CAHFSA
CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY AGENCY
AN INSTITUTION OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY

CAHFSA NEWSLETTER

CAHFSA AT Caribbean Week of Agriculture 2026

SPECIAL EDITION / OCTOBER 2026



From left to right: Dr. Nneka Hull James, Mrs. Dhanrajie Madray, Dr. Gavin Peters, Ms. Juliet V. Goldsmith, Mrs. Janelle Yarde-Blackman and Ms. Sairah Stippel.

Six Days. One Regional Mission.

Caribbean Week of Agriculture | 27 September-2 October 2026 | Trelawny, Jamaica

The Caribbean Animal Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) joined governments, technical experts, agricultural institutions and development partners at Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) 2026, under the theme "The New FACE of Caribbean Food Systems." The week connected regional priorities in animal health, plant health, food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and agricultural trade.

A WEEK OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Across technical sessions, institutional meetings and ministerial dialogue, CAHFSA advanced discussions on disease preparedness, SPS investment, safe food production, border readiness and regional cooperation.

ANIMAL HEALTH	PLANT HEALTH	FOOD SAFETY	SPS & TRADE

CWA DAY 1 | SUNDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2026

Opening the Week: One Region, One Conversation

CWA 2026 opened at Ocean Coral Springs Jamaica, bringing regional stakeholders together to launch six days of agricultural dialogue.



CAHFSA Team at the opening ceremony of the Caribbean Week of Agriculture.

THE NEW F.A.C.E. OF CARIBBEAN FOOD SYSTEMS

F **Food Security**

A **Agri-Business Development**

C **Climate Smart Technologies**

E **Export Expansion**

CAHFSA DELEGATION

- Dr. Gavin Peters, Chief Executive Officer
- Ms. Juliet Goldsmith, Plant Health Specialist
- Dr. Nneka Hull James, Animal Health Specialist
- Ms. Janelle Yarde-Blackman, Food Safety Specialist
- Ms. Dhanrajie Madray, Finance and Administrative Officer
- Ms. Sairah Stippel, Plant Health Technical Assistant

THE WEEK AHEAD

CAHFSA's participation would span technical sessions, institutional meetings, regional coordination and policy dialogue - connecting science, systems and cooperation across the Caribbean.

CWA DAY 2 | MONDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER

Healthy Systems, Safe Solutions

CAHFSA and the Caribbean Good Agricultural Practices Committee (CGPC) jointly led discussions on good agricultural practices, agricultural health, food safety and safe movement of agricultural products. The session highlighted coordinated standards and institutional cooperation.



BCRC-Caribbean and CAHFSA discussions on sound pesticide management.

PESTICIDE STEWARDSHIP

BCRC-Caribbean and CAHFSA led a conversation on responsible pesticide use and safer food systems under the message:

HEALTHY FARM

↓

SAFER FOOD

↓

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Responsible pesticide use is part of safer production, safer food and healthier communities.

CODEX IN ACTION

During the 20th Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA 2026) in Trelawny, Jamaica, CAHFSA participated in the "Codex in Action: Caribbean Standards for the New F.A.C.E. of Food Systems" workshop led by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The two-day practical workshop brought together 23 delegates from 13 Caribbean countries and focused on strengthening regional participation in Codex Alimentarius. Participants worked through the Codex Procedural Manual, development of national positions and strategic interventions, concluding with a mock Codex committee session.

23	13	MOCK CODEX
delegates	Caribbean countries	committee session

CAHFSA'S ROLE

Dr. Gavin Peters participated as a panelist, contributing CAHFSA's regional perspective on strengthening Caribbean engagement in international food-standard setting. Ms. Janelle Yarde-Blackman also participated as part of CAHFSA's continued efforts to build regional Codex capacity and strengthen the Caribbean's voice in international food safety discussions.

CWA DAY 3 | TUESDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER

Regional Animal Health: From National Action to Regional Readiness

CAHFSA facilitated the intersessional meeting of the CARICOM Committee of Chief Veterinary Officers (CCCVO), led by CCCVO Vice-Chair Dr. Kimond Cummings in collaboration with CARICOM.



CAHFSA together with the CARICOM Committee of Chief Veterinary Officers and representatives from CaribVET, IICA, WOAH, UWI and USDA.

CARICOM Chief Veterinary Officers, regional and international partners came together at CWA 2026 to strengthen the region's defenses against animal-health threats. With expertise from CARICOM Member States, CAHFSA, WOAH, CaribVET, IICA, USDA, The University of the West Indies and other partners, the meeting focused on turning national efforts into coordinated regional action.

Key priorities included preparedness for High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza, Rabies and African Swine Fever; stronger veterinary certification and border controls; faster surveillance and information sharing; and progress on CARICOM trade policies for live animals and animal products. Participants also pledged support to Suriname following a presumptive avian influenza event and explored a regional animal-health border-alert system.

KEY PRIORITIES

- Disease preparedness
- Veterinary certification
- Border controls
- Surveillance & information sharing
- Trade policy coordination

A STRONGER REGIONAL VOICE

The meeting closed with a clear call for a stronger regional voice in international animal-health standards and continued action through regional committees and initiatives. Participants also honored Dr. Kathian Herbert-Hackshaw, Chief Veterinary Officer of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, celebrating her dedicated service and lasting contribution as she prepares for retirement.



CWA DAY 3 | TUESDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER

Plant Health, Pesticide Risk Reduction & Traceability



Mrs. Juliet Goldsmith, CAHFSA Plant Health Specialist.



CABI Global Partnership for Pesticide Risk Reduction.

INVESTING IN PLANT HEALTH: BUILDING RESILIENT CARIBBEAN FOOD SYSTEMS

CAHFSA's Plant Health Department led this session on phytosanitary systems, pest prevention, surveillance and resilience. Participants explored building trust in phytosanitary systems and the IPPC African Phytosanitary Programme as a model for regional investment.

CAHFSA CONTRIBUTES TO REGIONAL TRACEABILITY DISCUSSIONS

On 29 September 2026, CAHFSA joined the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and regional and international partners for the Seminar on Improving Traceability in the Agri-Food Sector at CWA 2026. The seminar focused on the importance of stronger traceability systems across the Caribbean, including the need for greater transparency, compliance with international market requirements and improved capacity across the fisheries, aquaculture and agriculture sectors.

Representing CAHFSA, Ms. Janelle Yarde-Blackman, Food Safety Specialist, delivered a presentation contributing the food-safety perspective to the discussion on traceability. The session addressed Caribbean agri-food traceability, food recall and traceability, requirements in major export markets, and regional approaches to strengthening traceability systems. The seminar also reinforced the importance of developing more harmonized systems capable of tracing products throughout the food chain, from harvest to consumer.

HARVEST → PROCESSING → DISTRIBUTION → CONSUMER

CWA DAY 4 | WEDNESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER

Preparing Before the Threat Reaches the Border

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER SURVEILLANCE AND COMPENSATION WORKSHOP



Dr. Nneka Hull James delivering welcome remarks during the opening of the IICA ASF workshop.

CAHFSA delivered welcome remarks at a session led by IICA. Discussion centered on surveillance, early detection, response preparedness and producer compensation arrangements.

Dr. Nneka Hull James, CAHFSA Animal Health Specialist, delivered the welcome remarks on behalf of CAHFSA.

She urged countries to prepare for African swine fever (ASF) before it reaches their borders by strengthening legislation, surveillance, testing, reporting, response capacity and compensation mechanisms. She noted that ASF threatens livelihoods, food security and agricultural economies, while timely compensation encourages farmers to report outbreaks and support control measures.

Highlighting assistance from institutions such as IICA and USDA, she called for stronger veterinary services and coordinated regional action. She reaffirmed CAHFSA's commitment to supporting the CARICOM Chief Veterinary Officers while stressing that no country or institution can combat ASF alone.

"DISEASES DO NOT RESPECT ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES."

Animal health preparedness is an investment in people, livelihoods, resilient agriculture, food security and the economic stability of Caribbean communities.

PREPARE	REPORT	COORDINATE
Strengthen legislation, surveillance, testing and response capacity.	Timely compensation supports reporting and control measures.	Regional cooperation strengthens veterinary services and preparedness.

CWA DAY 4 | WEDNESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER

CAHFSA Symposium: The New Face of SPS

A central highlight of the week, the symposium examined modern, responsive SPS systems for safeguarding animal and plant health, ensuring food safety and facilitating safe trade. Strong institutions, technical capacity, harmonized approaches and implementation at borders were recurring themes.



CAHFSA together with speakers and presenters during the symposium.


Panel discussion on policy expectations and SPS modernization.

FEATURED SPEAKERS & SESSIONS

- Mr. Christopher Worrell, Chair of the CAHFSA Board of Directors - Opening Remarks and Vision for the Future Caribbean SPS Regime.
- Dr. Gavin Peters, CEO, CAHFSA - Practical Application of the SPS Regime: The Role of CAHFSA.
- Dr. Nneka Hull James, CAHFSA Animal Health Specialist - Moderator
- Panel Discussion on Policy Expectations and Priority Actions for SPS Modernization with contributions from Dr. Francisco D'Alessio (WOAH), Mr. Ryan Anselm (Dominica) and Dr. Saber Mansour (FAO Rome).
- Dr. Janet Lawrence, Food Safety and Quality Specialist, IICA - Regional SPS Investments that Deliver Results.
- Ms. Janelle Yarde-Blackman, CAHFSA Food Safety Specialist - Interactive Stakeholder Feedback Session using polling and guided discussion.
- Ms. Juliet Goldsmith, CAHFSA Plant Health Specialist - Defining the New FACE of SPS and validating priority investment areas and strategic actions.

THE MESSAGE

Modern SPS systems depend on strong institutions, technical capacity, harmonized approaches and implementation that works at the border and throughout the food system.

CWA DAY 5 | THURSDAY, 1 OCTOBER

Secure Borders & Strong Governance

SECURE BORDERS, SECURE FOOD SYSTEMS

CAHFSA joined the FAO session addressing points-of-entry preparedness and the importance of cooperation among veterinary and plant-health services, customs, immigration, public health and other stakeholders.



Dr. Nneka Hull James (CAHFSA), Ms. Tanio Hooste (FAO), Dr. Andriy Rozstalnyy (FAO), Dr. Carla Baker (FAO)

CAHFSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The CAHFSA Board of Directors convened during CWA for institutional oversight, governance discussions and strategic engagement on matters relevant to the Agency's mandate.



CAHFSA Board of Directors meeting in session.

ONE WEEK, CONNECTED SYSTEMS

From points of entry to regional governance, CAHFSA's CWA participation linked technical preparedness with the institutional coordination needed to protect Caribbean agriculture, food systems and trade.

CWA 2026 | SPECIAL EDITION

Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) Meeting

The 127th Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) convened during Caribbean Week of Agriculture 2026 in Jamaica, bringing together CARICOM Ministers responsible for trade and related areas to discuss matters concerning regional economic development, agricultural trade and cooperation. The meeting provided an important platform for reviewing progress on regional priorities and advancing collaboration towards more resilient Caribbean food systems.



As part of its annual engagement with COTED, CAHFSA provided updates on the Agency's matters arising across its three technical areas: Plant Health, Animal Health and Food Safety, highlighting ongoing activities, developments and priorities within its regional mandate.

CAHFSA presented papers on the recommendations of the CARICOM Committee of Chief Veterinary Officers, the recommendations of the Caribbean Task Force on Food Safety, the recommendations of the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum and the recommendations of the Coordinating Group of Pesticide Control Boards of the Caribbean. Additionally, CAHFSA's workplan and budget were approved at this forum.

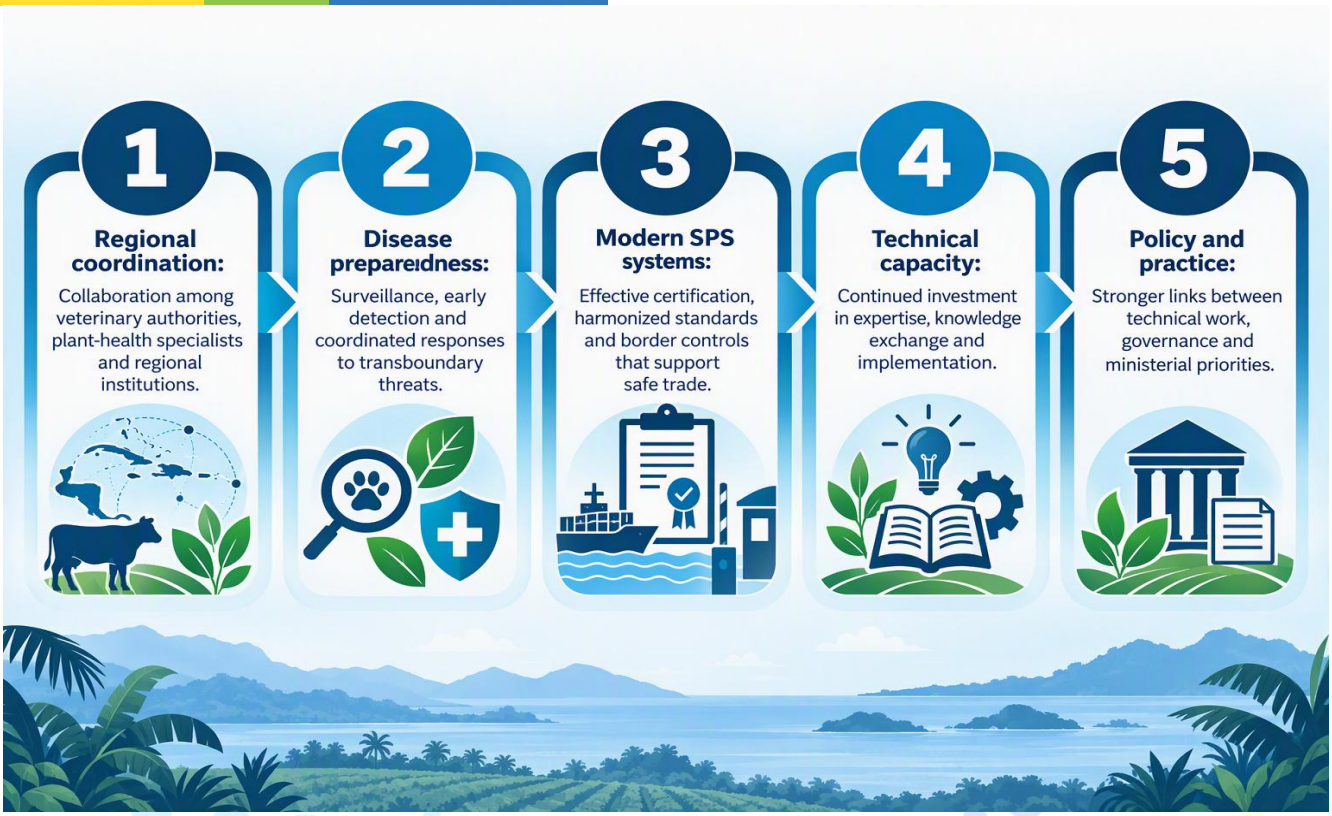
A significant highlight of this year's engagement was the presentation of the Regional Highly Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) Action Plan by CAHFSA, which received COTED's endorsement. This marks an important milestone in advancing a coordinated regional approach to HPAI prevention, preparedness and response. The endorsement reinforces the importance of collaboration among CARICOM Member States and regional partners in strengthening animal health preparedness and response capacity.

CAHFSA welcomes this important development and remains committed to supporting Member States in advancing the implementation of the Regional HPAI Action Plan and strengthening regional animal health systems.

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The Impact Behind the CAHFSA Activities



CAHFSA CONTRIBUTIONS DURING CWA 2026

- Healthy Systems, Safe Solutions
- Pesticide stewardship
- Codex in Action: Caribbean Standards for the New F.A.C.E. of Food Systems
- Intersessional meeting of the CARICOM Committee of Chief Veterinary Officers
- Investing in Plant Health
- Improving Traceability in the Agri-Food Sector
- African Swine Fever Surveillance and Compensation workshop
- CAHFSA Symposium: New Face of SPS
- Secure Borders, Secure Food Systems session
- CAHFSA Board of Directors Meeting

LOOKING AHEAD

CWA 2026 offered CAHFSA an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and highlight agricultural health and food safety as foundations for resilient Caribbean food systems. Continued collaboration with Member States and regional partners will be central to protecting production, livelihoods and trade.

TOGETHER, WE ARE ADVANCING a safer, more resilient and more connected Caribbean food system.

For more information on CAHFSA:

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