GFRAS-YPARD Competition
Coping with COVID-19: Stories from the Field

Using Social Media to Sell Produce: an Alternative for Farmers

By Jay Shears

Agriculture during a time of crisis is working at a time when nothing seems normal and it seems things would never go back to the way it was. Farming has become quite a challenge to local farmers here in Grenada due to the COVID-19 pandemic with the extra strain on farmers not being able to get full market for their produce like before.

I have a solution. For you see, there is a wide-reaching network that almost everyone these days seems to be connected to: social media. By using social media, farmers can almost reach everyone.

“But how,” you might ask? It is simple: farmers can connect to the various social media sites and advertise their produce online leaving the necessary information as to how buyers can contact them, the price of the item and the potential quality of the agricultural goods presented, thus putting them into contact with potential buyers.

You may be wondering how the farmer can get the product to the buyer and receive their payments from them with all the social distancing restrictions that are now implemented. However, there is a solution to that.

Even though Grenada is on lock-down, there are days when people are allowed to go out and buy groceries and essentials. On those days the farmer can set up various pickup points with his buyers, all while containing a minimum of six feet distance between him/her and their customers and also between the customers from each other.
Let’s say the farmer has to go out to sell their produce to the contacted buyers: perhaps 50 people responded to the post, but only ten are selected to a particular time slot, so the farmer chooses to only deal with a minimum amount of people at a time. This is only made better if the farmer has some mode of transportation as they can do delivery for persons maintaining social distancing at all times.

Using social media and orders made from person's online farmers can even become more efficient. They can more easily track how much of a certain produce is getting sold and how much they should be cutting back to not make a loss, or also to produce more if a certain produce is in high demand.

This can also allow persons to request certain types of produce from the farmer so the farmer can become more diverse, make the best of the market and may even come out profitable from combined yields knowing that whatever they grow, there are persons just waiting to buy it. This is a current problem in Grenada as many farmers are crying out from losses as not many people are buying their produce and hopefully this can aid in that situation.

This could also create somewhat of a bond between buyer and farmer as they can form a personal relationship and farmers can gain loyal customers to create a hopefully steady flow of income.

My heart truly goes out to all the farmers who are struggling through this pandemic and I hope this solution will be of some help so farmers can stay safe doing what they love while still providing for their families during this time.