

ABSTRACT

The use of Protected Agriculture/Undercover Systems (PAS) Farming to increase
Vegetable Production in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

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The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines decided to promote the use of Protected Agriculture Systems (PAS) Farming among farmers in an effort to increase vegetable production. The number of systems were targeted for an increase from 7 to 50 and it was expected that with such an achievement the national demand for vegetables would be provided from the farmers using the technology.

The farmers adapted the technology as was expected.

Production estimates showed an increase-over the ten-year period for both the quantity that was produced and acreage planted for three of four selected crops. It was difficult, if not impossible to attribute the increase to the use of the technology because production information related to the selected crops that were grown in protected farming were kept combined with that for the Open-Field Method at the Statistical Unit.

Records revealed that the importation of the selected vegetables indications are that increased over the ten-year period. Further prices for the vegetables continued to fluctuate during each year, suggesting a seasonal supply.

In a turn-around most of the farmers who adopted the technology began discontinuing its use by 2005 because of problems encountered. This was confirmed by a questionnaire conducted among them.

In another survey that was conducted among purchasers of the vegetables, using another questionnaire it was revealed that a large amount of importation was done by supermarkets and also vendors.

The Ministry of Agriculture was making an effort to rejuvenate the interest of farmers to use the technology.