

## An Agricultural Apprenticeship Program for Youth in Trinidad, West Indies - Can it Meet the Caribbean's Urgent Need for Younger Farmers?

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**Abstract:** To address the aging farmer population in Trinidad, W.I., a situation common to the Caribbean region, a Youth Apprenticeship Program in Agriculture (YAPA) was initiated. An assessment of its effectiveness was conducted in 2007. Results indicated that present trainees went into agriculture to make "additional" income and for self employment, with "contributing to national food security" being ranked lower. They were generally satisfied with the extent of field work, the experience gained and trainers' knowledge and skills. However, they would leave agriculture if they received other employment opportunities or if they were not provided with key resources such as land and soft loans. Past YAPA trainees had significantly changed ( $p < .05$  level) attitudes regarding farming; being less optimistic than present trainees about the future of farming. Recommendations included greater involvement of young persons in the restructuring of the program and overall curriculum redesign to make it more technology oriented.