

ABSTRACT

**Socio-Economic Characteristics of Young Farmers
in County Victoria, Trinidad with particular
reference to Farm Income Generation**

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Rapid reconnaissance surveys conducted in all the counties in Trinidad have shown that the average age of farmers is about 55 years old. When one considers that the small economies of the Caribbean depend, to a large extent on agriculture and the need to sustain agricultural production, one can well understand the need to get younger farmers into the industry.

The study aimed to investigate this concern, by studying the socio-economic characteristics of young farmers in County Victoria and the relationships of some of these characteristics to farm income generation.

The respondents consisted of 185 farmers within the age group 18-35 years. Data were collected by personal interviews. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the socio-economic characteristics. Multiple Regression and chi-square analyses were used to test the significant relationships between selected independent variables and dependent variable, income generation, from the farm.

Results showed that the socio-economic factors: gender, level of education, farm organization membership, contact with extension officers, satisfaction with farming and land tenure were not significant in explaining variance in levels of farm income. Of the 29 independent variables tested, only 7 showed significant effects on level of farm income. These were farm background, age, type of enterprise, size of crop farm, amount of large livestock, use of credit and long-term plans in farming. The study

suggests the need for designing policy based on these significant variables.

The importance of having a farm background as a major characteristic of young farmers is recognised. It is suggested that as a topic for further research it might be useful to study this factor in greater depth.

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