

Prof Wilson was an advisor to the International Foundation for Science, a member of the International Editorial Board of Tropical Science and the Board of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau International (CABI).

He was a founding member of the International Society for Tropical Root Crops and an Honorary Life Member of that Society. Additionally, he was a Fellow of the Third World Academy of Science.

Among the many awards Professor Wilson received were the National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science

and Technology (NIHERST) “Lifetime Achievement Award” for his outstanding contribution to root-crop research and post-harvest biology in 2000 and the “Commitment to Excellence Award” in recognition of distinguished teaching and research in Postharvest Physiology and Biochemistry, from the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS) in July 2013.

Professor Wilson served as the Editor In Chief of the *Tropical Agriculture Journal* since 2005 until his passing, and also as the co-editor of the *Faculty of Food and Agriculture News*.

## Postharvest Management Strategies to Reduce Losses of Perishable Crops

Improved methods to reduce postharvest losses of fresh produce as well as minimally processed products, was the focus of a workshop conducted by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation in collaboration with the UWI and the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO). The workshop, which took place in Trinidad from February 24-25, 2014, targetted field officers, certified farmers and produce managers.

This training came out of recommendations from the third ISHS Conference on *Postharvest and Quality Management of Horticultural Products of Interest in Tropical Regions*, which was held in Trinidad from July 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The need for follow-up activities for reducing postharvest losses and promoting development of value-added products for food security and increasing employment opportunities were identified (*Continued on page 16*).



*Participants toured the NAMDEVCO packinghouse and gave demonstration of postharvest treatments.*

*Facilitated by Ms Nirmala Persad, Mr Abdullah Ali-Baksh and Ms Afiya John*

## Postharvest Management Strategies to Reduce Losses of Perishable Crops

*Continued from page 3*



*Some of the workshop facilitators*

The main recommendations of the conference:

- To expose a core group of certified farmers to postharvest handling and storage through training and capacity building, with the overall objective of having them understand post-production constraints, and the technical solutions to overcome them;
- To focus on perishable commodities such as hot pepper, dasheen leaves, cassava, sweet potato, pumpkin, mango, papaya, golden apple, bitter melon, sweet pepper and shado benn which offer opportunities for further analysis and development and improvement of the said chains;
- To improve postharvest logistical procedures and services throughout the commodity value-chain.

It was noted that the major concern in relation to value chain development probably lies with market requirements and developing ways to address them: quality issues related to raw produce and subsequent packaging, storage, and transport, together with compliance with international standards and certificates are major issues that need to be addressed.

It was determined that effective postharvest treatments and sanitation protocols associated with packinghouse operations

must be given high priority; more specifically, understanding and introducing and applying HACCP and other certification systems (e.g. GlobalGAP, FT) are of major concern and need to be implemented, with the final objective to develop postharvest certification that will allow regional products to enter international markets.

All participants and stakeholders involved agreed that there is market potential in Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados (and by extrapolation

other Caribbean countries/neighbours); and this should be supported by conducting focused market studies in collaboration with Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados authorities, and other important market players (such as supermarkets and hotels) for offering high quality produce that has been properly certified, and can be traced back to its origins;

This training took place at the NAMDEVCO Packinghouse Conference Facility, Piarco, Trinidad.

Facilitators were from UWI (Dr Majeed Mohammed, Dr Saheeda Mujjafar, Dr Wayne Ganpat, Dr Lynda Wickham, Dr Gaius Eudoxie), and the private sector (Mr Prakash Issaire from Price Mart and Mr Rhett Chee Ping from Gordon Grant Shipping Company).

Presentations were made by Ms Pathleen Titus (Technical Advisor, Tobago House of Assembly), Ms Celestine Butters, (Packaging House Manager, Guyana Marketing Corporation), Mr Ronnie Pilgrim (CARDI, St Lucia), Ms Nirmala Persad (Packing House Manager, NAMDEVCO) and Ms Afiya John (Postharvest Technologist, NAMDEVCO).