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Solar Crop Dryer to be Available Next Year

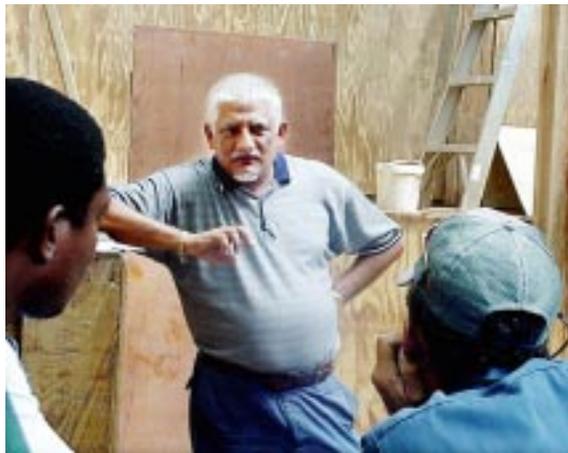
Farmers on St. Thomas will soon be able to dry their bush teas, seasonings and herbs in a commercial-size solar crop dryer. At the invitation of the UVI Cooperative Extension Service, Dr. Clement K. Sankat, chemist and agricultural engineer, spent a few days in the territory conducting solar crop dryer workshops. Dr. Sankat also designed the commercial-size dryer located at the V.I. Institute for Agricultural Development.

Solar crop dryers are custom-designed dryers made from wood and glass, which use heat from the sun and air convection to dry crops.

The community dryer will be available to farmers on St. Thomas by February 2004. Jacques Malbranche, president and founder of the institute, said the community dryer will be available to certified farmers for up to 72 hours at a time.

According to Dr. Sankat, solar crop dryers are becoming increasingly popular in the Caribbean, mainly due to rising energy costs. Farmers who at one time used large ovens to dry crops are now turning to a less expensive method, he said.

“Drying crops must be seen as part of the entire process-



Dr. Clement K. Sankat, chemist and agricultural engineer, speaks to a group about the building and designing of solar crop dryers, at the V.I. Institute for Agricultural Development, where a commercial-size solar crop dryer will be located.

ing system,” he said, noting the marketing potential of dried crops. “The potential here is really for herbs and teas.” Dried herbs and bush teas have a shelf life of up to 300 days.

Dr. Sankat, chairman of the chemistry and agricultural departments at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad campus, travels around the Caribbean speaking about and designing solar crop dryers. He has designed solar crop dryers for lumber companies in Trinidad, spice companies in Grenada and jerk meat companies in Jamaica.

“This is an excellent idea to build a relatively large dryer,” Dr. Sankat said. He hopes that once farmers become familiar with the process they will be encouraged to build their own dryers.

Farmers who attended the October workshop received certificates. Additional workshops to educate and certify farmers are scheduled for February.

The workshops were sponsored by the UVI CES, the V.I. Energy Office, the V.I. Institute for Agricultural Development and V.I. Dept of Agriculture.

Events Calendar

Oct. 30	Student Debate	STT
Oct. 30	Grad School Workshop	STT
Oct. 30	Mini Career Fair	STT
Oct. 31	Liberty Day	STT,STX
Nov. 3	Eco Tourism Presentation	STT
Nov. 9	Literacy Conference	STT
Nov. 13	English Proficiency Exam	STT,STX
Nov. 21	MBA Comprehensive Exam	STT,STX

The Freshman Jeopardy Challenge on the St. Croix campus was a big success. The Social Science 100 team won the challenge with a score of 590. The Science 100 class extended a good effort with 90 points. The September 25 event



drew a crowd of more than 75 students, faculty and staff. Another Freshman Jeopardy Challenge is expected in the Spring semester.

Sussman to Donate \$335 K for Science and Math Research

St. John resident S. Donald Sussman, the chairman of Trust Asset Management LLP, has agreed to a \$335,000 multi-year commitment to support a science and mathematics research and education program hosted by the University of the Virgin Islands.

Mr. Sussman will donate \$335,000 over the next three years to provide the mandatory local funds needed to secure a four-to-one matching grant from the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) program. Mr. Sussman's donation and the NSF grant, which is subject to final approval, are expected to total more than \$1.3 million.



Shown, from left, are Trust Asset management employees Wilbert Smith, Heidi Hansen, Bosedede Bruce, Tanya Ward Benjamin, Denroy Simon, Kwesi Howard (back), Mona Charles and Freida Webster with Trust Asset Management Chairman S. Donald Sussman, UVI Provost Dr. Gwen-Marie Moolenaar and UVI Vice Provost Dr. Henry Smith. Not present for the photo were Winifred Walters and Kevin JohnLewis. Smith, Bruce, Simon, Howard, Webster and JohnLewis are UVI graduates.

The Virgin Islands EPSCoR program will improve science and mathematics research and education for grades K-16 throughout the Virgin Islands. VI-EPSCoR is administered by the University of the Virgin Islands with the encouragement of the Virgin Islands government.

"Improving basic science education for all students is vital to the future of the Virgin Islands," said Mr. Sussman. "It's wonderful that I can be the anchor to

help bring federal money here."

Trust Asset Management is a global investment management services company based in St. Thomas.

UVI Student, CTC Translator

UVI sophomore Lorna Jno-Lewis served as a translator at the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) annual conference held from October 16-18 on St. Thomas. Jno-Lewis was a French translator for student finalists of the CTO's "My Caribbean Essay Contest." Students from throughout the Caribbean participated in the contest, writing about why their country/island is the best. The finalists presented their essays at the Caribbean Tourism Conference (CTC).



Lorna Jno-Lewis

Jno-Lewis' duties included around-the-clock translation for the duration of the conference, which mandated that she stay at the hotel with the students.

"It was a great experience," said Jno-Lewis, who is majoring in education.

Jno-Lewis learned about the opportunity at her part-time job.

Hundreds of people from the CTO 32 member nations, travel agents and media representatives were in the territory for the CTC conference.

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