

Hurricane recovery: Agriculture revitalization in Dominica underway

REPORT

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Friday, October 13, 2017 — Agriculture revitalization has begun in Dominica following the passage of hurricane Maria last month. A seedlings project coordinated by the OECS Commission, FAO, CARDI and an agriculture consultant has been undertaken to ensure the self-sufficiency of the country. Over 100,000 fast growing seeds were recently planted and the first harvest is expected in four weeks.

Hurricane Maria has left the landscape in Dominica, the “nature island”, desolate and the need for replanting is apparent and urgent. Self-sufficiency is now a priority to speed up the recovery process as the country currently depends on shipments of food relief from regional and international stakeholders.

In order to accelerate the agricultural revitalization in Dominica, the OECS Commission has partnered with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and an agricultural consultant, Peter Dillon along with the Ministry of Agriculture of Dominica to establish a seedlings project.

Fast growing food crops were identified as the priority seeds: tomatoes, eggplants, pumpkins, sweet pepper, spinach, lettuce, cabbage and kale. On one hand, the operations consisted in supporting individual farmers and households through the distribution of seeds. On the other hand, four major sites have been identified as strategic areas for replanting interventions : Roseau, the North-East area, the South-East area and Portsmouth. The Portsmouth community, located in the south of the island, is particularly important as it enables the food supply of the hospital.

"This week we worked in Roseau and in Portsmouth where we planted a total of 150,000 seeds. We also ensured the rehabilitation of four greenhouses. The interventions went much better than I thought. We are expecting the first harvest in four weeks! We are literally going to keep planting seeds." Mr. Dillon confirmed.

After Dominica, the agriculture revitalization project is expected to continue in the British Virgin Islands.