



## IICA-COLEAD Caribbean Agrifood Business Series

### Session n°10:

#### Successes from agrifood entrepreneurs and SMEs in packaging and labelling

Thursday 24 August 2023 – 10:00-12:00 (AST)

### BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

#### **Mara ABRAHAM – Ag Executive Director, Dominica Bureau of Standards, CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ), Dominica**



Mara P. Abraham is the Programme Manager for Standards Development at the Dominica Bureau of Standards. She is responsible for managing the National Standards Development programme which includes the development of Dominica National Standards and the coordination of Dominica's participation in Regional and International Standards Development work. Ms Abraham currently serves as the Chair of the Technical Management Committee (TMC) of the CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ). TMC is a committee made up of representatives from CARICOM Member States and is responsible for the development of CARICOM Regional Standards.

Mara P. Abraham holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agri-Business Management from Cameron University and is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Management Studies at the University of the West Indies – Open Campus.

#### **Isolina BOTO – Head of Networks and Alliances, COLEAD**



Isolina Boto is the Head of Networks and Alliances at COLEAD, a non-profit association of private sector operators in the agrifood sector active in the European Union (EU), Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions. Isolina has more than 25 years of experience in agricultural development. She started her career with the European Commission and has also worked with various ACP embassies and NGOs in areas related to food security, rural development and trade. Before joining COLEAD, she was the Manager of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) Brussels Office (2004-2020) implementing policy initiatives related to the ACP-EU cooperation in the field of the agrifood sector. She has led agribusiness projects in support of capacity development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), entrepreneurs and farmers organisations across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific and developed agrotourism aimed at linking agriculture and tourism sectors.



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## Allister Reynold GLEAN – Technical Specialist, International Trade and Regional Integration Programme / Representative in Barbados, IICA

Allister Glean is the Representative (Acting) of the Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Barbados. He spent the last 5 years as the International Specialist in Agribusiness and Value Chains, stationed with the St. Lucia Delegation. Allister has worked extensively in the agricultural sector for over 20 years with experience working in agricultural research and development, agribusiness development, food and beverage processing as well as development financing for agribusiness.



Allister has lectured on a part-time basis at the tertiary level for over 16 years in the areas of marketing, strategic planning and business ethics. While trained in management and marketing, he also possesses post graduate qualifications in international relations and agribusiness development. He is also a qualified attorney at law. Allister tends to have a particular interest in

governance, market development and trade facilitation.

Allister has a passion for working with micro, small and medium sized business with emphasis on women, youth and producer groups. In fact, he is himself also a small farmer producing food crops on a 2 1/2 acre plot.

## Jeremy KNOPS – Délégué Général, COLEAD

Jeremy Knops holds a Master's degree in Business Engineering from the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM). Prior to joining COLEACP in 2009, he was involved in Guatemala with the daily operations of a farmers' cooperative exporting loquats to the EU and the US. He started to work for COLEACP as an expert in charge of matters related to private standards and certification for ACP producers and exporters of fruit and vegetables. Jeremy is an accredited coach for leadership and professional development. He has been appointed as General Delegate of COLEACP in June 2019.



## Tania LIEUW-A-SOE – Chairperson, Wi! Uma Fu Sranan , and CEO, SURIVIT N.V., Suriname

Tania Lieuw-A-Soe grew up as the daughter of an agriculturist and poultry farmer and has been an entrepreneur since 1990. In 2004 she founded SURIVIT N.V., a company which produces juices from organic grown exotic fruits and supplies hotel chains, restaurants and catering companies. As the CEO of SURIVIT N.V. Tania Lieuw-A-Soe strives to contribute to sustainable food and nutrition security, economic growth, value chain development and promotion and employment opportunities in Suriname with the specific focus on rural women.



Tania Lieuw-A-Soe is also the founder and President of the first women agriculture cooperative in Suriname, Agro Cooperatie Wi! Uma Fu Sranan, which was created in 2013. This cooperative is an organization in which women with the same passion for agriculture production are joined to empower and support towards a common goal: the strenghtening of Suriname's agriculture sector to pursuing poverty alleviation with entrepreneurial zeal, innovative business methods and courage focused on the local and international market. The cooperative has 38 members.

### **Kamarsha SYLVESTER – Managing Director, Hey Mama Products, Dominica**



Kamarsha Sylvester hails from a small village in the north of Dominica called Paix-Bouche. She has always had a love for agriculture and this was evident as she tried her hands at growing herbs and corn upon completing her degree. Her passion for entrepreneurship really commenced in 2012 while at her final year at the University of the West Indies where she teamed up with her business partner to produce ice pops.

Kamarsha is an all-rounder. She is an electrician with a degree in Psychology and International Relations. She is currently employed as a Social Safeguards Officer and she is also a well-known performance poet.

Kamarsha is a firm advocate for healthy eating and this is what prompted her latest venture: Hey Mama. Kamarsha's ambition is to see her products being sold at supermarket chains in Dominica, the wider Caribbean and internationally.

### **Sergio TILLET – Agri-Business Development Officer, Belize Marketing and Development Corporation (BMDC)**



Sergio has 24 years of experience in managing a business and executing marketing activities. His professional journey is characterised by a series of contributions to farmers and farming communities. In his current position, Sergio leads the Projects Unit of the BMDC. He spearheaded the first contractual agreement between a beekeeper cooperative and the BMDC. He also conducts marketing presentations to prepare different cooperatives to carry on their own marketing of their produce. He has actively contributed to the marketing of milpa grown rice from over 45 rice-growing communities in southern Belize. In this context, his bilingual background is a plus to communicate with farmers from different ethnicities and trades.

Sergio is also actively engaged with government and international entities to assist farmers. He liaises with the Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Enterprise to execute different projects.

Sergio holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration.

### **Hesma TYSON – Managing Director and Founder, Caribbean Specialty Foods Co. Ltd., Trinidad and Tobago**



Hesma has been involved in food processing for over 15 years, from which she was inspired through her experience blending sauces in her kitchen at home. She founded Caribbean Specialty Foods Company Limited to make hot sauces without artificial ingredients and to see her favourite condiment on the world stage. After three years of research and development, without any formal training in food technology, she eventually made her first batch of natural, shelf stable hot sauce. In 2019, the company trademarked the brand name Caribelle Foods and Hesma became a Ernest and Young (EY) Entrepreneur of the Year in the Emerging Category.

Hesma has attended many expos locally and abroad. As a female entrepreneur, she joined the She Trades TT movement (formed by the International Trade Centre, ITC) to work towards greater economic opportunities for women and promote a women-inclusive, fairer global trade. This has allowed the company free access to important training in export trade and networking with other like-minded individuals.

Hesma is also a business mentor for Youth Business Trinidad and Tobago (YBTT), where she assists young entrepreneurs in starting their business in the agro-processing industry. She also provides consultancy services to startups and MSMEs who wish grow their businesses.

## Onel WILLIAMS – Founder, Nella’s Tendaronis, Jamaica

Onel Williams is a food innovator, entrepreneur and marketer who grew up in Kingston, Jamaica. He owns and operates the Kingston-based food services company *Essential Goods and Services Trading Limited*. His distribution business focuses on finding niche suppliers and bringing their products to supermarkets. He founded Nella’s Tendaronis after recognising a gap in the local vegan food market with consumers being prevented from buying commodities like breadfruit flour and sweet potato flour as they didn't know how to use them. Thus, he created vegan pasta, a new value-added product that is scalable. The food innovator has caught the attention of Goddard Enterprises Limited, which is the second-largest conglomerate in the Caribbean, spanning over 23 countries in the Caribbean, North, South and Central America. Williams is also one of 10 winners in the Goddard Enterprises 100th-anniversary entrepreneurs awards competition. As part of the award, he receives entrepreneurial mentorship from a Goddard CEO.



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