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The CAMI Project - Weather and Climate Services for Caribbean Food Security

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Food security is major focus of Caribbean governments, with production being of particular concern. For the past three decades, Caribbean agriculture has been declining in relative importance, both in terms of its contribution to GDP and its share of the labour force. One of the problems Caribbean agriculture faces is the destructive impacts from weather and climate extremes. These include flood, drought, extreme temperatures, and strong winds from tropical cyclones. Other potential disasters, such as from pests and diseases attacks, are also weather and climate driven. These make weather and climate information critically important to decision-making in agriculture in the Caribbean region. In an effort to help reduce weather and climate related risks to the food security sector, The Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology, along with its partners the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and ten National Meteorological Services from within the Caribbean Community launched and implemented the Caribbean Agrometeorological Initiative (CAMI). From 2010 to 2013, CAMI set out to provide relevant information to farmers, and the industry in general, for decision and policy making. The project is funded by the European Union through the Science and Technology Programme of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of Countries' (ACP). The overarching objective of CAMI was to increase and sustain agricultural productivity at the farm level in the Caribbean region through improved applications of weather and climate information, using an integrated and coordinated approach. Currently, this is done through (i) provision of relevant climate information appropriately disseminated, (ii) predictions on seasonal rainfall and temperature, (iii) support for improved irrigation management, (iv) the development of strategically selected weather-driven pest and disease models, (v) use of crop simulation models, (vi) training of staff of National Meteorological Services (NMS) and two relevant regional research institutions (vi) and the staging of forums for farmers and Agriculture Extension officers. With its innovative actions and generated products, the thrusts of CAMI link well to the components of the WMO's Global Framework for Climate Services.