



**Can we turn Agriculture & Fisheries  
into our "New" Oil & Gas?**

**Onardath Maharaj**



Without food, populations cannot survive.  
And worldwide, there is alarming  
concern about food security.



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# Agriculture / Food production was the mainstay of the T&T economy 54 years ago . . .

- Rural / urban migration
- Opportunity cost of land (other investment / Tobago), labour, capital, entrepreneurship
- Food import bill versus budget allocation to agriculture
- Taste and preferences - baby cereals, fruits & veg

*Can we still benefit from this age-old practice?*



Big support for the TFFA for Local Day taking the lead to act in the economic reality

# Call to eat local



The approach from any of the 11 Field Nutrition Club, St. Vincent, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Chairman of the TFFA show their local fruits



Alanna Rubin, 4th Club member and student of the Maroon Presbyterian School shared attitudes with a manager, "Remembering Water"



Courtesy Bakery Tasty in Chaguanas

"It is critical to anchor all of this through inclusive policy development," he added.

The economist called upon the entire country to become more aware of reducing the nation's hefty food import bill. He said, "With declining rents from the energy sector, it is a greater burden to maintain Trinidad and Tobago's dependency on food imports, in addition to increased pressure on our foreign exchange and food price inflation."

He said, "For many years much lip service has been given to the importance of the agriculture and fisheries sectors and its far-reaching links to sustainable livelihoods, rural development, the environment, health, a diversified economy and overall food and nutrition security. The TFFA has been actively lobbying for

He said, "Firm policy positions are needed to directly foster production and to build comparative advantage in value addition, but as well to regain trust and goodwill among the stakeholders of the sector. Giving respect must be seen as reciprocal in the struggle for national food security and sovereignty."

Going deeper into what the TFFA was doing in the sector, Maharaj said, "The National Fruit Festival - another success story of the association - by design seeks to bring together a significant majority of stakeholders. This collaborative approach is also entrenched in small and micro-enterprises (SMEs) clustering or nucleated development. SME clustering in the sector could benefit from shared services such as packing houses, training, joint

# What are we doing right in agriculture? What are our strengths?



Fruit Festival 2015 - Open





**What are we doing wrong? What can we immediately do better?**



**What is preventing us from doing better?  
(issue of chemicals / nature of incentives)**



# Protecting women and men who feed the nation

**THE EDITOR:** The Tableland Pineapple Farmers Association and the Felicity Charleville Fishing Association join to extend our condolences to the families and friends of fishermen Larry Phillip and Wayne Samaroo who perished while at work in Mayaro on Monday. We stand with the fishing community, especially on the south-eastern seaboard, in this time of mourning.

This experience is yet another unfortunate and painful reminder of the challenges operators in the agriculture and fisheries industry continue to face. Inappropriate consideration for safety at sea, safety on the field and overall food safety practices continue to prohibit it prosperity and progress within the local food production sector.

Other future national food safety is compromised through unsustainable industry practices in the form of chemical effluence in waterways and in the disposal of post-harvest losses and carcasses, abandoned or lost nets, vessels and other fishing apparatus. This Mayaro accident, scorpions, machinery failure and misuse add to the challenges, cost of acquiring appropriate labour and as well serves as a disincentive to young and inexperienced people



the appeal that more must be done towards risk mitigation and understanding food security in our context. This understanding of food security and its related discourse should consider protection of the

the economic fortunes of rural areas, pegged, in the most part, to agriculture, fisheries and tourism. However, not understanding the choice of being a farmer or fisher as a personal livelihood and career decision, the benefits are not in tandem with corporate counterparts. We hope that such a philosophy is in consideration as we support the Government's strategy of focusing on structure, governance and people where food production is concerned in TT over this fiscal

areas, I pushed the development and implementation of a "financial empowerment programme for fishing communities" which was allowed to flop by the Seafood Industry Development Company.

There is also serious room for improvement in the provision of extension services. In the current scenario, ignorance being no excuse for the law, life jackets and other implements of safety cannot be underestimated. Operators need the guidance, mentorship and oversight to foster a culture change similar to the automobile industry and seat belts.

Industry development, albeit within the agriculture and fisheries sector, involves of critical evaluation and re-thinking in the current paradigm and thrusts. We must ensure that support for sustainable livelihoods in the sector, ocean and land use and empower sustainability mechanisms to support farmers and fisherfolk. These will demand political commitments, actions and collaboration on land and marine resources.

We hope that such a philosophy is in consideration as we support the Government's strategy of focusing on structure, governance and people where food production is concerned in TT over this fiscal

... challenges operators in the agriculture and fisheries industry continue to face. Inappropriate consideration for safety at sea, safety on the field, and overall food safety practices continue to prohibit prosperity and progress within the local food production sector.

A top-down view of a clear glass bowl filled with fresh organic vegetables. The bowl contains several bright red tomatoes, a large green bell pepper, a smaller red pepper, and several green beans. The vegetables are arranged in a somewhat circular pattern within the bowl. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

**What does organic really mean? Is it  
feasible in mass production? Why is  
it so expensive?**

Organic farming is a method of crop and livestock production that involves much more than choosing not to use pesticides, fertilizers, genetically modified organisms, antibiotics and growth hormones.

# How does home gardening actually affect farmers/middle men? Is there a conflict between encouraging home gardening and farm production/sales?

SATURDAY,  
APRIL 23,  
2016

## Economist urges: Grow food at home

**A15**

Stop complaining about rising food prices and start practicing agriculture at home. That is the advice from agricultural economist Omaidath Maharaj who said a backyard garden can significantly cut a family's food bill.

He called for concerted efforts to get involved in small-scale family-oriented agriculture.

Maharaj said citizens eat almost 4 million meals daily at an average cost of around \$20 per meal. Eating food

produced at home can result in savings if families analyze their budgets and produce what they can in available spaces around their homes, he said.

In the feature address at a general meeting of the National 4H Leaders

Council T&T at the San Fernando Hill, Maharaj said food sovereignty should be high on the agenda and citizens need to develop a taste for local foods in this period of economic challenges.

He said the cost of imported foods will continue to soar and T&T could find itself in a position where it might not be able to import these items because of dwindling foreign exchange.



# business

WEDNESDAY,  
OCTOBER 21,  
2015

## Economist calls for Eat Local Day

Agricultural economist Omaidath Maharaj is calling for an Eat Local Day to be observed in T&T.

"Appropriately themed and understood, agriculture offers the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty as the ability

and empowerment to feed one's self is perhaps arguably one of the largest social safety nets which can be offered in any country," he said in a statement on the recent celebration of World Food Day.

"Empowerment and social inclusion at

every level of the socio-economic ladder contributes to giving voice to the voiceless especially on matters of national interest."

Maharaj added: "Firm policy positions are needed to directly foster production

and to build comparative advantage in value addition but as well to regain trust and goodwill among the stakeholders of the sector. Giving respect must be seen as reciprocal in the struggle for national food security and sovereignty.

**A17**



# 1





**Can the recession be a good thing for local production? Is the sector prepared to pick up the slack? Are we doing enough research (CARDI etc)?**



# Quotation Summary

CURRENCY: (TT)

T&T Index: 1,953.33 (0.36) Cross Index: 45.52 (0.00)

IG	LAST OFFER VOL (\$)	LAST SALE PRICE	LAST SALE DATE (MM/YY)	SHARES TRADED (UNITS)	CLOSE QUOTE (\$)	DAYS QUOTE CHANGE (\$)
793	18.19	20/10/15	1	18.19		
149	14.01	20/10/15	998	14.01	0.01	
2,119	67.03	20/10/15	1	67.03		
500	38.95	20/10/15	200	38.95	0.01	
	3.66	13/10/15		3.66		
359	39.01	20/10/15	1436	39.00		
7,000	19.00	08/10/15		19.00		
	4.80	19/10/15		4.80		
2,184	3.60	19/10/15		3.60		
4,981	13.12	20/10/15	10,001	13.12	-0.01	
	18.76	19/10/15		18.76		
50,000	0.43	20/10/15	21,373	0.43		
66,048	0.25	13/02/15		0.25		
9,386	0.97	14/10/15		0.97		
6,137	62.45	19/10/15		62.45		
18,000	1.64	09/10/15		1.64		
15,468	16.72	20/10/15	1	16.72		
48,565	1.94	13/10/15		1.94		
9,000	22.00	09/10/15		22.00		
200	2.95	15/10/15		2.95		
263	8.90	12/10/15		8.90		
1,478	18.79	04/05/15		18.79		
25	112.00	20/10/15	159	112.00		
137,540	6.00	19/10/15	20,000	6.00		
4,152	1.61	16/10/15		1.61		
991	42.50	20/10/15	2,350	42.50		
	126.00	20/10/15	200	126.00		
21,643	25.00	20/10/15	76,45,914	25.00	2.00	
12,850	3.16	20/10/15	15,000	3.16		
800	47.26	04/10/15		47.26		
	45.01	28/05/15		45.01		
5,76	1.18	04/10/15		1.18		
7,120	22.51	20/10/15	1,144	22.51	0.01	
	0.00	31/12/69		0.67		
	0.00	31/12/69		1.70		
37,703	3.06	04/10/15		3.06		
630	1.10	08/06/15		1.10		
1,000	0.60	24/04/14		0.60		

# Agro Economist urges TT Eat more local food

AS THE global community celebrated World Food Day last Friday, the Tableland Pineapple Farmers Association (TPFA) yesterday reiterated its call for the observance of an "Eat Local Day" to boost the nation's appreciation for local produce.

In a media statement yesterday titled, "Give us this day Our local fruit", agro economist Omdash Maharaj pointed out that agriculture not only possessed the potential to feed the nation but also to contribute to the development of the country.

Appropriately themed and understood, agriculture offers the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty as the ability and empowerment to feed one's self is perhaps arguably one of the largest social safety



Agro economist Omdash Maharaj stated, adding, "empowerment and social inclusion at every level of the socio-economic ladder are essential to building a nation that is resilient and self-sufficient." Maharaj stated, adding, "stated and noted that firm policy positions were needed to direct local production and build local capacity. He noted that well-governed and gain trust and goodwill among the stakeholders of the sector."

"Giving respect must be seen as reciprocal in the struggle for national food security and sovereignty," Maharaj stated and pointed out that corporate and citizen support were also critical for the survival and success of the sector.

"That support is also essential to grassroots initiatives which seek to break the cycle of poverty in rural and fishing communities and as well in seeking to educate on the importance of the domestic food sector in urban areas," he added. The World Food Day website states 805 million people, one in nine worldwide, live with chronic hunger while the "costs of hunger and malnutrition fall heavily on the most vulnerable."

# and Quotation Summary

CURRENCY: (TT\$)

FACE VALUE: 0.00 TRADE VALUE: 0.00

LAST SALE PRICE (\$)	LAST SALE DATE (MM/YY)	LAST TRADE VALUE (\$)	LAST TRADE DATE (MM/YY)	CHANGE FROM OPENING (\$)
386.00	23/09/14	7.978	900,000.00	100.00
165.50	23/09/14	-6.995	344,378.00	165.50
108.51	30/05/12	0.752	105,000.00	109.51
108.51	23/09/13	0.235	808,000.00	108.51
194.99	12/06/13	1.875	13,000,000.00	194.99
123.00	21/05/14	0.905	28,791,000.00	123.00
191.64	01/12/10	1.945	300,000.00	191.64
121.00	27/11/14	1.485	24,434,943.00	121.00
178.30	25/03/15	1.664	500,000.00	178.30
100.74	26/10/13	2.135	63,043,000.00	100.74
123.33	25/03/15	1.795	900,000.00	123.33
166.47	02/10/13	3.075	7,000,000.00	166.47
123.30	01/06/15	2.375	728,000.00	123.30
108.03	11/09/13	3.035	46,304,000.00	108.03
134.90	31/05/15	3.065	5,000,000.00	134.90
130.00	03/08/13	2.875	2,000,000.00	130.00
168.41	11/11/14	3.005	80,000,000.00	168.41
137.78	13/12/14	2.805	21,512,000.00	137.78
117.74	03/08/15	3.005	101,000.00	117.74
100.85	22/06/15	3.025	70,000.00	100.85

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**INCOME & GROWTH FUND**

Fund Name	Immortelle
Unit Price	TTS13.03
	As at Oct 19, 2015

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**CARICOM trade - what don't we know about how much we rely on imports from Grenada & St Vincent?**



**Fisheries: is our fish safe to eat? What should we know that we don't yet know? How can we get to know more about fish? Are our seas being overfished? To what extent is trawling an issue?**

**Are we truly independent if we  
continue to depend on other  
countries to feed us?**



# Repeal of Cocoa Act crippled industry

By JANELLE DE SOUZA Monday, October 3 2016



Therefore, Rambharat said the Cocoa Development Company and the new board was given a mandate to recreate the framework to ensure that the country's status and integrity as cocoa producers are not compromised, and to bring confidence in the sector.

However, he said, despite any future increases, it would be impossible for agriculture and fisheries to replace oil and gas with respect to contributing to the country's GDP.

Instead, he said its contribution would be to the earning capacity of individuals in rural communities.

"Cocoa is a vital commodity in rural TT if we can rehabilitate estates, if we can boost production, and if we can convert that production through value added into products that remain in TT for local purchase and consumption.

That is where the true effects is going to be found. Not in agriculture's contribution to the national GDP, but agriculture and fisheries' contribution to rural development and the earning capacity of rural households," he said.

INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

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COLM BATS FOR SANDALS RESORT



**Are we cooking with gas?**



## NEWS

Farmers welcome new PM, await new minister

# Who will head TT agriculture?

THE NATION'S farmers will be paying special attention today to the swearing in of the rest of the Cabinet of Prime Minister Keith Rowley's new administration to see who will become the new Minister of Food Production especially as Clarence Rambharath, who was earmarked by Rowley prior to the general election - to be agri minister, lost at the polls.

There has been talk that Rowley is keen on appointing only elected MPs to Ministerial posts.

In the meantime, agro economist Omardath Maharaj said on Wednes-

day that he joins with members of the Tableland Pineapple Farmers Association (TPFA) in congratulating the country's new Prime Minister. Rowley who is Diego Martin West MP, was sworn in on Wednesday at Queen's Hall. During the election campaign, Rowley said, if elected as prime minister in last Monday's General Election, Rambharath (the PNM's Mayaro candidate) would be this country's next agriculture minister. Rambharath was defeated in the Mayaro constituency by the United National Congress' (UNC) Rushton Paray.



Agro economist Omardath Maharaj

In a statement, Maharaj said the general election campaign muted the conversation on issues of national importance, namely the imperative for diversification, recession of the economy, de-

clining foreign exchange reserves and availability, food price inflation, unemployment, underemployment, overall healthy eating, lifestyles and the environment among a host of other socio-eco-

nomics indicators of our standard of living.

"We make an early call on the Minister of Agriculture to re-open the communication channels within the sector for broad and even-handed engagement of all stakeholders, including the citizenry," Maharaj said. "We call for quick examination of the State enterprises under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture; the leadership and management of which have been languishing in disarray and inefficiency for some time.

There must be consideration for value-for-money audits, and a human resource policy which aligns with industry standards, and needs," he said. The last Food Production Minister was Devant Maharaj who was not an elected MP, but was made a Senator by then prime minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

Maharaj (Omardath)

stressed the need for "prudent, transparent management and reporting of national affairs and agriculture sector performance, considering there has been a failure to achieve the objectives set out in the Medium Term Policy Framework (2011-2014) for Agriculture and Food Security."

He identified these as reducing the food import bill (target: ten percent annually); reduce the rate of food inflation, and sustain it within single digits; create sustainable, long-term productive employment in the sector to support a national unemployment level that is under seven percent, increase the sector's contribution to GDP (target: three percent by 2014) and create a food secure nation.

Calling for inclusive policy planning and action in TT, Maharaj said, "There is also great hope for a Ministry of Rural Development and the

projects to be delivered in Moruga/Tableland, including the development of the Moruga Road, Moruga Port and fishing facility." Noting the election of the PNM's Dr Lovell Francis as the new Moruga/Tableland MP, Maharaj was optimistic that Francis "ought to see that region develop into a model rural constituency."

Underscoring the need for "consultation, collaboration and coordination for a clear path ahead," Maharaj said, "We call on the incoming Government to pursue and establish a rural development policy that is focussed, not on urbanisation, but committed to meeting the challenges faced by our rural and coastal areas, while importantly, unlocking their potential." He added that, "the economic fortunes of rural and coastal communities are pegged, in the most part, to agriculture, fisheries and tourism."

## NAVIGATIONAL WARNING 043/15

### TRINIDAD - SOUTH EAST COAST

#### CHART BA 517

**MVs HIGHLAND VALOUR, HIGHLAND COURAGE**





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