



PRESS RELEASE

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THE CARICOM PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATION APPLAUDS THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY H.E. PRESIDENT IRFAAN ALI, OF THE REDUCTION IN THE INTEREST RATE FOR POULTRY FARMERS, AS A SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARD ACHIEVING CARICOM'S 25% X 2025.

The CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CPSO) applauds the announcement by H.E. Dr. Mohammed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, of the reduction in the cost of financing among other measures extended to poultry farmers in Guyana. Poultry meat is among the nineteen (19) agri-food opportunities highlighted in the Region's Twenty-Five by Twenty-Five (25% x 2025) goals for extra-regional import displacement, endorsed by the CARICOM Heads of Government (CHoGs). This initiative, announced by President Ali, properly addresses the critical issues of the 'cost of finance' and the 'cost of feed', which have been two major concerns of farmers and processors, in Guyana and across the Community. Measures to increase rice, corn, and soy production as key inputs to poultry feed, were among the interventions announced by President Ali.

According to the analytical work undertaken by the CPSO, the CARICOM poultry industry, including in Guyana, can potentially displace extra-regional imports of poultry meat into CARICOM markets valued at US \$149.0 million per year. Successful import displacement will require urgent domestic policy reforms, *inter alia*, reducing the cost of capital and reliable access to feed at stable prices. The initiatives announced by President Ali are therefore concrete steps towards meeting these requirements.

In addition to much needed domestic policy support, the most critical 'policy shift' that remains is for CARICOM Member States to create or allow the emergence of a 'genuine single regional market' for poultry meat, that provides equal market access by all poultry meat producers to all CSME markets.

Relative comparisons of the market access for poultry meat imports into CARICOM Member States demonstrate wide variations in the Common External Tariff (CET) and market access. According to the CPSO's work, such variations in the import market access among Member States, highlight the scope for the possible introduction of a CARICOM-wide Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) regime, underpinned by a harmonized CET, the removal of remaining Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), adherence to the CARICOM Poultry Standard and a CARICOM Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary (SPS) regime. According to initial work by the CPSO, under these conditions, if CARICOM Members introduced a TRQ regime for poultry meat, intra-regional imports could substantially displace imports from extra-regional sources.

The announcement by President Ali of interest rate reductions to poultry farmers and expansion in crop production as an adjunct to poultry feed, positions Guyana and other CARICOM producers to potentially become 'net exporters' of poultry meat to CARICOM markets within the construct of a harmonized CARICOM single market for poultry meat. Instructively, Guyana, along with Belize, already maintains low levels of poultry meat imports.

Having regard to the difficult food insecurity situation confronting 57% of CARICOM populations, and the increasingly challenging global food supply situation, the CPSO praises the timeliness of the announcement by President Ali, as an infusion of much-needed confidence to CARICOM agri-food systems.

In endorsing the significance of the announcement by President Ali as Lead Head with responsibility for Agriculture, the CPSO recognizes the acceleration in the pace of extra-regional import displacement that could occur, if other CARICOM Member States introduce similar measures in accordance with their financial circumstances. The initiatives announced for Guyana, can also spur closer collaboration and 'scaling-up' among the regional poultry industry, particularly, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, among others.

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ABOUT THE CPSO

The CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CPSO) is the most recently accredited Associate Institution of the Caribbean Community. The CPSO is a 'Service Organization' to mobilize and advance private sector participation in CARICOM, with a mandate to contribute to the full implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). The Membership of the CPSO is comprised of private sector entities operating in the CARICOM space, including Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs).

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