

ABSTRACT

Future Scenarios for Food Security in the Caribbean in the face of Global Climate Change: A Case Study of Jamaica

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Climate-related hazards such as hurricanes and droughts now regularly result in millions of dollars in damages and losses to Jamaican agriculture, but the projected impacts of climate change have far more serious implications for agricultural productivity. Adaptation planning is therefore vital for the survival of the sector and for maintaining even a basic level of food security. However, effective sectoral adaptation is highly dependent, in practice, on adaptive capacity at the level of the individual farmer, and on decisions made by different actors at local, national and international level. Decisions concerning adaptation are mediated by several important variables, including the lack of information on the future impacts of climate change; attitudes with regard to complexity, change and uncertainty; and adaptive capacity, which is determined by resource considerations, cognitive constraints and value systems. Relatively little research has been done in the Caribbean on the cognitive barriers to adaptation, or on the conditions under which individual actors are motivated to act. This thesis examines the perception, knowledge and understanding of Jamaican farmers with regard to climate change and food security. The thesis explores farmer attitudes with regard to current decision-making processes, and assesses how these attitudes are linked to vulnerability and affect climate change adaptation and food security planning within the agriculture sector. Finally, it suggest an approach to decision making around food security and climate that address uncertainty, scale and complexity.

Keywords: Cavell Simone Francis-Rhiney; climate change; food security.