



# SWEET POTATO

## *Enhancing & Increasing Sweet Potato Production*

### **Introduction**

Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) is an important staple in Jamaica. The tuber is required in the export and fresh markets as well as the agro-processing industry. In 2008, total consumption of the tuber was 25,797,000kg, representing 100% locally grown sweet potatoes.

### **Prices**

On the week ending October 2, 2009 the average retail price of



sweet potato was \$207.70/kg while the range of the farmgate and municipal prices were \$55 to \$176/kg and \$134 to \$176 respectively.

### **Supply Availability**

Sweet potato is cultivated island-wide. In 2008, 79% of the island's



production came from the parishes of Manchester, St. Elizabeth, St. Ann and Clarendon. The popular varieties grown locally are the Eustace, Big Red, Clarendon, Blue Bud, Quarter Million, Dor and Uplift. The tuber is available all year round.

### **Uses**

Sweet potato is usually eaten boiled or baked and may be candied with syrup or used as puree. The tuber is also used to manufacture flour and fed to livestock.

### **Target Market**

In 2008, 1,188,086 kg of sweet potato were exported mainly to the United Kingdom and Canada.

### **Why Invest?**

- There is a good demand for sweet potatoes both in the local and overseas market.
- The crop will adapt to the ecology in Jamaica.
- Good foreign exchange earner.



### **Investment Opportunity**

The crop has great potential for investment particularly, in the agro-processing Industry. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is working in partnership with the Scientific Research Council (SRC) on several new value added products. These new developed products/formulations are available at the SRC.

### **Health Benefits of Sweet Potato**

- Rated the most nutritious of all tubers
- The protein of this tuber has a good biological value with 4.2% lysine and other Amino acids.
- Sweet potato is a good supplier of calcium, iron, Vitamins A & C and minerals.
- Rich source of anti oxidants for protection against heart disease, stroke, cancer and delaying the progression of Alzheimer's disease.
- Low glycerin index for maintaining steady blood glucose levels, therefore suitable for diabetes.

### **Ways to Add More Sweet Potato to your Diet**

- Pack a baked sweet potato for lunch, topped with vanilla yoghurt.
- Switch from potato chips to sweet potato chips.
- Peel and cut into strips to eat with your favourite dip.
- Blend into a breakfast smoothie.

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