



On Farm Food Safety Workshop Series—Summer 2019

The Department of Agriculture is currently hosting a four night workshop series “On Farm Food Safety” which started on Thursday 4th July and will run through until Thursday 22nd August; the first night was attended by 30 persons and the sessions on 11th July by 25. The workshop is geared towards local crop farmers and aims to educate attendees on the importance of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and specifically safety when harvesting, packaging, and transporting fruits and vegetables. The Department of Agriculture identified this workshop as a priority because as Mrs. Claudette McKenzie-Bowen, Agronomist and work shop presenter articulated it “consumers of agricultural commodities have a right to expect that the foods they are buying and eating are produced in a safe manner and are of the highest quality”. Farmers are expected to safeguard the wellbeing of their clients and food safety has a critical role in assuring that food stays safe at every stage of the food chain from production to harvest, processing, storage, distribution, all the way to preparation and consumption.



Claudette McKenzie-Bowen explaining how the RHS Color Chart



Claudette McKenzie-Bowen (L) and Zelmalee Ebanks (R)

Mrs. Zelmalee Ebanks of Whistling Duck Farm in North Side has been attending along with her staff Jasmin Gravador and Doreen Porter, in order to “reinforce some things”. Mr. Chuck Thompson, 1st Vice President of the Cayman Islands Agricultural Society expressed that while a lot of the material is common sense that the presenter broke it down into various local examples that related to our environment, “the biggest impact that has stood out for me, which I have learned, is the cleanliness which is required at the various stages, planting, pre-harvest, post harvest and transportation. Sanitation of the harvest crates that are used is as important as washing your hands frequently”.

The next session will be held on Thursday 15th August featuring Standard Operating Procedures/Minimal Processing of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables; the last session on Thursday 22nd August will cover the Importance of Food Safety in Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. The two hour presentations are being held upstairs the Stacy Watler Pavilion in Lower Valley, Bodden Town starting at 6pm. Anyone interested in attending is encouraged to call 345-947-3090 to confirm their attendance.

