

PRESS RELEASE

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VI Explores White Potato Production with Regional Partners

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The Premier's Office, through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, is taking steps to develop a sustainable white potato production programme, following the participation of local farmers at a Capacity Building for White Potato Production and Marketing seminar in Dominica.

The seminar, held from 1 - 3 December, 2025 and organised by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States OECS, brought together experts from across the Eastern Caribbean to share knowledge on white potato cultivation, marketing, and best practices. Based on data from the International Trade Centre (ITC), OECS nations imported 8,890 tons of white potatoes in 2024, valued at approximately US\$7.6 million.

The Virgin Islands was represented by farmers Leon Queeley and Vincent Frett.

According to Mr. Queeley, white potatoes have strong potential for development in The Virgin Islands. He highlighted the fertile soil and dedication of local farmers, emphasising that with proper planning and guidance from regional partners such as the Caribbean Agriculture's Research and Development (CARDI), the Inter-American institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, The Virgin Islands can successfully establish a sustainable white potato production programme.

Mr. Frett also expressed strong support for the initiative, noting: "This was a really good workshop. It is now up to the government to take action. We need proper equipment and access to potato seeds to start a pilot project. While the cold season is ideal for planting, we can also try test planting in certain moist areas. We eat a lot of white potatoes and producing them locally will help reduce imports."

Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr. Theodore James, said the department is already collaborating with regional partners on this and other initiatives to boost agricultural production in the coming months. "We will also be meeting with these farmers early in the new year to develop guidelines and a strategic plan for white potato production, ensuring that lessons learned from other Caribbean islands are applied locally."

This initiative underscores the government's commitment to enhancing food security, supporting local agriculture, and creating economic opportunities through sustainable crop production.

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About:

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is a division of the Premier's Office of the Government of the Virgin Islands. We are mandated to promote and regulate the agricultural and fisheries sectors to ensure that food produced and harvested within the Territory is safe, nutritious, and sustainably produced, while protecting the natural environment, enhancing economic growth, and improving the social well-being of Virgin Islanders.

Photos: Mr Vincent Frett

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