AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION DIVISION

Divisional Scientific Officer: Mr. M. Y. Boodoo

1.0 Introduction

The Agricultural Information Division (AID) has continued with its main objective of providing up to date and reliable statistics/information to users/stakeholders for various uses such as policy formulation, strategic planning, decision making and research. The Division maintains a Database Unit, a Library and Documentation Unit, an Audiovisual Unit and a Computer Network Unit to achieve its mission. The Division also forms part of the triangular inter-library network comprising AID/UOM/MSIRI. Audiovisual support is provided to the Ministry and parastatal bodies for the organization of agricultural events.

2.0 ISO Certification

The Agricultural information Division became an ISO certified Division. It was awarded the MS ISO 9001:2008 certificate by the MSB on 30 November 2011 which remains valid until November 2014. The scope of the certificate of registration covers the following services:

- Development and provision of information services on food and agriculture to ministries, government departments, parastatal bodies, local authorities, other government agencies, private companies and international organizations.
- Provision of IT support services and audiovisual and other related ancillary services.
- Provision of library and documentation services to professionals and the general public.

In this respect, regularly internal auditings were carried out to ensure that the Division satisfies the requirements contained in the quality manual.

3.0 Database Unit

3.1 Website

Links of agricultural institutions supplying statistics to the Division (FARC, AREU, AMB, FSC, MSIRI, MMA, Irrigation Authority, Tobaccc, Tea Board, etc) were established to the AID website for ease of consultation by stakeholders. Statistics on foodcrop production as well as slaughter data for the last quarter of 2010 and for first three quarters of 2011 were updated in the AID website.

3.2 International Cooperation

In the context of international cooperation with countries, inputs were provided in respect of import/export trade figures of agricultural products with Tanzania and Kenya, for the years 2007 to 2009, import/export with Germany for year 2009, an update on cooperation with Rodrigues, import/export of fertiliser to the NEPAD Agency for progress made by Mauritius in implementing the Abuja Declaration on Fertilisers, trade in agricultural produce between Singapore and Mauritius for years 2008 to 2010, import/export with Congo (Brazzaville) and the possibilities of Joint Ventures between Greek and Mauritian companies.
3.3 Food Crop Statistics
Foodcrop statistics (area harvested, volume of production and area under new cultivation) received from the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU) were compiled for the months December 2010 to October 2011.

3.4 Livestock Slaughter Statistics
Data on livestock slaughter (cattle, goat, sheep, pig and deer), their origin (local or imported), the number of heads slaughtered and their respective carcass weight for December 2010 to November 2011 from the Mauritius Meat Authority, were processed.

3.5 Database Management
Latest statistics on issues pertaining to the agricultural sector published in the Annual Digest of Statistics, import and export trade data on agricultural products of 2010, data on particular subgroups of food items (rice, wheat and other cereals, pulses, milk, meat etc.) and up to date information on world food production and food security as well as on consumption pattern and price were regularly downloaded from appropriate sites.

3.6 Miscellaneous Requests
In the context of food security, information was supplied to various stakeholders in respect of Food production and Producer Price Index, imports and exports of anthurium for the year 2010, imports of all soya and maize by-products for the year 2010 and imports and exports of turmeric and cardamom for the years 2006 to 2010.

FAO questionnaires on Tropical Fruits (fresh and processed fruits, imported/exported for years 2008-2009) and on Rice Trade and Stocks (imports and exports for the years 2006-2009) were filled.

4.0 Library and Documentation Unit

4.1 Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)
With the help of CTA (Technical Centre for Agricultural and rural Cooperation), the SDI Service around specific research profiles was maintained.
Bibliographical references obtained through computerized searches from worldwide agricultural databases such as AGRIS, CAB Abstracts, AGRICOLA, BIOSIS, PASCAL, TROPAG, HIBISCUS, AGRITROP were channeled to research divisions /officers.
A total of 1,944 references were provided under the SDI Service

4.2 New Acquisitions
49 additional new books and 204 periodicals were purchased. 103 books, 2 CD-ROMs and 242 periodicals were acquired through donations or exchange with various organizations inland and overseas.
4.3 Miscellaneous

1,968 books/documents were issued on loan to officers of both the Agricultural Services and Agricultural Research and Extension Unit.

44 requests were made on behalf of our staff to other research institutions for the various interlibrary loans of agricultural documents.

12 requests were ordered for some 90 free documents from various research institutions abroad. Various requests were also ordered for specific technical and scientific publications.

1,526 library users have been attending the Documentation Unit for reference work and other library services.

Some 224 requests for miscellaneous agricultural information have been attended to through telephone calls and queries from users.

4.4 Computerisation /CD-ROM databases

A special Library Software has been set up for fast retrieval of information. This database has been maintained and 10,155 entries have been input in the system.

Literature searches have been carried out on-line on various worldwide CD-ROM databases such as CAB Abstracts, AGRICOLA, TROPAG AND RURAL, which are regularly updated. 41 requests were met and 7,340 references downloaded on diskettes/pen drive and provided to officers.

181 requests have been attended to and 5,784 pages, 624 files of information have been downloaded from specific sites on the Internet, printed/copied on diskettes/pen drive and provided to officers.

5.0 Audiovisual Unit

5.1 Public Address and Audiovisual Support

Audiovisual support was provided to cover 109 events such as World Food Day celebrations, training sessions, seminars, workshops, meetings, launching ceremonies, sensitisation campaigns. The main organisations concerned were:- Farmers Service Corporation, The Agricultural Marketing Board, the Small Planters Welfare Fund, the National Parks and Conservation Service, the Cane Planters & Millers Arbitration and Control Board as well as the Divisions of Entomology, Horticulture, Dairy Chemistry, Veterinary Services, Richelieu Engineering Workshop, Food Technology Laboratory, National Plant Protection Office, the Office of the Chief Agricultural Officer, and the Ministry of Agro Industry & Food Security.

Some important events covered were:

- Launching of field operations and regrouping project (phase V)
- Sensitisation workshop on “Wetlands and Forests” - Forests for water and wetlands.
- COMESA workshop
- Food Security projects under the 1000A scheme and handing over of lease agreement
- World Veterinry Year 2011
- Launching of Potato campaign
- Launching of Onion campaign
- Launching of Garlic campaign
- Launching of Goat Project
- Launching of the Stray Dog campaign
- Training in Apiculture
- Regional Agro Ecology project
- Presentation on ocular disease affecting dogs and cats
- Workshop on Women Empowerment
- International Year of Forests and the celebration of the World Biodiversity Day
- Family Day celebration
- Climate Change
- Art in the Forest project
- Planters Excellence Award Scheme
- ISO Certification Award ceremony

5.2 Photographic Work
The Unit took pictures to cover 86 events for the Divisions of the Ministry and other parastatal organisations.

5.3 Graphic Work
Posters, pamphlets, labels, brochures, leaflet programme, banners, invitation cards, billboards were designed for the following divisions: Dairy Chemistry, Entomology, Veterinary Services, Food Technology Laboratory, the Head Office of the Ministry and the office of the Chief Agricultural Officer.

6.0 Computer Network Unit

6.1 List of sites under IT Support
(a) Port Louis - Head Office, Sterling House, Blendax House and Abercrombie ES

(b) Reduit- Main Stores, Agricultural Services and NPCS

(c) Beau-Bassin- Barkly ES (Horticulture)

(d) Curepipe- Forestry Service, PGR (Horticulture), and Curepipe ES (Agronomy)

(e) Others- Remote Sensing, Richelieu ES, Engineering Division (Richelieu), Terre Rouge Rivulet, Saint Pierre ASC, PGR N.Découverte

6.2 ICT Infrastructure
The current shared systems size in terms of number of equipment forming part of local area network:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Plouis</th>
<th>Reduit and others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Pcs</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>225</td>
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</table>
No. of Printers 125  270  
No. of NoteBooks 15  24  

The Stand Alone Systems in terms of not forming part of local area network both at PLouis and Reduit  
No. of PCs = 55  

The following Application Software/systems are operational at the Ministry (Port Louis & Reduit):-  

(i) HRMIS (Personnel System)  
(ii) Treasury Accounting System – Finance Section, at Sterling House, PLouis  
(iii) Land Conversion Permit System – Main Server at Reduit  
(iv) Registry Information System  
(v) Websites of the (i) Ministry of Agro Industry; (ii) Office of the President.  
(vi) Government Intranet System (GINS) – The network at the Ministry is constantly expanding and support was provided to all div/sections of the ministry connected to GINS Network.  
(vii) Small In-house Systems – (Foxpro Platform) – 3 In house systems (2 in Poultry Division and 1 at Barkly ES) was maintained  

During the Year 2011, the officers at CNU (Reduit) performed the following:  

(1) Attended to e-Agriculture and ISO monitoring committees  
(2) Re-configured PCs in case of technical problems  
(3) Troubleshooted on connectivity as and when required with respect to GINS Network  
(4) Configured PCs for internet access through GINS  
(5) Carried out surveys to detect fault when users do not have access to internet through GINS  
(6) Provided assistance to the Central Co-ordination Unit (CCU) of CISD icw technical problems with router.  
(7) Assisted EIS technicians in the commissioning exercise of GINS equipment  
(8) Assisted suppliers for commissioning exercises icw delivery of IT Equipment like PCS, printers, laptops, UPS etc.  
(9) Installed and configured new ICT equipment.  
(10) Provided maintenance of in-house systems at Barkly Division, and APD  
(11) Performed daily/weekly/monthly back-ups on servers  
(12) Installed Free Anti-Virus and Anti_Spyware on PCs  
(13) Updated websites for the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security and Office of the President  
(14) Carried out surveys in all Depts/Sections of the Ministry to update list of IT equipment and IP addresses