

**Dolly D. I. and Lindner J.**

**Caribbean Extension and Outreach: Not a Question of If, but How**

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**Abstract**

Food security, food safety, food production and food marketing are contemporary issues necessitating strong and vibrant Extension and Outreach programs in developing countries. The authors of this paper agree with Rivera's (1990) statement that the appropriate Extension model or system is situational in context, content, culture and politics. Despite these constituents of Extension currency, all systems are influenced by past experiences. The most essential feature of the past is a perception of free advice, state run management and delivery and a head start from research initiatives. The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework for effective Extension and Outreach with particular emphasis on the English speaking Caribbean. Much has to be considered regarding a suitable model if Extension and Outreach must contribute an educational resolve to the food issues.

The authors of this paper contend that for any Extension system to be effective it must: 1) be institutionalized, well-defined and well-funded; 2) address important/cotemporary issues/problems; 3) be sufficiently nimble and flexible in order to address emerging issues; 4) be a credible and unbiased source for information/education and solutions/research; 5) understand the needs of its customers; 6) embrace participatory and integrated approaches; 7) recognize that little happens in isolation and create regional/global sustainable partnership/linkages with governments, NGO's, researchers and educators; 8) be excellent stewards of resources acquired; 9) recognize that return on investment (ROI) from its research and outreach must be well-documented; and 10) allow for decentralized decision making and action when warranted.