

ABSTRACT

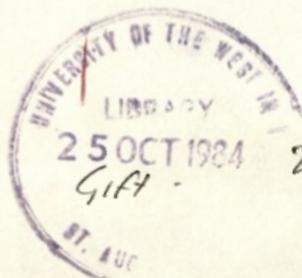
The Antigua and Barbuda "Annual Plot-to-Plot Competition" (PTPC) has been in existence since 1954 and is organised by the Agricultural Extension Service (AES), Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries (MAL&F).

The object of this study was to document the history of the PTPC (1954-1983) and to evaluate the educational and other aspects of the 1983 PTPC.

The major study populations consisted of the 1983 Island Prize Winners (IPW's); the Agricultural Instructors (AI's) and Senior Field Officers (SFO's) who were associated with the 1983 PTPC; policy makers, retired past and present AES staff. Data were obtained by means of structured interviews (IPW's), self-completion questionnaires (AI's & SFO's) unstructured interviews (policy makers, retired past and present AES staff) and consulting AES and MAL&F files.

The major findings of this study were that during the course of its existence the emphasis of the PTPC had changed from a farming system approach to a crop enterprise approach; the 1983 PTPC cannot be considered to be a competition in the truest sense of the word since the aims were not documented and since competitors (IPW's) did not know the rules and rewards and did not make the decision as to whether or not they would enter the competition; the educational potential of the 1983 PTPC was not fully realized since few educational activities were organised and since most of the IPW's were not involved in these activities; the AI's and SFO's did not mention that the PTPC was a means to give recognition to outstanding farmers.

It was recommended that the aims, rules and rewards of the PTPC should be decided on, documented and popularised. Another recommendation was that the educational potential of the PTPC should be more fully exploited by telling the farmers why prizes were awarded, producing appropriate leaflets and making the judging and educational activity. It was also recommended that the PTPC should be used as a vehicle to give meaningful recognition to outstanding farmers.



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The main findings of the study were as follows:

1. The 1975 documented aims and rules of the PTPC did not reflect the situation existing in 1983. The 1983 PTPC aims and rules were not documented.
2. IPW's did not know the 1983 PTPC rules and rewards;
3. The 1983 PTPC rules and rewards were not linked to the aims;
4. Significant inputs (staff time and money) were put into the 1983 PTPC;
5. The teaching activity linked to the 1983 PTPC were limited and were not focused on any particular practices;
6. The IPW's were not told why they had won prizes;
7. The AI's and SFO's and IPW's felt that the PTPC was beneficial and should not be stopped;
8. PTPC (giving farmers recognition) was not mentioned as one of the things that needs to be done to promote, sustain and increase farmers interest in farming;
9. A significant number of IPW's, AI's and SFO's and policy makers want to see changes effected to the PTPC in the future.

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