GUYANA CHRONICLE

AGRICULTURE MONTH SUPPLEMENT

2026





"Innovate, Nourish, Grow: Building a Strong and Sustainable Guyana"





Gov't engaging commercial banks on 'agri' lending at preferential rates

PRESIDENT Dr Irfaan Ali has said that the government is negotiating with commercial banks to make loans for agricultural production more affordable, with support aimed at medium- and large-scale operators.

Speaking at the Farmers Conference, President Ali said the government had brought commercial banks together to discuss incentives modelled on those offered for low-income housing.

He said the aim was to encourage lending to agriculture at preferential rates.

"There was a time when we came back in office in 2020.

People were not even looking at agriculture as a sustainable way of growing a business or investing.

For a matter of fact, a lot of the large farmers and large producers were scaling back investment in the sector.

People were leaving the sector, the rice sector, the poultry sector," he said, adding: "Today, not only have we brought back production and instil confidence in the system, but we are nurturing a new generation of young Guyanese who see a future in agriculture, who see a future in investing in agriculture. We have been able to build the consortiums of young people now in poultry."

Dr Ali said Republic Bank had committed to setting aside resources for agricultural loans, while the rate was still under negotiation. He hoped an agreement could be announced before the end of the conference week.



President Dr. Irfaan Ali

"We have brought all of the commercial banks together, and we are currently negotiating with them to offer the same type of incentive that we offer for low-income housing to banks for loans to agriculture, so that those who want to go into more medium, large-scale production can get those loans at affordable rates," he said.

He also noted that Demerara Bank was offering poultry loans at five per cent, adding that the government was discussing whether incentives could help bring the rate lower.

President Ali said the financing measures were part of a broader effort to address farmers' challenges and support investment in production.

He linked the planned lending support to the government's wider agricultural policies and infrastructural investments.



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Agriculture ventures account for almost 30% of development bank applications

-Mustapha says 'agri' ministry's outreach helping farmers access financing to expand operations

AGRICULTURE, which is one of Guyana's fastest developing sectors, is slated to see continued growth through the Guyana Development Bank (GDB) and so far, it accounts for almost 30 per cent of the applications that have been received, according to Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha.

Speaking on Monday at the Farmers' Conference 2026, the minister noted that the figures and growing interest are a result of work being done to ensure farmers know what financing is available to them and how they can qualify.

He said many producers do not need large sums but require access to smaller amounts that can help them invest in their operations and increase production. This collaborative approach and emphasis on providing opportunities for Guyanese, backed by strategic leadership, is part of the wider effort to strengthen Guyana's agricultural sector and its role in regional food security.

Highlighting the role of the president in regional agricultural leadership, the minister noted that with growing investment by farmers and continued regional engagement, Guyana's agriculture sector is positioned to contribute to wider efforts to reduce food imports and strengthen the Caribbean's food security.

The Farmers' Conference 2026, which is slated to become an annual event, brought together farmers, agriculture stakeholders, and regional sectoral leaders. The conference served as a platform for farmers and stakeholders to share their challenges, views and opinions and help shape policies impacting the sector.

While work to further develop the sector continues, the minister noted that farmers are already leading in the number of applications currently being made to the Guyana Development Bank, with agricultural applicants accounting for almost 70 per cent of the total.

"Most of the applications are from the farming community, the agriculture sector," he said. Mustapha credited the farmers' strong interest in sensitisation efforts made by the Ministry of Agriculture, which has been working to ensure producers understand the available financing and the requirements for accessing it.

"Many farmers need not large sums of money, but they need some money to increase and invest in their buildings. The development bank is one of the areas, and we have done a lot of work in terms of propagating and informing them about what are the criteria to get loan…. And that is why you have almost 70 per cent of the applicants that are farmers," he said.

The minister's remarks come as the government continues to prioritise the agriculture sector in Guyana's national development agenda, with efforts focused on ensuring farmers can benefit from the country's economic growth. Mustapha said the development of the sector requires continued engagement with the people who depend on it, noting that farmers' experiences, concerns, and participation must remain central to decisions affecting their livelihoods.

"As a government, we cannot make progress in agriculture without the farmers themselves. Their experience matters, their concerns matter, and their participation must remain an important part of the decisions that affect their livelihood. That is why gatherings such as this conference are so valuable. They bring people together, encourage dialogue and provide an opportunity to strengthen relationships among farming communities, the government, and the wider agricultural sector," he said.

He added that the government must ensure that agriculture remains an area where farmers can expand their businesses, young people can see opportunities for their future, and communities can benefit from greater economic activity.

At the regional level, Mustapha highlighted Guyana's growing role in efforts to strengthen food security across the Caribbean, noting that agricultural development must extend beyond national borders. Moreover, the minister said Guyana is now leading regional efforts in agriculture and food security under President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's leadership.

Highlighting the work and impact the President has made in regional agriculture leadership, Mustapha noted, "Agriculture has an important role to play in achieving these objectives. Under President Ali's leadership, Guyana has continued to play an important part in regional efforts to strengthen food security and expand agricultural co-operation. His engagement at the CARICOM level reflects an understanding that the opportunities before us are not limited to our national borders," he said adding, "Today, I am proud to say that Guyana is leading CARICOM under President Ali's leadership in agriculture and food security."



Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha says the agriculture sector accounts for almost 70 per cent of the applications to the Guyana Development Bank (Delano Williams photo)

Furthermore, Mustapha pointed to the CARICOM 25 by 2025 Plus Five initiative, which he said has helped mobilise capital, policy reforms, and political will across the region to reduce the Caribbean's collective food import bill and strengthen food security.

He said regional co-operation creates opportunities for countries to share knowledge, strengthen relationships and make better use of available resources. "When our Caribbean neighbours work together, we create opportunities to share knowledge, strengthen relationships and make better use of the resources available to our region," Mustapha emphasised.

Guyana's farmers, he noted, remain an important part of these efforts, as the work taking place on farms and throughout agricultural communities contributes not only to national development but also to the country's ability to support the wider Caribbean.

"Our farmers are an important part of that vital effort. The work taking place in our fields and farms and throughout the agricultural communities contributes to Guyana's development and strengthens our ability to contribute to the Caribbean. We should take pride in Guyana's contribution to the Caribbean," he said, adding that Guyana should take pride in its contribution to regional agriculture and food security as it continues to expand production and create opportunities for farmers.

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Climate-smart shade houses open new agricultural opportunities for Region One women

TWO climate-smart shade houses were commissioned this month in Morawhanna and Smith Creek, Mabaruma, Region One, to support women's groups in expanding agricultural production, pursuing income-generating opportunities, and building more resilient livelihoods through agriculture.

Funded by the Greater Guyana Initiative (GGI) and implemented by the Guyana Marine Conservation Society (GMCS), the two facilities are part of the Economic Livelihoods Project, which supports community-led development and helps communities respond to climate-related challenges.

According to a GGI prelease, they were built by local community contractors and the facilities also create opportunities for community participation during the construction phase.

The local women's groups plan to cultivate crops such as celery and shallots, with the intention of dehydrating them and creating value-added products and this approach could extend the shelf life of produce and reduce post-harvest losses, the release added.



Women groups in Morawhanna and Smith Creek, Mabaruma, Region One, now have access to climate-smart shade houses. The two facilities which were funded by the Greater Guyana Initiative (GGI) and implemented by the Guyana Marine Conservation Society (GMCS), are expected to support community-led development and help communities respond to climate-related challenges (Ministry of Agriculture photos)



It stated that the shade-houses include features designed to support agricultural production under changing weather conditions.

The Morawhanna facility incorporates water harvesting and conservation measures to help manage water supplies during dry spells, including periods associated with El Niño, while the Smith Creek structure features UV corrugated roofing.

"This project is a very successful one and [is] beneficial to we the women," Sylvia Roberts, leader of the Towatuma local women's group spearheading the project said, according to the release. She further stated, "I must say thanks to the Greater Guyana Initiative and Ms. Annette for bringing such a wonderful project for us."

Meanwhile, Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha, highlighted the importance of expanding agricultural production beyond the coastland and strengthening hinterland communities' contribution to

national food security.

According to the press release, he also noted the government's objective of achieving at least 35 per cent participation by women and youth in agriculture.

"Today's commissioning holds special significance as it reflects the central role women continue to play in the development and transformation of our agricultural sector," he was quoted as saying.

GMCS Project Director, Annette Arjoon-Martins, described the project's approach to supporting women's agricultural activities and community resilience.

"This project is the purest form of the power of partnerships," she said adding, "The partnership between our donors IDB Labs, The Greater Guyana Initiative, and the Ministry of Agriculture, you are all responsible for the success that we are celebrating today."

Lorna Carlson, Socio-economic Manager at ExxonMobil Guyana, noted that the project supports local capacity and community-led economic activity. "Today is about celebration, growth, partnership and community and it reminds us that agriculture remains at the heart of Guyana. It feeds families, it supports livelihoods across the country and it drives economic growth," Carlson said.

The release said that through its partnership with GMCS, GGI supports community-led initiatives intended to strengthen livelihoods and resilience in Guyana's hinterland communities. Region One Regional Chairman Brentnol Ashley also highlighted the importance of investments that create economic opportunities and reduce reliance on food transported from the coast.

"We celebrate more than the completion of agricultural structures. We celebrate women empowerment, stronger community partnerships and new opportunity for indigenous women and young people to build better lives," Ashley said.

"These shade houses will create opportunity for more reliable production, improve crop management and strong agricultural livelihoods," she emphasised.

The GMCS is dedicated to conserving Guyana's marine and coastal biodiversity while promoting sustainable, community-led livelihoods for Indigenous and coastal populations, while the GGI is a 10-year, GY$20 billion commitment supporting capacity-building, community development, and economic diversification in Guyana.

The initiative is funded by the Stabroek Block co-venturers ExxonMobil Guyana, Hess, and CNOOC, and focuses on building local capacity and supporting sustainable development across the country.







Poultry production climbs to 9,000 tonnes in 2026



By Altia Smith

GUYANA has produced 9,000 metric tonnes of poultry in 2026, up from 5,000 metric tonnes in 2025, as the government continues to invest in the livestock sector to boost local production and reduce reliance on imports.

This was highlighted by Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, during a Ruminant Exhibition, held earlier this week at the Rising Sun Turf Club, West Coast Berbice.

Mustapha said Guyana had previously imported more hatching eggs than it produced locally but noted that ongoing investments were expected to help the country become self-sufficient in the hatchery sector.

The investments form part of broader efforts to expand domestic food production, strengthen food security and create opportunities for farmers and other stakeholders in the agricultural industry.

"Very soon we will be working with a number of farmers to not only increase their stock, but also ensure they have better breeds," The minister said.

The exhibition, organised in collaboration with the Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA), brought together more than 40 farmers from Regions Two, Three, Four, Five, Six and Ten to learn about developments in the country's ruminant industry.

Addressing the gathering, Mustapha emphasised the government's commitment to expanding agricultural production and improving the livelihoods of Guyanese.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, multimillion-dollar poultry processing facility at Fyrish. He said the commissioning of the facility represented the outcome of planning, determination and investment in the sector.

The new facility is expected to support the development of the livestock industry while creating employment opportunities and strengthening the production and processing of locally produced meat and other agricultural products.

Guyana has also been investing in poultry production and processing infrastructure, with facilities in Georgetown and on the East Bank of Demerara supporting the sector. Expanding local production could also create opportunities for exports, particularly as the country continues to increase its poultry output.

During the exhibition, Mustapha also highlighted the importance of food safety, including the management of pesticides and toxic chemicals, and outlined the need for measures to address potential risks to consumers.

"We want to develop the livestock sector…. the government has been making investments and have been increasing budgetary allocations in the sector." He stated.

The minister later led reporters on a walkthrough of the cattle farms at the turf club, providing an overview of the daily management of the animals and discussing plans to integrate poultry production with broader efforts to expand the local supply of dairy and meat products.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, the annual exhibition provides farmers with first-hand information on progress in cattle, sheep and goat production while promoting modern and sustainable livestock farming practices.

The event concluded with a cooking competition in which participating teams showcased their culinary skills using mutton curry as the main dish.

The Guyana School of Agriculture placed third, followed by the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute in second place, while the competition also featured entries from farmers representing several regions.





Scenes from the Ministry of Agriculture's Ruminant Exhibition





This year's World Food Day observance also featured an exhibition of locally produced items and agricultural products, showcasing the diversity and potential of Guyana's agriculture sector

Guyana's vibrant agriculture sector celebrated as the country observes World Food Day 2026

GUYANA has placed agriculture and food security at the centre of its national development agenda, with increased investments aimed at strengthening domestic food production, reducing reliance on imports and building resilience against global challenges.

This is according to Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha, who was speaking at the observance of World Food Day at Mainstay/Wayaka Village, in Region Two.

The event, held under the theme "Innovate Today, Nourish Tomorrow", brought together a wide cross-section of stakeholders from the agriculture sector to highlight the importance of innovation, sustainable food production and food security.

Minister Mustapha said Mainstay/Wayaka was a fitting location for the observance, given the community's longstanding reliance on agriculture, fishing, traditional knowledge and the responsible use of natural resources to sustain livelihoods across generations.

He stressed that food security must never be taken for granted, noting that countries worldwide continue to grapple with the effects of climate change, disruptions to global supply chains, rising production costs, conflicts and uncertainty in international markets.

"These challenges reinforce the importance of strengthening our ability to produce food, protect our agricultural system and ensure that our people have reliable access to nutrition," he said.

According to the minister, this year's theme calls for a shift beyond traditional approaches to food production and encourages greater innovation, stronger partnerships, investment in human resources and the development of systems capable of meeting the needs of future generations.

"It causes us to embrace innovation, strengthen partnerships, develop human resources and create systems capable of meeting the needs of future generations. And importantly, it reminds us that the decisions we make today will determine the opportunities available to our children and grandchildren tomorrow," he stated.

He pointed to the significant increase in budgetary allocations for agriculture, which he said had risen from $18.5 billion five years ago to $113.5 billion in the current allocation.

According to the minister, these investments are contributing to a major transformation of the country's food system.

Minister Mustapha further noted that Guyana has

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Mustapha resolves decades-old land dispute, 113 farmers receive leases

AGRICULTURE Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, has brought closure to a decades-old land dispute involving farmers from Rampoor and surrounding communities in Region Five (Mahaica-Berbice), with 113 farmers receiving agricultural land leases during the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary Agricultural Development Authority's (MMA-ADA) Open Day at Onverwagt, West Coast Berbice, earlier this week.

According to the ministry of agriculture, the distribution marks a significant breakthrough for farmers who have spent decades seeking security of tenure and formal recognition of their right to occupy and cultivate agricultural lands.

Speaking at the event, Minister Mustapha said the matter had remained unresolved for far too long, creating uncertainty for farming families whose livelihoods depend on access to productive agricultural lands.

Minister Mustapha explained that resolving the issue required sustained engagement, careful consideration of the concerns raised by the affected farmers and a commitment to finding a practical solution that would allow agricultural production to continue without further conflict.

The Minister also underscored the importance of the MMA-ADA to agricultural production and the livelihoods of thousands of families across Region Five.







The distribution marks a significant breakthrough for farmers who have spent decades seeking security of tenure and formal recognition of their right to occupy and cultivate agricultural lands



Guyana strengthens mangrove monitoring with upgraded digital system



The improved platform, developed with support from the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), is expected to enhance access to mangrove-related information and strengthen decision-making in mangrove management, monitoring and conservation

MINISTER of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha has underscored the importance of mangroves in protecting Guyana's coastline, agricultural lands, infrastructure and communities from the impacts of climate change, as he delivered the feature address at the launch of the improved Guyana Mangrove Information System (GuyMIS) earlier this week.

The launch was held at the Mangrove Centre at the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) compound.

During his remarks, Mustapha highlighted the role mangroves play in reducing coastal erosion and flooding by absorbing wave energy, trapping sediment and stabilising vulnerable sections of the coastline.

He also pointed to their importance in supporting biodiversity and sustaining livelihoods, noting that mangrove restoration extended beyond environmental conservation and formed a critical part of the government's broader efforts to strengthen food security and economic resilience.

He emphasised that protecting these ecosystems is also an investment in farmers whose livelihoods depend on productive agricultural lands, fisherfolk who rely on healthy coastal ecosystems and future generations who will benefit from the preservation of Guyana's natural resources.

He reiterated that mangroves serve as a natural defence against coastal erosion and flooding by reducing wave energy, trapping sediment and stabilising vulnerable sections of the coastline, while also supporting biodiversity and sustaining livelihoods.

Addressing the launch of the improved GuyMIS platform, Mustapha said the initiative represents another important step in the ongoing modernisation of Guyana's agriculture sector through the integration of technology and digital solutions.

He explained that challenges such as climate variability, changing weather patterns, emerging pests and diseases and increasing global demands for food production require smarter, more innovative and responsive approaches to agricultural development.

The improved platform, developed with support from the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), is expected to enhance access to mangrove-related information and strengthen decision-making in mangrove management, monitoring and conservation.







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$650M pump station Commissioned to strengthen drainage, protect farmers in Region Three

– $23B earmarked for canals, internal drains and embankments over the next two years

A $650 million pump station commissioned at Canal No. 1, Bagotville, West Bank Demerara, is expected to strengthen flood protection, safeguard farmers' livelihoods and support agricultural production in Region Three, as the government continues to invest in drainage and irrigation infrastructure across the country.

The facility, commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture through the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA), adds to the region's growing network of pump stations being developed nationwide.

The project also included the installation of two additional pumps and the construction of a new community centre valued at approximately G$60 million. Equipped with four drainage pumps and a combined pumping capacity of 580 cubic feet per second, the facility will provide improved drainage for approximately 5,000 acres of land, benefitting thousands of farmers and residents. This comes as Region Three remains one of Guyana's most productive agricultural areas, supporting rice cultivation, cash crop farming and livestock production.

Giving the feature address, Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha said the commissioning should be viewed as more than the opening of another facility, but as part of a wider effort to provide greater security and resilience for Guyana's farming communities.

He noted that the $650 million investment was among several projects being undertaken to improve drainage and irrigation, with NDIA Chairman, Lionel Wordsworth, highlighting the construction of 6 pump stations being built in Region Three over the past six years. These projects, the minister noted, are intended to ensure that agricultural communities are better protected against flooding while supporting continued production. Minister Mustapha further disclosed that G$81.9 billion, representing 72.3 per cent of the Ministry's G$113.2 billion budget for 2026, has been allocated to drainage and irrigation, compared to G$9 billion in 2020.



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha

According to the minister, investments in drainage, irrigation and agricultural infrastructure are helping to support growth across different subsectors while creating opportunities to increase production. As he stated, "Drainage and irrigation has been an important aspect of our programme over the years, because we want to ensure that the productive sector in our country thrives. When the productive sector thrives, everyone benefits. We are not putting all our eggs in one basket in terms of waiting for revenue coming out of the oil and gas sector. That is why we have seen prolonged growth in the agriculture sector over the years," he said.

The minister acknowledged, however, that the construction of pump stations alone would not resolve all drainage challenges facing the country. He said the government is pursuing a broader programme involving modern and resilient infrastructure designed to manage water more effectively and protect cultivated areas and residential communities. "Under the leadership of President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali and the PPP/C Government, we have embarked on the most ambitious programme of agricultural and drainage infrastructural development in Guyana's history," Mustapha said. He announced that approximately $23 billion would be spent over the next two years, or over the next year, on the continued development of the infrastructure supporting the agriculture sector.

"We will have to build infrastructure that is resilient, innovative, and modern. I am happy to say that we are in the process of building that mega infrastructure. Over the next two years, or over the next year, we will be expending approximately $23 billion to build high-level canals, to build internal drains, and to build embankments to keep floodwater away from the community and the cultivation areas," he said.

Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture, Vikash Ramkissoon, highlighted the scale and importance of the work carried out by NDIA in collaboration with regional authorities and Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) to respond to heavy rainfall. He was keen to note that efforts often extended beyond the commissioning of infrastructure, requiring teams to monitor facilities and ensure that pumps remain operational when communities face flooding threats.

"I want to let you know that a tremendous amount of energy and effort is placed into ensuring that your properties and your livelihood are saved," he said. Ramkissoon said the additional pump station was particularly important for Canal No. 1 because of the challenges in managing water in areas below sea level. The region's drainage system, he emphasised, must respond to changing weather conditions and tidal patterns, to safeguard farmers, communities and agriculture production in the region.

Regional Chairman, Sheik Mohamed Inshan Ayube, also underscored the importance of continued infrastructural development to the expansion of agriculture in Region Three. He said the establishment of facilities such as pump stations is necessary in supporting sustainable agricultural growth. While acknowledging the role of the Ministry of Agriculture and NDIA, Ayube said the Region also played an important part in advancing agricultural development, with the region seeing significant growth in the sector in recent years.

"We are working in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to fulfil the vision and commitment of this government to ensure that food security is well harnessed, established, and secure in Region 3 and across this country," he said. The commissioning of the Canal No. 1 Pump Station adds to ongoing efforts to improve drainage, protect agricultural communities and strengthen the infrastructure needed to sustain agriculture development in Region Three and nationwide.



The $650 million pump station commissioned at Canal No. 1, Bagotville, West Bank Demerara

Throughout October, the Ministry of Agriculture hosted farmers' markets across various communities, bringing farmers, agro-processors and consumers together to showcase and support locally produced agricultural goods, promote local entrepreneurship and provide residents with access to fresh, affordable produce.


















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Rice-Duck Integrated Farming strengths livelihoods, improves productivity

-- Minister Mustapha says





AGRICULTURE Minister Zulfikar Mustapha has highlighted the potential of integrated farming to reduce production costs and boost farmers' earnings at the Rice-Duck Integrated Farming initiative hosted at the Guyana Rice Development Board's (GRDB) Rice Research Station.

The initiative, supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Canada, seeks to improve productivity and promote sustainable agricultural practices while creating additional income opportunities for rice farmers.

During his address, Minister Mustapha explained that the initiative represents another important step in the government's efforts to modernise Guyana's rice industry and strengthen farmers' livelihoods.

He noted that under the leadership of President Dr Irfaan Ali, the government remains committed to introducing innovative, cost-effective farming practices and providing the necessary support to help rice farmers sustain their operations and remain competitive, particularly at a time when unfavourable global rice prices continue to present challenges for producers.

The minister explained that rice-duck integrated farming offers farmers an opportunity to diversify their income while maximising the productive use of their existing farmlands.

He noted that, for many years, rice farmers have depended primarily on paddy production for their livelihoods. However, through this initiative, farmers can explore new opportunities to

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Rice-duck integrated farming offers farmers an opportunity to diversify their income while maximising the productive use of their existing farmlands

Guyana's vibrant agriculture sector celebrated as the country observes World Food...

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gained international recognition for its food security efforts, describing the country's progress in feeding its population as a significant achievement.

"We must also become more resilient, more self-sufficient and better positioned to contribute to regional food security," he said, emphasising the need for Guyana to continue expanding domestic production while pursuing greater self-sufficiency in key food commodities.

As part of these efforts, Mustapha noted that Guyana has successfully ventured into the cultivation of corn and soya, while local onion production is expected to meet domestic demand by the end of the year, eliminating the need for imports of the commodity, provided production targets are achieved.

"If you look at drainage and irrigation, farm-to-market roads, agricultural research, mechanisation, modern production systems, storage, processing and marketing infrastructure, all those areas, we are seeing massive investments being made," he said.

The agriculture minister noted that agriculture extends beyond crop cultivation, noting that the sector plays a critical role in creating employment, supporting rural communities and providing opportunities for entrepreneurship.

Meanwhile, Chairman of Region Two, Devin Mohan underscored the importance of agriculture to the region's economy, pointing to its established rice and cash-crop industries, coconut production and the vast agricultural potential of the Pomeroon.

He said these activities provide employment, support local businesses, sustain families and make a significant contribution to feeding the nation.

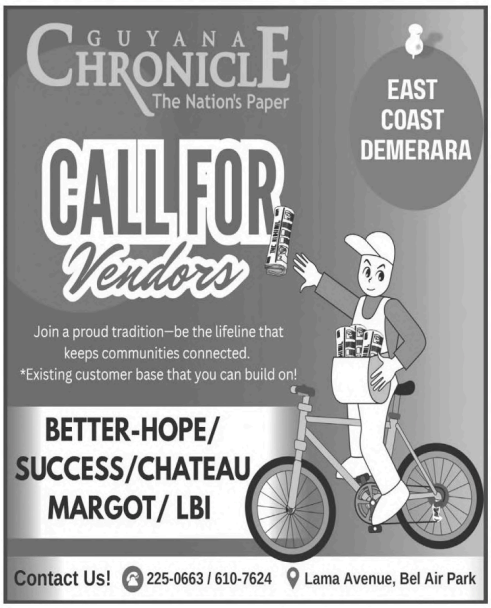
Mohan added that the Regional Democratic Council remains committed to working alongside technical agencies and farming communities to ensure national agricultural policies deliver tangible benefits to residents.

He also highlighted the need to continue improving agricultural infrastructure, strengthening market access, encouraging young people to enter the sector, embracing innovation and exploring opportunities in agro-processing and agricultural tourism.

The World Food Day observance also featured an exhibition of locally produced items and agricultural products, showcasing the diversity and potential of Guyana's agriculture sector.

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Rice-Duck Integrated Farming strengths...

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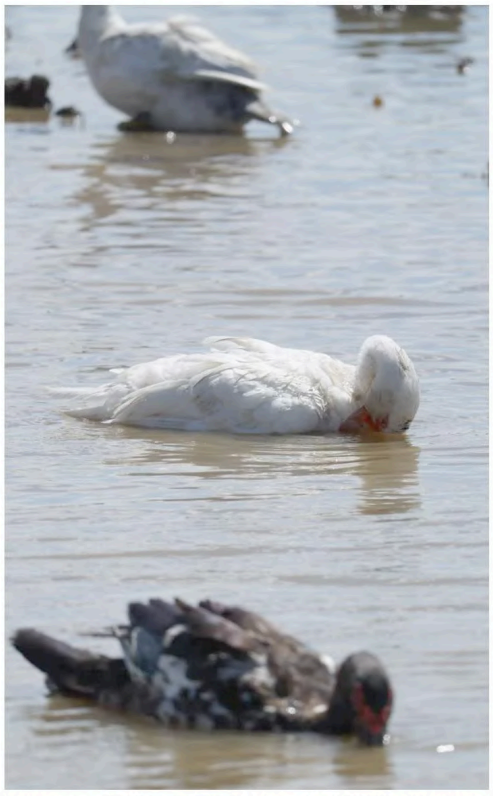
generate additional revenue from duck production alongside their traditional rice cultivation, effectively creating two potential sources of income from the same acreage.

Minister Mustapha further explained that, under properly managed conditions, ducks can play an important role in controlling certain insects and weeds in rice fields, while their manure contributes nutrients to the growing environment.

This integrated approach, he said, has the potential to reduce dependence on certain agricultural inputs, lower production costs, and improve the overall profitability of farming operations, while promoting more environmentally sustainable rice cultivation.

He emphasised that the programme demonstrates how innovation, agricultural research, and sound government policies can work together to address existing challenges within the agriculture sector while creating new economic opportunities for farmers.

Minister Mustapha also welcomed the support of the FAO and the Government of Canada, noting the importance of partnerships in advancing agricultural development and introducing modern farming techniques that can benefit local producers.



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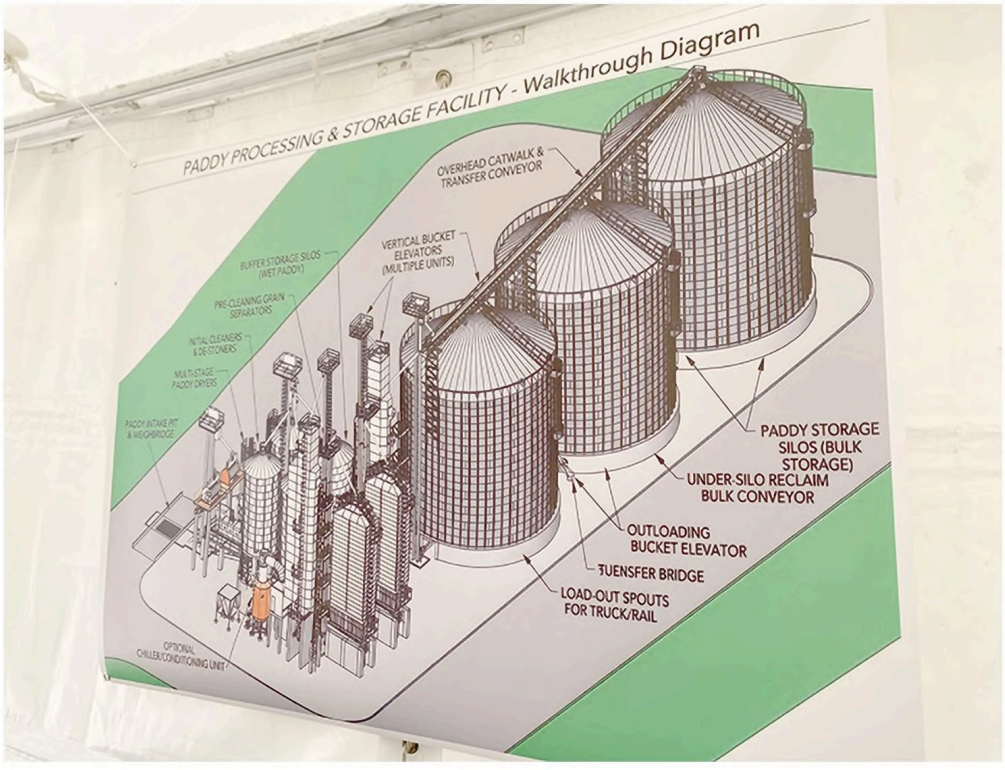
$1.6B paddy-drying, storage facility to strengthen Essequibo rice industry



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The sod-turning ceremony for the facility was held on Friday, October 16, 2026, with Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha; Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture, Vikash Ramkissoon; Permanent Secretary, Daun Ellis; Member of Parliament, Sonia Latchman; and Regional Chairman Devin Mohan, among those in attendance.



The project represents a major investment in agricultural infrastructure, as the government moves to expand the capacity of the rice industry and address challenges associated with inadequate drying and storage facilities during the harvesting season.

Addressing farmers, millers and other stakeholders, Minister Mustapha said Region Two remained one of Guyana's leading rice-producing regions, contributing significantly to the country's agricultural output and export earnings.

He said that the region has approximately 36,000 acres under rice cultivation, representing about 16 per cent of Guyana's total rice acreage, and produces approximately 1.4 million bags of paddy per crop. In 2025, Region Two accounted for approximately 25 per cent of the country's rice exports.

However, as production continues to expand, existing drying and storage infrastructure has struggled to keep pace with the growing demand. Minister Mustapha said that the region's eight rice mills can accommodate approximately 30,000 bags of paddy daily, leaving farmers vulnerable to delays during periods of peak harvesting.

He also highlighted the financial consequences of inadequate storage, noting that approximately 16,000 bags of paddy, valued at $64 million, were spoiled during the first crop of 2025.

"No farmer should have to watch a good harvest spoil because the necessary infrastructure does not exist," Minister Mustapha said, underscoring the importance of the new facility in protecting farmers' investments and livelihoods.

When completed, the facility will feature three modern storage silos with a combined capacity of 10,000 tonnes. It is expected to facilitate the drying and storage of approximately 500,000 additional bags of paddy per crop.

The infrastructure will also allow paddy to be preserved under controlled conditions for between eight and 12 months, giving farmers and millers greater flexibility to manage their produce and make marketing decisions without being pressured to sell immediately.

Minister Mustapha said the investment was part of the government's broader

commitment to building a stronger, more competitive and climate-resilient rice industry.

He noted that Region Two's rice acreage is projected to increase to approximately 40,000 acres, with production potentially reaching 1.8 million bags per crop as yields improve from about 38 bags per acre to 45 bags per acre.

The facility is expected to directly benefit approximately 1,400 to 1,500 rice farmers, while creating employment opportunities in construction, operations, transportation and logistics.

Providing an overview of the project, Chief Executive Officer of the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority, Lionel Wordsworth, said that the facility is being developed on approximately 10 acres of land to accommodate the current infrastructure and allow for future expansion.

He said the initial development would establish 10,000 tonnes of storage capacity, while the overall design provides for a potential capacity of 20,000 tonnes through the addition of another row of silos.

Wordsworth outlined that the facility would be equipped with two mechanical dryers capable of processing approximately 900 to 1,000 tonnes of paddy daily, four wet bins, receiving silos, conveyors, elevators and cleaning equipment.

The storage system will also incorporate temperature monitoring and carbon dioxide controls to help preserve paddy quality over extended periods.

He said that the facility would operate through a centrally monitored Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, allowing the equipment to be monitored and managed electronically.

The project has been divided into two main components. The civil works, including foundations, access roads and buildings, were awarded to 4N Hardware, while Superbrick, a European company, was contracted to supply the engineering equipment and oversee its installation.

Wordsworth said the project is scheduled for completion within one year and assured stakeholders that the relevant agencies would work closely with the contractors to ensure the facility is delivered according to the agreed specifications.

Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture, Vikash Ramkissoon, described the sod-turning as a demonstration of the government's continued commitment to farmers and the development of the agricultural sector.

He pointed to the significant increase in public investment in agriculture, noting that allocations have risen from approximately $18 billion in 2020 to $113 billion in 2026.

Ramkissoon said the government's objective is to increase national rice production to one million tonnes by 2030, adding that achieving this target would require continued collaboration between the government and farmers.

He highlighted investments in fertiliser support, crop insurance and other interventions designed to reduce production costs and strengthen farmers' capacity to remain productive.

The minister also pointed to the role of the Guyana Development Bank in providing financing to farmers, particularly those seeking to return to cultivation or expand their operations.

He said that improved storage capacity, coupled with access to financing, could give farmers greater control over when they sell their produce and help them secure better prices.

Regional Chairman Devin Mohan said the development is expected to strengthen Region Two's position in Guyana's rice industry while supporting the wider network of farmers, millers, exporters, transport operators and other businesses that depend on the sector.

For the Essequibo Coast, he said the project marks a significant step towards modernising agricultural infrastructure, reducing avoidable losses and ensuring that increased production is matched by the capacity to dry, preserve and market the region's paddy.

Rice farmers expressed gratitude to the Governments of Guyana and President Irfaan Ali for listening to their request.

"We are thankful for this facility; we look forward to this for we can now dry and store our paddy for better prices" Narine Persaud said.

Other rice farmers expressed their gratitude to the government for listening to their concerns and ensuring they were being addressed.





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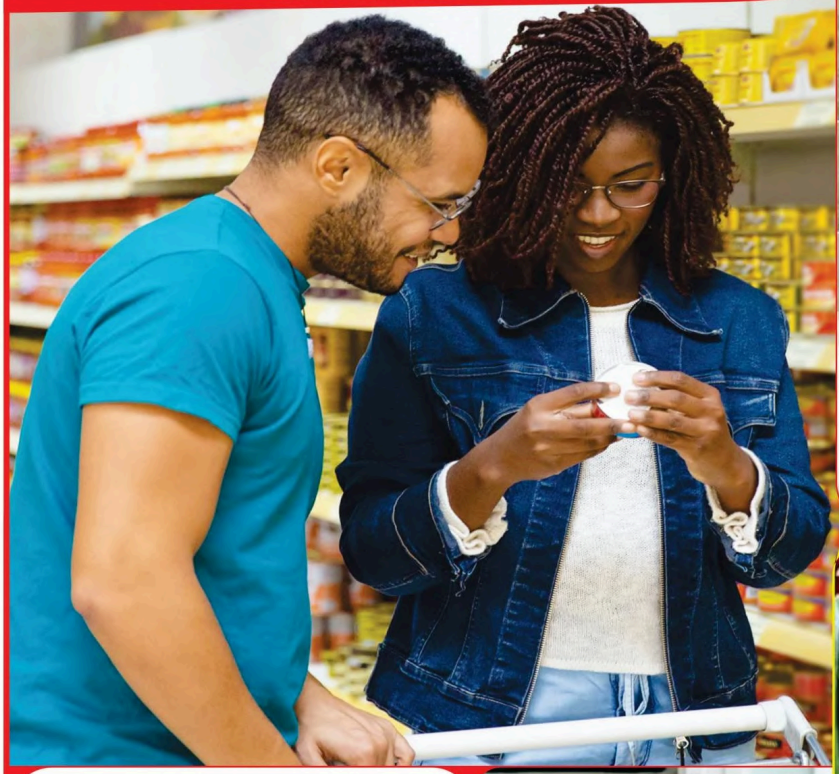


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