

# New Agriculture Center to Train Thousands of Haitian Farmers

**Video link connects Haitian Farmers with U.S. Agriculture Experts.**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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**BAS BOEN, HAITI** - The U.S. government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), kicked-off Haiti's National Agriculture and Labor Day on May 1 by inaugurating a cutting-edge agricultural training center.

The Sustainable Rural Development Center will help modernize Haiti's agricultural sector by training farmers to use innovative agriculture techniques that will increase crop yields and boost incomes. The five-hectare campus features a training center, warehouse, dormitory, three laboratories and a distance-learning facility.

The dormitory will allow farmers from across the country, including the northern region, to benefit from the resources physically located at the Center, and an online video link with the University of Florida will connect them to the expertise of U.S. agronomists.

Haitian farmers will learn how to analyze soil, identify pests and diagnose diseases that hamper crop production. They will also learn to use tools and techniques like drip irrigation and fertilizer briquettes that reduce costs and boost yields.

Agriculture is central to the Haitian economy, generating nearly 25 percent of gross domestic product and employing more than 60 percent of the population, but declining crop production has plagued Haiti for the past 50 years. The Government of Haiti identified agriculture as a key sector to create jobs and boost the economy. The U.S. government responded by designating agriculture as one of the four areas targeted for earthquake reconstruction along with health, governance and infrastructure.

Initially, public and private sector partners will manage the new center, including: USAID, the Haitian Ministry of Agriculture, the National School of Agronomy, local farmer associations, and representatives from Haitian agribusinesses. In the next few years, the U.S. government will transfer full management responsibilities to Haitian institutions.

"Our support will help train thousands of farmers over the next few years," said USAID/Haiti Mission Director Carleene Dei. "Once the center is running smoothly, Haitian institutions will possess the knowledge and experience to manage the center without our assistance."

The Sustainable Rural Development Center is one of eight agricultural training centers built with U.S. government funding in Haiti. The facilities are part of President Obama's global hunger and

food security initiative, Feed the Future, which is working to reduce global hunger and poverty by supporting country-led plans for agricultural development.