

MINISTRY PAPER /2014

Interventions in the School Feeding Programme

1.0 Purpose

The matter for tabling is the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries interventions in the School Feeding Programme.

2.0 Background

It is generally accepted that good nutrition is important for the physical, social and mental development of individuals. It is especially important for children in the formative years, as poor health, coupled with poor nutrition, diminishes their cognitive development.

Several national and international studies have concluded that investing in school feeding contributes to significant economic development. School Feeding Programmes are acknowledged internationally by both governments and donor agencies as a valuable safety net mechanism to improve livelihoods.

The World Health Organization (WHO) in its Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding has indicated that child feeding is a fundamental part of the necessary care for childhood development.

WHO has indicated that approximately thirty percent (30%) of children under five (5) years, worldwide, are stunted as a consequence of poor feeding and its resultant repeated infections. WHO has indicated that even in resource poor settings, improved feeding practices must be adopted to enhance nutritional intakes.

3.0 School Feeding Programme (SFP)

The provision of nutrition to school children is largely administered by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Budgetary allocation for this purpose is channelled through three (3) conduits, namely, PATH; Cook Lunch Programme; and Nutrition Products Limited (NPL). The mix of fund distribution, through the three (3) conduits and importantly, product selection, is constantly

evaluated to determine the most efficient use of those funds. The MOE in leading this charge has indicated that the government's objective is pivoted on the inclusion of more nutritious and locally grown food in the School Feeding Programme. The Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries/Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) is expected to play a supportive role in the production and supply logistics of primary and secondary products.

Currently, 137,000 students, enrolled in 836 schools at the early childhood, primary and Junior High levels benefit from the Nutrition Products Limited's (NPL) programme.

4.0 Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries/RADA Interventions in SFP

The Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries/RADA has been instrumental in providing support to NPL in the following manner:

- Facilitating the inclusion of Liquid Eggs thereby replacing 33% of both margarine and vegetable oil in the production of the solid offerings.
- Linking NPL with both banana and carrot suppliers thereby facilitating increased varietal snack offerings.
- Banana and carrot inclusion has propelled a movement from the traditional bulla and rock cake to a wider range of products.
- The suite of additional products now include, carrot muffins and cakes; banana muffins and cakes; and scones (small cake).

➤ Liquid Eggs

Liquid egg was first introduced in Nutrition Products Limited's (NPL's) solid snack in October, 2013 as a partial substitution for the imported fat component (margarine and vegetable oil).

To date, Caribbean Egg Processors Limited (CEP) has supplied 2,152kgs of liquid eggs at a value of J \$1,339,840 to NPL.

To date, NPL has purchased seventy (70) cases at a value of \$593,600. The bulla formulation contains two (2) grams each of liquid eggs, therefore purchases of liquid eggs equate to four hundred and seventy-six thousand, two hundred and eighty (476,280) bullas. Importantly, from the perspective of agricultural production this equates to nineteen thousand two hundred (19,200) eggs.

➤ **Other Products**

The total quantity of Bananas purchased to date is 2,925kgs at a value of J\$163,607 while the total volume of Carrots purchased is 1,905kgs at a value of J\$92,444.00. These ingredients have been used to make muffins and cakes for inclusion in the School Feeding Programme.

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