

... Caribbean Agrifood Business Series



IICA-COLEAD Caribbean Agrifood Business Series

Session n°17: Innovation and technology adoption by entrepreneurs in the Caribbean

Thursday 24 April 2025 – 14:00-16:00 UTC

BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

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.



Jill Donk – Manager, ZUDO Tropical Fruit, Suriname

Jill Donk was born and raised in Suriname in a true agricultural family. Later, she married a farmer, which only deepened her connection to the world of agriculture. Together with her parents, she has always been involved in farming—starting primarily with vegetable cultivation, and around 12 to 14 years ago, they began growing soursop. In addition to farming, she worked in education for 12 years. However, over time, her passion for agriculture grew stronger, eventually leading her to leave teaching and fully commit herself to the family business, which they named ZUDO. The company specialises in the cultivation and processing of soursop into products like juice, pulp, and tea. Within ZUDO, Jill is responsible for data management and financial administration. With great passion and dedication, she and her family are building a future for sustainable farming in Suriname.

Dr. Ruel Ellis – Lecturer, University of the West Indies

Dr. Ruel Ellis is a lecturer in the Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering at The University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine in the following courses: Simulation, Project Management. Production/Operations Management, Database Design and Enterprise Information Systems. He is the Coordinator of the MSc. Project Management Programme and also delivers the Project Management Information Systems and Project Management for Small and Medium Enterprises courses. Additionally he supervises projects in the MSc. Occupational Environmental Safety & Health in the Faculty of Science and Technology. Dr. Ellis is also the current Chairman of the IEEEETT (Institute of Electronic and Electronic Engineers, Trinidad and Tobago) Education Society and is current Chairman of the



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Society of Caribbean Industrial Engineers and President of the West Indian Group of University Teachers (St. Augustine Branch). Publicly Ruel serves as Chair of the Operations Committee on the NIHERST Board of Governors, he is a member of the National Productivity Counsel and the Advisory Committee for Creative industries at the NTA.

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



Allister Glean is the Representative 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.

Tim Hauber – Farm Development Officer, Centre for Training and Innovation, The Bahamas



Tim Hauber grew up in Ontario, Canada and obtained a BSc. In Food Science from the University of Guelph. After working in the field of Sensory Science in Canada for 5 years Tim moved to Nassau, The Bahamas to manage The Adventure Learning Centre, an outdoor educational center for Bahamian school children. Tim spent almost 20 years in Nassau operating several farms including Goodfellow Farms, Lucayan Tropical Produce and Field to Fork Community Farm. These farms span the spectrum from low tech organic vegetable production techniques to high tech hydroponic vegetable production in state-of-the-art greenhouses. Tim is currently employed at The Center for Training and Innovation (CTI) in Rock Sound, Eleuthera as the Farm Development Officer. His focus at CTI is to improve access to fresh vegetables throughout Eleuthera and to provide educational experiences for local farmers and backyard gardeners.

Mahalia Joseph – Managing Director, 3BA Allamanda Enterprise Limited, Trinidad and Tobago



Mahalia Joseph is a forward-thinking entrepreneur from Trinidad and Tobago, dedicated to driving sustainability through innovation in agri-processing and renewable energy. She is the founder of 3BA Allamanda Enterprise Limited (3BAEL), a company established in 2021 that produces high-quality dried herbs, spices, and fruit snacks under the brand Allamanda Flavours, while also pioneering clean energy solutions for underserved communities. With a strong foundation in agriculture and food systems, Mahalia leads 3BAEL's integrated approach to farming and full-cycle processing—reducing waste and maximizing product value. Her passion for sustainable innovation extends into the energy sector with ECOBATT, a groundbreaking sand battery that provides affordable, reliable energy storage using thermoelectric technology. Her work has been recognized regionally and internationally, winning the 2024 NEDCO Innovative Entrepreneur Award, COSTAATT's Full Circle Competition, and placing in the WIPO Pitch Competition. She also completed the NEDCO Business Accelerator Program and represented ECOBATT in the global ClimateLaunchpad competition. Driven by purpose and powered by innovation, Mahalia continues to shape a greener, more resilient future for Trinidad and Tobago and beyond.

Fayaz Shah – Manager of Science, Technology and Innovation, Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)

Fayaz Shah is an Agronomist by training with over 25 years of experience working in the Agricultural sector in the Region. He is currently the Manager for Science, Technology and Innovation at CARDI. In this

position he provides strategic leadership to a multidisciplinary team of scientists and technical staff to implement the Institute's research programme across 14 CARICOM member states. His focus has been on increasing crop productivity, reducing crop risk and supporting climate adaptation. This has led to him introducing and validating new agronomic techniques resulting in increasing cassava yield to 27,000 lbs. per acre to support development of further agro processing flour and starch industries and for improving management of the South American Palm weevil in coconuts using an improved pheromone funnel trapping method. Before joining CARDI Fayaz held various technical managerial positions in the private and government sectors where he worked specifically on improving the productivity of hot pepper, cassava, sweet potato cocoa and crops produced in hydroponic systems. He has also conducted farmer's capacity building exercises for farmers and farmers' groups on pest and disease management and increasing yield for various crops in Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. As technical consultant/project manager Fayaz has also worked in Trinidad on the Caroni Green Hot Pepper Project where he was able to achieve an increase in hot pepper yields to 20,000 lbs per acre to support their fresh fruit export. In this position, he also worked with several farms in the Caribbean including Plympton Farms in Guyana to mitigate their pest and disease challenges and increase their crop productivity. He is the holder of a Master of Science in Crop Protection with specialization in entomology from the University of the West Indies.

Richéda Speede – Managing Director, Blue Shell Productions, Barbados



Richéda Speede is an ocean professional with over six years of experience in coastal and marine resource management. Richéda holds a BSc (Hons) in Ecology and a MSc (Dist) in Natural Resource and Environmental Management, both attained at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. With a passion for participatory research she has consulted on projects focused on fisheries management, sargassum management, social impact assessment, and blue economy development. Richéda is currently the Managing Director of Blue Shell Productions, a boutique consulting firm that provides specialized services in fisheries management and blue economy development. There, she discovered her professional niche in the fisheries sector, consulting on projects that promote resilience, drive digital innovation, and support sustainable fishing practices to advance the industry.



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