

**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF FOOD PRODUCTION**

*St. Clair Circular, St. Clair, Port of Spain*

*Tel: 622-1221ext. 2205*

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**Report**

Four (4) Consecutive Quarters of Growth in the Agriculture Sector

**Ministry of Food Production 2013**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Government’s overarching goal for the agriculture sector is **to create a food secure nation**. In this regard, the Ministry of Food Production (MFP) has developed an action plan for 2012 – 2015 which is premised on the pursuit of increasing the country’s food security.

Food Security was defined at the FAO World Summit of 1996 as existing “***when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.***”

The Ministry of Food Production recognizes that the country is on a tight rope as far as food security is concerned and if action is not taken Trinidad and Tobago may find itself in a position where it has money but unable to purchase food. The mandate of the MFP is to grow locally and make available to citizens, quality (safe and nutritious) but affordable foods in sufficient quantities to ensure our food and nutrition security, and in so doing, provide an attractive and profitable livelihood for all producers.

By providing a unified direction, this comprehensive plan (2012 – 2015) aligns resources with national priorities and intends to create a platform for the National Government and private sector to venture into strategic partnerships to effectively mobilize and utilize available land and marine resources, labour, human resources and technology. It will allow stakeholders to actively participate in the development of a sector with the potential to extend into national economic and social development.

The approach will result in:

1. reduction in the food import bill,
2. further reduction in inflation, primarily driven by food prices,
3. creation of sustainable, long term productive employment, and
4. contribution to the diversification of the economy

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Food Security is a major goal of the Government. The objective is to develop a highly productive agricultural sector that is modernised and internationally competitive and that generates sustainable income levels for producers comparable to those obtained in other sectors of the economy.

The performance of the domestic agriculture sector was favourable for 2013. Comparatively better weather conditions, increases in acreage under cultivation and the continuation of targeted policies significantly contributed to growth for the period. The Agriculture and Food Security Medium-term objectives for the sector include:

* Reduce the food import bill
* Reduce the rate of food inflation and sustain it within single digits
* Create sustainable, long-term productive employment in the sector to support a national unemployment level that is under 7%
* Increase the sector’s contribution to GDP
* Create a food secure nation

***Results***

The growth experienced in the Agricultural Sector occurred due to the continued efforts by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Growth of the sector was also driven by a number of other initiatives including:-

1. the $1.9B allocation that was made to the sector in the National Budget in 2012;
2. the launch of the Commercial Large Farm initiative;
3. the Ministry also revamped and restructured its Agricultural Incentive Program; and
4. the increase in the access to lands through the award of leases.

***Real Gross Domestic Product***

The positive impact of the initiatives under the NFPAP 2012/2015 is now being realised. Provisional data obtained from the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago on the quarterly gross domestic product showed that the Agricultural Sector experienced growth from the first quarter 2012 to first quarter 2013. The year on year percentage change in Gross Domestic Product moved from -8.6% in first quarter of 2012 to 5.1% in the first quarter of 2013. Details are shown in Table 1 below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 1 - Quarterly Gross Domestic Product Q1 2012 – Q1 2013** | | | |
| **Period** | **Year on Year % Change** |  |  | |
| 2012 Q1(January 2012 to March 2012) | -8.6% |  |  | |
| 2012 Q2 (April 2012- June 2012) | -5.1 |  |  | |
| 2012 Q3 (July 2012 - September 2012) | -4.3 |  |  | |
| 2012 Q4 (October 2012 - December 2012) | 1.5 |  |  | |
| 2013 Q1 (January 2012 - March 2013) | 5.1 |  |  | |
| Source - Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago Economic Bulletin – July 2013 Volume XV  No. 2 ISSN: 1818-0027 - Table 1 Quarterly Gross Domestic Product Index at Constant Prices. | | | |

***Prices***

Data obtained from Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago for the Food Price Inflation and Headline Inflation also indicates a reduction in the Food Price Inflation Rate from the first quarter 2012 to May 2013. The year on year percentage change in the Food Price Inflation Rate moved from 24.1% in Q2 2012 to 9.6% in May 2013. There was also a reduction in the Headline Inflation Rate moving from 11% in Q2 2012 to 3% in October 2013. This is shown in Table 2 below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 2 - Year on Year Food Inflation Rate and Headline Inflation Rate – Q2 2012 to October 2013** | | |
| **Period** | **Year on year % change Food Inflation Rate** | **Headline Inflation Rate (%)** |
| 2012 Q2 (April - June 2012) | 24.1 | 11 |
| 2012 Q3 (July - September 20120 | 14.7 | 7.7 |
| 2012 Q4 (October - December 2012) | 12.7 | 7.2 |
| January 2013 | 13.8 | 7.3 |
| February 2013 | 10.6 | 5.9 |
| March 2013 | 12.9 | 6.9 |
| April 2013 | 9.4 | 5.5 |
| May 2013 | 9.6 | 5.6 |
| June 2013 | 12.6 |  |
| July 2013 | 4.8 |  |
| August 2013 | 7.7 |  |
| September | 3 |  |
| October | 3.7 |  |

Source - Central Bank Economic Bulletin – July 2013 Volume XV No. 2 ISSN: 1818-0027, Table 10 Index of Retail Prices.

***Praedial Larceny***

Report December 2013

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No. of Patrols**  **(Mobile)** | **No. of Patrol**  **(Foot)** | **Market and Farmers Visits** | **No. of Reports Made** | **No. of Reports Under Investigation** | **No. of Reports Solved** | **No. of Persons Arrested** | **Offence Detected** | **Investigating Officer** | **Results** | **Remarks** |
| 348 | 12 | 501 | 20 | 8 | 12 | 1 | Praedial Larceny &  Failing tp submit breath for sobriety test | 9 Officers | - | - |

The projected trajectory of growth is expected to continue in 2013 due to the continued positive impact of the following:-

1. the National Food Production Action Plan 2012-2015;
2. the expansion of the Commercial Large Farm initiative through the regional arrangement with Guyana and local implementation efforts;
3. the launch of the Caroni Green Initiative;
4. the review and implementation of a more structured approach on the Agricultural Incentive Program with special incentives for the larger farms;
5. the re - launch of a strengthened Praedial Larceny Unit; and
6. the continued efforts to distribute leases to farmers.