

**ARE OUR FARMERS DYING WITH THEIR KNOWLEDGE? : LOCAL CROP PROTECTION PRACTICES IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

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**ABSTRACT:** Without the proper collection, documentation and preservation the local knowledge and practices of the aging farming population of Trinidad and Tobago may soon be gone with them! The objective of the study was to capture the local control practices for pests and diseases by farmers 60 years and over in Trinidad and Tobago. The Snowballing technique was used to select 95 farmers in both Trinidad and Tobago. Information was elicited using semi-structured questionnaires and face to face interviews. Data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The results further show a diverse number of traditional methods were used by farmers to control pests and diseases. Most of these were similar but may have differed a bit in the way each method was applied. A wide range of non-chemical, natural materials and methods were applied as for pest control which included: use of ashes, human urine, soapy water, black disinfectant. An overwhelming number of the farmers attested that the local control methods used are effective but very low percentage often use it, surrendering to the chemical approaches. A fair percentage of them obtained information about it from their grand-parents, parents and friends. It is recommended that local crop protection measures should be adapted to fit agricultural process by blending it with modern agriculture to achieve a sustainable agriculture. This will require validation trials and further basic research. The study reemphasizes the need to urgently collect, document and preserve the local pests and diseases control methods.

Keywords: Local Knowledge, Indigenous Knowledge, Pest and Disease Control.