

UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE MOAF'S FSMA COMMITTEE

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Director General
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ACHIEVEMENTS

The goal of the Food Safety Modernization Act implementation project is to enable Jamaica to become compliant with the United States Food and Drug Administration's Food Safety Modernization Act and to ensure continued access of Jamaican foods to overseas markets.

Between October 2011 to present, a number of fresh produce exporters who were slated for FDA inspection, were specifically targeted by the MOAF's FSMA committee for auditing and training. Consequently, these facilities passed the FDA inspections. Also several exporters who were experiencing difficulties with shipment of yams being detained/rejected at US ports for exceeding Minimum Residue Level (MRL's), received training in post-harvest handling and chemical treatment, resulting in significant reductions in the rejection of shipments.

The technical competence of over 50 individuals from the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Industry, Investment and Commerce, farmers and exporters have been enhanced as a result of local and overseas training. Of special note was the FDA approved JIFSAN, University of Maryland 1-week train-the-trainer course in Good Agricultural Practices, held in Jamaica, February 18-22, 2013, which among other things, confirmed that the ministry's programmes and objectives are in alignment with achieving international standards.

Additionally, over 1700 farmers, some of which, export products to the USA were sensitized to the FSMA and trained in personal hygiene and food safety, pesticide management and record keeping.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) manuals for crop and apiculture have been developed and are available as training and reference material

ON-GOING ACTIVITIES

Several registered farmers' groups comprising over 200 farmers supplying fresh produce to the USA, are to receive assistance with regards to erection of toilets, hand-washing stations, pesticide storage areas and field sheds. Soil and water quality testing are to be done as well. This is in keeping with the FSMA requirements.

Similarly, a number of fresh produce exporters to the USA have been earmarked for infrastructure upgrade. Alongside this effort, the ministry's Agricultural Marketing Complex is being renovated in phases to meet world class standards and facilitating global access to international markets.

An educational programme promoting the FSMA has commenced with TV, radio and billboards communicating the theme – "Food Safety is Everybody's Responsibility".