



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES

Updated Statement by the Hon. Floyd Green, MP Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Impact of Recent Torrential Rains on the Agricultural Sector

Madame Speaker,

Over the past several weeks, Jamaica has been experiencing poor weather conditions which have been influenced by significant weather systems including the most recent Hurricanes Zeta and Eta. As previously mentioned in Cabinet, the continuous torrential rainfall has dealt quite a blow to the Agricultural sector with exponential damage to produce, livestock and infrastructure.

I now wish to address this honourable house by providing an update on the response of this government to the continued flooding across the island with the greatest damage evidenced in St. Elizabeth, St. Catherine, St. Andrew, St. Thomas, Clarendon and Manchester.

Crops

As a result of the weather conditions, some 2, 955 hectares of crops were lost, valued at some \$2.5 billion, affecting approximately 14,181 farmers. Crops lost in the deluge include: legumes, vegetables, condiments, cereal, plantains, fruits, Irish and sweet potatoes, bananas, yam, cassava and sorrel.

Livestock

Madame Speaker, the livestock subsector was not spared. The largest loss was from poultry (broilers and layers) at an estimated value of some \$12 million. Other impactful losses include: damage to apiculture valued at approximately \$10 million with over 295 colonies lost by some 60 farmers; over 60 dairy and beef cattle were lost valued at approximately \$6.8 million and over 350 pigs and small ruminants valued at some \$7.5 million. Overall losses for Livestock amounted to some \$38.9 Million with a total of approximately 780 farmers being affected.

Infrastructure

Madame Speaker, the damage assessment for infrastructure such as farm roads and drains, protected structures, greenhouses and catchment areas is ongoing. However, preliminary estimates are valued at \$140M. The Ministry is working feverishly towards the completion of the assessments despite the attendant obstacles.

Support to the sector

Madame Speaker, the Ministry understands the challenges that the sector faces even as we push to get past the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic through new norms. The onslaught of this meandering weather condition has now challenged the sector like never before. I call upon the resilience of our farmers and other stakeholders, supporting agencies, both public and private, to stand with the government in being resolute that we must recover. Accordingly, the Ministry has identified resources which will be redirected to provide immediate relief to the sector. The Ministry commits to working with the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service in identifying additional support to return to acceptable levels of

productivity. The mechanism of support will be coordinated through the direct provision of input supplies to farmers, to be dispatched via

- A. RADA
- B. Members of Parliament
- C. Rehabilitation of infrastructure (farm roads, drains, protected structures)
- D. Public Private Partnership

Response to the Sector

Madame Speaker our support will be focused in the parishes which experienced the greatest losses. These include Manchester, St. Elizabeth, St. Catherine, St. Thomas, Clarendon and St. Andrew.

Accessing support -RADA

RADA extension officers across the island have been dispatched to identify areas and farmers who were impacted. These farmers are now advised to follow up with their extension officers and parish offices in order to access their benefits. They will be required to complete the beneficiary assessment forms and follow the instruction given by their RADA officer. Those registered will be directed to select farm stores to access their benefits.

Members of Parliament

The support provided through the MP's are categorized under three tiers based on the level of support needed, damages sustained and assessed. 20 urban MP's will be provided with \$500,000 each while 20 rural MP's will be provided up to \$1M worth of support; while 21 MP's in those areas significantly impacted will be provided up to \$1.5M worth of support. A total of \$64.5 M is to be dispatched through the MP's via RADA for immediate support to their respective constituencies.

Madame Speaker to support urban and container gardening which richly supplements the family income while assisting in providing nutrition support the Ministry has committed \$10M to provide 2500 householders with backyard farming kits valuing approximately \$4000 each.

CROPS

Chemical Programme

The Ministry will be providing direct support to farmers in the form of a pesticide programme. The chemicals to be distributed include fungicides, herbicides and insecticides to combat current and expected heavy infestations due to the continuous rainfall. This programme is valued at \$95M.

Seed programme

Assorted seeds and other planting material will be provided to the tune of \$215M. These inputs will be provided to open field farmers as well as greenhouse producers whose growing fields and covered vegetation has been partially or completely wiped out.

Fertilizer

Madam speaker, the nutrition of several crops would have been compromised due to the level of leaching of soil nutrients that has taken place. As an immediate intervention, the Ministry is allocating \$30M towards badly needed fertilizer to assist in replenishing nutrition to aid rapid crop recovery.

Tractor Services

The Ministry, through RADA, will redeploy tractor services to the affected areas so that farmers can get back into production as soon as the weather permits and field conditions are favourable for tillage. A minimum of two tractors will be made available to the worst affected areas.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Farm Road Programme

The damage to our farm roads has been severe and so under our current Farm Road Programme, 17 roads valuing approximately \$111.6M will be rehabilitated in the affected parishes. Additionally, the Ministry has immediately isolated some \$100M which will be redistributed to rehabilitate farm roads in other affected areas.

Rehabilitation of Protected Structures and Catchment Areas

Madam speaker we have determined that our food security is paramount and so one element of our very quick recovery strategy will include the allocation of some \$40M to urgently repair greenhouses and shade houses that have been damaged to get farmers back into production. Repairs to catchment areas such as ponds and reservoirs, will also be undertaken to provide a sustainable water source for farmers and farmers' groups. The assessment of the affected areas is almost complete.

LIVESTOCK

Apiculture

Support in the amount of \$5M will go towards bee farmers to assist in the restoration of colonies which have been destroyed and to provide

an alternate source of feed for bees which are unable to forage during the continuous periods of rain.

Other livestock

Support in the amount \$20M for other livestock to include pigs and small ruminants will be provided through their registered organizations.

PUBLIC – PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Madam speaker the Ministry over the years has partnered with several input suppliers in the further development of the sector for continued support to farmers. This challenging period is no different as a number of our private sector partners who are input suppliers have come on board and pledged their support to the rebuilding of the sector. The value of their contribution up to this point is some \$20.3M. We wish to express our appreciation to the following suppliers who have quickly come on board with the Ministry, as well as the others who have committed to join going forward as we continue on our road to recovery

- H&L Agro
- St. Jago Farms
- Caribbean Broilers
- Jamaica Broilers

- Newport Fersan Jamaica Ltd
- AG- Chem Plant Limited

Madame Speaker the overall support that characterizes the Ministry's response at this critical time now stands at \$636.9M with \$616.6M as direct support from Government with \$30.3M from private partners.

The summary of support is detailed in the table below.

MOAF/RADA Proposed intervention	Value	Sponsor
CROPS		
Seed/planting materials	215 M	MOAF
Chemical (fungicide, pesticide, herbicide)	95 M	MOAF
Fertilizer	30 M	MOAF
Sub-total	340M	MOAF

INFRASTRUCTURE		
Farm road programme	211.6M	RADA
Repairs to greenhouse, shade house & catchment areas	40M	MOAF
Sub-total	251.6M	

LIVESTOCK		
Apiculture	5M	MOAF
Livestock	20M	MOAF
Sub-total	25M	
TOTAL (MINISTRY INTERVENTION)	616.6	

PARTNERSHIP WITH INPUT SUPPLIERS		
Baby chicks	2.2M	Jamaica Broilers
Baby chicks	2.2M	Caribbean Broilers
Feed	1.9	Jamaica Broilers
Fertilizer	2M	Newport Fersan
Input supplies (fertilizer, herbicide, insecticide &	3M	H&L Agro

seeds)		
Discount package (fertilizer, chemicals & seeds)	1.5M	H&L Agro
Input supplies (seeds, chemicals)	10M	AG- Chem Plant Ltd.
Care packages (assorted inputs)	7.5	St. Jago Farms
Sub-total	30.3M	

Total Support to the Sector		
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	616.6M	
Private Sector	20.3M	
Total	636.9M	

Madam speaker let me reassure the country that as I hear the cries about rising food costs and observe the distress of ALL our farmers, this government remains resolute in ensuring the our food security. This call is not beyond us as we have done it before and will do it again. The strategies and support planned by this ministry are aimed at bringing back stability to ensure the prosperity of agriculture our farmers and our country. We will continue to support our farmers who continue to face risks due to weather-related events of drought and floods.

Once the estimates of damage have been completed by RADA, the government through the ministry of agriculture will collaborate with the ministry of finance in a bid to redirect and source funding toward

the provision of further support to farmers who have been adversely affected.

November 6, 2020.