



THE AGENCY FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

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MCA ENGAGES FARMERS IN NORTH LEEWARD

Over 100 traditional cultivators and farmers gathered at the Chateaubelair Primary School for a consultation hosted by the Medicinal Cannabis Authority (MCA).

Addressing the event was CEO of the Medicinal Cannabis Authority Dr. Jerrol Thompson, who provided updates on industry developments and programs tailored to support traditional cultivators such as the launching of the Lashum/Top hill alternative development project. He emphasized the importance of integrating cultivators into the expanding medicinal cannabis industry while addressing their broader agricultural contributions.

Chief Operating Officer of the MCA, Terral Mapp, highlighted the industry's potential during the country's recovery phase following multiple economic and environmental shocks. He pointed out that St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) recorded over 100,000 stay-over visitors last year, a record-breaking figure. This surge in tourism, coupled with the expansion of dispensary outlets across SVG, creates a significant opportunity for local cultivators to secure market access and enhance their livelihoods. The MCA also acknowledged that traditional cultivators contribute to livestock and crop production, and efforts will be made in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture to integrate them into broader government support systems.

Dr. Machel Emanuel, a key contributor of cannabis seeds to SVG and a leading regional expert, shared his ongoing commitment to the country's medicinal cannabis advancement. He underscored the importance of sustainable cultivation practices and positioning SVG as a leader in the regional industry.

Farmers from across North Leeward actively participated in the discussions, voicing their concerns and recommendations. Many expressed a preference for forming cooperatives, which would allow them to engage directly with the market. Additionally, they called for more capacity-building initiatives and production support.

Representatives from the Zero Hunger Trust Fund and the Farmers Support Company (FSC) were also present to provide assistance. FSC representative, Charlene Garrett, spoke about the importance of treating farming as a business and recognizing farmers' expertise through continuous training.

The Zero Hunger Trust Fund representative, Alanda Moses, highlighted their backyard gardening initiative, distributing seeds and registering farmers for continued support. Additionally, medicinal cannabis cultivator Wesley Mofford, informed farmers about a potential market opportunity for various commodities, including turmeric, ginger, and peppers, highlighting their growing demand and economic benefits.

The consultation served as a critical step in strengthening the partnership between traditional cultivators and key stakeholders in the agricultural and medicinal cannabis industries, fostering growth and sustainability for local farmers.

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