



Growing Forward

Our National Agriculture Policy and Implementation Strategy 2013-15



ST HELENA ISLAND
February 2013

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Foreword



From the Chairman,
Natural Resources, Development and
Environment Committee (NRDEC)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Williams".

Hon. Raymond .K. Williams

I welcome the launch of our draft National Agriculture Policy and Implementation Strategy. For the first time we have set out our strategic objectives for agriculture, to cover the next eight years. Agriculture is important to sustained food supplies for our community, and its development will help to grow our economy and make us a strong and green Island.

Over the next decade the Island will experience unparalleled development and this will present both opportunities and challenges for our agriculture sector. To take adequate advantage of these opportunities and address the outstanding and new challenges the sector faces, we have developed *Growing Forward*, our National Agriculture Policy and Implementation Strategy. It is intended to provide a guide for our national efforts in overcoming the challenges facing the sector to ensure we make a success of the opportunities that exist now and will come with the future. Besides ensuring we are contributing more to food security for the community, *Growing Forward* aims to contribute to our other sustainable development goals.

We must however be realistic in the developments that can be achieved in the sector, and *Growing Forward* emphasises that we must maximise the areas of competitive advantage we enjoy through becoming more commercial in these areas and we cannot develop agriculture and manage our productive resources using only the tools of the past. Local enterprises must become more productive, efficient and employ enabling technology and alternative methods where appropriate. The Policy also underscores the need to develop and prudently manage our factors of production and inputs so that the cost of production encourages commercial enterprises, increased production and quality improvements.

Enabling and supporting institutions for the agriculture sector will be reformed and streamlined to ensure they support producers more efficiently and cost effectively. We expect the Policy to encourage and enhance positive partnership working, collaboration and participation among the sector's stakeholders to eventually realise our areas of agricultural potential. Whilst we seek agricultural improvement and development going forward, we also need to moderate the costs of that development – the financial cost of development to taxpayers, and the economic cost to businesses and individuals involved in agriculture and in supporting producers.

I wish to reaffirm the commitment of Government in creating an enabling environment for the realisation of agricultural development objectives envisaged in this National Agriculture Policy. Indeed the agriculture sector is important in our sustainable development to be given anything less than a high level of attention. I urge all stakeholders to ensure this Policy and Implementation Strategy is fit for purpose and commend this consultation draft to you for your comments.

Executive Summary

The small agriculture sector on St Helena directly contributes almost £600,000 annually to the local economy and provides full-time employment to up to 20 persons annually. Informally, up to 100 others are engaged in agriculture through part-time and small-holder activities. The sector comprises the following informal subsectors: vegetable cropping, coffee cropping, banana cropping, livestock and bee-keeping.

Whilst agriculture have contributed to many gains for local food supply, the environment and countryside, as well as local employment over past decades, we must recognise that agriculture is not working as it could in meeting current market demand for local food supply. This past trend has been changing as we continue with an agriculture system of the past and the Island becomes more reliant on significant supplies of imports to meet our annual requirements for agricultural produce. Total annual fresh vegetable and meat imports (meat – excluding processed meat products) carried a value of almost £750,000 in 2011.

The key strategic issues of interest facing the sector relates primarily to issues of infrastructure availability; access to agricultural inputs; pests and disease management; adoption of technology and innovation; scale of operations and productivity; increasing the competitiveness of local production; greater attention to markets and marketing; and improving the attractiveness of agricultural business to attract increased investment in the sector.

With the construction of an airport underway on the Island, national aspirations for a tourism industry, and rising international food prices, an increasing reliance on imports, this presents challenges for the Island in meeting our future food supplies and agricultural services. It is, therefore, imperative that this situation of a low production and productivity in agriculture is reversed.

The requirement for a National Agriculture Policy has been identified to guide necessary change for the sector's development and position it favourably to participate in the Island's challenging sustainable development programme. *Growing Forward* – our medium term National Policy and Implementation Strategy, has been developed in response to this requirement. Its Vision is: *'to achieve sustainable agricultural development through a set of common objectives that guide and support actions at our national level and contribute to food production and supply on the Island'*.

Eight outcome-oriented objectives have been established to guide interventions required to achieve this agriculture Vision. The overall development and growth of the sector is anchored on 3 strategic pillars namely: (i) production, productivity and competitiveness; (ii) Trade and markets; (iii) Investment and finance.

Recognising that there are considerable opportunities for the sector we also acknowledge that we need to be realistic in what we can do with limited full-time people working in agriculture and with a population of 4,000 people this requires small-town sized solutions to be implemented. We cannot do everything locally and therefore interventions and resources will be prioritised and development targets and timelines for the sector tempered with realism. Focus will be directed towards enabling the sector to better meet current market demands so that the sector is better positioned to respond favourably to some of the opportunities arising from improved access.

The Policy's broad Implementation Strategy is outlined through various short to longer term interventions that the sector's stakeholders will undertake in response to the strategic agricultural issues faced and to propel the sector forward.

Development of the sector will progress steadily and give priority to areas of competitive advantage currently enjoyed and could be enjoyed in future for a small range of new products, where a combination of freshness, availability, price and local content will be important. In these areas production will need to be commercialised through the development of a small number of professional growers to enable a shift to market-oriented production, reliable and constant supply, and quality and value for money improvement. Increased productivity is needed across commercial and small-holder enterprises through encouragement of greater employment of innovation and appropriate technology, within a framework of up-skilling, increased efficiency and adoption of local production and trade related standards.

To enable producers and merchants to deliver an improved supply chain for agricultural produce, priority will be given to establishing infrastructure for commercial produce storage, processing and packaging. Access to appropriate marketing space in the Jamestown Market and other identified areas will be improved.

Opportunity for greater partnership working 'in practice' within SHG, between SHG and producers and between commercial producers and small-holders will be promoted to maximise efforts for the benefit of the sector and to improve and streamline supplies of produce. Integration of agriculture with enabling sectors in the economy will also be encouraged.

Institutional and supporting needs for the sector will be strengthened to provide effective and efficient services to the private sector and focus given to the provision of opportunities for capacity building and skills development for the sector's participants.

The task to achieve sustained development of important areas of the sector is considerable but achievable. The sector's stakeholders are collective in their requirement of change for the sector and all are clear in their desire to share in the benefits of change and opportunity. A sector-wide approach, partnership-working and participation is necessary from all stakeholders to successfully drive and implement the work needed to realise the changes, and strong co-ordination and monitoring mechanisms will be instrumental in the success of the Policy.

1. Introduction and Context

1.1 Introduction

In 2011 St Helena introduced its new Sustainable Development Plan¹ which provides a medium term vision for the Island of ‘strengthened community and family life’ achieved through improved economic growth and effective management of our environment. St Helena’s Sustainable Economic Development Plan² highlights that whilst tourism will be the largest element in the economy, it will not be the only activity. Agricultural enterprise, including small-holdings, will continue to be important elements in providing food products for both locals and visitors.

Improved economic growth depends on a vibrant private sector and there is scope to increase commercial activities in producing local foods. Increased local food production offers innovative and economically viable opportunities for producers and other private sector participants involved in the Island’s food system. It supports economic development through increasing the amount of money spent locally for local produce instead of sending large amounts of money overseas to South Africa and UK for imported foods.

Improving food production from local sources plays an important role in supporting a healthier life style and eating habits for our citizens through improving opportunity for greater access to more frequent and affordable supplies of fresh produce. This prospect offers potential to reduce the increasing rate of hypertension illnesses that exists and to strengthen family life through contributing to improved human health and the well-being of our citizens.

Sustainable agriculture rests on the principle that we must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Therefore, long-term stewardship of our natural resources is of equal importance to short-medium term economic gain. On St Helena production assets are in short supply and their conservation is critical for productivity both now and in the longer terms. Whilst aiming for a higher level of environmental sustainability increasing local production will also support the ‘green location’ branding of the Island, in that the ‘carbon miles’ associated with food products will be minimal.

Both of the above planning documents for the Island indicate the importance of the private sector seizing opportunity to increase production where it is competitive to do so in order to contribute to food supply on the Island.

Therefore, a National Agriculture Policy (NAP) – titled ‘*Growing Forward*’ has been established to provide a medium term vision for an improved agriculture sector by 2020 and prioritised policy interventions through its implementation strategy. *Growing Forward* focuses on improving the contribution of local production to food supply on the Island in support of our national goals through increased business activity where appropriate and stronger partnership working between all categories of stakeholders, within a framework of limited resources and a requirement to safeguard our environment.

¹ St Helena’s Sustainable Development Plan (SDP), 2012/13 - 2014/15

² St Helena’s Sustainable Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2012-2022

1.2 Current Situation

The small agriculture sector comprises agricultural activities in the following areas of production: vegetables, coffee, fruit, livestock and honey. In 2011, sales of local vegetables from the key retail outlets amounted to 91,000 kg of mixed categories valued at £140,000. For the same period local meat production amounted to 76,850 kg with an estimated sales value of £456,000. Reliable data from other areas of production has been difficult to secure from producers.

The fraction of the population involved in some form of agriculture activity has decreased over the last decade and it is estimated that less than 20 persons are employed in full-time agricultural business and between 70 and 100 persons involved in small-holder/part-time agricultural activities.

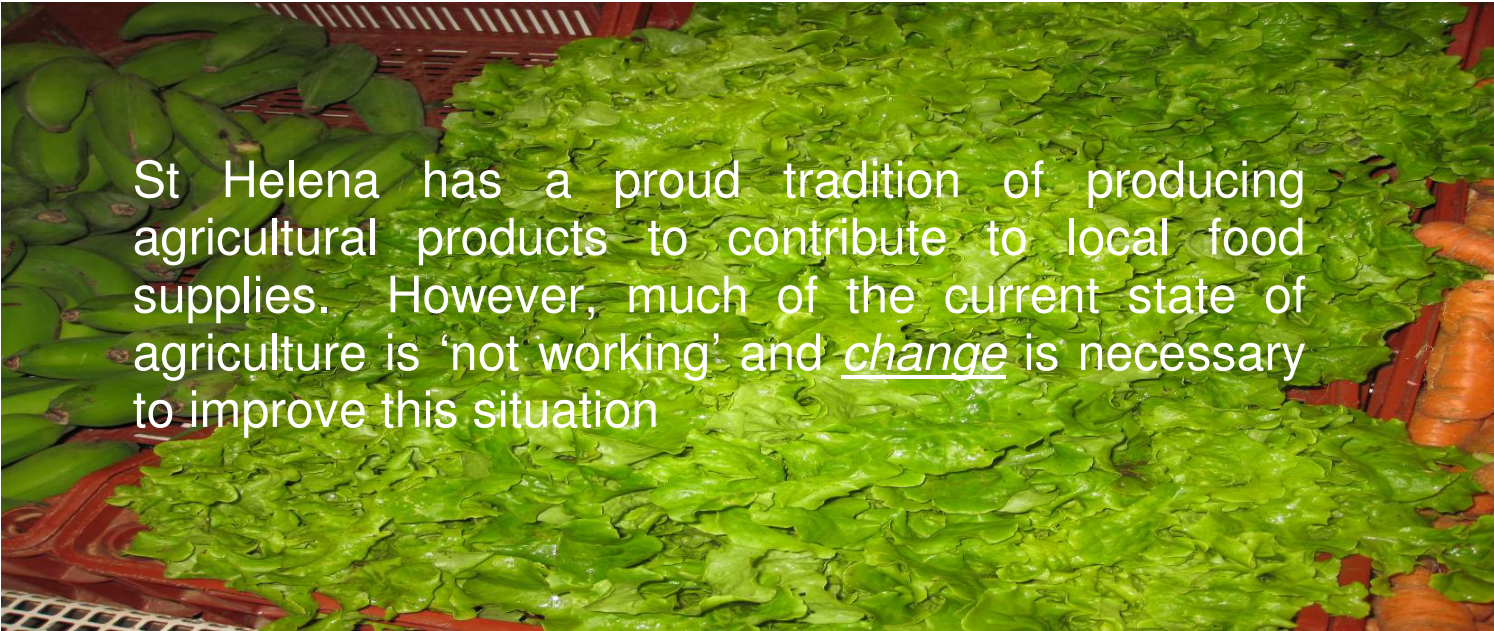
At the same time the Island's food import bill is steadily increasing. Local merchants continue to look to South African imports for reliable supplies of a wide range of agricultural products to meet the demand for fresh produce, and these imports are capturing an increasing market share. Total fresh vegetable and meat imports (meat – excluding processed meat products) in 2011 reached a value of almost £750,000. The increasing demand for imported agricultural products is the result of under investment in St. Helena's domestic agriculture and the low priority afforded to the sector in the SHG policy and decision making process. Therefore, we import a value of approximately £153,000 more vegetable and meat than we produce locally based on these approximate figures above.

The sector is not organised commercially and depends heavily on smallholder production which lacks scale, and has low productivity and an inconsistent supply stream. Labour shortages, unattractive retailer trading terms and low added value have further led to the under-utilisation of Crown land and private arable holdings lying idle and abandoned. In addition, land for livestock pasturage is becoming less productive owing to the encroachment of invasive weeds and an overreliance by tenants and syndicates on SHG for the on-going clearance and maintenance of these lands.

The smallholder nature of agriculture, the limited use of innovation, technology and mechanisation, a lack of co-operation amongst producers, and the existence of significant import tariffs on agricultural inputs have all contributed to a steady increase in production input costs, a reduction in output and a decline in the profitability of the sector.

A lack of suitable supporting infrastructure for production, post harvest storage and quality control has had a negative effect on productivity and placed producers in an invidious position in trading terms. Limited rain-water capture and storage facilities restrict irrigation opportunities for the sector and have resulted in a greater susceptibility to pests and diseases and their inevitable consequences.

Agriculture is dependent on the vagaries of the weather and is by its very nature a risky business. The year round prevalence of pests and diseases on St. Helena, the spread of invasive species both plant and animal, and the incidence of climate variability add to production costs and losses. Local knowledge and skills in dealing with and adapting to these risks are in short supply, and there is limited co-ordination of actions to reduce the risks involved.



St Helena has a proud tradition of producing agricultural products to contribute to local food supplies. However, much of the current state of agriculture is 'not working' and change is necessary to improve this situation

There is now an acute shortage of business skills in agriculture leading to untapped production and productivity gains for the sector. The current age profile of producers is skewed towards a small group of older individuals, compounded by a lack of younger persons with an interest to work in the sector.

Little focus is directed to opportunities for specialisation in products where a competitive advantage already exists, or to future, new products. There are few if any incentives for the increased production of specialist products such as honey and coffee, which have locally and internationally recognised prestige and pedigree. The development of high value-added resource-based products is limited and coffee, our main agricultural commodity for export to international markets, as well as other possible product exports to Ascension Island, face the significant barrier of increasing freight costs.

Trade and market issues currently faced include:

- uncompetitive retailing conditions with most of the risks borne by producers.
- inadequate market infrastructure and facilities.
- poor access to and development of new and existing products and markets.
- an absence of quality and trading standards that could be used to support and maximise the competitiveness of local output, and improve marketing opportunities for local production initiatives.

The growth of investment in agriculture has been constrained over the last decade by a decline in public and private sector financing. This has resulted in a significant reduction in island production and output, leading inevitably to a heavy reliance on imported foods. The low level of private sector investment in agriculture is attributable in the main to a lacklustre business environment within the sector. This environment is characterised by:

- limited access to and the high cost of short- and long-term capital.

- the older age profile within the sector resulting in a reluctance to invest in and expand the business.
- uncertainty in succession and continuity with a consequential inhibitory effect on planning and development.
- the erratic nature of SHG policies and interventions with a consequent dampening effect on confidence and morale.
- poor terms of trade at the retail level.
- a history of unsustainable agricultural programmes, and
- insufficient risk insurance products to instil investor confidence in the sector.

Institutional support, critical to providing a conducive environment for the development of agriculture and associated food businesses is uncoordinated and technical capacity in both the public and private sector is insufficient.

Agriculture policy is constrained by fragmented and inconsistent Government activity in a small number of areas with no overarching national policy or strategy for the sector over the last decade.

2. The Agriculture Sector in 2020: Our Vision:

Our Vision for the sector is:

‘To achieve sustainable agricultural development through a set of common objectives that guide and support actions at our national level and contribute to food production and supply on the Island’.

Looking ahead we aspire to the following desired state for agriculture by 2020:

- Our agriculture sector’s contribution to the economy will have increased largely through increasing productivity and competitiveness in those production areas we have identified we can do well, and the associated products are attractive to both locals and visitors.
- The chain of supply from farm to fork, involving primary production, storage, packaging and processing, marketing and retailing, is improved and enhanced through collaboration, the use of trade standards, and investment in infrastructure.
- Opportunities for the provision of new agricultural products never produced before because we never tried or were not equipped to undertake, will have been taken up and tried by the Private Sector through overcoming constraints in knowledge, skills and facilities.
- We recognise and acknowledge that some products such as potatoes, onions, cucurbits (cucumbers, courgettes, squashes and pumpkins) and meats, and at times others in the salad range will not be produced in sufficient volumes to regularly meet our requirements and will be imported.
- Agriculture remains an important priority for Government and the Private Sector and the NAP provides appropriate direction and support for the sector, with development and decision-making based on quality data, and improved collaboration and understanding of economic, environmental and social requirements and impacts.
- Our agriculture sector is integrated with other sectors, such as the tourism sector, and playing an increasing role in achieving a range of benefits and outcomes for the environment. This includes responsible biosecurity arrangements and our unique biodiversity (such as the endemic Wirebird) and agricultural landscapes afforded suitable levels of protection.
- Public confidence and recognition that agriculture is being developed in an agreed direction have increased. As a result of sharing responsibility with the sector’s stakeholders in agricultural decision-making, investment and resource management, the public sector’s reputation has improved as a trusted facilitator in the development of agriculture on the Island.
- Stakeholders supporting the development and regulation of the sector are delivering on their roles, strongly aligned to accountabilities for the benefit of the sector and its consumers. The capacity of all stakeholders to facilitate and deliver reforms has been strengthened through their active participation in training and up-skilling opportunities.

3. Opportunities and Challenges

It is clear that the circumstances facing our small agriculture sector continue to change. This reality poses challenges but also offers opportunities for the sector.

3.1 Sector Opportunities and Challenges

Meeting the needs of the current market is already a significant challenge for the sector. Implementation of St Helena's access project will herald increased demand further for many agricultural products over the medium term and beyond as the Island aspires to increased tourism, a more active business environment and the emergence of a new and more productive economy. Additional to meeting their basic needs consumers, both islanders and visitors alike, will expect more from food producers, retailers and legislators.

Already contributing to changing tastes and preferences are higher disposable income, smaller family size and an awareness of the benefits of a balanced diet and healthy eating habits. Consumers are more aware of the relationship between agricultural production and the environment and are anxious that the impact of food production and supply practices be maintained at the lowest possible level. At the same time it should be emphasised that responsible farming helps maintain a presentable rural environment, a form of countryside stewardship, to the benefit of islanders and tourists alike.

Rising international food prices, food shortages due to climate change, political instability overseas and future shipping arrangements to the Island will represent challenges for the security of the Island's food supply. These matters, if not positively addressed, could have serious economic, social and health implications for the island's population and could threaten the viability of the Island itself.

Concerns for the environment, and climate change and variability, at both domestic and global level, require that food producers implement measures to reduce the adverse impacts of their systems of production on the environment and address the contribution of their practices to changes in climate.

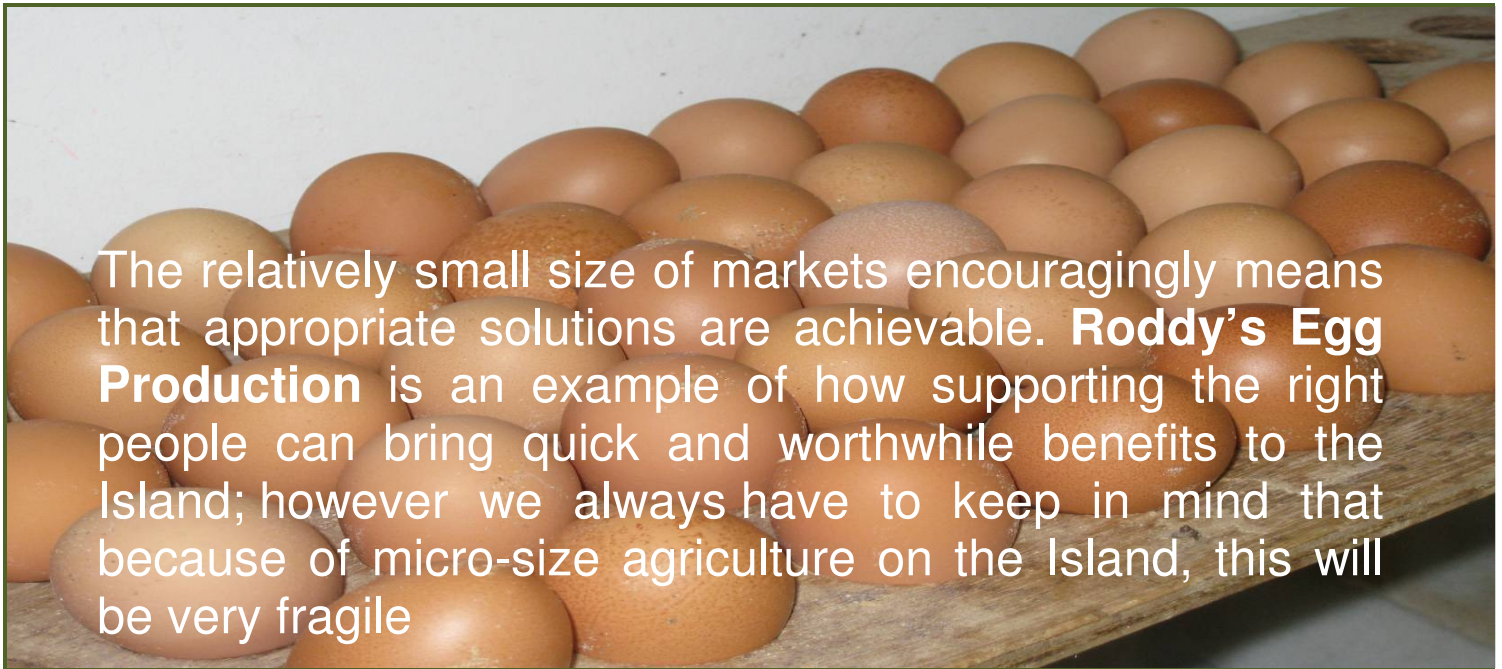
Various changes within our own Government and the Island generally may increase options for on-island business opportunities but will also tempt some of our younger and working-age population to seek international opportunities for work and alternative life experiences.

These opportunities and expectations will challenge the sector to:

- increase on-island food production as a proportion of overall food demand.
- improve product quality and presentation.
- streamline supply.
- commercialise some elements of production.
- offer new food products.
- introduce automation and mechanisation to achieve these demands.
- guarantee the safety, traceability and provenance of food produced on the island.

St Helena has the ability to take advantage of these opportunities and meet a number of these challenges within the context of the current market and future demand resulting through improved

access to the Island. **During initial consultations stakeholders were mindful that the relevant size of the St Helena market needs to be seen, and with a community of only 4,000 people the Island is of a size that resembles a large village/small town. Expectations for on-Island agricultural developments needs to be realistic, taking small town sized solutions.**



3.2 Meeting the Challenges

A country holds a competitive advantage in a product if it is better at producing that product than its trading partners. The main point of the principle is that a country should produce those products which it can produce best, and trade to obtain its other requirements. This argument does not sit particularly well with improved self-sufficiency goals as it implies that a country should not try to become self sufficient in products that may be bought in more cheaply, of the same quality or better, than they can be produced locally.

The factors that might over-ride the above statement would be found in a country that is being cut off from supply, is food insecure, or is unable to afford the cost in foreign exchange. None of these presently apply to St Helena. However, there are likely to be instances in future where frequencies of imports would be constrained and affected by shipping arrangements for the Island.

Competitive advantage assumes that the products are comparable, that is that eggs from South Africa are as good as local eggs. Consumer tastes and food budgets obviously play a part. It should however be noted that subsidisation of freight rates on the RMS effectively means that foreign imports are subsidised, which may in turn create an unbalanced view in relation to competitive advantage.

In order to achieve the outcomes required of a developing agriculture sector, change will be needed. As indicated earlier we have a small number of producers in the sector and this will remain for some time and therefore we will not be able to, and should not try to do everything

ourselves. We need to prioritise and allocate resources and efforts effectively and support the right people to ensure the sector better meet the needs of the current market as a matter of priority in the short-medium term and is able to respond to and benefit from the opportunities available in the medium-longer term through an improvement to access for the Island.

Importantly, we will concentrate on increasing production and productivity in those areas where we have evidence we enjoy a competitive advantage (through price, freshness, availability and local content). Such products include eggs, a range of salad products, and meats. New products not currently produced locally, may include additional salad products, culinary herbs and mushrooms that could increase our competitive advantage. Investment should be directed towards the research and evaluation of these to determine the potential for their local production.

Our sector will be structured differently and considerable private sector change in mindset, collaborative working and willingness to take risks will be facilitated and encouraged. **A small number of commercial producers and growers** will be incentivised to support areas of competitive advantage, producing reliable supplies of high quality products to meet customer needs, using modern methods of production based on an outlook of business efficiency and quality of service.

Smaller growers will be incentivised to grow their capacity and capabilities with comparably smaller investment and co-ordination of resources, and with calculated risk taking encouraged and adequate margins and profits recognised as essential. Their production will be important to support commercial producers and specialist production and co-operation amongst themselves will be encouraged to co-ordinate and streamline supplies.

With less than 20 people working full-time in the sector, additional people and young entrants will be encouraged to join the sector together with those enterprising individuals that currently exist, in order to scale up desirable production areas and drive the associated change needed for professional producers.

Productivity gains and enhancements will be facilitated through providing incentives to: reduce costs and limitations to improving agricultural input use; increase access to affordable levels of investment shared by the public and private sectors for vital infrastructure establishment; and adopt appropriate innovation, technology and related equipment. Improvements to the competitiveness and trade of key areas of production will be pursued through increasing access to markets and facilitating mutual recognition and adoption of trade related standards throughout agriculture.

Various forms and levels of up-skilling, including specialist capacity-building initiatives, will be facilitated across the range of agricultural stakeholders to improve a range of skills and capabilities, including technical, business and professional needs. Active participation will be encouraged and evaluated to ensure private and public sector participants are adequately trained, capable and committed to delivering the intentions of the policy and implementation strategy.

A partnership approach across stakeholders built on trust, openness, sharing of decision-making and responsibilities, and a willingness to take difficult decisions will be promoted to bring development and improves successes for the sector.



“Agriculture is important to sustained food supplies for our community and its development will help to grow our economy, and make us a strong and green Island”

Hon. Raymond Williams

Chairman of the Natural Resources, Development and Environment Committee

4. Development of a National Agriculture Policy (NAP)

Our NAP has been developed on two foundations. The first is a set of guiding principles discussed and agreed with the sector's stakeholders to help shape specific intervention measures for the development of the sector. The second is a collection of consultations with stakeholders and technical work that have ensured the policy reflects the aims, objectives and capacity of the sector's stakeholders to implement the policy.

4.1 Policy Statement

The policy statement below based on the broad vision for the future direction of the sector mentioned earlier includes a set of guiding principles and 3 key pillars to underpin the vision and a number of specific objectives that the sector's participants will strive to achieve over the medium-long terms to eventually realise the vision.

4.2 Principles

Five guiding principles have been developed and used in the criteria for determining and prioritising key policy elements for the NAP:

Progressivity: The principle involves moving forward gradually so as to take into account different national circumstances and particular interests.

Partnership and consultation: All parts of the sector have a role to play in contributing to profitable agriculture and strong collaboration and relationships are key factors in achieving success.

Responsiveness to change: The policy must be an organic or evolving policy rather than a static instrument, which grows iteratively in response to experience and changing circumstances.

Market integration: Support programmes and activities should assist in integrating markets and promote production based on competitive advantage.

Stewardship: Government and the sector's participants have a role to play in good stewardship of land and water, and resources are managed sustainably.

4.3 Objectives

In order to achieve our Vision and desired state for agriculture, the following outcome oriented objectives will be pursued:



Our agriculture sector is more productive by stimulating an increase in output through innovation, improved efficiencies and the provision of supporting quality services.



The level of self-sufficiency in products for which we have a competitive advantage has increased as a result of more focused production efforts and maximising local potential.



Improved infrastructure exists for agriculture by investing in appropriate production units, water management facilities and supporting produce storage and processing facilities.



Food safety is improved through encouraging higher production standards, improved welfare practices for livestock, safe pest control procedures and effective regulatory and monitoring regimes.



The recognition of special agricultural products such as honey and coffee and new production is promoted through incentivising an increase in their production and supporting innovative marketing.



Increased trade and improved access to markets for commercial and part-time production is achieved through the use of modern and innovative marketing methods.



Agricultural resources and assets are protected for future production activities through actions aimed at their sustainable utilisation, management and stewardship in line with our National Environmental Management Plan.³




Our human resource capacity is sufficiently trained, capable and committed to delivering the objectives of the policy.

Simple and reliable performance indicators developed in consultation with stakeholders will help to measure progress towards the policy's objectives, inform and update priorities, target resources and focus discussion. They will cover both hard indicators of agricultural production and improvement and softer indicators tracking the confidence, expectations and perceptions of the Island's stakeholders and public. It must be recognised that uncertainties and unforeseeable events may affect the level of achievement of the performance indicators.

4.4 Core Pillars

In order to achieve the policy's vision and objectives, it was acknowledged by stakeholders that the NAP would have to address key challenges related to *production, productivity* and *competitiveness* taking into account the full value chain; *enhanced trade and market access*; and *financing* and *investment* flows into agriculture.

³ St Helena's National Environmental Management Plan (NEMP), 2012/13 – 2022/23.



Thus it was agreed that the NAP strategy will emphasise and focus efforts to improve the 3 key areas of:

- **production, productivity and competitiveness**
- **trade and markets**
- **investment and finance**

Agricultural development arising from efforts in the 3 core pillars may be affected by factors in the *economic* and *environmental* domains which would also need to be addressed. Supporting these drivers are *social* and *institutional* factors that provide an enabling environment for parties to interact in furtherance of various programmes of action towards sustainable development.

As such, the agreed **cross-cutting factors** for the NAP constitute *Social*, *Economic* and *Environmental* factors which are aligned to the 3 National Goals of the Island's SDP, as the 3 Pillars by themselves cannot be considered all encompassing.

4.5 Implementation Strategy

The implementation strategy will focus on the 3 main pillars discussed earlier and aim to explain the breadth of activity proposed through the stakeholder scoping exercise and further technical analyses, to be carried out in order to deliver the different policy objectives. No level of priority or importance have been assigned to each of the objectives, however they are all important in achieving the policy's vision. Achieving some of these objectives will require relatively more effort than others.

All future public plans, programmes and projects in the sector will be directed towards meeting these objectives. They will be implemented within the framework set-out overleaf, which include activities that will benefit both agriculture as well as a number of cross-cutting activities.

The implementation strategy is designed with an initial 3 year implementation plan; so that actions linked to funding cycles and Public Sector investment can be better managed.

Annual strategic planning cycles will integrate the required activities into detailed annual Action Plans to guide the relevant agencies.

5. Implementation Strategy

5.1 NAP Pillar 1: Production, Productivity and Competitiveness Strategic Issues

Background: The NAP Scoping Report identified a set of 9 common areas of interest by the sector’s stakeholders which should be given priority for consideration in relation to Pillar 1. These issues are: the structure of the sector; infrastructure and land issues; production input issues; pests and diseases; water management for irrigation; technology and innovation; human resources; other productivity and competitiveness issues.

Further analysis re-grouped these priority Pillar 1 issues into five strategic categories: (i) infrastructure (ii) agricultural inputs (iii) pests and diseases (iv) technology use and adoption (v) associated production, productivity and competitiveness issues.

5.1.1 Access to Infrastructure and Land

Although St Helena does not have an agricultural based economy, land and infrastructure are two important factors of agricultural production on the Island. The key infrastructure issues facing the sector relate primarily to issues of an in-sufficient stock of suitable buildings for production and storage, processing and packaging of products. Development of infrastructure will be encouraged on targeted areas provided for in the Island’s Land Development Control Plan⁴.

Important land issues include the shortage of good quality arable land as well as pasturage for cattle and sheep grazing and the current utilisation practices for both arable and pasture land. Purchasing the free-hold for Crown agricultural land in future was raised during the policy’s scoping exercise. However, SHG’s 2012 Land Disposal Policy provisions provide that “in order to promote sustainable growth in this sector through ensuring that land is available for agricultural purposes, SHG will not release the freehold of agricultural land but will instead make land within this category available on a medium–long term lease or licence system depending on the degree of investment to be made in the land. There will be a presumption in favour of continued renewal of the lease/licence, with no limit on the number of successive lease/licence agreements, as long as the land is in productive use”. This provision should remain in place for the short-medium term.



⁴ St Helena’s Land Development Control Plan, 2012-2022.

Rationale: Suggested key activities will aim to improve the availability of suitable production related infrastructure and improve access to and utilisation of our small agricultural land resource to encourage, in particular, increased commercial production. This will contribute to objectives 1, 2, 3 and 7 of the policy.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy for making progress with meeting our key infrastructure needs and improving access to land will include the following activities:

Short to medium term: (SHG=Government; ESH=Enterprise St Helena; PS=Private Sector)

- a. Implement an Agricultural Public-Private Partnerships Policy to provide co-funding with the private sector to establish key infrastructure for production, storage and packaging (**SHG and ESH**).
- b. Improve access to under-utilised land to maximise production opportunities for both arable and livestock production (**SHG and PS**).
- c. Establish a co-ordinated system of matching production to land resources and where appropriate, incentivise private land owners to lease land to producers for production (**SHG**).

Ongoing throughout the planning period

- d. Implement an effective system of monitoring Crown land to ensure it is used effectively (**SHG**).
- e. Investigate and implement opportunities for increasing small scale grazing pasturage through letting appropriate areas of forest land for agro-forestry (**SHG**).

5.1.2 Improving Access to and Use of Agricultural Inputs

In this sub section, strategic issues will be split between those that deal with crop production and those that deal with livestock production.

I. Crop Production

▪ **Seeds and Genetic Materials:** Limited use of seed of limited genetic potential is one of the major contributory factors to low productivity in crop production, and limited access, availability and affordability of improved agricultural inputs in general and seed in particular have exacerbated the situation.

Rationale: The activities below will aim to reduce barriers to use of high quality seed resources through improved opportunity to access seed of improved genetic characteristics. This will contribute to objectives 1 and 2 of the policy.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

Interventions will be made through the following activities:

Short term:

- a. Establish a Seed Information System to disseminate information to producers and merchants (SHG).

Short to medium term:

- b. Guide the selection of high value, improved seed varieties with proven resilience to local environmental variability (SHG with the PS).

Ongoing throughout planning period:

- c. Encourage evaluation of high value varieties by smallholders and commercial producers.
- d. Encourage and incentivise importation of increased quantities of high quality seed through bulk buying and reduction of appropriate import duties (both activities for SHG to lead).

- **Organic Material and Fertilisers:** Over recent years little soil fertility testing has been practiced in support of soil fertility and plant nutrition for crop production. Soil fertility, in particular, soil organic matter content has declined as has the availability of local organic material.

Major constraints to chemical fertiliser use include the high costs of fertilisers, risk of production failure and unpredictability of market related prices for products. Whilst conservation crop production has been promoted over the years (and should continue as an environmental and accessible means to increase sustainable intensification for producers), increased use of organic fertiliser will be promoted as a means of improving soil fertility and plant nutrition to enable productivity and quality gains.

Rationale: Soil fertility and plant nutrition will be given improved attention and the following activities are designed to facilitate increased adoption of enhancement systems. This will contribute to objectives 1, 2 and 7 of the policy.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy for nutrient management developments will comprise the following activities:

Short term:

- a. Promote adoption of nutrient management planning through:
 - encouraging a culture amongst producers of appropriate soil fertility testing to inform agricultural input levels.
 - upgrading ANRD capacity to provide a soil analysis, nutrient management and advisory service.
 - improving targeted fertiliser use through short-term incentives in adoption of fertigation systems and facilitating training and instruction in fertigation technology.



- b. Improve access for producers to appropriate fertilisers by establishing links with a reputable offshore supplier, in collaboration with local merchants (**all activities for SHG to lead**).

Medium term:

- c. Harmonise policy and guidelines (financial incentives, advisory support, and extension) on fertiliser and organic materials and seek to remove tariff barriers to their import.
- d. Encourage and incentivise increased utilisation of fish waste, green waste and animal waste at the producer level in the short-medium term to provide increased quantities of organic material to supplement the use of chemical fertiliser (**(both activities for SHG to lead)**).

Medium-long term:

- e. In line with our National Solid Waste Management Strategy targets⁵, investigate medium-long term opportunity for commercialising compost production through recycling of green, household, fish and animal waste streams to improve availability of organic material supplies.

- ***Irrigation:*** Our crop production activities rely heavily on irrigation systems and untreated water supplies and both occupy an increasingly important place in modern crop production. However, a major constraint to producers is the availability of sufficient supplies of untreated water.

To improve on past efforts to increase untreated irrigation, more focus needs to be given to untreated water storage and distribution infrastructure.

Rationale: The following activities aim to reduce the use of domestic water supplies for irrigation and improve opportunities for untreated irrigation in key production locations through improved provision of untreated supplies and promotion of increased drip-irrigation use. This will contribute to objectives 1, 3 and 7 of the policy.

Key Activities: The strategy for un-treated irrigation developments will include the following Interventions:

Short term:

- a. Establish opportunities for expansion of land under un-treated irrigation supply.
- b. Provide guidelines on efficient and effective irrigation systems and their use (**both activities for SHG to lead**).

Short-medium term:

- c. Promote and incentivise expanded use of drip irrigation technology to improve water utilisation (**SHG**).



⁵ SHG Solid Waste Management Strategy, 2012

Medium-long term:

- d. Improve irrigation water conservation and management in order to mitigate risks related to climate variability.
- e. Invest in improved rain-water collection and supporting storage systems in key production locations to increase capacity for un-treated irrigation supplies in these areas **(both activities for SHG to lead and collaborate with PS)**.

II. Animal Production

Whilst it is a national desire to increase production of products in which we hold a competitive advantage, including meats and eggs on the animal production side, the most critical challenges the sector faces is low productivity and profitability due to: erratic animal breeding programmes with variable standards of husbandry; varying levels of commitment to agricultural inputs invested on many of the Crown's sheep and cattle pasturelands; the fragmentation of potentially commercial pasturelands through the formation of syndicates with consequent dilution of effort and lost economies of scale; and the increased cost of imported feeds.

Rationale: The following activities aim to improve animal production and productivity through facilitating market related breeding programmes, incentivising high value production, creating opportunities to improve viability of production units by reforming the Crown's tenure system and removing tariff barriers to feed imports. This will contribute to policy objectives 1, 2, 7 and 8.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy to support the above objective will include the following activities:

Short-term:

- a. Promotion of breeding programmes to include the conservation of breeding stock and the use of genetic improvement techniques.
- b. Implementation of a monitoring and enforcement system to optimise the carrying capacity of Crown pastures **(both activities for SHG to lead)**.

Short-medium term:

- c. Secure funding options for the Animal Husbandry Fund as a source of regular investment to support breeding programmes.
- d. Investment in information and training to improve the livestock carrying capacity of pastures.
- e. Creation and implementation for Crown pastures of a management and tenure system based on a business unit arrangement, in order to remove multiple tenant/grazier practices under the current syndicate system **(SHG to lead all 3 activities with support of the PS)**.



- f. Encouragement of the formation of new producer groups employing progressive livestock production methods **(SHG will facilitate with PS)**.
- g. Assessment of the effect of tariffs as a barrier to animal production with appropriate action taken **(SHG)**.

5.1.2 Managing Pests and Diseases

Crop and livestock production and productivity are constrained by amongst other things, outbreaks of pests and diseases. Whilst it will not be possible to eradicate some diseases and pests, the key issues of concern involve surveillance and control, costs of control and the lack of supporting technical capacity in this area. Plant protection (PP) and animal diseases strategic issues are dealt with separately in this section.

I. Plant Protection

Whilst standards exist through the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) in terms of how to combat plant pest and disease problems, the Island faces constraints in its capacity to effectively implement them. This includes gaps in surveillance and control capacity; access to specific crop protection products and their use; a slow rate of knowledge transfer and uptake between ANRD and producers; and limited appreciation by producers of the purpose and benefits of the adoption of a localised plant protection programme.

Rationale: The following activities are aimed at improving the capacity for producers to implement plant protection programmes that improve effectiveness of plant protection products and measures. This will contribute to objectives 1, 4, 7 and 8 of the policy.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The priority activities that will be focused on include the following:

Short term:

- a. Establish professional capacity on-Island in Pest Control and Biosecurity **(SHG)**.
- b. Promote a more proactive approach by producers to plant protection programming by: providing guidance and training to improve the early recognition and control of pests and disease **(SHG leading with co-operation of PS)**.

Short-medium term:

- c. Promote a more proactive approach by producers to plant protection programming by: incentivising improved capacity for pesticide spraying requirements via the Private Sector through the SHG Divestment/Public-Private Partnerships Programmes **(SHG with PS)**.



- d. Establish a regulatory authority for the use, trade and disposal of crop protection products **(SHG)**.
- e. Strengthen post-harvest systems by:
 - facilitating provision of improved storage facilities
 - promoting the use of storage and monitoring guidelines **(SHG to lead with some responsibility also the PS)**.

II. Animal Health

In order to improve livestock production and productivity, with respect to animal health, the Island needs to address first the prevalence of animal pests and diseases. The second key challenge faced by the sector is a lack of producer capacity in surveillance and control of animal diseases.

Rationale: The following areas of focus in relation to health and welfare are intended to ensure the economic values from livestock production are protected and improved where possible. This supports objectives 1, 4 and 8.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy for meeting the challenges of pest and disease for animal health will include the following activities:

Short-term:

- a. Provide guidelines to strengthen livestock management practices including the use of suitable animal housing and the creation of a beneficial environment.
- b. Provide producers with guidance and training to improve the early recognition and control of disease. **(SHG to lead both activities)**.

Short-medium term:

- c. Increase producer participation in routine veterinary services with training and guidelines in the timely use of non-prescription veterinary medicines.
- d. Improve the Animal Diseases Information System to assist with disease prevention, recognition and control.
- e. Introduce a standard for veterinary medicines and other related chemicals including their registration, importation, utilisation and disposal **(SHG to lead on all three activities)**.



5.1.3 Innovative Methods and Technology Use (I&T)

It is apparent to both Government and the Private Sector that the widespread uptake and adoption of innovative methods and technologies is required to support the Island's demand for fresh food. The effective utilisation of innovative methods, techniques and products will help to:

- alleviate the constraint of labour intensive production methods.
- attract new entrants to the sector.
- facilitate an increase in output and improvement in quality.
- focus attention on food production.
- improve planning and record keeping.

Suggested focus areas must encourage production, harvesting, storage and grading activities to be done more efficiently by the employment of innovative techniques, improved infrastructure, and increased use of mechanisation.

Rationale: The activities below will accelerate the transfer of innovation and technological improvements to our small-holder and commercial producers, improve production levels and efficiencies and strengthen our capacity to improve the sector's profitability. This will support objectives 1, 2 and 8.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy for increasing innovation and technology adoption will include the following activities:

Short-term:

- a. Incentivise increased utilisation of covered production methods for both soil planting and hydroponics to scale up operations across production where we hold a competitive advantage (**SHG and ESH**).

Short-medium term:

- b. Incentivise uptake of I&T to develop new product opportunities (**SHG and ESH**).
- c. Undertake demand driven I&T research and development (**SHG with support of ESH**).
- d. Improve the rate of transfer of I&T by ensuring that investment through the Public-Private Agriculture Partnerships programme is available where required (**SHG and ESH**).
- e. Ensure the result of research in I&T is transferred to producers, and SHG and private sector supporting services staff through specialist information and training initiatives (**SHG**).



5.1.4 Other Production, Productivity and Competiveness Issues

I. Human resources:

The majority of the current smallholders and full-time producers are older persons, and younger entrants to the sector are critical to providing a more commercially organised and risk-taking outlook towards agricultural production. There is also a shortage of both general and suitably skilled labour to support larger-scale production. A lack of knowledge sharing and information transfer amongst producers has resulted in a culture of working in isolation and weakened farmer representation which limits the competitiveness of the sector through frequent periods of shortages and gluts.

Rationale: A number of the activities below aim to encourage a small number of younger entrants into the sector to reduce dependence on our older producers through focussing efforts to facilitate business and up-skilling opportunities, to both retain those that currently exist and attract new persons. A stronger and more vibrant farmer organisation represented by a higher number of producers would reduce silo working and introduce collaborative planning and working between producers. This will contribute to objectives 1, 2 and 8 of the policy.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy for human resource improvement will include the following activities:

Short term:

- a. Harmonise agricultural teaching and training programmes undertaken by Government to establish an appropriate and effective local agricultural curriculum (**SHG**).
- b. Promote agriculture as a career through the TIC initiative by focussing efforts on targeted groups of young people (**ESH with support from SHG**).

Short-medium term:

- c. Raise the level of performance of Government staff to ensure effective service delivery and accountability through Continuous Professional Development training (**SHG**).
- d. Implement a programme of local placements and apprenticeship for a select list of carefully chosen people with an interest in agriculture, to improve skills and knowledge and identify potential and ability in specific areas of production (**ESH and SHG with PS**).
- e. Provide initiatives for development of general and specialist agricultural skills through:
 - sharing best practice guidelines and standards, importation of trainers, and
 - facilitating opportunities for offshore training/exposure to professional agricultural establishments in appropriate areas of agric-business (**ESH and SHG with PS**).



- a. Establish a facility able to perform a central recruitment function for the supply of human resources, including from abroad, which producers may tap into **(ESH)**.

Ongoing throughout the planning period:

- b. Encourage improved producer relationships through greater communication, collaborative working and information sharing (via establishment of producer groups) to increase opportunities to achieve co-ordinated production and supply **(SHG with PS)**.

II. Specialist and new products:

Opportunities exist to increase existing specialist production for the local and international markets as well as establishing new products for the local market. Key challenges include the small area of land under coffee production, high production costs, small scale honey enterprise, and little interest in piloting new products such as culinary herbs and mushrooms.

Rationale: A moderate increase in specialist production and establishment of new products will be needed over the next 3 years and it is expected that investment and support will be targeted towards a small number of suitable sites. Activities will be aimed at encouraging realistic expansion of coffee plantations, targeted expansion of apiculture activity and start-up of potential new production to extend our competitive advantage. This will contribute to objectives 1, 2 and 5.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy for increasing our specialist production and establishing potential for new areas of production will include the following activities:

Coffee:

Short-term:

- a. Establish a database of suitable Crown/Private land with potential for coffee production and possible options to secure such land for coffee development **(SHG)**.

Ongoing throughout the planning period

- b. Promote and encourage opportunity through the Public-Private Partnership Policy for establishment of coffee on suitable land **(SHG and ESH with PS)**.
- c. Investigate opportunities to improve the productive status of specific coffee plantations that exist already but are neglected. Opportunities to include long term sub-leasing by a coffee producer, one-off grant funding, or other incentives **(ESH and SHG with PS)**.

Honey:

Short-term:

- a. Collate a distribution map of established hives to identify under-utilised areas **(SHG)**.



- a. Establish a directory of suitable plant species that allows beekeepers to introduce and expand feed and foraging sources for their bee populations (**PS**).

Medium-long term:

- b. Encourage an increase in apiculture activities in locations where this is possible through the introduction of short-term incentives.
- c. Investigate the possibility of creating a retail premium with the development of tourism (**ESH and Private Sector**).

New Products:

Short-medium term:

- d. Evaluate and develop new production opportunities through the implementation of the ANRD Public-Private Partnership Policy (**SHG**).

III. Fruit production:

The majority of our requirements for fruit are met through imports, with bananas making up the bulk of the local fruit supply. We currently enjoy a competitive advantage for this product and it is a fruit that has minimal pest issues associated with its production. The biggest challenge to establishing other local fruits relate to the prevalence of the fruit fly which has increased significantly and proven difficult to control and manage with pest control programmes.

Over the next three years fruit production will not be afforded the same priority as proposed for vegetable, meat and specialist production. However, support will be prioritised and targeted to larger scale private sector initiatives, improving the competitive advantage we enjoy for banana production and encouraging seasonal fruits that we know thrive well against the backdrop of fruit fly prevalence. These species include avocado, pineapple, papaya and mango.

Rationale: The following activities will aim to support medium to large scale private sector driven fruit initiatives and improve our local advantage for banana production and the above mentioned seasonal fruits, primarily through establishing SHG-Private partnerships. This will contribute to objectives 1 and 2 of the policy.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy for fruit production will include the following activities:

Short-medium term:

- a. Establish partnership opportunities driven by the private sector to establish medium-large scale fruit initiatives focussing on priority fruits mentioned above (**SHG and PS**).



- b. Encourage management of banana plantations to improve production and fruit quality **(SHG)**.
- c. Support private sector nursery development to improve their capacity to supply fruit root-stock materials to meet small and large scale fruit production material **(SHG/ESH)**.

5.2 NAP Pillar 2: Trade and Market Strategic Issues

Background: The key strategic trade and market issues identified by stakeholders through the policy scoping exercise include (i) access to markets - inaccessibility and unreliability of markets as a result of trade and retailing arrangements with all of the risks carried by producers; inadequate market infrastructure and facilities such as storage, processing and packaging facilities; distribution problems; poor market information; and (ii) other barriers to trade including the absence of product trading and marketing standards. These issues have an impact on objectives 1, 2, 4 and 6 of the NAP. In addition, they have a direct impact on the ‘competitiveness’ of local agriculture. With globalisation and increased visitors to the Island, the issue of food safety will also take on renewed prominence as many consumers will begin to expect international standards of food safety.

Rationale: The following activities aim to establish a trade and marketing programme that will result in increased trade and access to markets through enhanced infrastructure, introduction of trade and quality standards, incentives for self-motivated marketing and compliance with agric-food safety requirements. This will contribute to achievement of the objectives highlighted above.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy for meeting the challenges for trade and market issues will include the following activities:

Short-term:

- a. Invest in improved market infrastructure through developments at the Jamestown Market and other key sales outlets to increase access to appropriate marketing space.
- b. Encourage contract-based production and sale of products to increase opportunity to secure markets and fair prices for producer and merchant and streamline delivery and supply **(ESH to facilitate between Merchants and Producers)**.
- c. Implement a market information system to provide data for producers and traders **(SHG/ESH)**.
- d. Encourage recognition and adoption of trade standards that require attention to quality and presentation during supply and sales activities **(ESH and PS)**.



Short-medium term:

- e. Develop and implement food safety guidelines (including residue control) in alignment where practicable, with relevant international standards (**SHG and PS**).

Medium-long term:

- f. Invest in facilities to enable products to be graded, stored, packaged and preserved in order to protect quality and smooth out effects of gluts and shortages (**ESH/SHG/PS**).
- g. Promote and incentivise opportunities for product diversification through processing and value-adding (**ESH**).

Ongoing throughout the planning period:

- h. Incentivise co-operative and own-brand and marketing initiatives to remove marketing and distribution constraints (**ESH**).
- i. Increase capacity to implement trade and marketing standards through local and overseas training (**ESH**).

5.3 NAP Pillar 3: Investment and Finance Strategic Issues

Background: Insufficient investment in agriculture is one of the main causes of limited agricultural development and decreasing contributions to our food supply. Public and private Investment in agriculture has declined and we have become increasingly reliant on imported products to bolster food requirements. In terms of private sector financing and investment, declining food production is linked, among other factors, to limited access to credit & financing, and a business environment which discourages private sector involvement in agriculture. The previous sections have emphasised the need for increased public sector investment in core support and advisory services, research and technology, and the maintenance and development of agricultural infrastructure.

The key challenge to financing of and investment in agriculture will be to improve the image and business environment of the sector. Investment by almost all categories of stakeholders is required: the business sector, - producers, traders and the BoSH; and the public sector - SHG and ESH.

Rationale: The following activities are intended to encourage a conducive investment climate in agriculture and food production by which finance and investment will enhance production, productivity and trade. This can further be achieved by developing products with competitive advantage. This will contribute to objectives 1, 2 4, 6 and 7 of the policy.



Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy to meet the finance and investment challenges includes the following activities:

Short-medium term:

- a. Increase public budgetary provisions to establish a small number of motivated and professional producers (including looking offshore for interest/skills) providing constant and reliable supplies and delivering quality that meets improved trade standards (**SHG and ESH**).
- a. Increase collaboration between producers and traders by accelerating trade and market reforms and identifying and promoting areas of specialisation, with a view to developing Partnerships and Equity ventures (**SHG – Partnerships and ESH – Equity ventures**).
- b. Increase the attractiveness and profitability of agriculture by improving producer incentives and using policy instruments to:
 - review import duties and provide input supply and production generation material incentives (including targeted subsidy) (**SHG**).
 - reduce export constraints (**ESH**).

Ongoing throughout the planning period:

- c. Promote investment opportunities by the banking and economic development entities to support areas of agriculture development, to include loan, partnership, equity and micro-financing (**ESH**).

5.4 NAP Cross-cutting Considerations: Cross-cutting Strategic Factors

Background: As described at Section 4.4, there are three broad cross-cutting factors influencing the three core pillars of the NAP, namely social, economic and environmental. In support of the strategies above, a number of cross-cutting activities will also be implemented to strengthen the overall framework for the development of the agriculture sector.

5.4.1 Health and Social Factors

It is no exaggeration to say that food production, sale and consumption occupy a central role in the lives of each and every citizen. This is especially true of St. Helena and its people. Given that agriculture, horticulture and market gardening are the mechanisms by which food in its basic form is produced, these industries and the way in which they are structured and managed affect us all.



Agriculture and food production while very much viewed and managed as businesses are also considered by those involved to be part of a way of life and a vocation. Any formulation of new or restructuring of existing policy must take that important aspect into account. Change can be difficult in any case but can be especially challenging in a rural context where flexibility and mobility is constrained by low incomes, lack of other opportunities, lower educational attainment, a higher age profile and limited access to capital. Mobility or exit from the sector is not taken lightly.

The people of St. Helena are highly skilled in the art of cooking and entertaining both of which are usually organised together. Social unity and cohesion is food centred on the island and any agricultural policy that can assist in maintaining and developing this aspect of life is making a useful contribution to the social health and well-being of the islanders.

The agriculture and food sectors are seen as having an increasing role in delivering a healthier life style and eating habits to all citizens. Hypertension which is becoming a serious problem on the island (an average of 1161 patients annually over the last 5 years on the Island ⁶) can be reduced and management of it made easier by eating the right foods. The frequency of certain types of cancer is also recognised to be influenced by diet.

The introduction of a Food Promotions Group or Board could make a significant contribution to this problem by providing information on the health benefits of fresh food, providing recipes, encouraging the growing of new foods, holding food tasting demonstrations, supporting buy local campaigns, organising an annual Food Fair, developing a food labelling policy and monitoring food safety.

The refurbishment of the Market building will provide a focal point for the showcasing of local agricultural produce and will bring growers and producers closer to each other and the community. The adoption of the countryside management recommendations in this policy will greatly assist in developing the eco-Tourism product offering on the island and generate much-needed income.

Changes to the farmer's representative body will increase influence at the political level and help to maintain if not increase the sector's profile across the Island.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

Short-medium term:

- a. Establish a food promotions body to encourage delivery of activities targeted towards food, diet and a healthier life style for our citizens (**ESH and SHG**).

5.4.2 Economic Factors

Our agriculture sector is small and suffers from a lack of appropriate scale. Additionally, the operation of agricultural enterprise on a commercial basis is practically absent. The efficient management of resources, mechanisation, professional production methods, trade standards, and business skills and service quality is limited. Together, these issues threaten the future contribution of agriculture to our economy and represent key economic challenges going forward.

⁶ Health and Social Welfare Directorate Statistics, February 2013

State institutions and private sector operators, are critical to providing an environment that is conducive to the development of the sector and an associated expansion of food supply to Islanders and visitors alike.

Our challenges in this area include the provision of overall governance, strong national influence and representation, appropriate legislation with adequate enforcement capacity, information and knowledge transfer, support services, monitoring and evaluation capacity, incentives and economic co-ordination

Key requirements include the need for significant institutional development and strengthening at various levels, including the private sector, public services and the Farmer Association.

Rationale: It is proposed that the NAP will help to channel resources and facilitate efforts to:

- promote and support an increased business focus for agriculture.
- strengthen co-operation between stakeholders.
- increase the influence of representative organisations and NGOs.

These improvements will contribute to all of the NAP's objectives.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy for supporting the key economic issues for the sector will include the following:

Short term:

- a. promote an attitude of business and professionalism within the sector and streamline funding and administration systems in support of agricultural development **(SHG and ESH)**
- b. Assess high priority Research and Development needs with a view to establishing an information and knowledge sharing system to support the implementation and monitoring of the NAP **(SHG)**.

Short-medium term:

- c. Encourage and co-ordinate a national approach to the introduction of trade and quality standards and guidelines, and the improvement of product and service quality across the sector **(ESH with support from SHG)**.
- d. Strengthen business linkages and integration between the agriculture and tourism sectors **(ESH)**.
- e. Improve transparency and accountability by strengthening the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of policy interventions and their associated impacts **(SHG)**.

Ongoing throughout the planning period:

- f. Prioritise investment of resources and actions in the areas of production where we can demonstrate a competitive advantage **(SHG and ESH)**.
- g. Support the creation and continuation of small-holder endeavours based on lower levels of resource allocation but recognising their contribution to food supply and the economic and social profile of the Island **(SHG and ESH)**.
- h. Raise the level of business and technical skills of producers through on and off-island training and IT - based knowledge transfer software **(SHG and ESH)**.

- i. Work in partnership with ESH and Government, including partnering investment, to create economic opportunities in agriculture **(PS)**.
- j. Seek opportunities to strengthen their role and effectiveness in representing the sector **(Farmers Association)**.

5.4.3 Environmental and Ecological Factors

Our agricultural practices will aim to have minimal negative impact on the environmental and local ecology. In fact agricultural practices have already been shown to have a positive impact on the local ecology particularly where effective management of pastureland provides for enhanced Wirebird habitat. Our desired objective in relation to environmental factors is to 'implement sustainable farming practice through environmentally friendly production and management methods whilst striving to achieve wider SDP/NEMP and social goals'.

Our natural agricultural resources contribute significantly to our food supply and greater efforts are required to increase their utilisation through producing a greater volume per unit of surface area and to do so in a sustainable manner, particularly as our production systems become increasingly affected by climate variability, perhaps more so than climate change. This could have varying consequences including, in certain cases, decreased soil fertility, increasing soil erosion, the increased prevalence of certain pests and diseases, degradation of habitats and a decline in water quality.

Rationale: The following strategy will support the implementation of sustainable farming and environmentally friendly production and management methods. This will contribute to objective 7 of the policy.

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

The strategy includes the following activities:

Short-medium term:

- a. Establish and implement invasive species policy to facilitate a co-ordinated and realistic approach to invasive species management over the medium-longer term **(SHG)**.
- b. Preserve crown pastures and arable lands through appropriate tenure systems, including effective enforcement of leasing provisions to prevent invasive weed encroachment and general land degradation **(SHG)**.
- c. Develop and implement a holistic approach to Island biosecurity centred on increased risk assessment and adequately supported by policy and legislative reform **(SHG)**.



Medium-long term:

- d. Strengthen research and development capacity into climate variability, its impacts and to mitigate risks to the adaptation of our existing crop and animal production systems and opportunity for new production and varieties (**SHG**).

Ongoing throughout the planning period:

- e. Maintain the Wirebird conservation and agricultural gains achieved on the mitigation sites through prioritising management incentives for these pastures (**SHG with PS**).
- f. Integrate agriculture and environmental management policy in practice, through encouraging production methods that mitigate and adapt to the risks of climate variability and promote soil and water conservation (**SHG with the PS**).
- g. Provide for environmental assessment of new agricultural initiatives and monitor and enforce implementation of mitigation requirements (**SHG**).

Key Activities, Priorities and Responsibilities

Countryside Management and Agri-environmental measures suggested to support these key activities are:

Short-medium term:

Management of Hazardous Wastes

- Policy development and management for import, sale, use and disposal of pesticides and agro-chemicals.

Ongoing throughout the planning period:

Protection of Water Resources

- Nutrient management planning
- Grassland management
- Protect surface and groundwaters

Landscape and Habitats

- Maintain field boundaries and improve the visual appearance of farm fields and farmyards
- Identify and protect wildlife habitats
- Remove invasive weeds, follow up to prevent regeneration and use pesticides and chemical fertilisers responsibly

Rural Archaeology and History

- Protect features of historical importance

Training, Education and Record Keeping

- Familiarise all stakeholders with environmentally friendly farming practice and re-enforce these practices, highlighting their financial and environmental benefits to the Island.

Responsibilities:

Planning and the SHNT:

- Collaborate to lead on protection of features of historical importance.

SHG via ANRD and EMD:

- Collaborate to provide direction for and monitoring of the other activities above through co-operation with other agencies and the Private Sector.

6. Working in Partnership

The NAP can only bring about real change if the sector's stakeholders work together and new entrants are encouraged to the sector. A partnership approach built on trust, openness and a willingness to take difficult decisions is essential for success.

Inter-government collaboration and clarification of roles and responsibilities will be given attention. There is already links between ANRD and the Environmental Directorate in the delivery of SHG led functions and activities. Further synergies will be explored to provide clear and detailed roles and responsibilities for the policy interventions. The forming of the wider Physical Environment Directorate will provide a timely process in supporting this requirement.

Strong collaboration and partnerships between SHG, ESHG and the private sector is critical for positive change. ANRD and ESH are already working together through an agriculture sector development programme and a Public-Private Partnership Policy initiative designed to increase the competitiveness and profitability of the sector via co-operation and partnership with producers in the creation, development and expansion of enterprises in agriculture. There is already an example of an ANRD-led Public-Private Partnership initiative in action and it is anticipated that as experience and confidence is gained, new partnerships based on this experience will be formed not just in Agriculture but in other sectors of the economy in the years ahead.

We wish to enhance existing collaboration, incentivise new initiatives and, as highlighted during the NAP's scoping exercise, encourage more use of non-legislative alternatives to regulation.



Strong collaboration and partnerships between, SHG, ESH and the Private Sector is critical for positive change

There is already an example of an ANRD-led Public-Private Partnership initiative in action through our Public-Private Partnership Policy, with ESH support.

The Natural Resources, Development and Environment Committee (NRDEC) will recommend representatives from the sector's stakeholders (including Government and non-government entities) to form a NAP Working Group to establish priorities for annual outcomes, actions and communication and advise the Committee on the best means of delivering agreed outcomes. NRDEC will follow progress, be consulted on policy and legislative reform and in collaboration with the Working Group, participate in communicating to the public progress on the implementation and development of the Policy.

7. Communicating the NAP

Agriculture and Food policy and development is of interest all of our Island's citizens and visitors. This concern arises from the contribution of local production to food supply on the Island, the choice of food products available to consumers, food safety issues, attracting new entrants and successors and annual public investment made in support of the sector.

There will be annual reporting on the NAP's progress and a wider communication of policies and initiatives. Communication will take different forms depending on the information to be delivered and the target audience. This would mean developing relationships with non-governmental organisations, improving websites, newspaper articles, radio interviews, local TV, on farm demonstrations and a forum for Questions and Answers.

8. Risk Management

The key risks which could hinder the achievement of the NAP's objectives are identified and assessed overleaf.



Table 8: Risks and Mitigation			
Description (Risk Impact)	Probability	Impact	Proposed Mitigation
1. Most Significant Risks			
Intended scaling up of production and commercial activity need to develop agriculture does not materialise	Medium-High	High	<p>SHG and ESH to work closely with Private Sector to provide a range of finance options and access to capital.</p> <p>Use the SHG-Private Partnership Policy to carefully target those producers who want to develop commercially in segments of the market where we are competitive</p> <p>Ensure private/public stakeholders recognise and support importance of growing agriculture through holding a series of stakeholder meetings and an annual agriculture forum.</p>
Resistance to change and reforms, in particular quality and trade standards does not improve	Medium	High	<p>Provide clear Information Sheets on why reforms needed and support this with practical training</p> <p>Offer awareness programmes of changing requirements and expectations; early involvement of those involved in agric-trade with opportunity for localised standards that meets minimum requirements towards eventual acceptance of international standards. Encourage the establishment of a Food Promotions Board.</p>

2. Institutional Risks			
Inertia – inability to make the necessary changes in the timelines, due to: Changing mindsets – the hardest thing Everyone involved but no drive or accountability Constant internal negotiation	High	High	High quality leadership and focus maintained on the development results. Clearly assigned ownership and accountability and clearly defined roles and responsibilities within SHG and ESH.
Financial and human resources needed to achieve developments is not available	Medium	Medium	Make use of the NAP to make the case for additional resources. Ensure NAP is robust and target human resources with capacity and willingness to succeed.
Poor agricultural service delivery from SHG	Medium	High	Ensure agriculture is mainstreamed in Government strategies and key services given priority in SHG service delivery budgets.
3. Environmental Risks			
Environmental degradation across key agricultural lands affects capacity and ability to achieve increased production and productivity improvements	Medium	High	Effective enforcement of licencing/leasing provisions for Crown production lands. Support increased private sector capacity for soil fertility management. Encourage timely and best practice invasive plant management and strive for a co-ordinated control programme over the medium-longer term.
Frequent occurrence of climate variability affects increased production and quality outputs	Medium - High	Medium	Plan production in collaboration with producers with factors of climate variability built in. Adopt alternative production technologies that

			<p>minimise risk from climate variability.</p> <p>Provide incentives to develop strengthened post harvest and storage facilities</p>
4. Political Risks			
Lack of continued political sentiment and support for agriculture through potential change of Councillors in the short term	Medium	High	<p>Inform and reassure councillors and stakeholders about the agricultural vision and determine and ensure it is what they want</p> <p>Encourage NRDE Committee councillors to champion the case for local agriculture across LEGCO and with DFID</p>

Annex 1: Glossary

Animal Disease Information System	electronic system for the collection and storage of animal disease and related data
Agri-Environmental	agricultural practice as it affects the environment
Best Practice	industry recognised method of producing arable crops and meat
Biosecurity	a system of security designed to protect against contamination usually by importation of plants or plant material, soil, animals or animal products, micro-organisms and associated diseases
Continuous Professional Development	maintain professional competence by ongoing training in the latest developments, techniques, methods and products
Countryside Management	the practice of environmental conservation in tandem with rural enterprise, access to the countryside and recreational activities
Covered production	a method of producing vegetable and other crops in a protected environment such as glasshouses, polytunnels or shade houses
Cross-cutting factors	factors which while not immediately relevant may have incidental or associated relevance
Ecological	pertaining to the interactions of living organisms with the environment in which they exist
Farmers Association	non-governmental organisation group formed to represent the interests of Farmers
Fertigation	the delivery of plant fertiliser via an irrigation system
Food Safety	an expression or measurement of the suitability of food for consumption by humans
Incentives	financial and non-financial inducements to achieve a certain standard of agri-management, production and output
Innovative	derived from new or novel technologies or ideas
International Plant Protection Convention	international agreement on plant health which seeks to prevent the introduction and spread of pests, disease and micro-organisms
Invasive Species	non-native plants, animals insects, fish and micro-organisms that displace endemic or desirable species
Joint Ventures	a (business) enterprise jointly undertaken by two entities to share the initial investment, risks and profits
Non-governmental Organisation	entity set up to represent the views of a particular interest group that is independent of Government
Nutrient Management Planning	the process of assessing the requirement for and the application of chemical and organic fertiliser
Organic Matter	soil constituent containing decomposed plant material, manure and animal by-products

Performance Indicators:	any criterion by which performance in output, efficacy, quality or productivity can be measured
Pillars	fundamental areas of development upon which objectives and interventions are based
Plant Protection	systems or pesticides designed to protect plants from attack by pests and diseases
Private Sector	non- governmental profit making businesses
Public Sector	Government and Local Authority institutions
Resource-based	in agricultural terms - deriving from land and water
Scoping Exercise	exploratory and consultative process
Self-sufficiency	ability to produce a commodity in the required amounts to satisfy local consumption
SHG	St. Helena Government
Stakeholder	those with an interest in or affected by a policy
Tariff	duty or tax on imports
Trading Standards	benchmark upon which trading terms and practices are based
Value Added	processing or enhancement of a basic commodity to increase its sales price



Further information and details can be obtained by contacting

Agriculture & Natural Resources Directorate Scotland
St Helena Island
South Atlantic Ocean
STHL 1ZZ

Tel: +290 2724 Fax: +290 4603

www.sainthelena.gov.sh