

Trinidad and Tobago's readiness to compete under the EPA: a competitive assessment of the country's tomato production technologies

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On December 16, 2007, CARIFORUM (CF) and the European Commission (EC) initialed the comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in Bridgetown, Barbados. All fifteen (15) CARIFORUM member states are parties to the EPA. For the first time in the case of the Caribbean, the agreement allows for reciprocal trading arrangements between the countries of the European Community and CARIFORUM, including goods and services, among other things. It is anticipated that the agreement will facilitate a more dynamic export and import market for the Region.

In the case of agricultural commodities, tomato has always been of interest to Caribbean producers. However, garnering a list of sensitive products and with reciprocity of trade, it is unsure whether the region's tomato producers will be exposed to open competition. Against this background, the study assesses the various technologies used for tomato production in Trinidad and Tobago and presents a comprehensive economic evaluation of each system including open field rain-fed, open field irrigated and those utilizing various types of greenhouse technologies. The monthly wholesale market prices are then used to assess returns to labour, management and investments in each model. Further, the competitiveness against European producers is assessed. The study also makes recommendations for utilization of the various production systems under specific agricultural conditions in an increasingly competitive environment.

Palabras Claves/Key Words: Tomato, EPA, Production technologies