October 31, 2019

**TFACC’s Booming Crop Production**

The Tamarind Farm Adult Correctional Centre (TFACC) reaps over 24,000 pounds in crop production, under the Department of Correctional Services’ Agriculture Self-Sufficiency Programme. This was disclosed yesterday (October 30) during a site visit at the farm-based institution located at Salt Pond, Spanish Town, in St. Catherine.

The visit included: Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security, the Hon. Rudyard Spencer; Commissioner of Corrections, Lt. Col. (Retired) Gary Rowe; Superintendent of the facility, Leslie Campbell; and other senior members of the Ministry and Department of Correctional Services.

Minister Spencer led the visit to assess the institution’s agricultural activities, which highlighted the theme “eat what you grow and grow what you eat”. They viewed the farming activities, which showcased the cultivation of sweet and hot pepper seedlings. They also saw the production of approximately 14,000 pounds of callaloo, 4,000 pounds of pumpkin and 6,000 pounds of sweet potato.

“**One of my priority areas, in the crime reduction strategy, is to oversee the reduction of recidivism rates. This is done through the rehabilitation and successful reintegration of adult and juvenile offenders. Currently, the principal agricultural outputs comprise broiler meat, eggs, vegetables, root crops and fruits; notably we are completely self-sufficient in egg production,”** the State Minister said.

Fifteen (15) inmates from the TFACC will be engaged in a Crop Management course, which is being delivered by personnel from HEART/NTA. Tamarind Farm and Richmond Farm Adult Correctional Centres continue to produce vegetables on a subsistence basis, with recent efforts into commercial production of sorrel and hot peppers for selected manufacturers.

Superintendent Campbell at TFACC pointed out that they currently have 8 acres of sorrel and they were advised that one acre equals to 70,000 pounds. He said that OJay Koolers is currently asking for the entire 8 acres and Spike industries is interested in buying 1,000 pounds, per week. This, he said, can be facilitated through the surplus that will be distributed after supplying the inmates’ diets. Superintendent Campbell also noted “**we assisted the community recently through the donation of 365 pounds of callaloo to the Spanish Town Infirmary, Mustard Seed Communities, White Marl Primary, Father Ho Lung & Friends and Bellevue Hospital.”**

Commissioner Rowe highlighted that the correctional services’ programme provides those who are not academically inclined with an avenue to generate income. “**Transformation is not only for the Ministry itself but, for the inmates and wards. It means that we give them an opportunity to learn a way to generate income, legally,”** he said.