellence in extension workshop will be held at UWI in Trinidad in August.

The Diploma in extension will be finalized so that the curriculum can be fully implemented as students arrive in the fourth quarter.

CAEP will continue to work with participating countries in implementing their National Extension Improvement Plans.

Procurement of agricultural equipment, communications equipment, and vehicles will begin in earnest as individual procurement plans for each country are completed.

Evaluation plans for Phase II will be submitted to US/AID for approval.

Dean Lawrence Wilson, Faculty of Agriculture, UWI, will visit four MUCIA institutions to help identify potential technical assistance collaborators under CAEP.

Action Needed

RDO/C needs to respond to the proposal for the St. Vincent loan scheme.