



WORLD FOOD DAY 2008 THEME - WORLD FOOD SECURITY: THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIOENERGY

World Food Day (WFD) aims to heighten public awareness of the plight of the world's hungry and malnourished and to encourage people worldwide to take action against hunger. It is celebrated every year on 16 October to commemorate the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 1945.

This is the first of a series aimed at assisting readers in understanding the Theme of World Food Day. We need to understand the terms 'Climate change' and 'Bioenergy' before we can examine the challenges which these pose to world food security or decide how we will act to reduce these negative impacts.

Climate change:

It may come as a surprise to know that the climate of the Earth has always been changing. This occurred very gradually and systems adapted to these changes. The changes we've seen over recent years however, are thought to be mainly as a result of human activity rather than due to natural changes in the atmosphere. This has resulted in more rapid changes which impact on biological systems.

We are now introducing some terms; ***greenhouse effect***, ***greenhouse gases*** and ***global warming***.

The Greenhouse Effect is at the centre of the climate change debate. This does not refer to any effects of greenhouse crop production but rather to the heating up of the atmosphere by excessive production of 'greenhouse gases', that is, gases which trap heat. These gases are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases. This unusual heat is termed global warming. Internationally there have been efforts to reduce the production of these greenhouse gases which are mainly the byproducts of increased industrialisation.

Carbon dioxide enters the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels (oil, natural gas, and coal), solid waste, trees and wood products, and also as a result of other chemical reactions (e.g., manufacture of cement). Methane is emitted during the production and transport of coal, natural gas, and oil. Methane also results from livestock and other agricultural practices and by the decay of organic waste. Nitrous oxide is produced during agricultural and industrial activities, as well as during combustion of fossil fuels and solid waste. Fluorinated gases are synthetic, powerful greenhouse gases that are emitted from a variety of industrial processes.

Next we will be learning about the impacts of this warming on climate, weather, agriculture and food security.

This article is presented by the World Food Day National Committee. For further information, contact etis@malmr.gov.tt

REFERENCES:

www.bbc.co.uk/climate/evidence/

www.epa.gov/climatechange/

Pictures from WFD exhibition in Trinidad and Tobago.



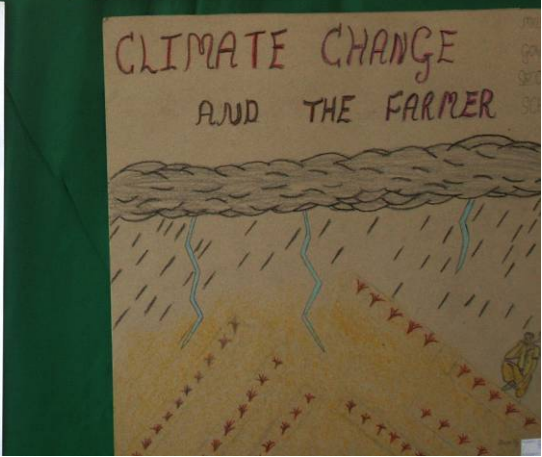
Students enjoy their visit to Agri Expo



The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, Senator the Honourable Arnold Piggott presents UWI Campus Principal with a fruit tree.



UWI St. Augustine display at Agri Expo



Winning posters from Tobago House of Assembly school competition – Climate change and the farmer



Tobago House of Assembly Farmer's display booth explaining climate change