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Guyana Dairy Development Project and the *Farmer to Farmer* Program Cattle/Dairy Industry Development

Overview

The Partners of the Americas's Guyana Dairy Development Project (GDDP) was a United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded project founded in 2001 focused on building a domestic dairy industry in order to provide affordable and nutritious dairy products in Guyana. Partners' *Farmer to Farmer* program is also a USAID-funded project that provides technical assistance to local agricultural producers, producer organizations and agribusinesses in Haiti, Guyana and Jamaica. Through the *Farmer to Farmer* program, US agricultural volunteers provide short-term technical assistance to address specific local needs. Volunteers include extension agents, farmers, consultants, small business owners, professors, and other agriculture professionals; many volunteers are highly regarded experts in their fields. In addition to working on the dairy and cattle industries in collaboration with GDDP, Partners' *Farmer to Farmer* Program in Guyana also focuses on fruits, vegetables, food processing, and the development of agricultural cooperatives.


Dairy Industry Development Background

Prior to 2001, there were few sizeable dairy operations in Guyana. Through the Guyana Dairy Development Project, Partners assisted in providing technical assistance and training, building a marketing campaign, and educating the public about the benefits of dairy products. Partners also helped to introduce a free milk program in local schools to combat childhood malnutrition.

Project Description

To build on the success of the GDDP, *Farmer to Farmer* is continuing to assist dairy farmers and producers by providing specialized volunteer technical assistance. In addition, *Farmer to Farmer* volunteers are also working with beef producers

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to increase cattle production, improve animal health and nutrition, and develop meat hygiene and slaughter practice standards. Both industries have great potential for growth in Guyana and potential export to other countries in the Caribbean region.

In order to determine the most appropriate steps for achieving growth and success in these industries, *Farmer to Farmer* volunteers conducted an industry study to review national agriculture policies, evaluate the dairy production and dairy processing industries, assess marketing strategy, analyze import and export trends, and review the role of associations and cooperatives in the industry. Volunteers interviewed farmers, government officials, academics and other pertinent individuals to gather data with the goal of writing a detailed and complete an evaluation report describing the findings. The *Farmer to Farmer* volunteer evaluation team has completed their review in country and is working to publish the findings of the study, which will aid in the development of the next phase of the project and the direction for the cattle industry in Guyana.

Progress to Date/Project Impact

Through the Guyana Dairy Development Program and the *Farmer to Farmer* Program, Partners of the Americas has provided guidance to more than 7,000 cattle farmers in new dairy development technologies. *Farmer to Farmer* volunteers have continued to provide guidance to these farmers in the areas of clean milk, nutrition, rotational grazing, and cooperative development.

As a result of the Guyana Dairy Development Project average milk production per cow per day increased by more than 300%. The average number of cows milked per day increased from 6 to 8 and average quantity of milk per day increased from 52 to 87 pints.

Next Steps

Farmer to Farmer volunteers will provide assistance to farmers and cooperatives in the areas of animal health, farm management, artificial insemination, slaughter practices, and meat hygiene. In addition, the findings of the industry evaluation will provide guidance for the next steps of the project and future volunteer assignments with the *Farmer to Farmer* Program.

Contact Information

For more information on Partners of the Americas and the *Farmer to Farmer* Program, please visit www.partners.net. For specific questions, please contact Peggy Carlson, Director of the *Farmer to Farmer* Program, at pcarlson@partners.net or 202-637-6230. In Guyana, please contact Kelvin Craig, *Farmer to Farmer* Field Officer, at kelvin_craig@yahoo.com or (592) 222-2991.