

## IDENTIFYING AND RANKING THE MAJOR PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS OF CROP FARMERS IN TRINIDAD

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**ABSTRACT:** Farmers in Trinidad and Tobago constantly complain about the myriad of problems they confront as they seek to earn a livelihood. Evidence suggests that government has taken several actions to bring relief to farmers over the years. In spite of this, the complaints continue. One reason may be because government is not addressing the main and urgent problems as perceived by the farmers. The objective of this study was to identify and rank in order of priority, the problems of farmers in Trinidad, as well as to solicit solutions also and rank-order them. The results will provide decision-makers with key information to plan strategies and impactful interventions. Data were collected from a random sample of 300 crop farmers across major food production locations in Trinidad. The survey instrument was a structured questionnaire and data were collected in 2012. The Problem Confrontation Index (PCI) was used to rank problems and solutions. PCI is a simple economic model useful for studies in rural situation. Results showed that the three top problems were: (i) the high costs of inputs, (ii) shortage of farm labor, and (iii) little or no incentives for youth to enter food production. The three top ranked solutions were: (i) provision of skilled labor for farming, (ii) lowering the costs of inputs, and (iii) provision of greater incentives and credit for farmers. Results show that while actions are needed at all levels, the major problems require actions at the policy level. These are most important and urgent if the needs of crop production farmers are to be satisfied.

Keywords: Problems, Solutions, Crop, Farmers, Trinidad.