

ABSTRACT

This study discusses the farm-level inputs required to increase production of high value vegetables in St. Vincent, and the measures required to remove the obstacles to the use of these inputs. Some nineteen vegetables are covered, with most attention being paid to carrots. The data was collected by a survey of farms, supporting services, and market statistics.

It was found that the CARIFTA market offered the best prospects for high value vegetables. The crops in greatest demand were onions, garlic, peanuts, carrots, and pumpkins. Expansion of production to satisfy this demand would make a significant contribution to national product.

Improved protection from pests and diseases through greater use of chemicals and longer rotations was found to be the most important farm-level requirement. More fertiliser, herbicides, mechanisation, and irrigation were also required. In the case of carrots, thorough clearing and tillage were important, the latter increasing the response to fertiliser.

As yet St. Vincent only produces high value vegetables on a relatively small scale. However the Government has recently made a serious effort to expand vegetable production and has had some success with carrots. The survey showed carrots to be a profitable crop, returning a mean revenue of \$1.55 for every dollar of input.

A number of measures to increase production are proposed. Prominent amongst these are:-

- a) Promotion of the crops with the best market prospects
- b) Concentration of extension effort in the most responsive areas
- c) Extension field stations for closer integration of research and extension.
- d) A crop protection service capable of more rapid response.
- e) Easier access to credit.
- f) Improvements in marketing, including plans for contract arrangements.
- g) Mechanisation and irrigation on suitable land.

The programme will require a substantial increase in agricultural staff, and some of the proposals such as the provision of irrigation will require a considerable capital outlay.