

# WEEKEND NATION

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**BARBADOS  
MARKETING  
CORPORATION**

## **BMC/BASIS - Model for Regional Information**

Weekly Column No. 108

During this week, Mr. Peter Helgren, the U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in charge of establishing a market information service in St. Vincent has been visiting Barbados for discussions with the BMC-BASIS staff. The St. Vincent market information service began operation in January this year, having been stimulated by the BMC-BASIS initiative in Barbados.

During his visit, Mr. Helgren familiarised himself with all aspects of BASIS work-surveys, compilation of tables, writing reports and assembling and distributing information. He will assess how best the experience which has been built up over the past two years in Barbados can be applied to the St. Vincent situation.

### **Potential Benefits**

#### **(A) National**

Apart from St. Vincent several other territories - Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia and Trinidad & Tobago - have expressed interest in market information. The benefits of a market information service, such as BASIS, have been

discussed previously in this Column. Briefly, they are:

- a reduction in wide fluctuations in the supply and price of fresh produce; and
- a greater degree of stability in the market place which should encourage increased consumption of domestic produce. This in turn should result in more stable and higher incomes for farmers, and a more varied and nutritious diet for consumers.

#### **(B) Regional**

With several BASIS-type services operating, the next step would be to circulate their information to produce a regional information system. Potential clients of a regional intelligence system would include: large scale farmers, farmers' groups, national marketing boards, private sector importers and exporters, government ministries, and regional agencies.

Services that could be offered would include:

- timely price information for a range of regional supply countries and markets;
- production and fresh produce disappearance information on each country in the region, and analysis to identify seasonal pat-

terns, trading opportunities etc.;

- brokerage services i.e. facilitate the bringing together of buyers and sellers of commodities, transportation services, storage and processing services;
- information on market conditions in extra-regional countries and non Caricom regional countries and ad hoc research assignments for specific clients.

In essence, the objective of a regional production and marketing information system would be to increase opportunities for, and reduce the risk involved in, trading activities, specifically to allow middlemen to identify and act upon opportunities to re-allocate supplies within and outside the region through trade.

Within the region the BASIS model has been recognised as one worthy of emulation. The development of BMC-BASIS can therefore be seen as being beneficial to the agricultural sector within Barbados as well as assisting in the development of a workable food strategy for the Caribbean community.