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Session n°21:

# Advancing agroecology for Caribbean SMEs



*Caribbean Agrifood Business Series* ...



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# FROM SICK SOIL TO THRIVING BUSINESS

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*Food Harmony's Agroecological Journey*

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[www.foodharmony.solutions](http://www.foodharmony.solutions)



# WHY I MADE THE TRANSITION

*Motivation & first concrete changes*

## The Turning Point

- ▶ I loved the land from childhood & grew up in conventional farming in St. Lucia
- ▶ Struggled with obesity & cancer
- ▶ Asked the question that changed everything: "Why are we so sick when we live so close to the earth?"
- ▶ The answer led back to the soil every single time



## First Changes at Food Harmony

- ▶ Eliminated ALL toxic chemical inputs immediately - cost & risks
- ▶ Pure stand cocoa
- ▶ Adopted multistrata agroforestry design
- ▶ Let soil biology lead — not synthetic shortcuts
- ▶ Introduced cover cropping for soil rehabilitation
- ▶ I saw grass in a new light
- ▶ Began cycling organic matter available on-farm (free)

Soil health = Food quality = Human health

# AGROECOLOGICAL PRACTICES IN ACTION

*Practices most effective in improving soil health, productivity & ecosystem resilience*

## Multistrata Agroforestry

Layered canopy design mimics natural forest structure — maximises biodiversity, captures nutrients, builds organic matter, helps conserve water

## Organic Matter Cycling

All farm waste returned to soil. Composts, mulches and plant residues feed soil biology continuously

## Grass & Cover Cropping

The bridge between degraded land and living soil. Rehabilitates tropical soils faster than any chemical can — and for free

## A Spectrum of Active Roots

Demonstrating how intentionality in the farm design supports regeneration, microbial life and ultimately crop success.



# AGROECOLOGY IMPROVES THE BUSINESS

*Changes in yields, costs, performance — and the reality of SME transition*

## Zero Chemical Spend

Money once spent on toxic inputs now stays in the business — or goes into savings



## Stronger Soil Resilience

Farms withstand climate stress better.  
Healthier soil means more consistent yields season after season



## Clean Products Reaching Market

Clean, chemical-free products for health-conscious consumers



**Transition truth: Short-term risk is real. Long-term gains are bigger. Patience and conviction are non-negotiable.**

# CHALLENGES, ENTRY POINTS & SUPPORT NEEDED

*Honest reflection on scaling agroecology as a Caribbean SME*

## Main Constraints

- Access to capital & grants
- Technical knowledge gaps
- Labour availability
- Climate vulnerability



## Entry Points for SMEs

- Start with grass & cover cropping
- Stop chemicals
- Compost all on-farm waste
- Observe soil before spending
- Connect with peer farmers
- Document everything from day one

## Support That Matters

- Grant funding & patient capital
- Peer-to-peer farmer networks
- Affordable technical training
- Policy that rewards soil health



# THE OPPORTUNITY & CALL TO ACTION

- ▶ The Caribbean and all tropical countries have everything needed to lead in agroecology
- ▶ Rich biodiversity, year-round growing seasons, abundant organic matter
- ▶ What's missing is knowledge transfer, funding and community
- ▶ Food Harmony is proof of concept — built on one island, one farm, one founder

 **New E-Book: Grass & Soil Health in Tropical Agriculture**

Launching Soon!

Anja Fernand | Founder

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# Thank you

