



## IICA-COLEAD Caribbean Agrifood Business Series

### Session n°12:

#### Business opportunities in the agroprocessing for Caribbean entrepreneurs

Thursday 21 March 2024 – 14:00-16:00 UTC / 10:00-12:00 AST

### BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

#### Nadine Benn-Greaves – Founder, Vedge Out Food Products, trading as Ligon's Gluten-Free Mixes, Barbados

An internationally certified Food Scientist and a highly trained Food Technologist and Engineer braced with more than 15 years' experience in the area of Food Safety, Science and Technology.



She loves assisting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in maintaining the highest quality and food safety standards for their products. As a lead trainer for agro-food processing National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance (FSPCA), her expertise has allowed her to attain the national honor of the Governor General's Silver Crown of Merit Award for my excellent work and outstanding contribution in the area of Food Science in 2015.

#### 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.



## **Deneé Gilman – Senior Marketing Research Officer, Marketing and Corporate Communications Division, Scientific Research Council (SRC), Jamaica**

Ms Deneé Gilman is Senior Marketing Research Officer at the Marketing and Corporate Communications Division of the Scientific Research Council (SRC). SRC is Jamaica's principal public sector agency, responsible for the fostering and coordination of scientific research and the promotion and application of its results. The Mission of the SRC is to serve the productive sector, policy makers and the general public to enable sustainable growth & development in Jamaica by (i) providing quality scientific and technological solutions (product/process research and development, policy advice and facilitating technology transfer); (ii) popularizing science and technology through strategic alliances; and (iii) being customer-focused, with an innovative, competent and responsive team.

## **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 COLEAD 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 COLEAD 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 COLEAD in June 2019.



## **Professor Rohanie Maharaj – Food Science and Technology programme, University of West Indies**

Professor Rohanie Maharaj is currently the Programme Coordinator of the postgraduate programme in Food Science and Technology at the Chemical Engineering department, and is actively involved in teaching, research, outreach and administration in the Food Science and Technology unit at the University of West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago.

Professor Maharaj was awarded a grant by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations to conduct a series of capacity building webinars and discussion workshops on Food Packaging Practices in the CARICOM region in December 2020. Prior to this she was involved in a FAO project on Agro-processing for Small Entrepreneurs in Belize. She has coordinated several short-courses and workshops on fermented beverages, food microbiology, sensory evaluation and food packaging for industry and public audiences. She also received a grant from the Campus Research and Publication Fund Committee in 2022 on Rapid Testing of Contaminants.

Apart from her twenty-seven (27) years of academic experiences, Professor Maharaj brings fourteen (14) years of significant industry experiences, where she has worked at Johnson & Johnson in the manufacturing and marketing sectors leading quality and reliability at a senior level. She is well trained in building quality at the international level and has also served in the capacities of Team Chair and Evaluator for external accreditations on behalf of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT).

## **John Robin – Owner, Benjo's Seamoss & Agro Processing Co Ltd, Dominica**

John Robin is the funder and owner of Benjo's Seamoss which has become – over the last 25 years- the largest sea moss production company in the region. The company produces so-called “meal in a bottle” health beverages that include 8 energizing flavours: Original, Peanut, Oats, Linseed, Pure, Boisbande, Ginseng and Ginger. The drinks are exported to around 20 Caribbean countries, as well as to the USA.

John Robin was studying fisheries development in Canada when he realised the potential value of sea moss. Sea moss (also referred to as Irish sea moss or red algae) is a versatile superfood which contains 83% of all essential nutrients and is high in antioxidants as well as vitamins A, D, E and K. After returning to Dominica, John conducted research to bottle sea moss and extend its shelf life.

Aside from his processing activities, John works on advancing the cultivation of sea moss within local communities in Dominica. He is involved in training and assisting individuals who want to grow and harvest seaweed which he might then be able to process. He is also Chairman of the Dominica Manufacturers Association (DMA).

### Negus Sealy – Brand Manager, International Food Science Center, Barbados

Negus Sealy is currently the Branding and Marketing Manager at the International Food Science Centre, an initiative of Export Barbados that aims to provide a quality food processing facility for micro processors that currently produce in non-commercial conditions. Negus attained a Bsc. with Hons. In Economics and Management from the University of the West Indies Cave Hill in Barbados and progressed to add value across a wide cross-section of various sectors in Barbados inclusive of production, tourism, construction, agriculture and food and food safety.

Mr. Sealy is equipped with extensive experience in sales, product analysis and development and is especially competent with regards to the management of all processes encompassing the transformation of raw materials into final products that are market ready and saleable.

His current professional goal is to incrementally increase the economic output of Barbados through the awareness and utilization of the International Food Science Center and moreover to enable a shift in the narrative and culture of dependency on and consumerism of imported products by facilitating a framework for a new outlook on industry and production in Barbados.

### Tricia Webbe – Co-Founder and Managing Director, BWC Enterprise Inc., Antigua and Barbuda

Ms. Webbe is Co-Founder and Managing Director of BWC, a coconut-based company that has been in existence since 2016 and has been paving the way in innovation by producing all natural coconut products and its derivatives. By manufacturing all natural products, the company has been able to provide an income for women and families throughout the community.



Strongly believing in zero waste, Tricia has been awarded Community Champion for the environment. She is also a part of the Alliance for Coconuts team organised by the International Trade Center (ITC) and the United Nations. Being a part of the Alliance for Coconuts network has enabled Tricia to gain deep knowledge about agriculture of the coconut plants and reviving the coconut industry in the Caribbean, using new innovations such as tissue culture of the coconut palm. She strongly believes that reviving the coconut industry in the Caribbean will play an integral part in the lives of women and families throughout.



*This event was organised by the Fit For Market Plus programme, implemented by COLEAD within the framework of Development cooperation between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), and the European Union (EU).*

*This publication has been produced with the financial support of the EU and the OACPS. Its contents are the sole responsibility of COLEAD and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU or the OACPS.*