

## **Diversifying your operation - Young farmer shows the key to staying profitable**

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Agriculture has been a part of Radcliffe Campbell's blood for decades, but this was not his only motivation for entering the agricultural sector.

Campbell explained that he took the sector more seriously following a dream in 2005, encouraging him to go to the hills of Eaten, Hanover, to plant banana and plantain, in order to provide sustenance for himself and others, and so far, he believes he has not been misled.

Thirty-two-year-old Campbell, a devoted Pentecostal, third-generation farmer and manager of the family-operated Campbell's Plantation, explains that following the 2005 vision, he began cultivating a variety of crops on eight acres of land, and to date some 10 acres are being utilized in the production of bananas, plantains, coconuts and fruit tree crops.

At present, the responsibility of cultivating and harvesting produce for sale to guaranteed market including community shops, supermarkets, vendors, Sandals hotel and restaurants in the parish, is being done by the family of eight.

### **Enthusiastic farmer**

Quizzed on the use of technology in growing his crops, the enthusiastic farmer quickly pointed out that he has been using only traditional farming techniques and relies mainly on rain-fed irrigation to water the field.

In retrospect, entering and competing effectively in the sector wasn't as easy as Radcliffe Campbell had thought, for one, he has had difficulties with the increased cost of inputs such as fertilizer and chemicals. However, a major test of his resolve came in 2007 when his banana plantation was battered by Hurricane Dean.

Although dejected, Campbell was able to replant some of the affected fields, following encouragement from family and friends. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture provided assistance in the form of fertilizer and other inputs to the young farmer.

Like many farmers across the island, Campbell notes that he too is plagued by praedial larceny. To lessen the incidence of theft, he is currently replacing the perimeter fencing of the field.

In a country where food security has become a serious issue, the Campbells intend to do their part. As such, the farm will be transformed into a mother farm where various production, harvesting and agri-processing techniques are taught to the nation's young.

### **Tourism sector**

To maximize the opportunities that the tourism sector presents, plans are afoot to introduce tours of the farm as part of the attractions available in the parish to both locals and foreigners.

His other plans include tapping into the export market, constructing a food-processing facility to produce banana chips, baby food and specialized products for diabetics. These plans will be brought to fruition if he is able to secure the required financing.

"We want to be able to return our farm to full production, therefore, when we secure the required financing we will be able to produce at optimal levels," he emphasized, while adding that if individuals were interested in collaborating with the company they were welcome.