

A. Overall output

Influenced primarily by increased acreage, output from the 2009/2010 ginger crop is projected to increase by about 30% to 387 Metric tonnes (mt) of ginger rhizomes [dry weight basis (ratio of 1:5)].



Fig. 1: ginger field in Clarendon (rhizome growth)

Favorable weather conditions during the latter half of the crop, when rhizome growth is most rapid, should offset the yield effects of earlier bouts of dry periods. Irrigated fields, which account for less than one percent of cultivated acreage, are expected to record strong yields. However, due to the relatively small proportion of irrigated fields to total acreage, the influence on overall yield and output will be marginal.



Fig 2. Ginger field in Clarendon (foliage cover)

A recent field survey in the major ginger producing areas in eastern (St. Thomas) and central (Clarendon and Manchester) parishes revealed encouraging performance. Ginger fields in Clarendon generally show robust rhizome growth and healthy foliage (figs. 1& 2). Indicators are similar in St. Thomas and Manchester.

B. Marketable Supply

The main factors responsible for variations between total output and marketable supply are: (1) diseased rhizomes and (2) retention of “seed” rhizome (planting material). Good agricultural practice and the absence of flooding have reduced incidence of “ginger rhizome rot disease” on the 2009/2010 crop. However, increased demand for “seed” rhizomes to expand acreage for the 2010/2011 crop could reduce supply of marketable (food) rhizomes to between 40%-50% of total output (155mt-194mt) and lift farm gate price by as much as 25% to USD6.17/kg.

With yield generally ranging between 7-8 Mt per acre, supply in the ginger industry depends on acreage response. Over the short-term, acreage response to price and production incentives is expected to restrict marketable supply of ginger due to the absence of dedicated “seed” rhizome producing operations in the country. Under existing farm-level selection of planting material,

supply response to production incentives is expected to lag one to two years, while “marketable supply” response could lag between two and four years.

C. Price

The demand for “seed” rhizome could push up farm gate price for the 2009/2010 ginger crop by as much as 25% to USD6.17/kg (dry weight). However, farm gate price for rhizomes for processing is expected to hover in the neighborhood of USD5.50/kg (dry weight). Export price of split dried Jamaican ginger should hold firm from 2009 in the proximity of USD7.7/Kg (dry weight) as processors are expected to absorb a substantial portion of transportation and processing cost to retain market position. Price signals in the seasonally high demand December period should give a clearer indication of possible farm gate price for January to March, the main buying period for exporters.

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