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SVG Agriculture Minister Delivers 12-Month Address Accounting for SVG Agricultural Reforms

The ministerial statement details guaranteed crop prices, $13.3 million in rural infrastructure, debt reduction, and anti-theft solar technology.

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Transformation and Parliamentary Representative for South Central Windward, Hon. Israel Bruce, delivered a comprehensive 12-month ministerial statement to the House of Assembly accounting for his first year in office. The statement outlined major policy shifts, direct farmer input support, international trade agreements, debt reduction measures, and infrastructure projects aimed at reducing food import bills and strengthening rural economies.

Legislative and policy milestones executed over the past year include a landmark data management and trade agreement signed on September 14, 2026, with California-based Agricultural Technology firm Quantum Inc., establishing guaranteed commercial off-take with Happy Produce Global LLC for dasheen and Season Fresh Farms for hot peppers. The agreement introduces digital farm mapping and aggregation depots while raising the minimum farmgate floor price for dasheen from roughly $40 XCD per 100-pound sack to a guaranteed minimum of $100 XCD per sack.

On October 13, 2026, the ministry launched the 11th Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) program featuring over $13.3 million XCD in partnership with the Caribbean Development Bank to construct feeder roads, footpaths, and drainage in upland farming districts such as Greiggs, Tibaru,

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and Fiddlewood. Furthermore, cabinet negotiations restructured Vincy Fresh's debt from $25 million XCD down to $5 million XCD, saving taxpayers $20 million XCD.

To combat praedial larceny, the ministry established a public-private partnership with Laynes Hardware to field-test solar surveillance cameras as a precursor to deploying 1,000 units across national farmlands.

Additional achievements include finalizing documentation to declare Chatham Bay Forest in Union Island a National Forest Reserve, executing the SIDS SoilCare Phase 2 agreement on January 27, 2026, securing $1.3 million XCD from the FAO for geospatial mapping, graduating 25 young Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) certified farmers on July 31, 2026, structuring 15- to 20-year youth land leases at $1 XCD annually, and forming the National Association of Traditional Cannabis Cultivators (NATCC).

"Food sovereignty, Madam Speaker, is not an abstract slogan. It means ensuring that our people have reliable access to healthy, nutritious, locally produced food, lowering input costs so farmers can stay profitable and ensuring that St. Vincent and the Grenadines commands its own agricultural destiny", Minister Bruce said.

Addressing historical project stalls and constituency infrastructure concerns, Minister Bruce detailed how the ministry completed the installation of India-funded agro-processing machinery at Lauders, La Croix, and Langley Park within two months after inheriting a two-year project delay. The statement also addressed parliamentary debate surrounding constituency infrastructure funding, confirming that road construction on the Diamond Intersection and Freedom Road project resumed under inter-ministerial cooperation with the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure despite fiscal constraints inherited from past allocations.

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On national livestock protection, the administration presented new animal traceability regulations and joint enforcement protocols established with the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force and the Ministry of National Security to enforce highway stop-and-search operations against farm theft.

Meanwhile, minister Bruce noted that for the upcoming 2027 parliamentary session, the ministry will submit proposed amendments to the Agricultural Produce and Livestock Prevention of Theft Act to establish tougher judicial penalties against farm theft. Active procedural matters currently before the Office of the Attorney General include finalizing the animal traceability regulations, drafting legislative framework for a medicinal cannabis testing laboratory, completing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Italy for expanded solar camera financing, and executing long-term land lease agreements for young agricultural entrepreneurs.

Additionally, the ministry is advancing seven capital project proposals for regional financing, including the $12 million XCD Arrowroot Revitalization Project to mechanize extraction facilities.

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