

ABSTRACT

Studies have shown that agriculture has been on a secular decline for many years both in terms of agricultural production and in terms of an aging farmer population. To arrest this trend, youths must be targeted. The general objective of this research paper in light of these conditions is to assess the knowledge and perceptions of secondary school youths in Trinidad regarding agriculture, food and natural resources.

The data was derived from field research in five areas in Trinidad. The data was collected by means of a questionnaire administered to each of approximately fifty fifth and sixth form school students in each area.

After analyzing the data, the study showed that some of the perceptions held in the past by youths are different while some are not. Youths in this study perceive the word “agriculture” to be restricted to and synonymous with farming and planting, crops, livestock, crops and livestock, and simply nature.

Various factors were indicated by youths that would discourage their participation in agricultural activities. These factors were too much hard work, not an interesting task, risks associated with the activity, it does not allow for one to lead a glamorous lifestyle, and the salary is too small.

However, the statistics showed that a great majority of youths strongly agreed that agriculture had a positive impact on our economy and almost all the youths agreed that agriculture is important in Trinidad and Tobago.

This study has implications for agricultural literacy and educational institutions, and for young farmer programs.