



## TOBAGO HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

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# MEDIA RELEASE

## Agricultural Incentives during COVID-19

The Division will roll out its Covid-19 Response Plan for Tobago on a phased basis, starting May 18, 2020. Farmers and home – gardeners are now invited to register for agricultural incentives as outlined by the Division to boost food production especially during this uncertain time.

### Phase 1- Home- Garden Start-Up Kits

The Department of Agriculture will distribute to home-gardeners 200 start-up kits at first instance from May 18, 2020. Further commitment is made to distribute 100 start-up kits on a monthly basis thereafter for the next four months (September 2020). Start-up kits will comprise a selection of vegetable seeds (pigeon peas, corn, okro, cucumber, etc.), seasoning herbs and food crops (cassava, sweet potato, banana/plantain).

### Phase 2- Distribution of Vegetable Seedlings

The distribution of vegetable seedlings to home- gardeners will commence from the start of June 2020. Distribution will also take place on a monthly basis up to September 2020.

Home gardeners can call to register their interest in the home garden start-up kits and vegetable seedlings through the Division's hotline: 639 1966 between 9am- 12noon, Monday – Friday.

**Start-up kits and seedlings will be distributed on a "first come first serve" basis.**

### Planting Material for Farmers

- ▶ Planting materials for sweet potato, cassava and plantain are currently available. Interested farmers are asked to call the hotline to register.
- ▶ Farmers can access the Division's covid-19 Farmers' Incentive Programme through application forms that will be available from the Division's Incentive Unit starting from June 2020.
- ▶ Farmers wishing to expand their operations or new farmers seeking start-up capital are advised to seek assistance through the Enterprise Assistance Fund and Business Development Grant facilities of the the Division of community Development, Enterprise Development and Labour.

#### 4. **INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF STARTER LIVESTOCK:**

This incentive is intended to alleviate the burden on Government livestock stations for meeting the demands for starter livestock, particularly pig and small ruminants (goat and sheep):

- (i) Breeding Stock Production incentive of \$100 per weaner (pig, sheep, goat) subject to set criteria (weight, body conditioning, animal health, etc.) and verification by the Division's staff.  
(Mainly pigs)

#### 5. **CROP IRRIGATION:**

To encourage vital year-round production through crop irrigation, the Division intends to offer an incentive of 100% the total cost of irrigation system (water pump, equipment, infrastructure) up to a maximum of \$35,000.

#### 6. **LIVESTOCK AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS:**

The Division intends to encourage food security in livestock production through viable enterprises in poultry (meat and eggs), small ruminant, pig and rabbit production.

Therefore, the following incentives in this regard are:

- (i) The Division will seek to have state lands available for medium to large poultry farms (3000 - >10,000) birds.
- (ii) 50% on pre-approved housing and infrastructure for poultry (boilers, layers) up to a maximum of \$100,000.
- (iii) The Division will continue to promote the existing incentive on rabbit production

#### 7. **GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE THROUGH LAND DISTRIBUTION:**

Recent graduates of Cycle 11 of the YAPA Programme in 2018 will be issued at least two

- (2) acres of land for agricultural production.

#### 8. **HOME GARDENING:**

- (i) The Division intends to distribute planting materials (seeds, seedlings, cuttings, etc.) free of charge to home gardeners.
- (ii) To encourage year-round home gardening, the Division will also offer an incentive on watering equipment and watering systems of 50% of the cost (water pumps, water tanks, irrigation fittings, etc.) up to a maximum of \$3,000.
- (iii) The Division intends to offer an incentive of 50% on approved home gardening tools.

#### 9. **AGRO-PROCESSING:**

The Division will further incentivize this National Agricultural Incentive to 70% of the cost of establishing approved facilities for agro-processing of approved commodities (root tubers, pigeon peas, corn, banana and plantain, mango, local meats, local dairy milk) to a maximum of \$80,000.

#### 10. **POST HARVEST STORAGE FACILITIES (CHILL AND COLD STORAGE)**

The Division intends to build the island's capacity in chill and cold storage facilities via private sector investment through the provision of an incentive of 60% of the cost of establishing approved infrastructure and facilities for chill and cold storage up to a maximum of \$50,000.

The Division continues on its drive towards achieving food security for Tobago and has recognised the urgent need for boosting our food production levels during this uncertain period. We hereby encourage existing and new crop and livestock farmers and home-gardeners to access the support provided to yield greater production in Tobago.

Should you need any further information, feel free to visit the Food Crop Production Unit at Montessori Drive, Glen Road, Scarborough, Tobago or contact 639-2234 ext . 3584/5.