

Kingston, Jamaica
Klao Bell-Lewis – Manager, Public & Corporate Affairs

Contacts: Scotiabank

klao.bell-lewis@scotiabank.com
Tel: 876. 922.1000 ext 22166 or 876.321.0960

Scotiabank Foundation funds research lab at Northern Caribbean University



Scotiabank Jamaica Foundation (SJF) and Northern Caribbean University (NCU) recently partnered to establish Agricultural Research laboratories at NCU's Mandeville campus, providing local farmers with access to much needed testing, measurement, and assessment services.

The 3 research labs were equipped through a \$10 million grant from SJF, affirming and boosting the research initiatives on going at the central Jamaica based university. The official opening of the state of the art facility was done by President and CEO of Scotia Jamaica Bruce Bowen and Executive Director of the SJF Mrs. Joylene Griffiths-Irving and the NCU administrators.

“The establishment of this facility is the first of its kind in the English speaking Caribbean, and this further position NCU as a centre for innovation and research, and particularly in research that is relevant and has direct and immediate benefit to the community,” Mr Bowen said in his pre-ribbon cutting address.

The head of the Canadian based financial institution reminded the audience that though many persons know the real issues affecting Jamaica, they do more talking rather than getting into action.

He added: “NCU is known for getting things done. This institution has quietly gone about getting things done, they talk less and do more, because they know that talk is cheap and what defines leadership is the ability to get things done without pointing fingers.”

The opening of the Agri-Research Laboratories was the second collaborative venture undertaken by SJF and NCU in recent years; SFJ in 2004 donated \$9.6 million to the University's Endowment Fund and Computer Community Outreach Programme to make tertiary education accessible to the needy and extend computer literacy to the surrounding communities.

The SJF grant enables the provision of full service operations for the farmers of this region, and as local farmers tap into the new resources made available at NCU it is envisioned that agricultural practices will be strengthened and improved. NCU continues to be a medium of development and community upliftment to the benefit numerous communities, through its Community Counselling and Restorative Justice Centre, Morris Entrepreneurship Centre, and special projects aimed at training farmers to rehabilitate mined out bauxite lands of central and rural Jamaica as well as the use of enhanced farming techniques such as green housing.

Bowen emphasized, “mid-island Jamaica is the largest producer of agricultural products in the country, it is therefore fitting that the research centre is located in this region. We look forward to the contribution of the work here to advancing development of a modern, efficient and internationally competitive agricultural sector.”

NCU administrators welcomed the initiative to partner with SJF, to provide for the many communities that are served by the University as well as providing well needed practical training for research students at NCU. Associate vice-president of Academic Administration with responsibility for Graduate Studies and Research, Dr. Paul Gyles, while leading the team in a demonstration highlighted some of the mandates of the labs.

“The equipment purchased with the SJF grant allows NCU to do the following tests in the Agri Research labs: provide tests for the detection of pesticide residues on agricultural products locally and for export, testing for microorganisms, for caloric content of agricultural products and juices, and testing of soil and its content among others,” shared Gyles.

The lab will provide scientific research to assist local farmers in making quality yielding decisions and improve their production potential. NCU continues to support the ‘grow what you eat and eat what you grow’ mandate being promulgated by the Ministry

of Agriculture, in support of local farmers.

There are additional far reaching implications resulting from the establishment of the research facility, as the search persists for a sustainable economic growth solution for Jamaica. Detailed and scientific analysis of the factors of food production and the Jamaican diet will be greatly enhanced. With many unexplored areas and ideas in local agriculture, stakeholders and investor should be keen to make use of the resources available at NCU.

About Scotiabank:

Scotiabank has been in Jamaica since 1889 and is the premier financial institution in the country with just over 2,000 employees and 39 Branches Island wide. Scotiabank is a subsidiary of Scotiabank Group which offers a diverse range of products and services including personal, commercial, and small business banking; wealth management; insurance; and mortgages. The Group is an award winning institution having been named on numerous occasions as the Bank of the Year and Best Bank in Jamaica by international financial publications - the Banker, Latin Finance, Euromoney, and Global Finance magazines. The Scotiabank Group has \$332 billion in assets (as at November 31, 2011). For more information please visit www.jamaica.scotiabank.com.

###