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Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Floyd Green (left), speaking with youth farmer Venroy Wint at the launch of the Youth in Agriculture Roadmap at the Ministry in Kingston, on Thursday (November 12).

🕒 30 Nov 2020

The proposed Youth in Agriculture Policy being developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is expected to be completed and launched in 2021.

This was disclosed by Portfolio Minister, Hon. Floyd Green, who said that the earmarking of at least 20 per cent of government-owned lands for agricultural use by young persons in the sector under age 35 is among the priority focus areas.

“We expect that next year we will be able to [have a] Policy that will outline the vision of the Ministry in relation to the youth, regarding long-standing issues,” the Minister said.

He was speaking during the launch of the Youth in Agriculture Roadmap, at the Ministry in Kingston on Thursday (November 12).

Noting that youth in agriculture experience challenges accessing land, Mr. Green indicated that he has instructed officers at the Ministry to take the necessary steps “to ensure that we have... government land... set aside for our young people”.

“So while we finalise the development of the Policy, I have already said to the team: ‘let’s start acting upon [this undertaking] until we have the formal policy document’,” he added.

Mr. Green advised that the Ministry will be targeting lands held by the Sugar Company of Jamaica Holdings Limited and those in the agricultural parks to ensure that young people can access these.

“It cannot be considered on the same parameter that you consider people outside of the youth population; so that land has to be set aside specifically for youth,” he added.

Mr. Green said the Ministry will also be exploring the possibility of setting aside provisions from its production incentive relief programme, for youth, noting that the Policy “will speak to a percentage of [the] regime that will be [earmarked]”.

Mr. Green said the Policy will also address the long-standing issue of training and access to technical services.

“We have looked at the figures and we do know that... we are hard-pressed in relation to human resources to provide the requisite technical support that our farmers need, in general. But when we look at the information, we realise that the people who suffer most from a lack of technical support are, unfortunately, our farmers and women,” he said.

Consequently, Mr. Green said this requires formulation of programmes to specifically address that need.

He disclosed that the Ministry will, to this end, be launching a new programme this month, aimed at ensuring youth have a greater access to technical support and training that will enable them to transition into becoming innovative farmers.

“So we are going to rethink [the concept of] youth in agriculture by ensuring we have a robust, creative, innovative policy... that addresses some of the long-standing issues in a real and action-oriented way,” he said.

The Youth in Agriculture Roadmap, which was prepared by the Jamaica 4-H Clubs, offers a comprehensive guide to farmers, and youth who are interested in farming, on wide-ranging issues.

These include educational institutions offering training in agriculture, scholarships, careers in agriculture, farming networks, guidance on accessing land and funds for agriculture businesses, marketing, and farmer registration.

The document can be accessed in electronic format on the Jamaica 4-H Clubs’ website and its social media platforms.

It is also available on the social media platforms of the Ministry and its agency – the Rural Agricultural Development Authority, the Agro-Investment Corporation, as well as those of the Jamaica Agricultural Society, and HEART/NSTA Trust.

Source: JIS

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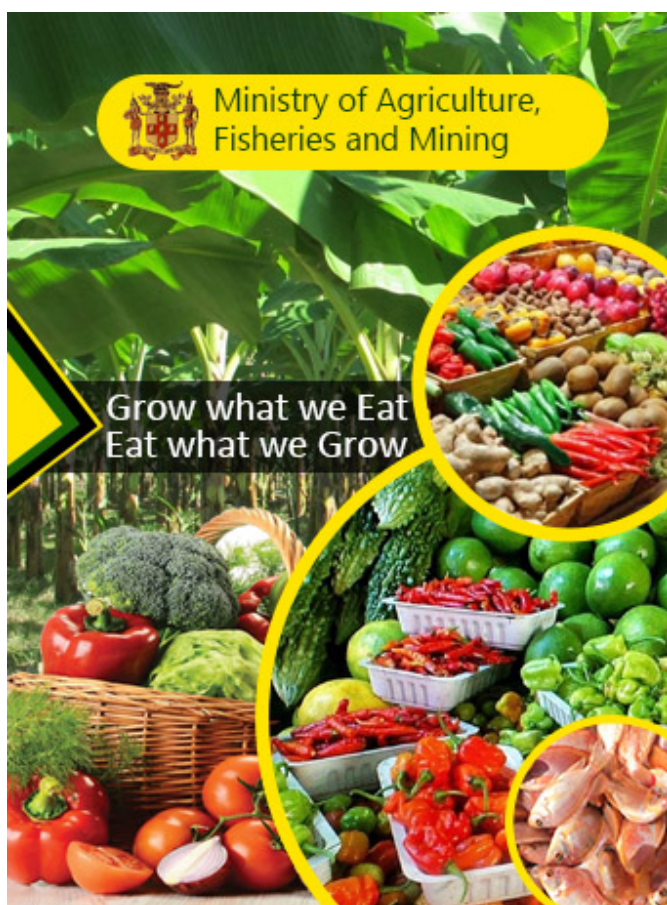
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