

CAHFSA Annual Report 2017



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ABBREVIATIONS

AHFS	Agricultural Health and Food Safety
CAHFSA	Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CARPHA	Caribbean Public Health Agency
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
COTED	Council for Trade and Economic Development
CPHD	Caribbean Plant Health Directors
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
CROSQ	CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards & Quality
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IICA	Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
ISPMS	International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures
LAC	Legal Affairs Committee
NPPO	National Plant Protection Organization
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PRA	Pest Risk Analysis
SOLAC	Senior Officials of the Legal Affairs Committee

SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization

CORPORATE INFORMATION

MANDATE: The Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) was established by the Heads of Government of CARICOM to perform a coordinating and organizing role in the establishment of an effective and efficient regional sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regime and to execute on behalf of Member States such SPS actions and activities that can be more effectively and efficiently executed through a regional mechanism.

LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

The following Agreements give force to CAHFSA:

- Revised Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA): February 25, 2011;
- Original Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency: March 12: 2010
- Revised Treaty of Chagaramas (Articles 57 and 74).

Our Vision: “to be a leading regional institution of international repute in the application of Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems.”

Our Mission: “to enhance regional development in agricultural health and food safety through the application of SPS Measures that meet the expectation of all stakeholders and contribute to the welfare of our citizens.”

Core Values: The organization is committed to:

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Integrity
- Confidentiality
- Good Governance
- Inclusiveness

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Letitia Vriesdelaan #10
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E-mail: info@cahfsa.org

Website: www.cahfsa.org

Telephone: 597 422 546 (Office)
597 743 9090 (Mobile)

AREAS OF WORK

- Plant Health
- Animal Health
- Food Safety

Chief Executive Officer: Mr. L. Simeon Collins

Number of Staff: 07

Number of Technical Advisory Committees: 03

Principal Bankers: DSB Bank Suriname N. V.

Board of Directors 2017

- Dr Beverley Wood: Barbados- Chairperson
- Dr Mark Pierre: Guyana - Vice Chairperson
- Dr Tubal Edwards: Antigua & Barbuda
- Mr. Gregory Rahming: Bahamas
- Mr. Emiz Cruz: Belize
- Mr. Anselm Ryan: Dominica
- Dr Bowen Louison: Grenada
- Dr Max Millien/Mr. Charles Pierre: Haiti
- Ms. Sanniel S. Wilson - Jamaica
- Dr Selvyn Maloney: Montserrat
- Dr Tracey Challenger: St. Kitts & Nevis
- Dr Auria King: St. Lucia
- Dr Kathian Hackshaw: St. Vincent & the Grenadines
- Mr. Radjendre Debie/Ms. Soenita Parbhoe: Suriname
- Dr. Simone Titus: Trinidad & Tobago
- Ms. Desiree Field Ridley/Ms. Nisa Surujbally/Dr. Ronnie Brathwaite: CARICOM Secretariat (Observer)
- L. Simeon Collins: CEO (Ex officio Member)

Human Resource Sub Committee

- Dr Mark Pierre
- Mr. Emir Cruz
- Dr Tracey Challenger

Finance Sub Committee

- Dr Beverley Wood
- Dr Selvyn Maloney
- Dr Bowen Louison

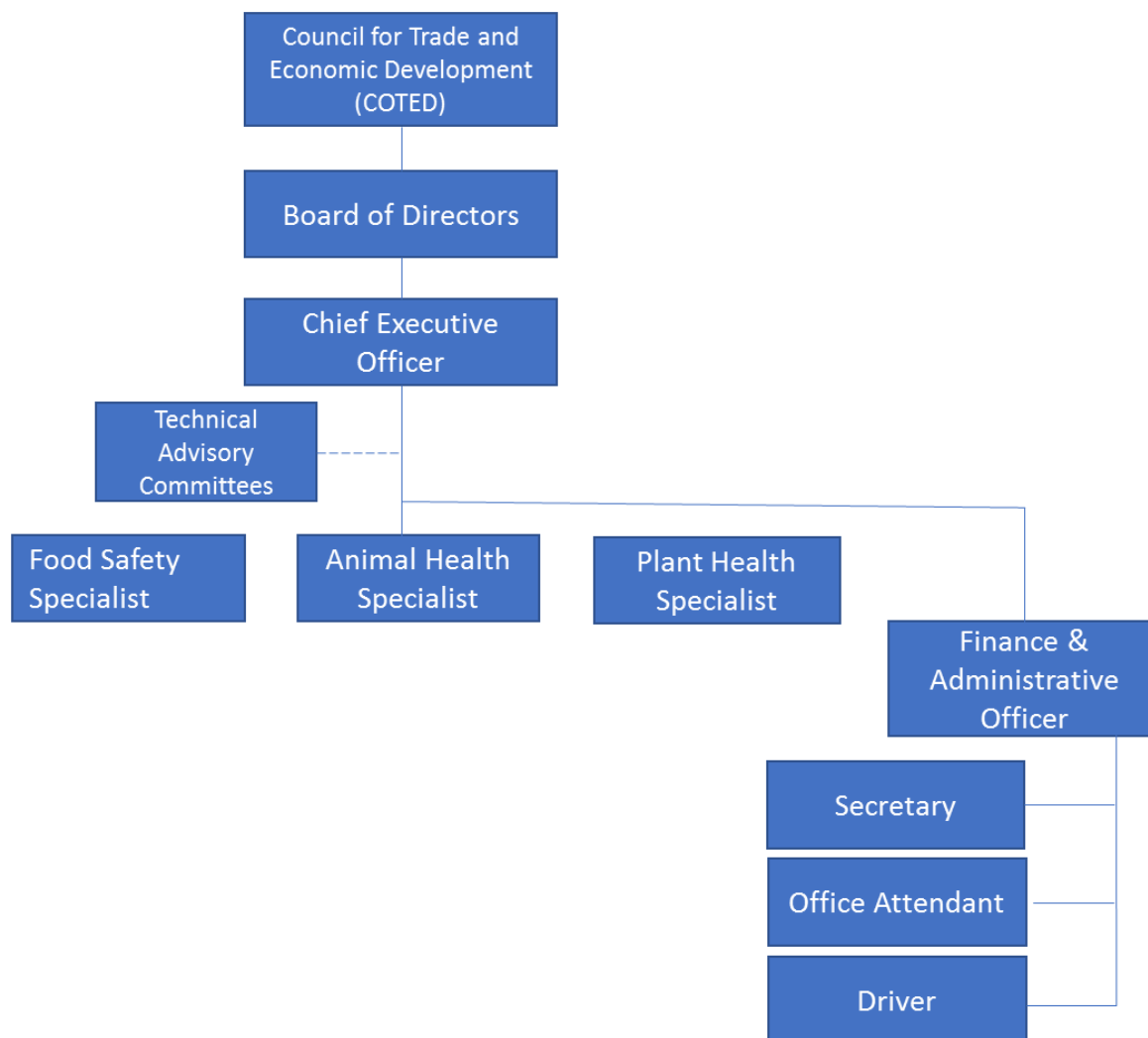
Professional Staff

- Mr. L. Simeon Collins, B. Sc., M.Sc. – CEO
- Mrs. Herma Griffith Ifill, FCCA, MBA – Finance/Administrative Officer
- Mrs. Juliet Goldsmith, B. Sc., M.Sc. - Plant Health Specialist
- Dr. Gavin Peters, DVM., M. Sc. – Animal Health Specialist

Support Staff

- Trisnatie (Truus) Djioed, Secretary;
- Hemantkoemar (Shaam) Kalika, Driver;
- Amushca Satjapradja: Office Attendant

Organizational Structure 2017



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CAHFSA is pleased to provide this report to stakeholders summarising key activities and providing updates on its operational plan and work programme for the period January to December 2017.

During the period in question:

- A Regional Guideline for Pest Risk Analysis of Imported Plants and Plant Products was approved for use by the COTED. This guide provides a model for the conduct of pest risk analysis by national plant protection organizations within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).
- A guideline for preparing market access proposals has been prepared by CAHFSA for use by CARICOM Member States. This guide describes a process that can be followed to gain market access with the least hindrance to trade but, at the same time, prevent the spread of plant pests and diseases into new areas.
- The Regional Biosafety Policy developed by UWI was approved by the COTED and a road map for the implementation of the policy has been developed;
- A draft specification for cassava flour has been developed to ensure that cassava flour produce in the region conform with international standards;
- Harmonized Conditions for a Permit Controlling the Importation of Live Caprine and Ovine from CARICOM Countries were in development;
- Harmonized Protocols for the Movement of Dogs and Cats in the Caribbean were being development;
- Protocols governing CARICOM Control, Inspection and Approval Procedures for Trade in Animal and Animal Products were under development;
- The Region benefitted from training programmes in Plant Pest Risk Analysis; Plant Pest Prioritization and in Food Safety and best practices for food of animal origin;
- Risk Assessment for Poultry and Pork Products to be traded were conducted resulting in the approval of six Member States to be able to export pork and poultry, including duck meat, to the region;
- A Procedure to facilitate the Settlement of SPS related trade dispute in CARICOM was under development;
- CAHFSA was named the Regional Plant Protection Organization for the Caribbean;
- CAHFSA was involved in coordinating the Work of Agricultural Health and Food Safety in the region and the work of the CARICOM CVOs;
- The following data bases were developed to provide information exchange and dissemination of SPS information throughout CARICOM:
 - Database on List of Pesticides Registered by CARICOM Member States;
 - Database on Regional Trade Issues;
 - Database on Regionally Regulated Pests;
 - Database on Agriculture Health and Food Safety Practitioners in the Region;
- An SPS Information Portal was developed on the CAHFSA website to provide information on WTO/SPS Notifications;
- Services towards strengthening agricultural quarantine capacities in Dominica, Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis commenced.

1 REPORT ON OPERATIONS

This report provides an overview of the operations of CAHFSA during the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017. It focuses on the major areas of work outlined in the 2017 Work Plan of CAHFSA, namely:

- Legislation and Standards
- Capacity Building
- Trade Issues
- Rapid Response and Safeguarding
- Information Exchange and Dissemination
- Linkages with Regional Organizations
- Linkages with International Organizations
- Administration and Finance

1.1 Legislation and Standards

1.1.1 Draft CARICOM Regional Food Safety Bill

A draft Regional Model Food Safety Bill developed under the 10th EDF Project was reviewed by the Senior Officials of the Legal Affairs Committee (SOLAC) as well as the Legal Affairs Committee (LAC) of CARICOM and was recommended to the Heads of States for signing at their meeting in July 2017.

1.1.2 Development of Standards for products derived from regional priority commodities

A draft specification for cassava flour has been developed by CAHFSA to ensure that cassava flour produce in the region conforms with international standards. The Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) at its Seventy First (71st) Special Meeting which was held in Georgetown, Guyana from October 4-6, 2017 agreed for the Ministries of Agriculture to assist with the dissemination of the cassava flour draft standard to national stakeholders for comments. Comments were also sought from Members States through the CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards & Quality (CROSQ) mechanism and through existing National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agencies. Comments received will be used to finalize the document early in 2018.

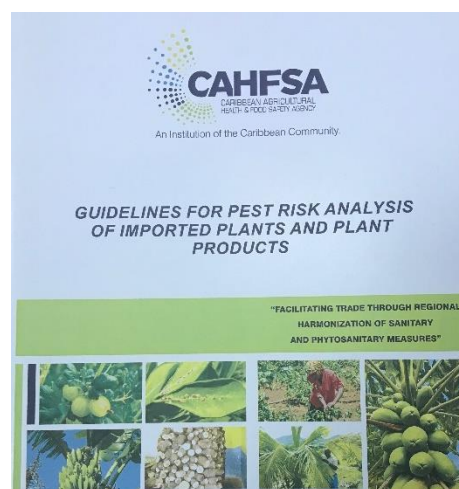


Figure 1: CAHFSA CEO and Board Chairperson attending the 71st Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) at the CARICOM Secretariat, Georgetown, Guyana

In the meantime, results emanating from the evaluation of cassava flour done on a study of the cassava flour industry in seven selected Caribbean countries to determine conformity to the draft standard, indicated that brands of cassava flour being sold on the market, in most cases, conform to the chemical and pesticide level requirements outlined in this draft standard and by extension, international standards. However, the microbial and heavy metal profiles are of food safety concerns. This highlighted the need for the entire work force in the cassava flour supply chain to adopt good manufacturing practices and preventive process controls in their operations.

1.1.3 Guideline for Conducting Pest Risk Analysis

The Regional Guideline for Pest Risk Analysis of Imported Plants and Plant Products which was approved by the COTED at its meeting in November 2016 was published in May 2017. This guide provides a model for the conduct of pest risk analysis by National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). It was circulated for use by Member States in August 2017.



1.1.4 Guideline for Preparing Market Access Proposals

A guideline for preparing market access proposals has been prepared for use by CARICOM Member States. This guide described a process that can be followed to gain market access with the least hindrance to trade but, at the same time, prevent the spread of plant pests into new areas. It was endorsed by the Caribbean Plant Health Directors' Forum whose members are the primary users. This document was adopted as a Regional Guideline at the Seventy First (71st) Special Meeting of the COTED which was held in Georgetown, Guyana from October 4-6, 2017.

1.1.5 Animal Health Protocols

Three regional animal health protocols have been reviewed by the Senior Officials of the Legal Affairs Committee (SOLAC) and the Legal Affairs Committee (LAC) of CARICOM during the period under review. These include:

- Harmonized Protocols for the Movement of Dogs and Cats in the Caribbean;
- Conditions for a Permit Controlling the Importation of Live Caprine and Ovine from CARICOM Countries;
- Protocol Governing CARICOM Control, Inspection and Approval Procedures for Trade in Animals and Animal Products.

1.1.6 Templates for Submitting Comments for SPS Standards

Annotated templates for drafting, submitting comments and responding to regional SPS standards were developed during the period under review.

1.1.7 Draft Regional Biosafety Policy

Feedback on the Draft Regional Biosafety Policy was sought by CAHFSA from all Member States and Regional Institutions following the decision taken by the COTED at its 62nd Special Meeting held in the Cayman Islands.

The draft was developed by the University of the West Indies (UWI) with funds from United Nations Environment Programme/Global Environment Facility (UNEP/GEF) with the intention of developing and implementing a harmonized biosafety system in 12 participating CARICOM countries, based on the Cartagena Protocol.

Comments were received from Montserrat, Trinidad & Tobago and St. Kitts & Nevis. Comments were also received from the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the CCS. These comments were incorporated in the document by UWI and the policy was adopted as a Regional Biosafety Policy at the Seventh First (71st) Special Meeting of the COTED which was held in Georgetown, Guyana from October 4-6, 2017.

On December 13, 2017, officials from CAHFSA met with UWI officials in Paramaribo, Suriname to discuss a road map for the implementation of the policy. Plans included:

- the review of all existing draft or passed Biosafety Legislation in Member States to determine how they fit within the Regional Biosafety Policy;
- awareness building among senior technocrats in the Ministries of Agriculture and Ministries of Trade in Member States, regarding trade issues associated with Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and the developmental impact of biosafety;

- the convening of a Regional Biosafety Risk Assessment Working Group to conduct regional risk assessment for GMO food and feed coming into the region as well as to provide support to the Member States in conducting national risk assessment for LMOs;
- use of the Guidance Risk Analysis framework for GMO's prepared under the GEF Project to prepare a risk assessment model to be used by the Regional Risk Assessment Working Group on Biosafety as well as by Member States;
- including a section on risk assessment for GMOs as plant pests in the Regional Guideline for Conducting Plant Pest Risk Assessment for Imported Commodities.

Applications will be made to GEF for funding to finance a Second Phase of the project. Under this phase, six countries (Guyana, Suriname, Belize, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago) that are in a fairly advanced stage of implementation was identified to get them through the entire implementation process and this will then be expanded to other countries. Haiti and Jamaica, not currently involved in Phase 1, will be added to Phase 2 of the project.



Figure 2: CAHFSA Officials meeting with delegation from the University of the West Indies to discuss implementation of a road map for Regional Biosafety Project.

1.2 Capacity Building

1.2.1 Pest Risk Analysis Training

A training programme, including PowerPoint presentations and a workbook has been developed by CAHFSA for use in training a cadre of pest risk analysts in the region. The programme has been used to conduct training workshops in several Member States. During 2017, trainings were conducted in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. Funding for this activity was provided by USDA-APHIS-IS.



Figure 3: Participant at PRA Workshop in Trinidad and Tobago Accepting Certificate of Participation from the CAHFSA Plant Health Specialist

1.2.2 Regional Training Course on Plant Quarantine Principles and Procedures

CAHFSA continues its collaboration with the UWI and Regional Partners in facilitating this regional workshop. During the 7th edition held July 31-August 11, 2017, the Plant Health Specialist delivered presentations on the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) (Overview, ISPM 1, ISPM 23) as well as on Pest Risk Analysis.

1.2.3 Training in Food Safety and Best Practices for Foods of Animal Origin

Between October 17 and 18, 2017, CAHFSA partnered with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Switzerland to stage a Food Safety Capacity Building Workshop on Foods of Animal Origin in St. Lucia. The main objective of the workshop was to heighten and increase awareness for food safety particularly in the meat sector (beef, pork, lamb, poultry) with the use of Codex food safety standards, and to have an open discussion on issues of antimicrobial use and antimicrobial resistance within this sector



Figure 4: CEO of CAHFSA addressing the Food Safety Workshop in St. Lucia

This training was attended by public health and veterinary officials from 14 Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries. Among areas for further action identified by participants was the Development of a Manual on Good Practices for the Slaughtering of Meat.

1.3 Trade Issues

1.3.1 Conduct of Risk Assessment for Agricultural Products to be Traded

The Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) on Agriculture at its 71st Special Meeting held at the CARICOM Secretariat, Georgetown, Guyana approved nine (9) poultry processing plants in the Region to trade among Member States. The poultry plants from six CARICOM Member States – Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago – were cleared to sell poultry products intra-regionally after they were assessed by Regional Risk Assessments Teams and met the sanitary requirements to enter the CARICOM Market. These assessments were coordinated by CAHFSA with the process of review and finalization done by the CARICOM Committee of Chief Veterinary Officers.

Additionally, two pork processing plants in Jamaica and one in Suriname were approved by the COTED to trade intra-regionally following the conduct of risk assessment by the Regional Poultry Assessment Team coordinated by CAHFSA.

1.3.2 Development of a Procedure for SPS related Trade Dispute Settlement in CARICOM

The COTED (Agriculture) at its Sixty-Second Special Meeting held in the Cayman Islands in November 2016 agreed on the relevance of a Regional Mechanism for Dispute Resolution on SPS Issues and for CAHFSA to oversee this. A first draft was circulated for comments in 2017. Comments were received from Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, the CRFM and the CCS. Based on Member States' comments, a new document will be drafted for a second round of consultation in 2018.

1.3.3 Market Access for Honey

The COTED (Agriculture) at its 71st Special Meeting expressed concern that Trinidad and Tobago had not yet complied with the decisions of the Twenty-Eighth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference, February 2017, and, “**agreed** that CAHFSA would proceed to conduct the Risk Assessment on honey, as necessary, once Trinidad and Tobago provide the SPS and Food Safety requirements that must be met by Member States seeking to export honey to, or tranship honey through Trinidad and Tobago as mandated by the Conference and that CAHFSA would assist in their finalisation as required. It **reiterated** the previous decisions that Trinidad and Tobago must complete the necessary legislative action to allow the trade and transhipment in honey of Community Origin and in the interim to avail itself of the provisions of Section 8 of its Caribbean Community Act and Article 9 of the Revised Treaty set out in the Schedule of that Act and taking all possible executive, administrative and other measures to enable it to allow the trade in honey of Community Origin;”

At the Forty Fifth Meeting of the COTED (9-10 November 2017) CAHFSA indicated that it had commenced discussions with Trinidad and Tobago relative to its compliance with the decisions

of Twenty-Eighth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference for the provision of SPS and Food Safety requirements that must be met by Member States seeking to export honey to, or tranship honey through Trinidad and Tobago, and that it will conduct the a risk assessment on honey from Grenada if determined to be necessary.

1.4 Rapid Response and Safeguarding

In order to improve the region's ability to prepare for and respond to pests and disease incursions, CAHFSA has begun the process of combining national priority plant pest lists into a regional database.

A template for preparation of the Fact Sheets on the Regionally Regulated Pests has been developed.

In addition, voucher specimens of select priority pests were obtained to assist in providing a preliminary/rapid diagnosis.



1.5 Information Exchange and Dissemination

In an effort to provide rapid exchange of information among technocrats and decision makers across the region, databases related to agricultural health and food safety have been developed. These databases, which are still in the developmental stage, are available from the CAHFSA website and provide information on:

- List of pesticides registered by CARICOM Member States
- Regional trade issues
- Agricultural Health and Food safety practitioners in the region
- Risk analysis
- Regionally regulated plant pests

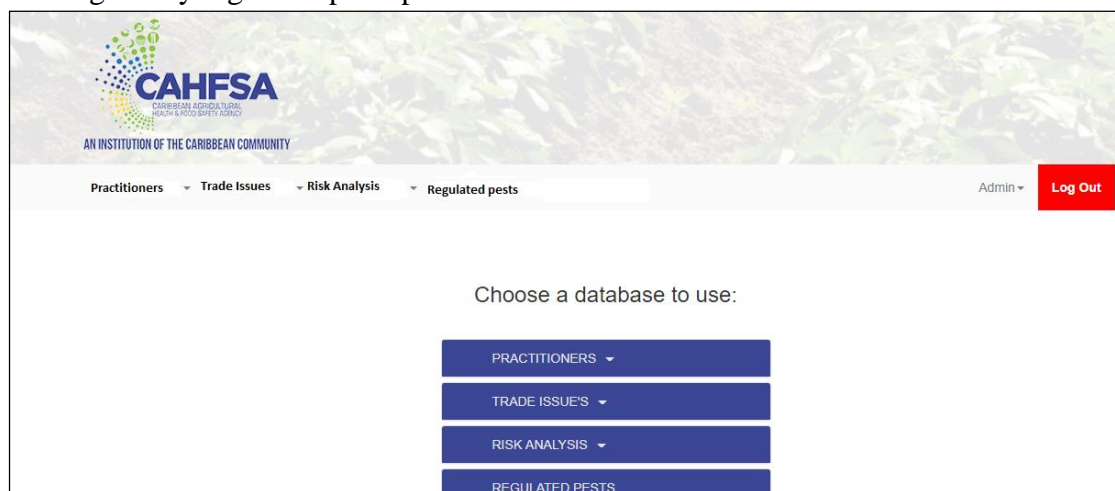


Figure 5: Screen shot of databases on the CAHFSA website

A **SPS information portal** has also been developed on the CAHFSA website in which WTO SPS notifications are posted weekly. Manuals and pest alerts are also included.

1.6 Linkages with Regional Organizations

1.6.1 Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems (AHFSS-TG) Thematic Group

The objective of this Group is to guide and support the work of agricultural health and food safety throughout the region and to ensure a coordinated approach to establishing effective sanitary and phytosanitary measures, with the aim of alleviating constraints to agricultural development in the Region. This Group (AHFSSTG) which was established in October 2014 comprises the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), the CARICOM Secretariat (CCS), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), CARICOM Chief Veterinary Officers (CCVOs), Caribbean Plant Health Directors (CPHD), and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA). CAHFSA is the coordinating agency of the Group. This Group has not been without its challenges. A major challenge has been the general under-staffing of the agencies responsible for AHFS. Key persons had to multitask and prioritise which often limits their ability to meaningfully and comprehensively respond to issues being addressed by the AHFS Thematic Group (TG) and to attend Meetings. Two meetings were held in 2017. The first was held virtually via GoToMeeting on March 21, 2017. The second was also held virtually via GoToMeeting on July 28, 2017 at which the work plan and the report for the first quarter prepared by CAHFSA was approved with minor amendments.

1.6.2 Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO)

A Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO) is an inter-governmental organisation functioning as a coordinating body for National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO) on a regional level.

Article IX of the IPPC provides for RPPO contributions to various activities that achieve the objectives of the IPPC. It extends the responsibilities of RPPOs to specify cooperation with the IPPC Secretariat and the Commission for Phytosanitary Measures in developing international standards.

The functions of RPPOs are mostly laid down in the Article IX of the IPPC and include:

- Coordination and participation in activities among their NPPOs to promote and achieve the objectives of the IPPC;
- Cooperation among regions for promoting harmonised phytosanitary measures;
- Gathering and dissemination of information, in particular in relation with the IPPC;

- Cooperation with the CPM and the IPPC Secretariat in developing and implementing international standards for phytosanitary measures.

Since the abolition of the Caribbean Plant Protection Commission in October 2014, the Caribbean has been the only Region in the world without a RPPO. CAHFSA has been designated to replace the abolished Caribbean Plant Protection Commission as the Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO) and has been given approval by the Seventy-First Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED)-Agriculture in October 2017 to write to the FAO seeking official recognition as the RPPO for the Caribbean. In addition, COTED agreed that CAHFSA would finalise the mechanism ensuring that the interests of the wider Caribbean were taken on board.

In keeping with this decision, CAHFSA, in November 2017, wrote to the Chair of the Commission of Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), seeking official recognition as a RPPO.

The IPPC Secretariat informed the Chair of the CPM Bureau about the request for recognition of CAHFSA as an RPPO under Article IX of the IPPC and asked the FAO Legal Counsel (FAO-LEGA) to review the submission.

FAO-LEGA reviewed the background documentation, in particular, the Agreement establishing CAHFSA originally signed by Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in Roseau, Dominica, on March 12, 2010 and the Revised CAHFSA Agreement adopted in February 2011 at St. George's Grenada which entered into force on February 25, 2011. In light of such Agreement, LEGA confirmed that CAHFSA has an intergovernmental status and is therefore eligible for being recognized as an RPPO by the IPPC.

The 29th Technical Consultation on RPPOs considered the advice received from FAO-LEGA, reviewed the CAHFSA submission following the criteria set out in the ICPM-4 for the recognition of an RPPO and agreed that CAHFSA has as a minimum, the functions required to be considered an RPPO under Article IX of the IPPC. Therefore, the 29th TC recommended to CPM the recognition of CAHFSA as an RPPO.



Figure 6: The TC-RPPO recommends that CAHFSA be recognized as a RPPO

1.6.3 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

a) Strengthening Agricultural Quarantine

CAHFSA has signed a letter of agreement (LOA) with the regional office of the FAO in April 2017 for provision of “*Services towards strengthening agricultural quarantine capacities in Dominica, Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis*”

The objective of the project is to strengthen the plant and animal quarantine capacities of the three countries based on specific priorities identified by these countries in their respective *Country Programming Frameworks*. A LOA was signed with the FAO in April 201

A survey instrument to collect information on existing pest and disease monitoring and surveillance system was developed and administered to stakeholders in the three countries.

During October 9-13, 2017, Mission 1 which includes an Inception Workshop/Stakeholder consultation was conducted in Grenada and St. Kitts & Nevis. During the Consultation, representatives from various stakeholder organizations, reviewed the results from the survey. Strengths of the current system pest monitoring and surveillance system in each country, main constraints and challenges as well as issues that exist in implementation were discussed and information gathered for the preparation of training materials and manuals.

b) Pesticide Management

CAHFSA is also collaborating with the FAO on the project entitled “GCP/SLC/204/GFF *Disposal of Obsolete Pesticides including POPs, Promotion of Alternatives and Strengthening Pesticides Management in the Caribbean*. As a partner, CAHFSA has committed to support the project to the amount of US \$200,000 “in kind.

CAHFSA’s contribution to date has included:

- Participation in the FAO Workshop on the Development of Harmonized Systems for Pesticides Registration, Control and Information Sharing (13-15 February 2017) and 2nd Meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) for the project GCP/SLC/204/GFF – *Disposal of Obsolete Pesticides including POPs, Promotion of Alternatives and Strengthening Pesticides Management in the Caribbean* (16-17 February 2017)
- Posting the current list of registered pesticides of the GCP/SLC/204/GFF project countries on the CAHFSA website.



Figure 7: Meeting held in Suriname with Project Manager of the GCP/SLC/204/GFF project

1.6.4 CRFM and CROSQ

A MoU was signed with CRFM and CROSQ in May 2017, to cooperate, coordinate and combine resources, experience and expertise to ensure proper networking in the areas of food safety, plant and animal health as they relate to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) matters.



Figure 8: Signing of MOU between CAHFSA, CROSQ and CRFM

1.6.5 CARICOM Chief Veterinary Officers (CCVOs)

The activities of this group are coordinated by CAHFSA. A Face to Face Meeting of the CCVOs was held in Jamaica between July 22-25, 2017. This was the second face to face meeting of the CCVOs held in 2017. The First Face to Face Meeting of the CCVOs was held in Dominica between March 6-10, 2017.



Figure 9: Meeting of the CARICOM Chief Veterinary Officers in Jamaica

1.6.6 Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum and CARICOM Community Plant Health Directors' Forum (CCPHD)

CAHFSA participated in the annual meetings of the CPHD and the CCPHD, held during July 10-13, 2017. In addition, the Plant Health Specialist participated in two Regional Partners' meeting.

1.6.7 Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)

Discussions were held with the CDB during the third quarter in regard to the provision of funding to strengthen the regional agricultural health and food safety system.

Additionally, the CEO of CAHFSA chaired the round table discussion on Quality Infrastructure for Market Access at the CDB, Technical Cooperation Division Closeout Workshop for the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) which was held at the CDB's Conference Centre, Barbados on October 26 and 27, 2017.



CEO of CAHFSa addressing CDB Close Out Workshop in Barbados

1.7 Linkages with International Organizations

CAHFSa, participated in the 64th General Session of the WTO/SPS Committee held at the WTO Headquarters in Geneva from March 22-23, 2017. The organization also participated in the informal session held at the same venue on March 21, 2017. It was also represented at the 12th Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measure (Incheon, 5-11 April 2017) and the 85th General Session of the World Organization for Animal Health (Paris, 21-26 May 2017).



Figure 10: CAHFSa Plant Health Specialist at CPM 12

In February 2017, the Plant Health Specialist of CAHFSa chaired the 12th meeting of the IPPC Technical Panel on Diagnostic Protocols, held at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy (February 13-17, 2017). This body is recognized under the WTO/SPS Agreement as the standard setting body for plant health.



Figure 11: 2017 Meeting of the IPPC Technical Panel on Diagnostic Protocols

During the week of 22-26 May 2017, CAHFSA's Plant Health Specialist participated in the 3rd FAO/IAEA International Conference on Area-wide management of Insect Pests: Integrating SIT and Related Nuclear and other Techniques, held in Vienna, Austria.

CAHFSA was represented at the CAC Meeting in Switzerland from July 17-22, 2017 by the Animal Health Specialist.

In September 2017, CAHFSA collaborated with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and regional partners to organize and implement the IPPC Regional workshop for the Caribbean, held 13-15 September in Christ Church, Barbados.



Figure 12: Participants at the 2007 IPPC Regional Workshop in Barbados, 13-15 September 2017

The Technical Consultation on Regional Plant Protection Organizations (TC-RPPO) held their annual meeting 30 October -03 November 2017 in Paris, France. CAHFSA was represented by the Plant Health Specialist. One highlight of the meeting was the TC's recommendation to the CPM that CAHFSA be recognized as a RPPO.



Figure 13: TC-RPPO 2017, Paris France.

1.8 Administration and Finance

1.8.1 Good Governance and Accountability

The Preparation of the Financial Manual commenced during this period. It will be completed with the relevant aspects of the accounting software on completion of set up and training.

Draft Staff Rules and Regulations were developed and reviewed by Members of the Staff Matters Committee in December 2017. It will be presented to the Board for approval in 2018.

1.8.2 CARICOM Strategic Management and Planning

A joint meeting of the Heads of Regional Institutions and CARICOM Committee of Ambassadors was held in March 2017 to discuss challenges experienced with the implementation of the CARICOM Strategic Plan. Following this, quarterly progress reports have been sent to the CCS Strategic Management Team.

2 CONCLUSIONS

The year 2017 was a very meaningful and productive one for the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency as it sought to function in its numerous portfolios. This included development of regional SPS legislation, Policies, Standards and Guidelines; Capacity Building; Rapid Response and Safeguarding; Conducting of Risk Assessment for Agricultural Products to be traded; Information Exchange and Dissemination and involvement with Sanitary and Phytosanitary Activities at the regional and international levels.

The same attitude of fervor and hard work that has been the culture of this institution from its commencement in October 2014 was carried over to 2017 and we were able to achieve and, in some instances, surpassed the objectives set down at the beginning of the year.

3 OUTLOOK FOR 2018

A number of new initiatives are planned for 2018 which would significantly improve the SPS work in the region. The most notable of them is the development of a fully functional RPPO bearing in mind that by the second week in April 2018 CAHFSA will officially be recognized as the RPPO for the Caribbean by the international community. This will include the development of a MoU with the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum to ensure that the interests of the wider Caribbean are taken on board in the work of the Caribbean RPPO as well as the development of a strategic plan and work plan for the RPPO and the revamping of Technical Working Groups.

Other initiatives include the establishment of a system of recognized diagnostic laboratories to support Member States in identifying plant pests, animal diseases and food borne diseases.

In addition, ongoing activities and actions will continue.

4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I hereby acknowledge with gratitude the work and support of the CCS; all members of the Board of Directors; staff of the CAHFSA Secretariat; the Governments of CARICOM Member States as well as all supporting agencies and collaborating institutions.

Remember, the effectiveness of CAHFSA will depend on the Region's ability to accept change. We are operating in a Community and as a Community we got to bind together and be part of the integration process.

L. Simeon Collins
Chief Executive Officer

