

FAQS:

Is there any support for me as a user of the system?

Yes. All users of the system have access to free technical support by telephone and by email.

What do I need to access the system and where can I access it?

Access to the system is possible through a regular PC with an Internet connection. This means that you can use Agricast from any location where the Internet is accessible.

Can I as a farmer track my crop information on Agricast?

All farmers have the ability to monitor their crop information that has been entered into Agricast. Farmers who have access to the Internet can be issued with a unique username and password to enable them to monitor their crops. A farmer will only be able to track his/her crop information.

How can I as a trader access the system?

Any business interested in using the system to access crop availability can do so by contacting Future Shock at 246 424 9025 or via email at info@agricast.org. On registering businesses will be issued with a username and password allowing them access to the system.

Will my crop information be available for potential thieves to view and make plans?

No. All access to detailed information is allowed only through the use of a username and password. A farmer can only see detailed information on his or her crops. Only after registering and being issued with a username and password will approved Traders/Buyers have access to what crops will

Faqs cont'd on next page

Agricast Report

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In the beginning...

A brief introduction to AGRICAST

October 17th 2001 saw the launching of an innovative tool with the potential to help transform the fresh produce agricultural sector in Barbados and the Caribbean. That tool is Agricast - a crop forecasting and tracking system for sustainable agriculture in developing nations.

Many countries face the challenge of achieving long-term food security through local crop production. **AGRICAST** helps to alleviate this problem through the provision of accurate, timely and easily accessible crop forecasting data to specific target groups.

As the means of achieving this the **AGRICAST** system has the following objectives:

- To accurately forecast the availability of crops under cultivation,
- To enable farmers to make the best and most profitable use of their land,
- To increase the produce purchased by traders from local farmers,
- To provide assistance to planners and policy agencies in determining national agricultural crop production output

The ensuing months have seen the conquering of various hurdles as the issues surrounding the successful implementation of the system have been and continue to be ironed out. Preliminary testing results however point to a reassuring 98% accuracy in the system's ability to forecast harvesting dates and yields for crops. What is certain is that Agricast is indeed both a noble and feasible concept that needs to be further utilised to the benefit of everyone.



A Practical Testimony

By Mr. E. Worrel – Chief Extension Officer (BADMC)

The introduction of Agricast to the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation's (BADMC) Extension Department was a welcomed initiative.

There was always the thought expressed that there was a need for a system to capture, store and recall information related to farmers and their activities in production of food products, especially those serviced by the BADMC Extension and Irrigation Departments.

To have the system implemented there was a training schedule for all BADMC Staff who would be involved in interfacing with the system. The training was readily accepted and after a few weeks of practice it was observed that the majority of the officers had attained a satisfactory level of competency.

The system being a new one had a few areas that could be improved to make the operations less tedious and more efficient. Comments and suggestions were forwarded to the service providers, which were readily accepted and incorporated into the system. It should be noted that the interaction between the service provider and the BADMC Staff was a cordial one.

Agricast has the potential for being able to determine the level of production in the development units and to be a tool in production planning and forecasting. The key to it all is the collection and subsequent inputting of information into the system. This calls for commitment by the relevant extension officer.

Agricast has potential for serving the whole island by (1) forecasting the amount and type of Agricultural Products that could be available at any given time and (2) informing the Government on the need to import or not.

AGRICAST

be available at a particular time and the relevant contact information.

How will crop information find it's way into the system?

Crop information is collected by Extension Officers on their visitations with farmers. Some farmers are even given data collection forms to note down the information between visits. The Extension officers then enter the data into the system on a daily basis.

Get Involved!

Traders/Buyers

To use Agricast to access up-to-date real time availability fresh produce reports give Future Shock a call at 246 424 9025.

Associations, Coops and other Agricultural bodies

To discuss the potential use of Agricast by your organisation call Future Shock at 246 424 9025.

Farmers

If you want to benefit from Agricast call the BADMC extension services at 428 0250 and tell them you wish to use Agricast.

Other Interested Parties

You may be interested in Agricast from a research perspective or you may wish to aid in the future development of the concept. Even if you just wish to learn more about the concept, it does not matter – Give Future Shock a call at 246 424 9025.

A preview of AGRICAST

AGRICAST is accessed through the web interface, www.agricast.org. All that is needed to access the system is an Internet ready computer and Internet access.

There are various authorised users of the system the most significant of them being National Coordinating Bodies and their Extension Units, Farmers and Traders. Varying levels of authorisation and security are implemented for each level of access depending on the user type.

Typically a National Coordinating Body signs on to the system with Agri-management responsibility for a particular geographic location or country. The system is configured with: the users; the known crops, yield ratios; growth data etc.

The Extension officers report all crop plantings by their farmers to the system by way of the web interface. As the crops progress and the Extension officers perform their routine visitations and assessment with the farmers, they can report any damages or changes to the crops' status back to the system.

AGRICAST is then able to generate a range of targeted production, forecasting, management, market intelligence and administrative reports.

Of special note is the report that provides traders/buyers with market availability information. As an example a search was conducted on October 16 2002. The search was for any variety of Carrot that was due to be harvested between Oct 16 and Oct 31st 2002. Agricast returned the names of a number of farmers fitting the criteria along with their contact information. Below is one of the farmers returned.

Farmer Contact information

Farmer Information

GRIFFITH, [redacted] - St. Lucy/Spring Hall

Content
St. Lucy
Tel: 43 [redacted]

Crop Information:

Carrots - Kuroda

Acreage: 0.75
Plant Date: Tuesday, July 02, 2002
Planting Verified: Yes

Forecasted availability date

Current Reported Outcome:

% of Acreage minus Damages	Quality	Forecasted Harvest Date	Forecasted Yield	Harvested	Date Recorded
100	Unknown	Tuesday, October 22, 2002		No	Wednesday, July 17, 2002

AGRICAST

'The Crop Forecasting Solution'
by Future Shock Inc
Tel: 246 424 9025

Postage

This issue is co-sponsored by:



BADMC

Our services include:

- Agricultural Extension
- Irrigation
- Marketing Intelligence
- Food Development & Food Promotion

Tel: 427 5250 • Email: badmc@sunbeach.net

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