



## IICA-COLEAD Caribbean Agrifood Business Series

### Session n°11:

#### The role of agrifood businesses in promoting circular economy: successes from entrepreneurs and SMEs

Thursday 16 November 2023 – 14:00-16:00 UTC / 10:00-12:00 AST

### BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

#### **Rosamund Benn – President, Women Agro-processors Development Network (WADNET), and Founder, Pomeroon Rose, Guyana**

Rosamund Benn is a farmer who produces coconut-based products with her husband through their company Pomeroon Rose that was established in 2017. They have been farming for about 40 years, growing their land from 5 acres to 50 acres since they began producing virgin coconut oil in the 90s. Pomeroon Rose sells virgin coconut oil to wholesalers, and small and large businesses in Guyana.

Rosamund has encouraged dozens of women in Guyana to process and market their crops to improve their quality of life. She is the President of the Women Agro-processors Development Network (WADNET) in Guyana, an organisation that aims to empower its member groups specifically through improving their entrepreneurial skills. The Network is also a member of the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP).

Rosamund's efforts have earned her the recognition of being named a "Leader of Rurality of the Americas," by the Inter-American Institute for cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). She will also receive the "Soul of Rurality" award, also from IICA, as part of an initiative to recognise the men and women who are making a difference in rural areas of the Americas.

#### **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.



## Kristin Deason – Caribbean Representative, Green Growth Planning and Implementation, Global Green Growth Institute



Dr. Kristin Deason is lead representative for the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) in the Caribbean, based in Saint Lucia, where she leads GGGI's programmes in support of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and its member countries. She previously supported GGGI's Pacific regional programme, based in Fiji. Kristin has over 15 years of experience leading and managing international sustainability and green growth programmes and projects, with over 5 years focused specifically on Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Kristin leads development and implementation of GGGI's programmes in the OECS region, focused on climate action, climate finance, renewable energy, and green entrepreneurship. Prior to GGGI, Kristin implemented sustainability and green energy projects with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the U.S. Army and Navy, the US Department of Energy, and the governments of Germany and the European Union. She holds a Ph.D in Systems Engineering with focus on Energy and Environmental Management from the George Washington University, USA, and a Bachelor's degree in Engineering from the University of Virginia, USA.

## Joshua Forte – Founder and CEO, Red Diamond Compost Inc, Barbados



Joshua is the founder of Red Diamond Compost Inc., a company that is revolutionising the agrochemical industry by developing the world's cleanest green solutions from organic waste and regenerative sources like Sargassum seaweed. The *Liquid Sunshine organic fertilizer* is currently available in Barbados and the *Supreme Sea organic biostimulant* will be reintroduced in the new year for farmers and home gardeners.

Joshua's innovative approach in sustainable agriculture and environmental management earned him the Canewood Award for his agricultural business at the 2023 Barbados National Youth Awards. He has a notable history in startup competitions, including completing the YLAI Fellowship and the Circulate Capital Circular Economy Accelerators.

In addition to his entrepreneurial ventures, Joshua plays a significant role in the cleantech sector as a member of the Bloom Cleantech Cluster, supported by Export Barbados and UNIDO. His expertise is recognized globally, evident from his role as a Delegate Speaker at the Food Crisis Plenary of One Young World Belfast 2023. As a certified BeCrop Farm Advisor, Joshua combines his dedication to sustainability with advanced technology, using DNA Sequencing for soil analysis to improve agricultural productivity and environmental health.

## Larry Francis – Managing Director, Indies Greens, Antigua and Barbuda



Larry Francis is currently the Managing Director of Indies Greens Ltd., a company operating in the country of Antigua & Barbuda since 2010. Indies Greens Ltd. is an aquaponics facility that utilises recirculating aquaculture of both food fish (tilapia) and ornamental fish and hydroponic vegetable systems.

Larry Francis has a strong technical background spanning over 30 years in various fields from project management, computer systems programming, IT Services, telecommunications and business management. He has been involved in fish keeping and rearing for more than 40 years. He is especially skilled at building effective, productive, working relationships with clients and other members of staff, with excellent analytical, organisational, and creative skills and is committed to the highest levels of professional and personal excellence.

Larry has trained over 100 persons from across the Caribbean region in aquaponics and is passionate in the quest to expand the reach of hydroponics and aquaculture to the average person in our Caribbean communities. He believes that through collective cooperation the Region's food security can be achieved and maintained.

## 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.

## Oniel Nuñez Guzmán – CEO, Onavocados, Dominican Republic

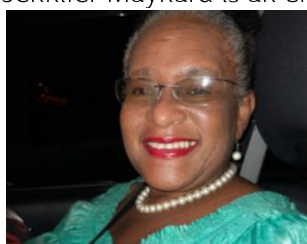


Oniel is a young Dominican entrepreneur with a passion for agri-business. He has been involved in agro-industrial projects supporting national agriculture for several years with his father. In 2008, father and son created the family business *Onfruits Dominicana SRL*, which has become a group of agricultural companies, pioneers in the production of organic avocados and mangoes in the country. The group owns the largest avocado nursery in the West Indies, located in San José de Ocoa, with an annual production of over 200,000 avocado plants of different varieties. The family group also produces avocados and mangoes GLOBAL GAP certified and according to international standards of good agricultural practice. The Dominican avocado industry has grown exponentially over the years, with over 600,000 tonnes of avocados currently produced solely for export.

Against this backdrop, in 2019 Oniel set up *Onavocados Dominicanos SRL*, an innovative company that transforms avocados using industrial processes, for example, into avocado oil. Onavocados enables local producers to sell avocados that do not meet export standards and cannot be sold on the local market either for lack of quality.

Oniel studied business administration and agribusiness in China. He has also obtained certifications in good agricultural practice and organic crop management.

## Jennifer Maynard – Founder, Microgreens@JayMay Acetoria, Antigua and Barbuda



Jennifer Maynard is an entrepreneur, farmer and rural development consultant, rural tourism specialist, and retired agriculturist. She is the founder of Microgreens@JayMay Acetoria, a sustainable green start-up producing novel superfood microgreens. Microgreens are young vegetable greens that can be categorised between sprouts and baby leaf vegetables. Through increasing individual consumption of fresh vegetables, the company aims to slow down the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases in Antigua and Barbuda. The company produces microgreens according to natural growing processes and supplies a substantial portion of their energy consumption from solar power. This business model

enables to produce cost-effective, affordable microgreens, while limiting the production impact on the environment. The company also works to mitigate storm and drought disasters through a protocol for post-disaster seedling and fodder production. In addition to their microgreens production, the company engages in farmer advisory and training services, and project preparation, appraisal, and management.



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