

Minutes of the 121st
Annual General Meeting
held on
Wednesday July 13, 2016
at the
Denbigh Showground
May Pen, Clarendon
commencing at 10:07 a.m.

PRESENT WERE:

Mr. Norman Grant	-	President/Kingston & St. Andrew
Mr. Donald Berry	-	1 st Vice President/Portland
Mayor Glendon Harris	-	2 nd Vice President/St. James

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Mr. Cyril Martin	-	St. Elizabeth
Dr. Hugh Lambert	-	St. Mary
Mr. McArthur Collins	-	Manchester
Mr. Patrick White	-	Trelawny
Mr. Delroy Redway	-	St. Ann
Mrs. Mildred Crawford	-	St. Catherine
Mr. Denton Alvaranga	-	Clarendon
Mr. Patric Service	-	Hanover
Mr. Owen Dobson	-	Westmoreland
Mr. Rupert Scott	-	St. Thomas
Mr. Ronald Blake	-	Jamaica 4H Clubs
Mr. Pat Rose	-	Direct Members' Representative
Mr. Clifton Grant	-	Direct Members' Representative
Mr. Hugh Johnson	-	Direct Members' Representative

Other members of the board were also in attendance.

SPECIAL INVITED GUESTS

Honorable Karl Samuda	Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture & Fisheries
Reverend Norman King	Prayer 2000

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIRMAN: Farmers, the pleasure is mine as President of the Jamaica Agricultural Society to call to order the 121st Annual General Meeting of the Jamaica Agricultural Society here at the Denbigh Showground, May Pen, Clarendon, today Wednesday, the 13th July, 2016, at 10:07 a.m. under the theme "**Grow What We Eat and Eat What We Grow**".

At this time the meeting having been called to order we will ask the Prayer 2000 Team to come forward to lead for us our devotional exercise.

DEVOTION

REVEREND KING: Good morning everybody. Indeed it is good to be with you this morning as I greet the Chairman and everyone. I am bringing greetings from Prayer 2000, and at this time we will start the devotional exercise. I will now call the team to sing two choruses and then I will bring the word.

(Devotion conducted by Prayer 2000)

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much Reverend Norman King from Prayer 2000 for leading for us the devotion. We are a praying people and a nation that prays together stays together.

Well, we have a lot of activities on today and we are going to be very businesslike in our business session.

I will just make a few quick announcements. General welcome to you all farmers, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen, my colleague executives, 1st Vice President, Mr. Donald Berry; Acting 2nd Vice President - Mayor Harris; Dr. Elizabeth - IICA representative; and our CEO - Mr. Christopher Emanuel; Mr. Maragh from the Pig Farmers' Association; other distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we want to really welcome you all; the leadership across the JAS; our Parish Managers; our Regional Managers; our Farm Queens; our Secretaries; members of staff from the Head Office and farmers in the various districts; Presidents and Secretaries of all the district groups across the length and breadth of Jamaica, welcome to you all and a fine good morning to you.

I would like to thank those sponsors who are here with us - HI-PRO, we really want to thank them for coming on board, along with JABLUM, serving excellent coffee; and you will have some great coffee to be served today. So we want to really thank you very much.

To all of our service providers, the PA System attendants, and those who will be preparing food. It is going to be a big business day for the JAS today; and I have a lot to cover in my address to you later on.

Before I ask our Chief Executive Officer/Secretary of the Jamaica Agricultural Society to come and read you the Apologies for Absence and the Obituaries I would like to just make three quick announcements:

1. The Governor General was slated to be here today, regrettably some matters have arisen and he will be unable to, but he is trying to get his message for me to read.
2. The Minister of Agriculture is on his way here and he will be here at eleven o'clock. Unfortunately, there are a number of events that are taking place today. I do not know if you know Dr. Richard Harrison, but Dr. Richard Harrison has passed on, he was the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, his funeral is at eleven o'clock today, so the Permanent Secretary has asked me to apologize for him; and also Mr. Pat Rose. Therefore, the Minister is splitting up himself so he says that when he gets here he wants me to try and see how we can accommodate him to speak after the address of the President and take some questions, as much as possible, and then allow him to pay respect in other areas.

So I would just like to read those into the record and to say to you, farmers, we want to get on very quickly with our business session, but it's an important session, a session certainly in which you require updates on our work for the last twelve months.

So farmers help me welcome the Chief Executive Officer of the JAS, Mr. Christopher Emanuel, who will now come and do the Apologies for Absence and Lateness and also the Obituaries, and then I will be back right after. (Applause)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

MR. EMANUEL: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Good morning. At this time we will take the Apologies for Absence and Lateness as per the listing presented.

- The Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen, Governor General of Jamaica;
- The Most Hon. Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica;
- The Most Hon. Portia Simpson-Miller, Leader of the Opposition;
- Hon. William Shagoury, Custos of May Pen;
- Hon. J.C. Hutchinson, Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture;
- His Excellency Josef Beck, German Ambassador;
- His Excellency David Fitton, British High Commissioner
- Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, Minister of Health;
- Hon. Daryl Vaz, Office of the Prime Minister;
- Hon. Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Local Government;
- Hon. Edmund Bartlett, Minister of Tourism;
- Senator the Hon. Pearnel Charles, Jr. of the Senate;
- Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson-Smith from the Senate;
- Dr. Lisa Myers-Morgan, Bodles Research Station;
- Ms. Yvonne Hall, Bureau of Standard;
- His Excellency Luis Moreno, United States Ambassador to Jamaica;
- Mr. Omar Sweeney, Jamaica Social Investment Fund;
- Mrs. Olive Downer-Walsh, Agro Grace;
- Hon. Andrew Wheatley, Minister of Science, Energy & Technology;
- Mr. Jose Luis Prada, European Union;
- His Excellency Cedric Harper, from the St. Kitts and Nevis Consulate.

Also to include Mr. Hugh Lyon who is ill; Mr. Pat Rose who will be late, and as was mentioned earlier, Mr. Donovan Stanberry, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries.

Are there any other apologies from the floor?

MEMBER: Good morning. Dr. Ron Blake will be late.

MR. EMANUEL: Are there any other apologies from the floor?

MEMBER: Good morning, Mr. Christopher Johnson.

MR. EMANUEL: Any other?

MISS MORGAN: Good morning, I am Rosheda Morgan and I am apologizing for Dr. Leslie Simpson from the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute who is unable to be here today.

MR. EMANUEL: Okay, thank you. Any other? There being no other apologies we now move straight into the obituaries.

OBITUARIES

MR. EMANUEL: During the review period the following individuals have passed on:

- Mr. Royston Johnson, former 2nd Vice President JAS/President, St. Ann ABS;
- Mr. Wilbert Harris, brother of Miss Hopaline Harris, former member of staff;
- Mr. Simon from Consolidated Agricultural Supplies;
- Mr. Lascelles Roach, an Investor, Greenhouse farming in Manchester;
- Ms. Lenora Denton, sister-in-law of Mr. Garth Tomlin, Board Member;
- Dr. Henry Rainford, formerly of Jamaica Livestock Association;
- Mr. Brenton Johnson, brother of Mr. Royston Johnson;
- Mr. Charles Harris, formerly, Ministry of Agriculture, Bodles;
- Dr. Epsy Jones, formerly of Northern Caribbean University & Aunt-in-law of Mayor Harris;
- Ms. Vilma Jones, aunt of Mayor Harris, Bristol in England;
- Mr. Obadiah Madden, father of Joan Allen, member of staff;
- Mr. Martin Allen, husband of Joan Allen, member of staff;
- Mr. Clive Dobson, former Trade Union Leader;
- Mr. Michael Shaw, former JIS Photographer and a friend of this organization;
- Mrs. Ruby Gray, mother-in-law of Mr. Charles Killingbeck;
- Miss Hortense Skeen, Hanover;
- Mrs. Johnson, mother of Mr. Hugh Johnson, St. Ann ABS;
- Mr. Anpheletus Platt, uncle of Collett Emanuel;
- Ms. Kathleen McLarty, grandmother of Jamila Francis, member of staff;
- Monsignor Richard Albert, Roman Catholic Priest;
- Mr. Linton Marshall, former President of Georgia JAS Branch, St. Thomas;
- Miss Advira Mitchell, member, Arcadia JAS Branch, St. Thomas;
- Mrs. O.B. Johnson, wife of Mr. O.B. Johnson, St. Jago Farm Supplies;
- Dr. Yukal Thomas, St. James;
- Mrs. Less, Vernamfield, Clarendon;
- Mr. Brenton Reid, former employee and Board Member of the JAS;

- Major Amin Jalaal, former Board Member & Chairman of Eastern St. Ann Coffee Coop.;
- Mrs. Colleen Ledford, sister of Mrs. Lavonn Murdock - member of staff;
- Mrs. Lorna James-Williams, sister of Miss Shernett Brooks, member of staff;
- Mr. Hershard, Clarendon;
- Mrs. Jean Stoddard, wife of Mr. Trevor Stoddart, St. Mary;
- Mr. Ronald Stewart, formerly of Coffee Development Company;
- Mr. Michael Scott, nephew of Mr. McArthur Collins, Board Member and Engineer in Dubai;
- Ms. Olga Christie, grand-aunt of Maxine Christie, member of staff;
- Mrs. Florence Barnaby-Simpson, sister-in-law of Prudence Daley, member of staff.

Are there any other from the floor for the records?

MEMBER: Miss Sylvia Walker from Orange Bay, Portland.

MR. EMANUEL: Any other? There being no other, can we stand at this time and observe a minute of silence for those farmers, relatives and friends of blessed memory?

(A moment's silence was observed)

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much Mr. Emanuel. At this time I am going to ask the members of the Board to join me on the platform.

(Members of Board joined Chairman on platform)

Farmers, I will call for a motion for the Agenda to be adopted as tabled - okay, with the recommended changes, that I may have the Minister speak at an appropriate time as agreed.

Moved by: Mayor Harris; Seconded by: Mr. Donald Berry.

All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN: Any against?

MEMBERS: No.

CHAIRMAN: The ayes have it.

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

CHAIRMAN:

Farmers, the next item on the agenda is the President's Address and Welcome, and since I have already welcomed everyone I would like to indicate to the 121st Annual General Meeting of the greatest, oldest and largest farmers' organization in Jamaica, the Caribbean and the Western Hemisphere that I and my Board express now our distinct pleasure to continue to serve you in the leadership of the Jamaica Agricultural Society.

Today, I find it a pleasure to address the 121st Annual General Meeting of the Jamaica Agricultural Society. I do so against the background that we are steadfast to the mission of the Society which is:

'To ensure the protection and the promotion of farmers' interests through a vigorous, independent and financially viable organization providing services to the farmers and assisting them to gain access to resources provided by Government and other agencies; and to enhance global policy initiatives in order to achieve sound and economic development.'

Farmers, my address to you will be centered on this mission.

I would like to declare here and now that your Jamaica Agricultural Society is in the best position in the last fifty (50) years, and I say that against the background that the Society has been transformed in a number of areas.

I would like to report to you that for the financial period ending March 31, 2016, the JAS recorded a comprehensive profit of \$24.6 million in comparison to \$1.3 million for the prior year ending March 31, 2015; and that is an improvement of over 1,700%. And I think you need to commend your JAS. (Applause)

That has been realized as a result of the revaluation of some of our assets where there is a revaluation income of \$32 million.

I want you to recall when the team of Mayor Harris, myself and my good friend from St. Elizabeth, Mr. Kingsley Clarke, came to you to support us to lead the JAS in 2003 - the asset base of the JAS then was just over \$200 million, and at that point the JAS was in excess of \$100 million in debt. Today, as we report to you, we are happy to indicate that the asset value of the Society now stands at \$525 million - almost a half a billion Jamaican dollars - and this is an increase of 9% over the value of 2015 of \$483 million. You need to commend your Jamaica Agricultural Society. (Applause)

This has been achieved through strategic debt restructuring and the engagement of our membership. There has been a focus placed on income generation in the forms of grant contribution and self-financing projects. And I would like to just commend the leadership in the JAS, the management and the staff, and also the leadership at the board level, because as a result of this re-positioning we are able to report to you - I said it last year but I will say it with more vigour this year - that your Denbigh and your Westmoreland property that were held by FINSAC were paid off by the JAS and we now have those titles in our offices, and that was a debt in excess of \$80 million, a debt that was taken out in the 1990's, we settled it with FINSAC and the assets and the titles now belong to our farmers.

Not only have we done that, but we have moved along in terms of the development of the asset base of the Jamaica Agricultural Society, and I would just like to quickly outline that to you, because when we leave here today I want every member of the Jamaica Agricultural Society to behave and understand that we are financially viable and we are an organization that can hold our heads up because our organization is on the right path.

Firstly, we spoke of Denbigh, and we are moving to develop the Denbigh Showground as a Denbigh City and what we call a Denbigh Destination. And when you come to the show in three (3) weeks' time you will understand what I am talking about.

The first thing farmers, the Denbigh Hotel and Farmers' Conference Centre is going to be a reality, and this executive that you have now - myself, Mr. Berry, and Mayor Harris, when you confirm him later on - by the year 2018 in January we will be having an equipped Denbigh Hotel here so that when you are coming to the Denbigh Show you can actually stay in your hotel, enjoyed by the farmers of Jamaica. (Applause)

And when you look to your left, wherever you are sitting, the Denbigh Food Court, we actually completed a development in progress last time. And let me also say to you that in addition to that a number of projects and a number of developments have been taking place, and I would like to commend these leaders - and I want them to stand and take a bow when I call their names.

I want to commend Mayor Glendon Harris for the excellent development that has taken place at the Montpelier Showground where we now have the Roger Clarke Building, and I expect that within the next twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months it will be completed entirely, and I want you to commend Mayor Harris and his team down in St. James. Stand Mayor Harris. (Applause)

I want to commend the team from Manchester, Director Collins and his team from Manchester for the tremendous work that they are doing in Manchester, the renovation of the Compton House Property, and the JAS have also secured income from that property. The full property is now rented by the Jamaica Agricultural Society and it is generating income for the Society. Commend the team from Manchester. (Applause)

I would like Mr. Berry to stand because under his leadership the property at Port Antonio in Portland was paid for in full by the JAS and we now have that title in the Jamaica Agricultural Society to now work on a development plan for that property and it will belong to the farmers of Portland. I want you to commend the President from Portland. (Applause)

There are a number of other developments: Mr. Dobson in Westmoreland is leading the development at Great George Street in Sav-la-Mar where there is an excellent property that is being developed there. I want you to commend the farmers in Westmoreland. (Applause)

We have some challenges that we are going to give the other parish associations, we are tasking Hague to move on with the development of the Hague Showground, and St. Elizabeth with the development of Essex Valley, and we are going to also work with the Deputy Mayor from St. Ann to develop the Bluefield property in St. Ann and ensure that every single parish that you enter you can see an active development of the JAS. I want you to commend all those leaders who have been working and continue to work. (Applause)

Farmers, I spent some time on the development of our assets because it is that base we are going to use to complete the transformation of the JAS, as only last month we acquired an additional piece of land for \$1.2 million at Sutton Street to expand the car park area that we have in Kingston, an area that is now generating some \$100,000 per month, and that we feel is going to be an important asset for the Society.

As a part of our strategy as it relates to our assets and our investments I am also very happy to advise you the members that we continue to develop and continue to invest in other assets. We have investment in shares, so farmers, let me explain to you that the farmers and the JAS have shares in the Gleaner Company, have shares in RJR, and have shares in Sweet River Abattoir, and I want you to celebrate that strategic move by the JAS. (Applause)

I am sharing this with you farmers because I want to touch a very delicate and important point. I am saying to every farmer who is a member of the Jamaica Agricultural Society that this is a JAS that is working for the farmers, so when you voted last year to increase the membership fee to \$500 it was a right and a strategic vote that you did, and based on that the JAS has been doing a number of things.

We have now worked out discount relationships with a number of farm stores and service providers, so as soon as you show the JAS card you can get a discount. Not only that, the board has approved and signed off on the fact that the JAS' ID card should now carry a photograph, your photograph. (Applause)

So it will not only be a membership card but it will also be an ID, and I think Mr. Emanuel has put in place a photographer who is here and those who want their pictures to be taken today your pictures can be taken. But not only that, we have given every single JAS Parish Manager a tablet. You know what that means? I am not talking the painkiller, a tablet that they can upload information in terms of what you plant and how much you plant and when that is coming in to market, but they can also take your picture and relay that into Head Office so that it can be uploaded into the database so that when the cards are issued it can be equipped with your ID as well.

So I do not want the farmers to complain to say the \$500 is too much, because the last time the membership fee was increased was almost 20 years ago. What this administration will do, we will ensure that the JAS will continue to work for the farmers for the development of agriculture and for the development of your communities.

And when we speak about working for the farmers what are we talking about? We think that - and I want to use this opportunity not only to call on the Government of Jamaica but to call on the commercial banks to make available a line of funding so farmers can get single digit interest rates as a part of the strategy to expand agriculture and grow the country on a sustainable basis. (Applause)

I commend the Minister of Tourism for establishing a J\$500 million line of funding for small and medium size players in the tourism sector, and it is against that background I call for the establishment of a similar line of funding for small and medium size farmers in the agricultural sector, at single digit interest rates and certainly funding for long term repayment. So farmers who have land but they don't have a title and they have a contract to sell

produce they can use those contracts to access loans so they can expand their agricultural production and ensure that we "Grow what we eat and eat what we grow".

When I speak about what the JAS is doing I am speaking about the launch of the "Grow What We Eat...Eat What We Grow" campaign launched by the Society in November of 2003. This is the most successful campaign launched by any agency in Jamaica since we got independence over 50 years ago - the "Grow what we eat...eat what we grow" campaign. (Applause) And I can only think of one other campaign that can compete with this campaign and it is the campaign "Two is better than too many".

But let us talk about what we have achieved as a result of this campaign: we have grown the domestic crop production from 491,000 metric tons in 2003 to 615,000 metric tons in 2013. We have also saved foreign exchange totaling some \$US500 million since the campaign was launched. And listen to this, farmers, every single government since we launched the campaign in 2003 has endorsed the "Grow what we eat...eat what we grow" campaign to the extent that the Jamaica Agricultural Society is extending this campaign and is intensifying the campaign.

As a result of this campaign we are now self-sufficient in pork. We are doing well in poultry; in irish potatoes; we are doing well in other domestic crops and this is as a result of the tremendous pull strategy or push strategy as a result of that campaign.

As a result of this campaign the governments - both this government and the former government - have endorsed the fact that we need to take our children from milk powder and get them to eat from what we grow in the school gardens that are operated by the 4H and RADA. And I would like to commend you farmers, the 220,000 farmers, who have worked relentlessly under this campaign to help to "Grow What We Eat...Eat What We Grow. Give yourselves a round of applause. (Applause)

We have also repositioned a lot of crops as it relates to coffee. Coffee farmers are now paid the highest price for coffee in close to five years. Whereby five to six years ago coffee farmers were paid somewhere in the region of \$2,500; now the farmers are paid somewhere in the region of \$12,000.00 per box.

The "Grow what we eat...eat what we grow" campaign has opened other opportunities for banana, cocoa, and for many, many other crops. Under this campaign the JAS is calling for support to the small ruminant industry because presently we have

a total population of goats and sheep in the region of 650,000, and in order to be self-sufficient we need to get up to 3.5 million heads of goat to save close to \$US8 million that we are spending on the importation of mutton and goat meat into the country; and in fact, what they are bringing in and calling it mutton we are not even sure what it is, and therefore, we want to use this call today to call for support for these farmers as well as our pig farmers and other farmers within the sector.

So the "*Grow what we eat...eat what we grow*" campaign is a big support for the JAS and I want every one of you farmers to own it and understand that the JAS was the pioneer for that campaign, and that we continue to lead in that way.

I would like to report to you that the board continues to meet monthly to map out strategic plans for the JAS which include the examination of our legal structure in an effort to reposition the organization as an independent and a viable organization contributing to the farmers and the agro-processors.

There is a list of things that we have done during the year that I would quickly like to just give you a bullet point of: The "*Grow what we eat...eat what we grow*" campaign celebration was done in November 25, 2015, and in this coming November 2016, we will be having a major event to celebrate our 120th Anniversary.

The 120th anniversary celebration by the JAS this year was a successful one as it allowed us to reposition the brand and has engaged our farmers as it relates to their importance and their relevance to the development of Jamaica.

During the year we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Trees That Feed Foundation to provide 10,000 breadfruit trees to the members of the JAS and to train farmers across the length and breadth of Jamaica. A part of the strategy is to develop here at the Denbigh Showground what we call a Denbigh Fruits and Food Demonstration Plot, and that Demonstration Plot will have every single crop that we grow in Jamaica. (Applause) It will have a background of these crops that we grow in Jamaica, and the Minister of Agriculture, the Governor General and the Prime Minister, will be planting in that plot during the Denbigh Agricultural Show.

We want to thank the Trees That Feed Foundation that will provide us with 10,000 plants, and also Dr. Julius Garvey, the son of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, one of our National Heroes who have provided us with 500 breadfruit trees accordingly.

The JAS has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Association of Christian Educators (NACE) to partner with us to market Jamaican agricultural produce on the international market in the USA, and where they will be providing a line of credit for selective farmers to grow crops and to supply it into a particular market. That strategy is a part of our strategy to expand the central marketing system for the Jamaica Agricultural Society.

Over the next five years the JAS will be working extremely hard to build a marketing framework to ensure that when farmers plant, the produce does not to waste, and the JAS has moved in that direction on three counts:

One, we have established a \$10 million Call Centre at our Head Office and there will be a point of sale system in all the 13 Parishes. We have already uploaded some 32,000 members on that database.

And farmers, let me tell you what that will do, it will have a log of all 32,000 farmers and they can call into that Centre and indicate what crops they plant and when it is going into market. We have a registration of buyers who will then come in and interact through technology, and interface with calls sent to individuals to say I want 10,000 lbs of carrots, and based on the log of production we will be able to match that demand with the suppliers. It is not going to be free, we think that there needs to be a fee for those who use that service but what it is going to do it is going to work to assist the farmers to produce and ensure that they have a market for all that production.

The JAS continues to promote the Parish Agricultural Show and also the Denbigh Shows, and I want to commend all of those parishes who have held agricultural shows this year. I want to commend St. Andrew for Agro Fest, Montpelier, St. Mary, Hague and Hanover. So we have five parishes that have held agricultural shows in addition to the Denbigh Show this year, and I want you to put your hands together for those parishes that have taken that initiative, and of course, St. Ann is included as well. (Applause)

The task that I am giving you is that over the next 24 months every single JAS parish should be holding a parish agricultural show to promote the presence of the JAS in your parish.

The JAS continues to be a critical stakeholder on the Tourism Linkage Council established by the Ministry of Tourism, and I am very happy to indicate to you that the Minister of Tourism has asked me to serve on the Linkage Hub once more until June 2018, and it is working because for the very first time in three years the

Tourism Ministry and the Tourism Linkage Hub will be at the Denbigh showground and the Minister of Tourism is very enthused about that. Can you give the Ministry of Tourism a hand for that tremendous partnership? (Applause)

The JAS continues to partner with the Social Security and Labour Ministry to train our farmers under the MLSS Step-to-Work Programme in the area of agricultural production. Over the last two years some \$14 million was invested in training over 1,500 farmers, and the MLSS, that's the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, has just provided us with an additional \$3.6 million to train some 450 farmers. Can you put your hands together for the Ministry? (Applause)

Farmers, I have one disappointment in that area and I am going to go public with this disappointment, but I have already engaged the Minister of Labour and Social Security. The former Minister had provided the JAS with some fifteen Farm Work Programme cards because we believe that the JAS is a qualified organization to recommend the farmers and the members to go on the Farm Work Programme, and at this very same meeting he committed that he will double it in 2016, and I would like to say how disappointed I am that this year we were not accorded not even one of the Farm Work Programme card to be distributed to our members. And I am going to call on the Minister, I am going to ask the Minister of Agriculture to help me with this, because we think that the JAS farmers hands tough enough and they can work hard enough to be included on the Overseas Farm Work Programme and we want to beg/ask the Minister to let us have some of the cards so we can distribute to the farmers and the members of the JAS.

Farmers, we continue to partner with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, the Judiciary and all farmers in the fight against praedial larceny. Praedial Larceny is seen as one of the biggest deterrents to agriculture. And let me just tell you where I stand on your behalf. We think that we have made progress since the Praedial Larceny Prevention Programme was launched in the Ministry of Agriculture, because there is now a 14.6% reduction in the reported cases of praedial larceny, and I want you to commend the team as it relates to that. Give them a hand, that's good progress. (Applause)

But farmers it hurts me when I see in one night a pig farmer loses one hundred pigs, and I said this thing is not petty crime, this thing is organized crime, because if you can thief pig next to the house where the man lives and him nuh hear it is either him sleep sound or dem do something to the pig dem. So farmers, I don't call this

thing praedial larceny any longer, I call it 'farm terrorism' and it is organized crime, and if it is organized crime I make three calls - one, for the Government to move swiftly and quickly to submit the Agricultural Produce Receipt System and the Larceny System under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Let me tell you what that means - that simply means that when you catch a thief and bring him to the courts and he is found guilty and the law has run its course, once Your Honour pronounce him guilty then I want the State to seize what he has, dispose of it, set up a fund that is called a 'Victim Compensation Fund' and for them to compensate the farmers who they have been stealing from for many, many years. (Applause)

I raised it in a particular arena and somebody says to me 'but Senator, we don't have to do that because the farmers can sue the person'. I said 'I don't want the farmers to get involved in suing people because dem thief all that we have, we don't have any money to engage lawyer'; I want the State to protect the farmers and ensure that in the same way you deal with lotto scamming, where you tek whey what the lotto scammers have and you give it to some charity, you need to tek whey what the praedial thieves have and give it back to the farmers whom they have stolen from.

The second thing that I would like to say is to ask for an amendment of the fines. Presently, the only amount that the court can charge somebody that gets affected is \$250,000, maximum. Ten (10) pigs value \$2 million so we are saying amend those two laws including the Larceny Act to increase that fine to a maximum of \$3 million, and maybe we should even go further than \$3 million to \$5 million. If you don't hit the praedial thieves where it hurts they will continue to steal from farmers and all that will happen is that farmers will be frustrated.

The final thing is to extend the tagging of animals from cattle to also sheep, goat and pigs because Tony, dem stealing pigs now. I know the Minister is committed but I want to say to the Minister that the JAS is committed to serving you in those areas.

I know that I am over my time but let me quickly in five minutes tell you a few other things. The JAS continues to partner with the National Blood Bank for the National Blood Drive in support of the lives of our farmers, and later on you will hear from them but as a part of our strategy we are encouraging our farmers to donate blood as a part of our commitment to build Jamaica.

The JAS continues to work in partnership with RADA, the 4H Clubs and all the agencies of the Ministry of Agriculture to see to a transformation within the agricultural sector. I want to use this opportunity to commend the 4H for last year attaining a membership of 103,000 members across the length and breadth of Jamaica. Can you put your hands together for them? (Applause)

I have written to the Honourable Minister and I will remind him that the JAS is seeking representation on all the agencies established by the JAS when they were formed, and these include RADA; these include the 4H; these include the Cocoa Board and the Coffee Board. In fact, did you know that the Coffee Industry Board was established by the President of the JAS, Mr. Willy Henry, Willy Henry of blessed memory? So how we have all of these Boards being named and we don't have a representative from the JAS? We are calling for representation on these various entities to ensure that we protect the interests of our farmers.

So farmers this is an important day for us. I would like to commend all the members of the board for the tremendous work; all the Parish Officers; all the workers across the length and breadth of Jamaica because we are in a process to transform the JAS.

There are other matters that as we go through matters arising I will address with you, but we are certainly committed as it relates to the transformation of the JAS.

I close on three quick notes - one, the need to improve the rural infrastructure for the development of agriculture which is farm roads and rural road network. (Applause)

I want to commend the Minister of Agriculture, he has been reported this morning as indicating that some over \$100 million will be invested in the development of cane roads for the farmers in the cane growing areas and that I commend, but what we would like to see is a wholesale development of the rural road network, and since the IMF tell us that we can now spend some of the money and the farmers helped Jamaica to pass so much IMF tests, so since we can spend some of that money I want some of that money to be spent on the development of the farm roads for the farmers and country people. (Applause)

The second point is that we need better water supply not only for the farmers but for the rural people. Farmers, I don't know about you but I am a country man and I love country, but it pains me, and Mr. Moore can tell you because I raised it at the last ABS meeting. I went into West Rural St. Andrew and I was touring some areas and I saw some large four inches and six inches pipes piping

water from the rural areas into the urban areas and when mi go one mile down the road mi see some country people a carry water on dem head fi go ketch a wash-up. And I have no problem, farmers, for water to come from country to help town people to get a shower but we need to tek off a pipe and ensure that some of that water remain in the rural areas so country people can ketch a shower too, so country people can have water as well. And I think it is important that we note that road and water are two critical things that need to be addressed, and the 121st Annual General Meeting of the JAS calls for action to be done in that area.

The next area is the area of banking, and I touched it earlier. The agricultural sector contributes 7% to GDP, it helps to employ over 200,000 people, therefore, a lot of the money that is in the commercial bank is poor people and small people money, but yet still they are not able to access those funds, and subject to the approval of the September board meeting of the JAS as a part of our re-positioning of the JAS we are going to engage a consultant that will lead a process within the next 6 to 12 months to establish a true farmers bank for Jamaica so farmers can save in that institution and they can be able to access loan from that institution. (Applause)

And let me tell you this, I know the Honourable Bobby Pottinger tried it and it failed but we are going to be engaging that process and say to you if the 200,000 farmers put \$1,000 as a seed in that institution then we are talking about \$200 million. And farmers this is important food for thought for the JAS.

We are going to be reaching out to the other commodity leaders - cane, banana, we are going to reach out to coffee, we are going to reach out to the domestic crops led by the JAS, we are going to start something that over the next 15 to 20 years you farmers can certainly have a financial institution that you can invest in and which will back you when you need that help.

The final thing I would like to conclude with is where the JAS sits as it relates to CARICOM. Farmers, on behalf of the JAS I would like to commend the Prime Minister for establishing the CARICOM Review Committee.

I am disappointed that the JAS was not selected to sit on that committee, as on that committee you have the JMA, the Small Business Association, the JCC, the PSOJ and the JEA. The only membership organization that is excluded from that committee is the Farmers Organization, so I am disappointed but I want to indicate to you that I will be writing to the Prime Minister about this,

I will write and commend the Chairman of that Review Committee and I will indicate that the JAS is willing to make a presentation to that CARICOM Review Committee. (Applause)

I say it against the following background with BREXIT - you know what BREXIT is, that is the UK leaving the EU. We don't believe that Jamaica should leave CARICOM, we believe that CARICOM should work for the farmers and for the people in the region.

Let me tell you why I say that, within CARICOM at this time we are importing \$US6 billion worth of food and I am saying if we have a proper agreement the 14 countries within CARICOM including Jamaica should be able to produce that food to support CARICOM. (Applause)

So the JAS launched in 2003 the 'Grow what we eat...eat what we grow' campaign; CAFAN which is the 14 members from Caribbean Farmers Network will be at Denbigh and at Denbigh we will be launching the same campaign within CARICOM so that the money that is spent outside of CARICOM can support the farmers and the producers in the region.

The final thing on that farmers is that the Heads of CARICOM just met last week and their position on BREXIT is that they will wait and see what happens, and I am strongly recommending that that is not the approach that should be taken and rather than taking an individualistic approach within CARICOM we need to take a united approach to see how we can capitalize on the opportunities. And I am disappointed that the CARICOM heads did not appoint a task force or a committee to look at how BREXIT would affect the region and the country and work assiduously to make sure that opportunities are converted as a result of the referendum vote that was taken.

So all of this farmers, we have to discuss today because we have to commission our leaders that the region must work to the benefit of the farmers and our people. So I am not joining this Jamaica versus Trinidad war, what we need to do is to see how we can come together as a region so CARICOM benefits the members within CARICOM. So farmers I humbly ask that you continue to support us.

Later on we will be putting two resolutions to you. One resolution is to support Pat Rose as our Direct Members' Representative who is the sole nominee for that position, and the second resolution is to support Mayor Glendon Harris to fill the position left vacant by our 2nd Vice President who is no longer with us, Mr. Royston Johnson, and we want you to support those two resolutions.

We want to salute all those who have worked very hard in the past and those who continue to work hard.

I want to salute the Board of Management of the JAS, agencies such as, IICA, CARDI, FAO, and all the other corporate companies that have supported us in a big way. I want to commend the support from DIGICEL and HI-PRO along with other sponsors who are coming on board for the Denbigh Agricultural Show come July 30 to August 1.

I would like to thank the Agricultural Diaspora Task Force Committee for coming on board to partner with us to sponsor the organic champion farmer, the symposium, and also to sponsor our National Farm Queen, Peta-Gaye Stewart, who will be going to Delaware next Friday on a sponsorship by the Agricultural Task Force Committee for three weeks as a part of our exchange program between Jamaica and the USA, and I am sure she will be a great Ambassador for the JAS. (Applause)

We would like to thank the management of the JAS. We would like to thank the staff, Mr. Emanuel and his team at the head office, the Parish Managers, the Regional Managers and the other managers who have worked very, very hard. And we have adopted an orientated approach as it relates to results and I would want to really commend the team for this work and to declare to you that the reward for good work is more work.

I would like to commend Miss Hamilton and Mr. Lewis, the team that is in charge of the Denbigh Showground. Give them a hand for a tremendous job, and some time later we will be recognizing them. (Applause)

We want to thank all our partners - and I had mentioned them earlier, Dr. Elizabeth Johnson from IICA; Mr. Patterson - Consumer Affairs Commission; Mr. Dixon from the Coffee Board.

We want to thank you Pastor King from Prayer 2000; Miss Doreen O'Connor - Director of Communications; Mr. Pinnock from the National Blood Bank; Miss Michelle Williams representing Agro Grace; Miss Green representing Patrick White from the Trelawny ABS.

The Jamaica Agricultural Society wants to register our commitment to agriculture, our commitment to partnership, and we are committed to the transforming and the re-positioning of the JAS as a viable farmers organization serving the agricultural sector and our membership at all times.

Long live the farmers of Jamaica, long live the Jamaica Agricultural Society. May God bless you all and bless Jamaica land we love so much. (Applause)

MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

CHAIRMAN: Farmers, at this time I will ask for a motion to take the tabling of the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.

So moved by Mr. Berry; and seconded by Mr. Maragh.

All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN: Any against?

MEMBERS: No.

CHAIRMAN: The ayes have it.

Amendments to the Minutes

CHAIRMAN: At this time we will take amendments or corrections, and we want you to have your AGM papers here. So we will go from page 1, page 2, 3, 4 and 5, 6 and 7, 8 and 9, 10 and 11, 12 and 13, 14 and 15, 16 and 17, 18 and 19, 20 and 21, 22 and 23, 24 and 25, 26 and 27, 28 and 29, 30 and 31, 32 and 33, 34 and 35. Can we do them in blocks of 5? 35 and 40 - I will give you time to go through. 40 and 45; 46 and 50; 50 and 55; 56 and 60; 60 and 65; 65 and 70...

MR. GAUZE: Mr. President, I am Samuel Gauze from the Bodles AGM, Sir, pages 70 to 72, Sir. I raised this last year, Sir, about the registration, Sir. We can't come here this morning - people coming from Westmoreland, Hanover and St. James and other parishes, and when you come this morning and register and get this book, Sir, what you expect we to read that we can come and amend or raise any resolution towards matters arising from the minutes? This is foolishness Mr. Grant. We are doing farming for over 121 years now and we are on the back burner and it's about time for us to move forward, Sir.

I mentioned this last year and you said you were going to send out these things, Sir, and when I went to the parish office they said 'as soon as it come - as soon as it come', and when I called the parish office last year, Sir, there was none, so how oonu expect people to come here this morning and to read this book, so what are we to

amend, what are we to read to answer to what you are saying? You mentioned from one to the end and there are no matters arising from the minutes, so next year do not come back here with this rubbish. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN: Member, what we are doing is actually the amendments to the minutes, so once we go through the amendments to the minutes – let me explain.

MR. GAUZE: We cannot say anything about the amendments for if there is anything incorrect in the minutes we do not know, we are not computers, we couldn't come here this morning and read this book to make any amendments or any confirmation, and anybody who confirm this they are hypocrites.

CHAIRMAN: Let me tell you what we did -- member, what's your name again?

MR. GAUZE: Samuel Gauze from Bodles.

CHAIRMAN: It is a very good point you just made, you know, a very good point.

MR. GAUZE: But I mentioned it last year and you come back now this year with it. Every year oonu come wid the same kind of thing, Sir. JAS is 121 years now, Sir, and we are going backwards, it's time we move forward. We are using modern technology, these things must cut out, now is not the time for us to put flour in a basket, we are civilized people.

CHAIRMAN: Conference - let me explain what we did. What we did was to send the minutes to the Annual General Meeting of the parishes so that it can be tabled at the parishes and it can be discussed by the executives in the parishes.

If you wish, Mr. Gauze, we could send them to the President of every branch so you can have it in those branches, but when you raised it last year - the year before what we asked permission from the AGM to do was to send them out to the parishes, which we did.

This AGM, because it is not possible for us to send them to the 1000 or 2000 members because of the cost issue what we can commit to is that we will send them to the President of the individual branches next year. Is that acceptable?

MR. GAUZE: That is acceptable, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: So do you want to move that motion?

MR. GAUZE: Yes, I would like that motion to move, Sir, so they can send it down, Sir, for the people who are registered, and when they have their meetings then people can read it and underline their objectives or whatsoever they think of, so when we come here we can answer, but when you go from 1 to the end and you don't hear anybody say anything it is because we have nothing to talk about.

CHAIRMAN: Very good point, but I need a seconder to that motion. All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN: Any against?

MEMBERS: No.

CHAIRMAN: The ayes have it.

I am going to do something better than that, within three months, Mrs. Jackson, of the completion of this meeting I will instruct that the minutes be uploaded on the JAS website so you can all have access to it and read it for 9 months before the next Annual General Meeting. (Applause)

So even if you cannot pull it down get your daughter to pull it down. So rapporteurs make sure that we have these minutes within a month of the end of this meeting so we can review it and upload it on the website.

Confirmation of Minutes

CHAIRMAN: Can we take the other pages as read, and if you will can we have a motion of confirmation of the minutes without amendments?

Moved by Stanford Samuels from Old Harbour.

Seconded by Barrington Ramballie from Woodside.

CHAIRMAN: All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN: Any against?

MEMBERS: No.

CHAIRMAN: The ayes have it. This is a democratic organization. Thank you very much. The next matter is matters arising.

MR. RAMBALLIE: Mr. President, I have something to say to you, sir. You know, we tired of this talk, talk, talk, talk. We sat down and listened to the PNP Government right through and now we reach the JLP Government and it seems like a di same ting we a go sidung and listen to. We nuh have no road a Woodside, we nuh have no wata. We wan' tell Mr. Andrew Holness seh if him nuh move fast fi we, we caan send back we yute dem a school and we caan tek care a dem out a farming. Every penny weh we have gone in a farming; We nuh have no wata and no road. So Mr. Andrew Holness, we a beg yuh sah, a Mr. Ramballie, you know a who, gi we some wata and road. Thank you Sah, and I have nothing more to say.

CHAIRMAN: But what I am going to ask you to do - which parish you are from?

MR. RAMBALLIE: St. Mary at Woodside.

CHAIRMAN: St. Mary at Woodside. I want your Parish Manager and your Parish President to sit down with you and draft a resolution calling on the Government to address the issues of road and water for the people of St. Mary including Woodside, et cetera, and when we come to the particular point of resolution I would like you to come and table it. Upon the tabling and the passage of that we will take that and send it to the Prime Minister of Jamaica.

MR. RAMBALLIE: Thank you, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: We want to welcome Dr. Blake who is just walking in, he apologized earlier on.

Matters Arising From the Minutes

CHAIRMAN: We are going to take matters arising, so let me explain to you how we are going to do this. Matters arising is from the minutes of last year, so I will go again page in block and then you have to cite the area that you are speaking from.

If you have more than two questions I would like you just to ask two questions and when we come back around we will come back to you so that as many persons can have an opportunity to ask questions.

You need to say your name very clearly so that it can be heard by the persons recording and the branch that you are representing.

So with that said I want to commit pages 1, 2 and 3 which is just the attendance; 4 and 5; 6 and 7. Okay, so you need to raise the matters in relation to the page that we are on.

Based on the appearance it would seem as if we can comfortably start at page 10. Okay, all right.

MR. GREEN: Farmers, good morning. Mr. Chairman and all the dignitaries on the platform good morning. I have two questions, Sir, to ask, not more than two, but if anything comes in the computer I will head back here if I get the chance.

Now Mr. Chairman, let me first commend you for the fine work that I have seen in here this morning. Just as the bus man drove me through I saw the beauty of Denbigh, I had to clap myself, and I will have to commend you, Mr. Chairman, for every time I come here I see a big difference, so I commend you, Sir, for what has happened. Those who take care of the Denbigh property, Sir, I commend them too for you can see dem have a large interest in what they are doing.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much and thank the team – it is teamwork.

MR. GREEN: Sir.

CHAIRMAN: The board had decided that we would operate Denbigh under the Denbigh Development Company and you will see continuous improvement. I want to thank, as I said, the Showground Management and those who continue to invest in it. Thank you very much on behalf of the board.

MR. GREEN: Yes, Sir. I am from the Deeside JAS Branch. My name is Sylvester Green and I believe you must be tired of hearing that name because every year I come here I say my name.

Now Mr. Chairman, I don't know if this will come quite reasonable to you. I have a belief in myself, Mr. Chairman, that if a man or a woman joins certain things they join it to get some benefit.

Mr. Chairman, I personally went to the JAS office in Hague, and I plant sweet yam, St. Vincent yam, yellow yam, renta yam. I plant dasheen and difference, and to every time I go there I see some difference there, disease, I don't know if it is the change of climate. Well, let me put it this way, if it is change of climate I don't believe any of us can do anything to it. I went to the office and I asked them what can I get to treat the farm so that it can come up and look like it's a farm, to help somebody and to help the farmers who have done it. I went there by foot, I called by the

office, Mr. Chairman, and I get 2 men; one man tell me from about in May that they will be coming to have a look at it because they don't want to give me...

CHAIRMAN: Which man?

MR. GREEN: The man who goes around and recommend to the farmers - look at what the farmers...

CHAIRMAN: Who, the RADA Officer?

MR. GREEN: The JAS.

CHAIRMAN: Oh, the JAS officers.

MR. GREEN: The JAS officers, they said that they will be coming, Mr. Chairman, to look at it and to give me some advice what to do, and Mr. Chairman, from May until now, and every time I call them 'they will be coming'.

Mr. Chairman, if you go in the ground now it's only yellow yam - it's only yellow yam look as farm. So Mr. Chairman, if I join JAS I believe you must recommend me. I don't say to give me because I see the JAS has reached a stage where it has nothing to offer farmers. I don't know about in other places but in Deeside Mr. Chairman, no little offer, no little fertilizer, no little dis nor little dat to help the farmers so dat dem can come, and Mr. Chairman, you join a big thing like JAS.

When I was a young man and joined the JAS, Mr. Chairman, when I plant my farm believe me Mr. Chairman, when I see...

CHAIRMAN: All right, let us now wind up, let us hear what you want us to do.

MR. GREEN: Hear this now Sir, I want Mr. Chairman, some help from the JAS.

CHAIRMAN: All right, I am going to ask my team to give you some support. We have some persons among us, some summer workers, I am going to ask Mrs. Jackson to have them at a particular area so some of those questions can be addressed.

We want to welcome the Minister, the Honourable Karl Samuda. Can we cordially receive him? (Applause)

Welcome the Honourable Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, the Hon. Karl Samuda, a farmer and a great friend. (Applause)

I will not say what he said to me but I know he will tell you - well, he wanted to know why we are up here (indicating the rostrum) we should be down there (indicating the floor). But Minister it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 121st AGM of the Jamaica Agricultural Society.

Remember now what I said, that the Minister is going to be with us for a while but we want to give him sufficient time to cool down and then to address us, so I am going to ask you if you have some specific issues once you make the point I want you to go over that table (indicating) or this table right here (indicating) to have those concerns logged and we are going to be following them up.

So we heard you...

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, you don't hear me done, Sir, you don't hear me done. Now Mr. Chairman, I represent a group. A President of the Deeside JAS branch and when I talk about the misfortunes that I meeting in my farm I am talking about the rest of JAS too because it is not only me alone is farmer they are farmers too and the sufferation that I am bearing they are bearing it too. And Mr. Chairman, the name is Sylvester Green.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, I know Mr. Green.

MR. GREEN: From the Deeside JAS Branch. You said that somebody will be recording but a person cannot record unless you know the person's name, and if you are going to be sending a letter or an offer send it to the group. The Secretary of the group is Mrs. Dawn Anderson, so it is not Sylvester Green the letter must come to, it must be to her.

CHAIRMAN: All right, Mr. Green.

MR. GREEN: I thank you for hearing me, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your point, it's a very important point and we will be following it up for you.

MR. GREEN: And Mr. Chairman, believe me, if you send something to help us as farmers I will be more thankful unto you.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, will do.

MR. GREEN: Blessings, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN: Blessings.

CHAIRMAN: At this time we are at page 11 to 25, so those who have comments to make on those pages...

MISS SMITH: Good morning Mr. President, good morning fellow farmers, good morning Mr. Karl Samuda, mi glad fi see yuh come in before me talk.

I am from the Joe Hut JAS Branch and I hope and trust that my issue that I have been making for so long a time can be addressed.

I am saying Mr. President, is because we name Joe Hut mek nobody nah come look 'bout wi? If yuh come a Joe Hut yuh nuh waan go back. We are in the parish of Trelawny.

I am saying again and again, and Mr. President, yuh not goin' get mi off your back until my issues are addressed. My issue is that I am in the JAS from 1960, for this length of time, I have passed through so many Presidents and until now Monica caan show sup`m fi di 42 members in my group to say 'Yes, I am working on your behalf'. I spoke last year about it and it is on page 52 -- and Mr. President mi waan see yuh before me lef' tiday mi have sup`m else fi tell yuh.

Mr. Chairman, please, I am begging you just to take the members of Joe Hut off mi back to show that I am working every year. Yuh see mi dey yah now mi two foot can hardly move, I wish yuh could a give mi two fi guh dung go work more, and I want the members to see that my work is not in vain. Not even one likkle pension. Mr. Samuda look inna it, look inna it Brother Samuda, Brother Samuda please look into it. From 1960 'till now, I am 79 years old and not even one paper pon di dresser fi sey yuh did a work fi JAS from Willie Henry time.

Mr. President, do sup`m fi Joe Hut man, Joe Hut a one nice place. We used to get sup`m from the JAS when Mr. Fletcher was there - wi get di road fixed, wi get di light, and from Mr. Welsh dead until now nothing more has been done to Joe Hut. And I understand from Mr. Willie Henry's time that if we want our voice to be heard we must form a group, and' wi form a group an' di only time I was missing from that group was when I went and spent two years in America and I don't know how Miss Harvey knows that I come back and as I come back she jump pon mi back and sey 'Miss Monica, please get the group re-formed', and from then I am working ups and downs, rain and all wet mi - probably mi have one pickney weh name JAS (Laughter).

MISS SMITH: Mr. President nuh tek weh mi deh sey slightly enuh cause mi a woman who don't believe inna lip service, cause if wi no have no group - mi sey fi mi members a 42 and them get so reluctant that is only 11 members registered because nothing has been happening.

Mr. President me noh believe inna duppy but if yuh no work pon their behalf and mi dead before you do sup`m yuh nah go happy inna yuh soul. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN: All right, Miss Monica, I am going to give some instructions right now because we have to fix up Joe Hut - we have to fix up Joe Hut - we have to fix up Joe Hut.

MISS SMITH: And for my years of service, Mr. President mi love oonu enuh, mi love people more dan how mi love cook food and mi a ask you if you can give me one likkle dividend tiday yah, tiday yah, tiday, tiday, tiday yah, tiday.

CHAIRMAN: All right, let me tell you Miss Monica what we will do in response - it's a very important point and we want to note Miss Monica Smith from Joe Hut, and we need to get her number and reach out to that group, but one of the things that we had started to do is to honour people who have worked long and hard. Okay?

MISS SMITH: Seventy-nine years.

CHAIRMAN: And I want to announce that we will get to you. We asked each of the parishes to nominate people for long service award, and it's not only the award but it's the recognition, and I would like to undertake that we are going to be doing as much as possible to recognize your work and your service to the JAS.

But on the second point you raised, the issue of pension, two years ago I came to this AGM and I said as a result of me going all over Jamaica and hearing people speaking the way you have spoken this morning we have led a process with COK to establish a Farmers' Pension Plan. This Pension Plan is specifically outlined for farmers that are as old or as mature as age 60, because normally you become a pensioner at age 60 or 65. What we have said to COK for the special plan is to allow farmers to come on at 60 and they retire at 70.

The contribution that you will make, which is your own saving, is as low as \$500 a month - and unfortunately we all have to die - but upon your death you will get a grant or some insurance of \$100,000, but outside of that when you get to a pensionable age you will be eligible for a pension.

I would like to place it on record to commend the following parishes - Kingston & St. Andrew, Portland, St. Mary and Trelawny -- not Trelawny, I don't think Trelawny has registered - about four parishes have registered about 500 farmers under the program and we want to commend you. So these are the things that once you identify it, as President and as the Board, we go through and we put it in place. There is a Pension Plan operated by the JAS and COK that once you work and you are eligible at a particular age you will be qualified for Pension, and I would like to ask the farmers here and the parish officers to ensure that the farmers who come, the farmers who are members register under that plan, so in 20 years time somebody who is 50 will not come to this mic in 20 years time at 70 and complain that 'I have worked for 20 years, and I have worked for 25 years and I don't have a pension'. We have done it because the only professionals - because farmers are professionals, we are no Cinderellas - who don't have a pension in this country are farmers. The police, doctors, lawyers have, and so we have now worked to put that pension plan in place and we are encouraging farmers to come on board with that plan.

MISS SMITH: So like how I am 79 now interest grow pon fi mi pension?
(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN: No, but unfortunately...

MISS SMITH: Sorry, Mr. President, I never know 'bout it before because you know why, and you know sometimes what mek di country run dung so oonu have di officers dem weh oonu trust fi do certain things and dem nah work and oonu nah come deh come see what they have done.

Mr. President, yuh deh pon 6 foot you know and mi deh pon 2, so sometimes if a even one minute when yuh come a Falmouth pass through Joe Hut, Joe Hut a one good likkle district you know, and they are progressive, but they need help.

The first playfield that is up in Trelawny is in Joe Hut and di pickney dem don't even have one football.

CHAIRMAN: All right, when I come to Trelawny I will come to Joe Hut. Give her a hand (Applause). We will take your recommendations on board, and just to say that we will list you and get in touch with you, but I think the wider issue that you raised today is the issue about the pension.

MISS SMITH: So how mi a go know when you a come a Joe Hut, Mr. President?

CHAIRMAN: I will tell you.

MISS SMITH: And you don't have me number, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: Come to the table and leave your number for me.

MISS SMITH: Okay. So I am looking forward to see you, Mr. President. Mr. President, if mi nuh see you come and if mi issue nuh approve trouble, trouble inna yuh sleep, yuh all a go dream see mi cause it's high time something done to Joe Hut. Every year we deh register, register, register, all pon mi sick bed mi deh ask members fi come register.

Mr. President may God richly bless you and the JAS, and me want fi see JAS come back like inna di '50's, '60's and the '70's. God bless you. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN: Okay. With the permission of the AGM can we ask that your questions or your speaking should not go longer than two minutes? All right, go ahead.

MEMBER: Ladies and gentlemen good afternoon. I am from the New Denbigh JAS Association and we as workers - I am talking on behalf of all of us - we are working for the past ten years for \$1,200 and I am asking right now for some increases on our pay and some things that we can use to improve our working area.

We are definitely in need of wiping buckets, buckets to use to squeeze our mops, we have to be using our hands and sometimes not even gloves. Others need to talk up, they are talking by themselves but they are not coming out to talk.

CHAIRMAN: Where?

MEMBER: Paul Bogle and Sam Sharpe talked and gave their lives for us, so I am here today to talk on behalf of all of us.

We need some increases on our salary and we need some utensils to use - squeezing buckets and other things - when we work. From last year I haven't got my pay that I worked here, and I need some improvement, something to be done about it. And when people come around they are accusing us like is we responsible for what needs to be done, so I think this is the best place to air my grouse and to talk about it. Sir, I am asking you to do something.

The application fee was raised to \$500 and all of us put out to pay it, so I think our salary should go up a little; it's time for it to move from \$1,200. Look how long we are working for \$1,200 and it cannot buy anything, it cannot do anything, we need it to improve.

They don't want to talk but I am here today to talk about it – workers, stand up and say something, you all are here, stand up, agree with me, we need to talk about the \$1,200. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN: All right, ma'am.

MR. HUGH: Mr. President, good morning.

CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

MR. HUGH: Mr. Karl Samuda, it is good to have you here, we have always admired you...

CHAIRMAN: Can you speak in the mic for me?

MR. HUGH: Good morning Mr. Karl Samuda.

MR. HUGH: The name is Winston Hugh from Hanover. I would like to address the problem that the gentleman came up with earlier about his yam being killed off by insects, it is slugs that is doing it all. For many years I have had the problem and I did research on it only to discover that slugs are the problem. There is a good slug pellet on the market, a very small blue pellet - I don't remember the name, if I knew it was going to come up today I would have brought the name along.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Green, listen to this response.

MR. HUGH: To all farmers actually because I believe we all have the problem in Jamaica. Slug is the problem - those little ones with the darkish colour they are the main problem, so all you have to do is to go out, buy the slug pellet and sprinkle it lightly around the yam and that will cure your problem.

Now I have many issues so I am going to go to that lady up there (indicating) and lodge those complaints, thank you. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you very much. All right, next person - very good intervention.

MRS. MAITLAND: Pleasant good morning from the rostrum to the pew.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, good morning.

MRS. MAITLAND: My name is Barbara Pryce-Maitland, I am from the August Town African Garden Upliftment Farmers Group and I am the Secretary. Well, Mr. President, as a farmer and an agro-processing person our group has been in session but we only have a little problem. We take over the August Town hill...

CHAIRMAN: You take it over?

MRS. MAITLAND: Yes, we have to say we take it over.

CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MRS. MAITLAND: We went up through the hills...

CHAIRMAN: Well, I hear you but that doesn't mean that it's okay.

MRS. MAITLAND: We went up on the hills behind African Garden of the hill because of the crime rate and we got the young people dem to farm.

On a whole we need land, we need land in the right and proper way that when we plant our food and when we have our livestock and so forth, et cetera, we are able to produce our good food and everything in the right and proper way.

Right now the group is going on, it is in session and RADA is on board with us for so many years, the JAS, we have our Field Officer who comes and meet with us on a whole along with SDC, the JAS and RADA and so forth, so we need help with land.

We have four drums and a tank now to put up proper watering and so what I would like to ask here today, we have our Farmers Cook Out every year and we need funding - we are not looking for any handout but we want your assistance with the rest of the farmers dem assistance that when we have our Farmers Cook Out the tickets dem will be on sale for \$1,000.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, and we will support you.

MRS. MAITLAND: Also, we would like your input to help us to get the land.

CHAIRMAN: Okay. All right, we take note of that, it's one of our groups in Kingston and St. Andrew, they have started some JAS project in the August Town area and yes, we will certainly be giving you support.

MR. BROOKS: My name is Gersham Brooks from the St. James JAS Summer Hill Branch.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, Sir, go ahead.

MR. BROOKS: Mr. President, we are asking now that the 'Eat Jamaican' Programme should be motivated or run around the country so that we don't have to go to Kingston every year, we don't have to go to St. Andrew every year, we want it to go to the parishes, or you are going to like - I am not a good reader, you know - cut it down and say all right then, we are going to run it for this season in this division or that division.

CHAIRMAN: Well, I am glad you raised that because the Board, we have decided that the "Grow what we eat...Eat What We Grow" campaign and the church service would be celebrated in a different parish each year.

MR. BROOKS: Thank you, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: I think I can remember one year that we had it in St. James, Mayor, so it is rotated - it's not only in St. Andrew or in Kingston, it is rotated, but your point will reinforce the need for us to ensure that that rotation is entrenched in our planning process. Our Executives are here and we will ensure that that rotation continues. It's a very, very good point, and thank you very much, and it is one that we will take on board, Sir.

MR. BROOKS: Okay Sir, thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Okay. Next person...

MISS STEPHENS: Good afternoon to you, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon to you, ma'am.

MISS STEPHENS: I am Dahlia Stephens from the New Hope JAS 1 Group - President, and on behalf of my farmers this morning we are not feeling good. I mean, like in 2000 we had in here packed. What happen to JAS with the farmers? Even this morning we had no representative from Trelawny. Where is our Branch Manager?

To me and my farmers from New Hope 1 it seems as if HI-PRO, FERSAN or NUTRAMIX are our JAS representatives because I can call on them any time and they are in New Hope, they are in Trelawny. What happen to our JAS Branch Manager and our JAS personnel? We need to see them more and for this, if it is not so, then JAS is going to the dogs. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN: All right, let me just quickly respond to that. I think Miss Gordon the Secretary is here. I understand that the Parish Manager is ill and you had a new President.

Trelawny has gone through some challenges and it is one of the parishes that we are going to work very, very close with, to deal with, but understand that all the names that you just called they have come on board as a direct result of the fact that the JAS has approached them to come on board, that's how we work, so we asked them to contact all branches and the Branch Presidents in the various parishes; but we note your concern.

I was at the Parish Office two weeks ago, we now have a Parish Office on the Hague Showground on the building established by RADA. We have given RADA a long term lease to construct a massive outfit on the Showground as a part of our commitment and partnership, and as a part of our strategy to reach out to you. That said we take note.

MISS STEPHENS: We are aware of all that you have said, but when I call them I use my credit, my phone, to call them to my group, they weren't sent there by JAS Branch Managers or other persons.

CHAIRMAN: Okay. All right, well we will take your concern on board.

MR. ANDERSON: Greetings to one and all.

CHAIRMAN: Greetings.

MR. ANDERSON: My name is Sylvester Anderson from the Border Community Farmers Group - the Border of St. Andrew that is. I only have one question and that is for the Minister.

Most of the time whenever I hear a speech in relation to things to do with the farmers, I hear of PMO and I don't hear about the JAS in that regard. I am just wondering about the PMO's as opposed to JAS. What can he say in relation to that?

CHAIRMAN: I know the Minister made a note and he will address it, and certainly it's a suggestion that I would embrace that when the Minister speaks he doesn't only speak of RADA but also of the JAS because we are working in partnership with each other for the interest of agriculture, but I am sure when he comes on he will address it.

MRS. WRIGHT: Good morning Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen...

CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

MRS. WRIGHT: My name is Hyacinth Patterson-Wright from Falmouth, Trelawny, representing the Martha Brae group and we have a problem all over Jamaica. I realize that everybody talk about land but women are not a part of it like we cannot work, but if we don't work alongside the men it not working out, so we need farm land that women can do their work just the same, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: So are you moving a resolution later on that on the whole question of land divestment and land distribution that a focus be made on distributing land to women?

MRS. WRIGHT: Yes, Sir. Thank you very much, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: Okay. We are going to ask that we just hold the questions after the last person in the line and then we can get to some others later on.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Hon. Minister, President of the JAS, fellow farmers, good day to you all.

CHAIRMAN: Good day.

MR. HUTCHINSON: My name is Daniel Hutchinson and I am from New Mills, Paddington, Jamaica, and it's the first I ever come to a JAS meeting and mi head hurt me so much.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, it's not the heat?

MR. HUTCHINSON: No, not from the heat, Sir, from the words. Now, I raised last year the problem of praedial larceny and it is very sad for us to come back this year and it has reached no further than talk. The praedial larceny problem is hurting agriculture in very significant ways - both ways - it kills the farmers - the young ones won't come into it and the old ones if them have anything fi duh them throw it up, them done wid it cause them caan continue working.

Now I hear they doing something about tagging animals, but it is not really the animals waan tag, is the teef dem need fi put the chip into that you can control wey dem go and what dem do.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, but you have to ketch them first.

MR. HUTCHINSON: When dem ketch dem dem let dem go. Reason one, the type of fine that we have for these kinds of operation it better we tell dem sey thief out everything.

Now, I believe strongly that the time we take to blame the police, blame the farmers, blame everybody, why don't we blame our Government that we do elect for not seeing to it that we go right? The farmer's business is everybody's business and what I believe should happen, the business should set up at the point where the meat is going, either at the supermarket or at the butcher shop, or at those points - because you caan trail man inna bush him wi shoot you - fi know wey the meat a go. They are not doing that.

And with your presentation this morning I take special note of you making these presentations, things that you should be involved in on behalf of the farmers are not happening. You named a few things, that you were not on that Board and they did not call anyone, call you then to be a representative of the farmers on those Boards.

Now for too long the agricultural business - you say it as I said it - is the Cinderella business in this country, it is treated as nobody, they don't care what you want to do because what, in Jamaica if you drop out of farming or if you waan lose you lose, but you haffi come again and come do the same thing.

We would wish that we use people from Jamaica to run the country and don't use foreigners. I am from a country area and all rural areas have similar operation so we nuh need fi tell the authorities anything, they know it all, but they ignore it because in their opinion we are nothing. We want some Jamaicans to run the country and not foreigners.

CHAIRMAN: All right, we take note of that.

MR. STEPHENSON: Mr. President, all protocols observed at the head table. My name is Lennox Stephenson, President of the Coleyville JAS Branch which is the only branch that is affiliated in the Parish of Manchester since 2016. The question I am asking Mr. President, is it time for resolution or resolution will come further down in the meeting?

CHAIRMAN: The resolutions will come further down.

MR. STEPHENSON: Thank you, Sir...

CHAIRMAN: Okay. All right, next?

MR. PAULWELL: Good afternoon, my name is Alvin Paulwell from the Portland JAS Branch, Mr. Donald Berry is my President. I am here today to ask a question and I need an answer from the Minister of Agriculture or you as the President.

CHAIRMAN: All right, speak in the mic a little more.

MR. PAULWELL: I get to understand that the price of coffee will cut. The present government -- the price of coffee cut in 2009/2010 somewhere there from \$3500 per box to \$2300 per box. As an elder farmer along with the younger farmers we are now amazed and dismayed to hear that the price of coffee gonna cut. I don't know if it is a rumour but I want to leave here with assurance today from the Minister of Agriculture and the President that the price of coffee will not cut. If the price of coffee cut it is going to make us as farmers weary to go back in the farm because some of us as farmers start to hold back from the present government now come into power; man start to sey to themselves sey cut under the present government here now - couple years ago - and they are not investing much money into it until dem sure where dem is.

Now, we need good farm roads, we need market.

CHAIRMAN: All right, and that question the Minister has made a note and he will respond to it during his address.

MR. PAULWELL: Yes. I know that farming is a silver bullet, it is one of the main posts to build Jamaica's economy right now, rural development, it is no joke about it. We have a lot of young farmers out there who need to invest more in the agricultural sector but they need a bank so that they can borrow some money to start up the business or to continue the business that they are in.

CHAIRMAN: So you are supporting the Farmers' Bank?

MR. PAULWELL: Yes, sure. I lost 100lbs of plantain in the market last week and I have a lot of plantain in the farm rotting, and banana right now, I have no market to get back my produce as I want it to be.

When it export whomever comes and buys it, the plantain or the banana from the one exporting it they make the money, farmers don't make money, we need to start make our money right now, we need to start get some good money out of our capital that we invested inna di ting, we nuh need fi invest inna it and when we come out - wi caan ride donkey go a bush, dem ting nuh deh again, technology right is what is developing now, we need the system to rise to an occasion that Jamaica can move forward.

I am so angry and dismayed that Jamaica is not moving under the two governments, none of them is pushing the economy as it supposed to go. We need to build on what we have from the '60's come right up now to 2016. Agriculture is the way to go. With a good economy and a good agricultural sector Jamaica can sell,

'buy Jamaican', 'brand Jamaica', to the world and to the Caribbean.

CHAIRMAN: Clap him - big, big statement - clap him. We endorse that 100%.
(Applause)

MR. SMITH: Good afternoon Mr. President, I have two concerns. I am the President for the Treadways Association and also an ABS Member in St. Catherine.

CHAIRMAN: Name, did you say your name?

MR. SMITH: Donovan Smith, President of the Treadways Association. One of the things that I realize inside here today is that we have less members today because of the group system, it was \$200 now it moved to \$500 and my group stands at 32 members and I had to fight my group to get them to register for \$500.

One thing I can say, I can stand here this morning because I came here this morning and when I came I asked about the picture system that will be going on our IDs, and we can say our group has gone through the first method as all my members who came here have gone to take their pictures to go on it.

CHAIRMAN: All right, give him a hand - give him a hand. (Applause)

MR. SMITH: Secondly - this is addressed to the Honourable Minister - praedial larceny in the Treadways area - praedial larceny in the Treadways area, Redwood, Palm...

CHAIRMAN: Sorry, Sir, we have two other persons, I said that we are going to cut off the first questioning session and we are going to come back again. All right? So if you don't mind, we don't want any other questions now until later - if you don't mind. So if we can just stop where we are now but nobody else should join after that gentleman.

Okay, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: At the last meeting that we had in Linstead, the AGM, I was saying to the Honourable Minister, the officers, we are saying to him that we are having a bad time in that area, we have now lost over 125 goats that have been moved in that area, and we cannot ketch anybody.

One night one farmer had 16 goats moved that night and the morning daylight ketch on dem - if you look in the Gleaner you will see it in the Gleaner.

CHAIRMAN: Sixteen (16) goats?

MR. SMITH: Sixteen (16) goats for one farmer from praedial larceny.

CHAIRMAN: I am sure the Minister will address the strategy around dealing with praedial larceny.

MR. SMITH: We got a call that some goats were tied up over by Mount Statin, that's the Ewarton area, when we went there it was over 25 goats, we called the police and they came there and they took those goats, and we are now suffering because of that. Nobody wanted to raise -- right now I am here and I am fretting if when I go back this afternoon my goats are there, so we have to do something.

And ladies and gentlemen you need to know who is coming in your district because you have some people coming in your district and when you are not there they tek up yuh goat and gone.

CHAIRMAN: Farm Watch, we are supporting Farmers' Watch, and call and share information with the police.

MR. SMITH: Yes. And another hog farmer lost hogs; be careful how you buy pigs and be careful how you buy pork because these hogs that they come and thief are in-pig ready to drop and they steal and cut out all of them. We need to know the butchers, we need to ensure that the butchers who are buying goats report to the station and tell them that they are going to kill a cow or goat that the person can go and look at it because they are the ones who are buying the stolen goats.

And also for the inspectors, inspectors are behind it because when dem thief a cow they can go and stamp the meat because they are either getting payment or something. Mr. Minister, I think we need something like \$500 million for farmers; when they steal and you ketch dem 20 years in prison - they need about 20 years in prison. When you ketch a man put them behind bars or give them some work to do and pay back the farmers. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Very good point.

MR. BROWN: Yes, Mr. President, Glenford Brown from the Bellevue Branch in St. Elizabeth.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, Sir.

MR. BROWN: Pertaining to the Agro-park, Sir many of our members, members of the JAS, they would like plot in the Agro-park, Sir, they are unable to obtain a plot. You don't think through the JAS you should recommend some of us so that we can get a plot in the Agro-park, Sir?

CHAIRMAN: Yes, I have no difficulty to -- I don't think the Minister stipulates whether or not you should be a JAS or non-JAS member, but we will, we will upon your request recommend farmers who are farmers and are members of the JAS to the Minister to benefit under the Agro-park programme once you fit the outline and the criteria that is established.

MR. BROWN: And in recent times, Sir, the JAS groups they are not being recognized. If any assistance comes for groups in the parishes, other groups are getting and the next group is not recognized, so that is another problem.

The one for the Minister now, there are some crops that are dying out, Sir, crops like pimento and chocolate, these are crops which I think we need to revive, Sir, and nobody is going to invest their money in planting pimento because it's a long term crop. We must also think long term because many of the crops that we are reaping today were not planted by us.

I was at the JEA Expo earlier this year and pimento was there selling for \$500 a pound. It's an industry that needs to be revived, Sir, and I think the JAS should play a part in reviving the industry. I am willing to be a part of the Pimento Planting project to revive the industry once it gets on stream, Sir. Thank you very much, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you very much. Pimento as a commodity is a part of the JAS and certainly we have worked with the Export Division as it relates to pimento, and we buy pimento presently -- annually, and the last time we were distributing the seeds. So we support your call and we will lend our partnership to the Honourable Minister once we are called upon.

MR. HUSSEY: Good afternoon Mr. President and the Head of the House. I am Cedric Hussey from the Mount Charles JAS Branch. My chief movement here today is to find out about the nutraceuticals and the medical herbs, if we are able as JAS members to achieve a contract or to get business going because I have a lot of youths in my group who are interested in planting.

CHAIRMAN: You mean the marijuana?

MR. HUSSEY: And the other herbs that are not marijuana which was mentioned to us at Hope Gardens with the previous Minister. I wonder if we could get on board so that we can make some money immediately.

We have the herbs here away from just marijuana, and I think if you possibly help us to achieve those for the international market we would make money without having to plow the soil because these herbs are here already. So I am asking you if you could assist me with achieving that contract for planting this marijuana from the JAS area, not from the far region because I am from Kingston and St. Andrew so I need to get mine from Kingston.

I would want to know what's the cost or if the JAS will back us as young farmers to get on board. I have some farmers who are willing to pay \$500 or even to start from \$200 as you have said, so they are on board, so I would like to take some good news for them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, Minister, it came up at some of the AGM's as to how can the smaller farmers be involved in the marijuana industry and I am sure both the agriculture side and the commerce side is under the Hon. Karl Samuda's portfolio, and I am sure that he will address it later on.

MR. GAUZE: Mr. President, good morning Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Commerce, et cetera, and all the other members and farmers here, Sir. First thing I would like to say Mr. President, I thought you were on matters arising from the minutes, Sir, and I have been here a little while and the thing said matters arising from the minutes and you leave from matters arising and you gone into questions and answers, but anyhow I am going to talk on matter arising from the minutes on page 42 and you don't reach there yet, Sir, but I have three things to talk about, so since I am on the floor I would just like to talk about them, Sir.

And this is for the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Sir, about praedial larceny. Everybody sey dem is a Christian and dem want to go to heaven but no one wants to die, and I am saying this to say, Sir, that nobody wants to go to prison because everybody trying now to be a barrister or a lawyer to defend criminals now. What I am saying, Sir, I have a solution here and I don't know if you will back me, but I am asking the Hon. Minister to take note of this Sir. When you ketch di people dem who are thieving di tings dem, di man who a steal it if him don't have the persons who are receiving it him wouldn't steal it, because one man no matter how big and odious his family is him won't thief a goat, especially several goats and cows, so when you catch those

people who are stealing the things now, Sir, just like how you have the law for buggery, rape and all those kinds of things, where they don't pay any money, you put dem in prison.

I am asking the Honourable Minister to think about this thing, Sir, because most of the people who are receiving these things, the people dem a wholesale places, millionaires, Sir, and dem don't want dem children who are doctors and nurses, et cetera, fi learn dat dem father gone to prison fi thief, so once dem know that dem is going to prison - once it is money they know that dem can pay di money Mr. Minister, but if dem know dem going to prison they might think otherwise, so I am asking the House if you could change the Constitution like the buggery, the rape and all those things so that when you catch them you don't charge dem any money because if you charge dem di money, Sir, it's we the farmers who lose because we not getting any contribution from dat, Sir.

The next point now, since I am here and you don't reach to that yet, on page 87 about the card that we should pay \$600 - on page 87. I remember in Mr. Glendon Harris' time, Sir, we did all agree that we should pay \$600 for three years and then we get the ID with the picture. Last year when it bring up, Sir, I went for lunch and I wasn't here when it bring up but I see it in the book for \$500, so I want to know if this card that we are getting for the \$500 is for one year or is it for the three years?

CHAIRMAN: It's for one year.

MR. GAUZE: So annually, every year, we have to pay \$500?

CHAIRMAN: Yes, the \$500 is an annual subscription, an annual membership fee.

MR. GAUZE: Okay, Sir. The last thing I would like to address the Honourable Minister on but I see he is absent, but somebody who is taking the notes can bring it to him, Sir. I am a farmer of the Bodles Farmers' Association and there is an area of land there that the highway part off. Sir the highway, the toll road that parts Bodles on the south side, Sir, not where we the farmers occupy but there is an area in front of HI-PRO where the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Tufton, when he was Minister, used to plant rice there, because we don't use that part to research anymore, Sir, because the animals dem or the tractor dem cannot go over there but we still have road that we can enter there, Sir, and there are several acres of land there that is unoccupied, that they are not using for research, and we the farmers would like to utilize that parcel of land Sir.

CHAIRMAN: All right, send us a letter outlining a proposal and we will make the representations for you. Come up to the table and leave all of your details there.

MR. GAUZE: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, wrap-up quickly. Come back after the second round Michael.

MR. RICHARDS: I am Handel Richards of the New Ground, St. Ann JAS Group. I want to address the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, and you Mr. President. Now, the roads - I want to make a description of it, I can't say it's bad, it was bad, it's worse now; water, we don't have water, the water is nearby but it does not get into our area. I am asking, Sir, if anything can be done and we need it to be done immediately where roads and especially water are concerned. There are many other items to address, Sir, but we will confine it to roads and water.

CHAIRMAN: So can you construct a resolution and bring it later on today calling on the authorities to address roads and water in the Parish of St. Ann in the following districts, and get a seconder. Okay, and let it be read into the records?

MR. RICHARDS: Okay, Mr. President, thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Great. All right, next person, and then Michael you are the last one.

MEMBER: Good afternoon farmers, Mr. President, Honourable Minister, pleasant good afternoon, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon.

MEMBER: Mr. President, the Jamaica Agricultural Society as I know it is one of the oldest community based organizations in Jamaica and they have a membership which spreads through every Parish.

Now the Government is promoting agriculture for the development of Jamaica's economy and the JAS has an organization that has membership throughout the length and breadth of Jamaica.

Now I notice that at a lot of these seminars we have importers and exporters meeting with farmers and a lot of different Government agencies - IICA, AIC and a lot of other Government agencies - and the JAS is conspicuously absent Mr. President.

Mr. Minister, this is a challenge to you personally, Sir, your work can be made easier to get the information out to the farmers if all these information could be passed on to the JAS so that they could pass it on to their members, because a lot of things have been taking place but the JAS is conspicuously absent Mr. President, so I really need the Minister to put JAS in a position where they can meet back with the farmers and pass on the information to the farmers and get the agriculture development going. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Okay; and as a part of the pro-activeness the JAS will have to get out there as well but the Minister will take note that we are here to extend the corporation to the benefit of the farmers.

MR. MICHAEL: Greetings to all the farmers from the four ends of Jamaica. I am Sherlong Michael from Flamstead in the Parish of St. Andrew - East Rural, St. Andrew.

Well, mi come down here today especially to see Mr. Grant and Mr. Samuda and also I expect to see Mr. Mike Henry, because the first thing -- and I want the Minister to listen to me too - before him and Mr. Grant go back into the corporate area I want them to find Mr. Mike Henry and ask him fi a bridge that cross from a place wey supply Hall's Delight, Westphalia, Davis Hill, Roberts Field. Di bwoy dem have it pon a tune sey 'if you cross it you will wash down into Yallahs Pond', so before Mr. Samuda goes up and before Mr. Norman Grant goes up I would like oonu find Mr. Mike Henry and tell him before the rainy season starts because the children dem over there get blocked over there, when the river comes down they caan go over. Is Mr. Samuda listening?

CHAIRMAN: Yes, but I don't think it is in Mr. Mike Henry's portfolio, I think it is Mr. Warmington, and also the Member of Parliament, Mrs. Holness, but what I would like you to do is to let us craft the appropriate resolution, because you are correct, and let's move it during the resolution point, because you are right, that whenever the rain falls nobody from those communities can cross it.

MR. MICHAEL: Well, we are talking about a resolution, we are talking about a bridge fi start inna August enuh, mi nuh know wey oonu a go get di money from for it's over 50 years Jamaica get independence and those children - when I stand in Cherry Berry Mountain and looking on my children some children caan go home for some two weeks, some three weeks, some four weeks, caan go across the river. So before you and Mr. Samuda go back in the office oonu go and find Mr. Warmington and tell him sey wi waan di bridge done before the next school season.

I talk it in several meetings, you know, but Mr. Samuda neva deh deh, but it drop pon deaf ears and fall on stones, it caan grow. Before the school season starts – where dem have it on tune and making plenty money 'if you cross it you will wash down into Yallahs pond, no one can cross it' - the people dem want a bridge before the school season starts. Mr. Samuda, mi nuh know where yuh a go get it.

The next thing Mr. Samuda, in the region of Flamstead, why Jamaica poor is because you have over 80% of the farm lands in forest up there not producing Blue Mountain Coffee and if you don't turn those lands over to the farmers and turn those lands into Blue Mountain Coffee you will be living in a bruk country and be a bruk Minister - you have 80%. (Applause)

The next thing Mr. Minister and Mr. Grant, you see me deh here dis mawnin mi don't get a good bathe, a wipe mi wipe up come here, mi nuh smell good. For the past three months I don't know what Mr. Grant and Mr. Samuda paying Water Commission to do fi wi nuh smell good. No water in the pipe in Flamstead and I would call it the biggest scammer company, it's the biggest scamming company in East Rural St. Andrew. (Applause)

And also Mr. Samuda, I am not talking politics but from the 2004 storm come - Mr. Hibbert is the MP - no water pump at the Ras Valley Pumping Station to go to Bloxburgh right up, all through Mr. Damion Crawford area, those people don't get water. This last lady here visited since around two weeks. All when oonu sey oonu have drought water deh deh so fi gi people water. A lazy Water Commission lazy or a bruk oonu bruk? Mi nuh kip one cylinder a mi place, cause if mi stove go off mi have mi spare.

In the pump house dem - two in Flamstead and one in Ras Valley - the one in Ras Valley serves Bloxburgh, Brighton almost come back to Bull Bay. I don't know, when the Water Commission man dem tek it over from the KSAC every pump house had two pumps and when the Water Commission man dem come I don't know whether I would sey dem steal one or dem take away one but one missing, so three missing out of six and the system cannot work without a standby engine.

So mi nuh waan oonu dey pon deaf ears because as mi tell yu sey mi nuh bathe since mawnin so oonu fi get up and mek di lazy man dem up a Water Commission go do dem work. I am not talking the operators dem wey a operate di pump you know, a talking about the lazy supervisors and di man dem wey sidding dung a Marescaux Road and Hope Garden, let dem go out and do dem work cause wi need water in the estate.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, give him a hand. I don't think we could have said it better. Thank you very, very much. (Applause)

I think the Minister has made a note and I will also make those notes and we will get the details and make the necessary representation.

So, can we have the appropriate motion to declare matters arising closed?

Moved by - can we have a mover and a seconder?

All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN: Any Against?

MEMBERS: No.

CHAIRMAN: Matters arising closed. Thank you very much. All right, we are going to now take quickly - and for the Minister to get the benefit of how the JAS has done we are going to take the Presentation of the Financial Report by our CEO and our Auditors and the Presentation of the Annual Report and then right after I will have words with the Minister and then I will tell you what will come next, but before that I would like to recognize Councillor Joel Williams. Can we welcome Councillor Joel Williams? (Applause)

And also to indicate that the Blood Bank is here next door for farmers who want to donate blood, you can certainly go over to the Nestle building to donate blood and help to save a life.

At this time put your hands together for Mr. Christopher Emanuel, Chief Executive Officer of the Jamaica Agricultural Society. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL REPORT

MR. EMANUEL: Good afternoon. All protocols observed. The privilege is mine to present to you the Financial Section of the Annual Report of the Jamaica Agricultural Society for the year ended March 31, 2016, but before I continue with the analysis I just want to do an extraction from our Incorporation Act and then I will ask Miss Shawna Sutherland from our Auditors - McKenley & Associates - to present to you the Auditors Report.

Now it is in the front of our Annual Report, the Incorporation Act extract 12(1), and it reads:

"The Board shall annually prepare and present to the Annual General Meeting, a report of its proceedings, together with a complete statement of its financial position and its accounts, audited and certified by an auditor approved by the Minister."

So at this time I will invite Miss Shawna Sutherland, as I said before, from our Auditors to present to us the Auditors' Report and then I will come back and do the analysis.

Presentation of Auditor's Report

MISS SUTHERLAND: Good afternoon farmers and gentlemen.

MEMBERS: Good afternoon.

MISS SUTHERLAND: Our Independent Auditors' Report:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Jamaica Agricultural Society ("The Society") which comprise the Statement of the Financial Position as of March 31, 2016, and the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Cash Flow Statements for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

Management's responsibility for the Financial Statements:

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and with requirements of the Jamaican Companies Act. This responsibility includes: designing, implementing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

The Auditors' Responsibility:

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Those standards require that we comply with the ethical requirements, and plan, and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance as to whether or not the financial statements are free from material misstatements.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the Auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatements of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the Auditor considers internal controls relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements. We believe that the audit evidence that we obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Independent Auditors' Report Opinion:

In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Society as at March 31, 2016, and of the financial performance, changes in reserves and cash flows of the Society for the year then ended, so far as concerns the members of the Society and in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements:

As required by the Jamaican Companies Act, The Financial Administration and Audit Act, and the Jamaica Agricultural Society Incorporation Act, we have obtained all the information and explanations which, to the best of our knowledge and belief, were necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion, proper accounting records have been kept, so far as appears from our examination of those records, and the accompanying financial statements are in agreement therewith and give the information required by the Acts, in the manner so required.

Thank you. Enjoy the rest of the day.

MR. EMANUEL:

Thank you Miss Sutherland.

PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL REPORT

MR. EMANUEL:

Members, I crave your indulgence and ask you to turn to page 1 of the financial statements - it's almost in the middle of your Annual Report. As I said in the highlights that the performance in Financial Year 2015/2016 was broadly satisfactory in a year categorized by tight fiscal management, and on page 1 you will see listed there our operating revenue totaling \$96.22 million, comprised of \$80.4 million from the government subventions and grants - and the figures are there: \$8 million from investment and \$5 million from membership and donations.

Equally, our operating expenses moved from \$88 million to \$97.3 million, but when I look at the breakdown I will bring to your attention why this is so.

In addition, our total operating expenses is \$105.3 million. However, we actually realized some gains from some revaluation allowing us to come out of the year 2015/2016 with a total comprehensive income of \$24.6 million compared to \$1.3 million 2014/2015.

On page 2 of the financial statements is a list of our assets, liabilities; and as we can see there that our total assets stood now at \$525.1 million, an increase of \$41.5 million, when compared to 2014/2015.

Notwithstanding, there was an increase in the Society's liabilities, but if you look at our current assets versus our current liabilities we are ahead by \$20 million.

From page 4 to about page 24 it's predominantly notes, but I will just zoom in on page 24 for your benefit - page 25 rather in terms of the administrative and general expenses.

One of the contributing factors for the movement in the administrative and general expenses is a movement in salary. As you know the government had awarded a salary increase to all civil servants and all our staff members currently are part of the civil service group and as such that increase is reflecting a movement of our staff costs and equally a movement in our subvention - travel and upkeep rather.

However, just to say that that movement was paid for or financed by the Ministry, so notwithstanding there is a movement in the bottom line there was also a movement in the top line by way of increased subvention.

I would like you to turn to page 26, the annual general meeting. There was a movement in terms of last year, 2015, it costs us \$1.7 million, it moved to \$2 million, and this is as a result of some increase in transportation costs. In terms of the movement from \$902,000 to \$1.3 million that has to do with our 'Eat Jamaican' campaign.

Page 27, is an analysis of our property, plant and equipment. It's all there for reading. Just to say that our largest property right now is our land and ponds which accounted for \$294.2 million at the end of March 31.

Our President spoke this morning to some investments in Sweet River Abattoir Supplies Company Limited, National Commercial Bank Jamaica Limited and Radio Jamaica Limited - that's all on page 29.

Pages 31 to 34 pretty much cover an analysis of our receivables, payables, and it ends by a listing of our Senior Directors' Compensation.

That pretty much covers our financial statements.

Can someone move for the adoption of the financial statements by this annual general meeting?

Moved by: Sylvester Green from Deeside.

Seconded by: Donovan Smith from Treadways.

MR. EMANUEL: All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. EMANUEL: Any against?

MEMBERS: No.

MR. EMANUEL: The ayes have it.

Let's quickly look at the tabling of our Annual Report. As I had indicated in the Incorporation Act 12(1)(2) - you all have a copy so I will just go through page by page and then we will just ask the meeting to adopt.

Starting at pages 5 & 6 - The Report from the President. Pages 7 & 8 - The CEO's Report. Pages 9 & 10 - The Board of Management Report, which pretty much gives an indication of your members' attendance to board meetings. Page 11 - List of Obituaries that we dealt with this morning. Pages 12 & 13 - our Human Resource and Administration Report. Page 14 - a summation of Commercial Activities. Pages 15, 16 to 19 - pretty much give us in summary form a report on our Field Services to include but not limited to membership, praedial larceny, other activities, inter-agency collaboration, to name a few. Page 20; our Public Relations Report. Pages 21 and 22 into 23 - our Marketing and Projects; and then the other section of the Annual Report pretty much deals with Financials which I had gone through earlier.

Can someone move for the adoption of the Annual Report by this meeting?

Moved by Tony Maragh;

Seconded by Handal Richards.

MR. EMANUEL: All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. EMANUEL: Any against?

MEMBERS: No.

MR. EMANUEL: The ayes have it. Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much Mr. Emanuel. I was just making the point to the Honourable Minister that the JAS has tabled our Audited Financial Statement and the Annual Report for the year ending the 31st of March, 2016, within three months of the end of the financial year end, and I want you to commend the management team and our auditors and the Board and everyone. This is a one commendable achievement. Put your hands together for that wonderful achievement. (Applause)

The Minister is going to address us shortly, and you have already moved the appropriate resolutions, but just before the Minister addresses us I am just going to ask for the Minister to be aware of some of the persons he is looking down on. I want to introduce our Farm Queens and I want you just to come quickly out and stand.

Miss St. Thomas	-	Miss Copeland
Miss Portland	-	Miss Casey
Miss St. Mary	-	Miss Croney
Miss St. Ann	-	Miss Alexander
Miss Clarendon	-	Miss Fisher
Miss St. Catherine	-	Miss Smith
Miss Hanover	-	Miss Brown
Miss St. Elizabeth	-	Miss Leslie
Miss Manchester	-	Miss Creary
Miss St. James	-	Miss Clennon
Miss Trelawny	-	Miss Stewart
Miss Kgn & St. Andrew	-	Miss Jacqueline
Miss Westmoreland	-	Miss McFarlane

Put your hands together for the Farm Queen contestants.
(Applause)

MR. HUGH: Senator Grant, I would like to say that Miss Hanover is unable to be here today, she had to sit exams. Please accept our apology for Hanover.

CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. HUGH: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, put your hands together again for the Farm Queen contestants (applause) and, of course, our National Farm Queen - Miss Peta-Gaye Stewart. She will not be at Denbigh because of the scholarship that she got to go to Delaware, so later on she is going to be making her presentation and she will be doing her final walk. She did very well and I think she is going to represent us in a wonderful way. (Applause)

And finally I want to say to the Minister importantly there are a lot of things that were said here, right, about the presence of the JAS in the parishes and I would like to just call the names of the Managers out because we are going to be calling on you to really be giving 110% going forward:

Manager for Region 1	-	Mrs. Murdock
Manager for Region 2	-	Mr. Thorpe
Manchester	-	Mr. Blake
St. Andrew	-	Miss Hall (acting)
Westmoreland	-	Mr. Hamilton
St. Thomas	-	Miss Finnikin
Portland	-	Miss Johnson
St. Mary	-	Miss Crosdale
St. Ann	-	Mrs. Dunbar;

Clarendon	-	Mr. Killingbeck
St. Catherine	-	Miss Duhaney;
Trelawny	-	Mrs. Ramdatt
Hanover	-	Miss. Scott;
St. Elizabeth	-	Mr. Sherman;
St. James	-	Mr. James
Showground Manager	-	Miss Hamilton.

Okay, so put your hands together for the Field Officers. (Applause)

And, of course, your CEO - Mr. Emanuel who you know; Miss Brown - HR; Mrs. Pullen- Marketing; Miss Francis - Public Relations; Mrs. Jackson – our Executive Secretary and Mr. Lewis – our Auditor. So can you put your hands together for them? (applause) Okay, so team JAS moving forward.

I am on record to endorse and commit the support of the Jamaica Agricultural Society to our present Minister, the Honourable Karl Samuda.

The JAS has always enjoyed support with the Minister of Agriculture, and, in fact, one President reminded me that many years ago when he was President a Prime Minister had planned to remove a Minister from the Ministry of Agriculture the Minister called on the JAS to make representation to the then Prime Minister to ensure that he remains in the Ministry of Agriculture.

So, Honourable Minister we look forward for a harmonious relationship and an understanding between your Ministry and the Jamaica Agricultural Society. We think you are the right man at the right place at the right time, and at this time it is my pleasure to present to the 121st Annual General Meeting of the greatest farmers organization in Jamaica and the Western Hemisphere, the Hon. Karl Samuda, Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture & Fisheries to address us. Please make him welcome. (Applause)

MAIN ADDRESS - HONOURABLE KARL SAMUDA

MINISTER SAMUDA: Thank you very much Mr. President and good friend, Norman Grant, Your Worship the Mayor of Montego Bay, Mr. Harris; Councillor Williams, other very distinguished - too many to call individually - ladies and gentlemen on this platform, and of course, distinguished ladies and gentlemen among the farming community here today.

It is my first address to the Annual General Meeting of the JAS. Although I have only been in this Ministry for the past four months I have had occasion to address various fora with the President who is the man who doesn't take no for an answer most times and I always enjoy being at his meetings because he always seems to have something new to offer.

Thank you very much for the welcome that I have received Norman, I appreciate it and I look forward to a long association, and I hope I won't have to call on you to ask the Prime Minister not to fire me.

I am sure that most of you when you heard that Karl Samuda was named as the Minister of Agriculture and other things must have said to yourselves 'well, I guess anything for the first time is worth trying', but I am sure most of you had no idea of who Karl Samuda was in terms of his involvement with agriculture. Well, since I am at JAS let me just get some credentials out of the way.

I was born on Espeut Avenue off Waltham Park Road and the gentleman living beside me was Mr. Willie Henry, then President of the JAS. Later on in life my path crossed with another President, Mr. Courtney Fletcher, from Moy Hall, when we had a family farm in Rowlandsfield, St. Thomas, and we sold coffee to Moy Hall and we sold banana out of Portland where my son would take it at nights and deliver it.

We have been in agriculture in almost - most of the popular crops: cane, coffee, and I heard someone speak of pimento. I really never knew you could grow pimento, I thought it was the birds that deliver the pimento but it seems to me that it is indeed a crop that is worth cultivating. We had a lot of pimentos on our farm. As I said we went into export, banana, cattle, coffee, and coconuts, so we had a broad cross-section of involvement. As a result of that my son who was a mere twenty-two year old at the time was voted the first young champion farmer in the country (applause), and our farm in St. Thomas won three years in a row the champion farm in the Parish of St. Thomas. (Applause)

So you see I have had a long association with agriculture, so much so that President Courtney Fletcher sent a letter one day to advise that we were - my son and I had been made life members of the JAS. You can believe that? But they canceled it, they canceled the life membership but they must bring it back because people who are honoured in that way would like to know that they are life members of an association that is as vibrant and as good as this is.

Now, I didn't come into the Ministry of Agriculture and get even one day holiday, I went right into a baptism of fire. My first challenge was a collapse of the sugar industry, and without going over and tell you every detail of it I can only say that when I was called to Lionel Town when it was announced that the Pan Caribbean run by the Chinese were not going to open this sugar season and I looked into the eyes of the workers I said 'no way, as Minister I can't preside over that', and so I declared from that evening that every effort would be made to save the workers and their jobs so that Lionel Town and Southern Clarendon could thrive and develop and the people could send their children to school, buy uniforms and live a decent life.

When eventually we saw a glimmer of hope in being able to keep the factory going I was faced with the prospect of not having another crop or not being able to take off the crop at Long Pond in Trelawny, 75,000 tons of cane was going to have to stand over other than the small amount that was going to be sent to Worthy Park. Can you imagine the loss to the farmers and to the workers not being able to get a dollar return on their efforts in producing 75,000 tons of canes at Long Pond?

Again, I got together with my expert team, a team that I had only been associated with for a couple weeks, and we put together a plan, and when I announced the plan that we will do everything to keep Monymusk open and make sure that Long Pond cane was reaped and that we were going to reopen the Long Pond Sugar Factory, I was expecting a notice any day from the Belleview Hospital to commit me into the institution because everybody thought I was mad, everybody saying I was going to dash weh Government money because there was no future in sugar.

Well, farmers let me tell you, after all is said and done we have produced so far, and we will be producing right through to the end of August. We have produced so far 2000 tons of sugar at Long Pond and Monymusk is running right now with farmers tending the fields. (Applause)

Now most of you here don't know anything about sugar, oonu know about yam and potato, and goat, and cow, and thief, but I am just giving you an idea of the involvement so far.

Last Thursday - because I am not somebody who gets a job and get overwhelmed with the position - we decided to go on the road, because I will be going on the road every week to visit farmers, visit you - you wait and see, I am coming up to Westphalia, Hall's Delight and Flamstead, because it's a place I

know good, Mount Charles too, and it's only one time in my life when I would have been welcomed in Mount Charles - I'll make you digest that for a little bit for those who know Mount Charles (laughter) - but I went to St. Elizabeth and Manchester and I visited New Forest, Duff House on the border St. Elizabeth and Manchester, and there was to be a meeting of the farmers -- who come from that area - anybody here comes from that area? Dem down di back dey -- there was to be a meeting to distribute, through JSIF, irrigation equipment, and so I took the opportunity to go and visit the Agro-park at New Forest, Duff House, but as usual when I go anywhere before I go to the meeting I like to go in and have a discussion in the field with the farmers, and what I saw made me very sad and disappointed. It was a lovely development, great effort made by wonderful people, but I saw one young man and I stopped my car, to my security I said 'stop', and I went to the farmer because what I saw I couldn't believe. He had a white bucket and a condensed tin and he was taking tin by tin of water from the bucket and pouring it at the root of every escallion, and when I looked at the amount of escallion root and what he was doing I said to him 'my friend this can't work'. He said 'well, Mr. Samuda if you don't love farming you can't do this', and he was doing it in boiling, boiling, boiling heat, sun hot like fire. I said no, this is too much, we are not going anywhere in Jamaica in agriculture if our farmers have to suffer this kind of experience.

So we went to the function and I can tell you if it's even one gesture that can make one farmer move from poverty to prosperity that day was a day of joy for that farmer because I made representation on his behalf, sent for him, because when I spoke to him and I said 'how much is it going to take you to irrigate this land', he said it is going to cost a minimum of \$60,000. Poor fellow, him don't even have 60,000 cents, he wouldn't even know where to begin, and the water was only coming every other day for half day; there are two pumps but one break down so they are running on one pump, so every other day they get it for half day. I said 'okay', and when I got to the function - I brought him there - I appealed on his behalf - as an example of what can be done - I appealed on his behalf for the supplies of irrigation tubing and all that is involved in setting up his farm on a proper basis, and he received it and we took him back to his farm and I told him 'when I come back here I expect you to have more things planted, better crops, more money, so that you can improve your life, fix your car and live a good life'. (Applause)

Now, I must tell you that that was a heart rendering experience for me.

So you see I am not looking at agriculture from the theoretical standpoint. For too long we talk agriculture and you hear all the theories about what can be done and what can't be done. I prefer to see people who have a willingness to work hard in their fields, apply themselves with the knowledge that they have acquired over the years of experience and assistance from organizations such as the JAS, RADA, 4H and those movements so that they can empower their lives.

I have heard talk this morning of water supplies and I can't think of anything, I can't think of a single factor for agriculture that is more important than water. In fact, before coming here I got a call to say that in sections of South West St. Elizabeth the farmers are having a very hard time because there is drought down there killing them.

I heard here the cry of Miss Monica from Joe Hut – well, Miss Monica, I don't know what your water supply situation is, but from what you were saying it seems to me that you need some fertilizer and I can tell you here and now, just as I do everywhere I go, I must find somebody who I can help directly as a Minister. So we are going to send you some fertilizer for your people up there. (Applause)

In fact, you go and identify all the legitimate farmers, make sure they join JAS though, and we will ask the JAS to distribute the fertilizer to them for you. (Applause)

The government is in the midst of developing the Essex Valley water system that will affect some 1400 farmers covering about 1400 acres of land, covering about 700 farmers in Southern St. Elizabeth. We are also improving water supplies in St. Thomas, in St. Mary, Trelawny and Manchester. We are doing that through the water harvesting systems, we are putting in 12 water harvesting systems and this is being supported financially through the Climate Change Adaptation Programme.

You know, in the areas of agriculture that you are involved in I hear talk of having difficulties to finance agriculture and as the new Minister I have come to the table with a new idea, and here is my idea: businesses that have money that are in the trading side of business, traders who buy what you produce and buy other goods imported and sell and make good profits must now be part of the partnership with the farming community. They must be willing to partner with you and to invest in you along with the Government.

I don't want the farmers to look only to the government and I don't want the investing business community to look and see what only government is supposed to be doing, I am trying to encourage a partnership between the business community and the farming community - and by farming community I mean the small farmers of this country who need a little money to buy the supplies in order to make their farms more productive, and when they provide the funds and select farmers in communities they must strike agreements with the farmers where they provide the funds upfront and when the time comes to get paid for the money they give the farmers the farmers will pay them back with the produce that are produced on the farms. That is the kind of relationship that I believe can take off the pressure off of you to finance yourself and to go all over the place to beg bank and everybody for the money you need to develop your farms. (Applause).

When I came here, you know, and I saw where this platform was I said to your President 'it should be down there in front of the people', and I also said to him 'I want to take off the microphone and walk go down there', because I don't get a feeling of connection between this part of the meeting and you, it's like we are not connecting.

(Microphone was removed from platform and Minister Samuda is on the floor with the farmers)

MINISTER SAMUDA: I come here today to talk up a conversation with you, I come here today to know and understand the problems that you are having, and when I hear somebody from Hall's Delight and Westphalia sey dat yuh caan get cross the river when rain falls especially, is a thing I know well, the only trouble is that that was 45 years ago. We have been independent in this country for 55 years and for 45 years when I went up there first we used to have the same problems that I heard here today and it's long time that, so what we need to do now is to look at how we get together and solve that problem.

I have come here today to talk to you and solve your problems. I can't solve all your problems but I know damn well that if you and I work together with the JAS and all the other agencies within agriculture we will solve the problems - we can solve our problems. (Applause)

There is no problem in agriculture too hard for you the farmers to solve because you have the knowledge, you have the experience, you have the will, you have the commitment, and from what I have seen here today the way that gentleman walked from down yah so and walked go straight up so and sey 'I

second the motion', you know what that means, that's a display of commitment to your organization. (Applause) And I want every one of you today when you leave here and you go back home you commit yourself to strengthening the JAS, to making your maximum contribution to every one of your groups and strengthen the JAS. (Applause)

Another thing I want you to commit to today, I want you to commit to me today that you will use every influence you can bring to bear on your various families to get the young people on the farms (Applause) and if you can show where you have been able to encourage your children, your relatives who are young, to go on the farm I as your Minister gives you a commitment to give them maximum support so they don't fail. I give you that commitment here today because this is a vital, vital industry. (Applause)

MISS SMITH: Mi sey when me hear sey one Minister inna di the agriculture Jesus Christ mi nearly speak in tongues cause all problems solve - problems solve, but you know when mi glad is when mi see you come a mi yaad a Joe Hut. (Applause)

MINISTER SAMUDA: I will come to your homes, I will visit with you because as a Minister I don't intend to sit down in no air-conditioning room behind no big desk and talk with a whole heap of people who are talking theory, I want to go out to the farms and meet with the farmers and see what they are doing and how they are doing it.

For instance, when I went down to Duff House to that same young man I spoke to you about 'Sanjay' he showed me how you reap escallion, and in all my life I never knew that you only take off a pinch off of the root and you sell that. So I said 'you don't clean it up' him sey 'no boss I caan clean it up because if I clean it up it costs me too much and I am not going to get the extra money fi it so I sell it same way and sometimes I win, sometimes I lose'. So I said 'you get cash'? him sey 'sometimes I have to give it to them and when it sell they bring back the money; sometimes I win, sometimes I lose'.

And when he explained how it is done to me I said 'Sanjay, is this the only way you can make it'? He said 'I can earn half a million dollars on a half acre of escallion. I said to him 'Sanjay, after I finish put irrigation pon you and you irrigate your escallion and make them full and green and fat I want you make a million dollars off of the half acre, expand your land, grow up from where you are', and anybody in this room or anywhere you are, or anybody who is willing to put out that effort I am willing to give you maximum support - maximum support. (Applause)

Colleagues, friends, farmers, understand me clearly, I see myself not just as the Minister of Agriculture but I see myself as a crime fighting Minister because if I put money in the hands of families then those in the family would not have to go out and struggle and thief and go to prison. I am contributing by developing the lives of the people in the farming community and I believe I am making a contribution to keeping down crime because the more money you make the richer you become, the better able you would be to guarantee that your children become lawyers and doctors and engineers and reach to the pinnacle and lift everybody out of poverty.

That is the mission I see, that is the job I have taken on. I haven't taken on this job to come bring you greetings as my friend Norman would like me to do, and stand up 5,000 miles away from you and talk down to you. I am a man who loves people and loves to be with people; I love to embrace people. You see dat lady there, she mek me feel warm man - she mek me feel warm, and I tell you enuh, when I saw the Farm Queen dem come out I said 'dem young boys don't know what dem missing man, dem don't know what dem missing'. (Applause)

Coffee: I heard somebody said coffee price is going down, but I can tell you this, everybody who have a square of land in the Blue Mountain area it is going to take you three years but plant coffee. Coffee has the greatest future in Jamaica because there is no limit to what the Japanese will buy - there is no limit, but you must protect yourself. You must get your price for your coffee locally because it is your local sweat that is going to bring home the coffee in the quantities and the good order so that we can get the best price, so protect yourself. But there is no limit and the price is going sky high, it don't start rise yet because there is no other coffee in the world that can compare to the Blue Mountain Coffee.

I heard a gentleman - him never really talk so loud, I don't know why, him neva talk so loud; I am looking for him, you know, he came up and he spoke about 'herbs' - see him here man - he said 'herbs', Cannabis. This Ministry is responsible for that, yes, I am the herbs man, but we can't sell the herb for social use, it has to be for medical use - it has to be for medical use, and by medical use it does not necessarily mean in a bottle but it must be controlled for medical purposes.

There is a growing demand by many countries around the world, Europe and parts of America, that are looking at Cannabis, herb or ganja, as we call it, to solve their problems - their medical problems, their economic problems, some of them might even solve their love problems, but at this time I would caution anybody who would seek to go out and cultivate the herb with the view that you could be able to sell it commercially or privately for social use.

There are uses to which it can be put in certain quantities but primarily our focus now is to develop a strain called 'Hemp' for medicinal purposes and as soon as the whole committee that is dealing with it and the finalization of all the regulations and everything pertaining to it Jamaica will be fully apprized as to exactly what the future holds for that.

So I come finally to the question of roads. You can't be a farmer and you have your produce and when it's time to get it to the market you can't get it to the market because di road dem bad; and I have been through some bad roads.

We have in the Ministry two hundred and odd million dollars for road improvement - farm road improvement. I am not talking about barber green, you know, farm road improvement. All the roads that were assessed previous to us coming to office, all contracts that were signed, we allowed those to go right through and those are either finished or they are work in progress, but what I said to the Permanent Secretary 'let us do a review of the situation through the help of the JAS, which I am going to call on to assist us; the help of RADA who is going to go through and survey and give us an accurate account of those roads that are worst off', and we will try our best to bring a remedy to most of those that are now causing you a lot of grief.

As I close, let me say to you all, we are a blessed people here, Jamaican people. We live in the finest country in the world but you must more than believe that because every day you wake up you must say to yourself 'I am in love with my country and my country people and I will put out every effort to improve my country'.

I will fight crime at every level. I will make sure that praedial larceny is at a minimum with the Farm Watch Programme that I hear you talking about, because there is nothing more painful than to lose your crops or to lose your animals, but in the final analysis whether you love orange or you love green - you see mi inna mi blue today - whatever the colour you prefer understand one thing, we are in this thing together, we are in this struggle

together (applause). Nobody, not Mr. Barack Obama nor the new lady that name something another May from Britain that is going to take over today as Prime Minister, none of them is going to come and give us anything, we have to work for it, and we don't have to beg them because if we work hard we can achieve it. (Applause)

When Usain Bolt went and ran for the first time it was felt impossible for him to do what he has done but he did it through hard work, not just yam, yam alone caan mek man fun fast, hard work, commitment and pride - pride.

We must be proud as a nation and we must put hands and heart together to work in partnership. God bless you and I will see you again. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN:

All right, what an address? Come on, put your hands together for the Honourable Karl Samuda, Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture & Fisheries. (Applause)

I think that he has gone down to be the first Minister who has addressed a JAS Annual General Meeting in such a way, and in fact, Minister, as a result of your example next year the head table is going to be down there (indicating the floor); next year we are going to set up the head table down there if we are going to be in here, because we are setting up another meeting hall for the JAS. Put your hands together for the Honourable Minister (applause). We are inspired, Sir, by your address and we are committed to work with you and we thank you for addressing the JAS' Annual General Meeting here today in such a remarkable and inspired way.

I know that Miss Murdock is going to be talking about how inspired you have made us feel today amongst the farmers who are not here. Thank you once again Minister and may God bless you. Come on put your hands together again (applause) for the Honourable Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture & Fisheries.

I am not too sure, TV Station, how you handled that but I am sure you got some areas of his presentation, but I like the feel. And Minister, I am tempted to do what you did but I am not you, but indeed we thank you very much.

The Honourable Minister attended a 4H function the other day and he said to me 'Norman, I am not coming to Denbigh to address any empty arena, position me in such a way that when I am speaking I am speaking to the people, I don't want to talk into no camera and to talk to an empty arena', and I want to say to

the Minister that I got to work with my team and when you come to Denbigh on the 30th you will be speaking to a lot of people in front of you, and so the commission that you have given me this year, next year we are going to make sure that when you come in you are speaking with the body of the farmers.

Did you enjoy the Minister?

MEMBERS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: You love him?

MEMBERS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: The JAS going to work with him?

MEMBERS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Because he has committed to work with us, and that fertilizer that he committed we are going to make sure that we get it to you. Come on, stand up and give the Minister a big, big round of applause to show him how much we appreciate him and we love him and we are committing to work with the Honourable Minister. (Applause)

The Minister has another engagement so we are going to allow him to leave when he so desires, but before he leaves, our camera folks, he wasn't here, I would like him to come forward for me to present officially to him the Denbigh Hotel.

(Denbigh Hotel presentation to the Hon. Minister Karl Samuda)

CHAIRMAN: Minister, do you have a few minutes, you can take one or two questions?

MINISTER SAMUDA: Yes, I can.

CHAIRMAN: Alright, so we are going to take some. And we have been side-barring but this Minister commits to working with the JAS, so give him a clap for that. (Applause)

We want you to make your questions be sharp and punchy so that we can get as many of the farmers who want to have a little talk with the Minister to get an opportunity. Go ahead.

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

- MEMBER: Mr. Speaker, this is just to endorse something that the Minister said. When I see the Minister take the mike and come down here I said 'that's the Mr. Samuda I know'. 'That's the gentleman who me and Mr. McMaster used to drive go up to his house on Sundays and him neva tell dem sey fi tell wi him nuh deh deh, him come out and siddung and talk to us pon him farm'. Thank you, Mr. Minister, I have some faith in you, so mek wi keep watching it and see how it a go work out. Bless you.
- CHAIRMAN: All right, thank you. Remember to give your name and branch.
- MR. BROOKS: I am from St. James, Summer Hill JAS Branch. My name is Gersham Brooks. Now, we the farmers in South St. James have a problem there with chickens, when we get our chickens and ready for market there is no market because when you go to the RADA people dem dung deh dem deh ask yuh sey if a politician gi yuh and these type a tings mus' cut out because we are paying them to do our work and if me deh sell mi chicken and you is employed to me how yuh a go ask mi sey if a politician gi mi? Dat no sound good Mr. Grant.
- CHAIRMAN: No, it doesn't sound good.
- MR. BROOKS: It nuh sound good, sir, so mi a ask you fi tell dem dung deh sey wi ready.
- CHAIRMAN: All right.
- MR. BROOKS: We ready, mi have chickens; right now mi can sell even two thousand pounds of chicken and there is no market for it, so what are we going to do?
- CHAIRMAN: Bring it come to Denbigh.
- MR. BROOKS: Bring it come a Denbigh?
- CHAIRMAN: Yes.
- MR. BROOKS: You know how much it a go cost me fi come up here, sir?
- CHAIRMAN: All right, we will talk; you said you have two thousand pounds, mek we talk 'bout it.
- MR. BROOKS: All right, sir, thank you.

CHAIRMAN: The Minister wants to respond.

MINISTER SAMUDA: My brother, listen, any RADA man who tell you dat tek him name - tek him name because he will have to account for that statement, because let me tell you something, I don't want no politics in agriculture (Applause) - I don't want no politics in agriculture.

MR. BROOKS: Thank you, sir, the 'ticks' bite bad.

MINISTER SAMUDA: I will take your name very shortly and I am going to find out the story behind what you just said.

MR. BROOKS: Okay, sir, thank you.

MINISTER SAMUDA: Bless you.

CHAIRMAN: Next person.

MR. NELSON: Good afternoon to everyone. Welcome Mr. Minister. I want to first commend our JAS President for the health of the JAS - I want you to listen to me, sir - in terms of profits and so on, we want to commend you, but my concern is - and I will talk to the Minister a little more - that the small farmers are detached from the JAS and the office, we don't have no eyes and ears and feet to deal with our situation.

We have had three years or more of drought, we have had farmers who plant up to four or five crops and have lost it all and we have not heard from the JAS that we have been supporting for so long; you not even ask the Minister wey him a go do fi wi. We talk a lot about what is happening in the JAS and how it is progressing.

CHAIRMAN: What area are you from, Sir, branch and your name?

MR. NELSON: Euton Nelson, President of the branch in Rock River, Clarendon, Pearnel Charles area. Now, sir, rain harvesting, number one; you know weh mi concern 'bout, there was a time when mi hear sey whole heap a black tank deh 'bout di place and the question I am asking is where are all the black tanks gone? A lot of those tanks have gone into areas weh nah do farming. Mr. Minister, I want you to keep your eyes and ears open because a lot of things a gwaan inna the JAS weh need fi sort out.

Listen, RADA in some a di parishes dem a run one ship and JAS a run one ship. RADA has to be at one with JAS and JAS at one with RADA. Right? Wi caan have it detached; we caan have the JAS detached from di small farmers because we have been suffering

too long. Right now some of the small farmers dem caan come back, dem nuh have nuh fertilizer, dem nuh have nutten fi start over. What is the JAS doing? Mr. Minister, you need fi keep an eye on di JAS, we want something better, sir.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you sir, thank you for the point. I will just make one point. You can sit down while I address you.

MR. NELSON: I hear you.

CHAIRMAN: Don't forget that in the 1990's it was the JAS at a Farmers' Forum that called for the establishment of an extension service called RADA.

As I said earlier on in my address, Minister, it has always been the convention that someone from the JAS sits on the RADA Board while also someone from the JAS sits on the Parish Advisory Board.

MR. NELSON: A two heads yuh have, sir - two heads inna di system - RADA and JAS.

CHAIRMAN: Hold on. RADA sits on our Board and I have said to the new - unfortunately the CEOs - if you look in the Report the representative for RADA came to 1 out of 11 meetings, but we are trying to ensure that at the top level, both nationally and in the Parish, we close that gap because we know it is important for us to work together.

For the records, I don't know if it is because of Dr. Harrison's funeral why we don't have a representative from RADA at the meeting here today, but Minister, we have always had a close collaboration and we want to see to it that that happens so we are not swinging two boats. So it's a good point that you made.

MR. NELSON: Quickly, Sir, let me ask you, is it true that the fee for Denbigh has moved from \$800 to \$1000?

CHAIRMAN: Yes, from \$800 to \$1000 - no, the first day will be \$900 and the second and the third day will be \$1000 because there is a massive Gospel Concert on the second day and a massive Digicel Rising Star event on the third day.

MR. NELSON: One quick advice and then I will sit down. Plow some of the profits into di small groups dem that are presently failing in the JAS; some of the profit of the JAS, the profit of the JAS that the small farmers give you, plow back some of that into the small groups that are failing, they need to see the JAS doing something.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, and we will take that recommendation. Let me just say that a part of the increase in the membership fee, 10% of that goes back to the small groups, but yes, we will take you on board with that.

I was just talking to one of my Directors, Mr. Emanuel, we are going to have to ensure, VPs, that the presence of our Parish Managers in the parishes are more effective. The Minister has given me a commitment for more support and I will be sitting with him for that, but we want to make sure that the brand of the JAS as it relates to the small parishes, as it relates to the small JAS groups in the communities are felt, so we take your recommendation on board, sir.

MR. FRAZER: Good afternoon, Will Frazer - Belair, St. Andrew. Question to you Senator Grant: the Richmond Project that you spoke of in the Annual Report, could you give any highlight as to what is happening with that?

CHAIRMAN: Yes, very good, very good.

MR. FRAZER: The second point, FINSAC was formed in the '90's I guess, the then government instituted a \$600,000 or \$60,000 cap on the insured money that the savers would get if the bank should fall. At the time the dollar was somewhere like sixty-odd Jamaican dollars to US\$1; if I am not mistaken it is now J\$126 for US\$1. I mean, that \$600,000 now is of no value in comparison to what it was then. I am proposing that this cap be moved from \$600,000 to somewhere like probably \$2 million. I think that would be much more reasonable if somebody is earning and saving.

CHAIRMAN: That is the security deposit you are talking about?

MR. FRAZER: Yes, the security deposit. Working and saving and be certain that at the end of the day if the bank should fall they have at least that amount to look on. I mean, right now the only entities that would benefit from that \$600,000 are the banks.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Will Frazer, that's a very good suggestion and I think you should craft a resolution to bring it back later on, but we will take note of that. I agree with you, sir, very good suggestion.

MR. FRAZER: I shouldn't have to call for a resolution, Senator Grant, this was spoken out in public; the Minister of Agriculture is here, JIS is here and whatever feed they are getting, should be a part of the feed as well.

CHAIRMAN: All right, the Minister is hearing you.

MR. FRAZER: Thank you very much for your time, sir.

CHAIRMAN: In relation to your first question, just quickly, the matter of the Richmond Cooperative - and I am glad the Minister is here because what happened is that this cooperative was formed by the JAS, we put the farmers together and they acquired this land and they have this company that is going.

Under the Cooperative Societies Act they have to make returns to the Department of Cooperatives. Unfortunately, Richmond was not making those returns, the JAS intervened upon their requests and commit to the Department of Cooperative to do the returns.

The Department of Cooperative insists that they are going to wind up the Richmond Cooperative, Minister, and as a result what they have done is to value the assets of the Cooperative because it includes land, and I think it came up to something like about \$40 million. The JAS being 50% shareholder and the farmers being 50% shareholders, so what they have done is to call on the JAS to pay the 50% that the farmers owe, that the farmers are entitled to, so they have put themselves in place of the farmers. It's like they are putting the company in liquidation. We have said the JAS is undertaking to bring up the arrears of the returns to the extent that the farmers were not able to do it and they have disagreed. So we were asking for the Cooperative Societies Act to be reviewed. The matter is now in the Supreme Court because we don't believe it is just to take away \$20 million from the farmers just because some returns were not done.

Miss Cruickshank is representing us, she was here a while ago, and the Supreme Court has instructed us to go to arbitration, so we are trying to seek a negotiator to deal with the matter. If we don't come to an arrangement by January 1 of next year then it will be decided in the Supreme Court.

Our view is that the Department of Cooperative, the Liquidator, has no legal right to the asset of the JAS, and therefore, we are going to fight that tooth and nail to ensure that the Richmond Cooperative remains in the hands of the JAS and the farmers. So I am glad you raised that matter.

We are asking the Ministry of Commerce to review the Department of Cooperative Societies Act to allow farmers group who have challenges with returns to reorganize their shop and not to come in as a result of that deficiency and own 50% of the asset, because the only reason why they are there is because the law tells them that they can come in and take over the asset, so we

are trying to represent the farmers in that area. I will send a brief to the Minister on that matter.

MR. MARSHALL: Good afternoon, I am Gary Marshall from the Spring Village community in St. Catherine. I have two points for the Minister. One, I would like the Minister...

CHAIRMAN: Go quickly because the Minister is going to leave shortly and we just want you to ask your question.

MR. MARSHALL: We are talking about bee-keeping. I would like to know if the Minister could find somewhere to let the Bee Keeping Industry in Jamaica get cheaper sugar, so we can sustain our bees through the drought period so when the honey flow begins we can have enough colonies to harvest enough honey for the Jamaican population - that's one.

Two, the Spring Village Development Foundation will have an Expo on the 31st of August and one of our mandates is to get the Minister of Agriculture to help sell the school in terms of welding, therapy culture, housekeeping, et cetera. So I wonder if I could meet with the Minister one minute before he departs to exchange some information with the Minister, please.

The next thing I would like the Minister - I am also the President of the Spring Village Farm Association and we have some challenges in terms of water on the farm so we would like to discuss that.

We also do castor oil farming; we would like the Minister to look into castor oil farming in terms of developing it and get more production to sell it in the tourist industry in terms of massaging in the tourist industry. I currently make castor oil but I want to do more, and I have also invested in a castor oil machine from China; it is very expensive to come to Jamaica but I made that investment, it can go much further if I could get some more support from the Minister.

CHAIRMAN: Very good, very good, excellent. The Minister said that he read your letter - he said he read your letter. The castor oil...

MR. MARSHALL: Yes, the castor oil, I made an investment in a machine from China but we want more to do with the development because we can mix castor oil with other oils to sell to the tourist industry - not with my farming group alone but other farming groups can join and make millions of dollars from this type of project.

MINISTER SAMUDA: Are you the gentleman who wrote me the letter about the castor oil?

MR. MARSHALL: I wrote a letter but...

MINISTER SAMUDA: I read it, I have it with me and I will act on it.

CHAIRMAN: So the Minister has the letter and he has read it and will act on it.

MR. BEECHER: Good afternoon everyone, my name is James Beecher from Dean Pen District in St. Mary. Last year I came here and talked about how the Minister of Agriculture deals with situations like drought or hurricane because the small man naah get nutten. I came here to see not Mr. Samuda but Mr. Derrick Kellier. He had called me and said he sent up some black tanks to RADA.

CHAIRMAN: When?

MR. BEECHER: From the Christmas I go there and I saw di tanks dem. My group has -- I registered 43 at the first year and it comes down to 20. Every storm that blows and every drought none of those people get anything.

I hear a man spoke about JAS nah gwaan wid nutten, JAS is the only people I got two bags of fertilizers from last year.

CHAIRMAN: Clap him, clap him. (Applause)

MR. BEECHER: I spent \$40,000 fi fertilizer last year, \$20,000 di year before; \$150,000 fi labour, not to speak about chemicals. I get nothing.

I plant 12,000 roots of cabbage last year, hybrid; 1 acre of pumpkin; mi yam field - 2 years I get prize at Annotto Bay, Gray's Inn, St. Mary.

Those yam that I plant people wanted the head to buy and I didn't sell the head, I go home and I plant them; last year mi field pretty, it all died, I have to buy yam now.

Mr. Kellier tell wi dat him going to try him best to mek wi get it. I would like to ask Mr. Barrington Ramballie to stand - when we go up by experiment farm we take all the necessaries from wi farm weh dry up...

CHAIRMAN: Sir, remember that I told you that the Minister is about leaving so we just really want you to punch some questions for him and let the others get a chance, with respect, because you can come back and make those comments.

MR. BEECHER: Mek mi finish mi little point and done. Look, I don't know where those tanks gone. When I go there they sey I must get a referral from Dr. Guy. I would like Mr. Samuda to find out where those tanks gone; not one of the 20 members of my group get one.

I go to a farm store and see a lady come wid a list from Rosend from the MP - him get 4 bags of fertilizer, 100 pounds; him get a fork; him get di same amount fi him bredda. Weh di politics a gwaan wid? I told you that politics, dem a wicked people.

A man tell me him get 12 bags of fertilizer and him neva jam a root of cucumber or anything and if him did know sey mi nuh get none him woulda carry two bags come gimmi; that man is an electrician.

CHAIRMAN: All right we are going to take your details, come here and give us your details so we can reach out to you, and the Minister specifically asks for your name, okay.

MR. BEECHER: Mi nuh finish because mi just come.

CHAIRMAN: You just come?

MR. BEECHER: Mi just come, mi group -- I was at the bathroom bathing and dem leave mi.

CHAIRMAN: No man, meeting starts from ten o'clock this morning.

MR. BEECHER: It costs me a lot to reach up here but mi sey mi haffi reach.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, good, you have a lot of commitment. (Applause)

MR. HUTCHINSON: My question is rain harvesting. I would suggest to you, Sir, we used to have a subsidized scheme where people build stone tank and otherwise, because in my opinion the black tank is not going to last that long and they going to come back and complain again.

CHAIRMAN: All right, good.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Number 2 - the one who suffers knows it - I am a victim of praedial larceny, so now I am asking the Honourable Minister, mixed with you, to see if you can get me two red-poll heifers at a subsidized price, at any time I will be ready to receive them. So I am putting that in your lap and the Minister's lap.

CHAIRMAN: What's your name?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Daniel Hutchinson from New Mills.

CHAIRMAN: So Mr. Hutchinson, are you suggesting that those who are affected by praedial larceny they should get a replacement animal at a subsidized price, is that what you are suggesting?

MR. HUTCHINSON: I am speaking personally for myself because most people not raising animals again.

CHAIRMAN: I think you should write the Minister and copy me or copy me and write the Minister.

MR. HUTCHINSON: But mi right now inna him ears, and you too.

CHAIRMAN: No man, don't worry, he has another engagement half-an-hour away, you know, so I am just trying to get in some points for you.

MR. HUTCHINSON: All right, all right, thank you, Sir. In closing we would wish to have - when we have our parliament, which is the farmers' meeting, and the technocrats dem come we don't want dem give wi two hours running; him did very fine today and we appreciate it a whole lot, and I want him to understand that we appreciate it but if him did 'tan longer we woulda do better business.

MS. MORELAND: Good afternoon, I am Moreland from Seville, St. Ann's Bay. My point is this, we have 260 onion farmers in my group and we lack water, road and tractor. We are not looking for everyday handout but we are looking for help so if oonu could provide us with a tractor we will tek wi time and pay it back, because if you give a man a square of land to prepare the farm for us, especially me as a woman it is \$20,000 and \$35,000 and him tek ten years fi do it, so if we have a tractor each farmer can get a day's support and it can do more than an acre or two acres and then we group together and we make Jamaica a better onion farm.

CHAIRMAN: St. Ann has a tractor.

MS. MORELAND: Which part?

CHAIRMAN: I think RADA has a tractor.

MS. MORELAND: RADA nuh have no tractor. RADA got three tractors, one from the PNP Government, one from mi nuh know who, and one from di Labour Government and dem nuh have none now and dem caan tell we 'bout none. My place where I am working right now piece a di tractor bruk dung inna mi land which part di man dem smoke and drink and drunk.

CHAIRMAN: And the JAS usually - we had tractors. The Minister spoke to me about supporting the JAS to go back into the Tool Providing Programme, and Equipment, and renting it to the farmers. He has asked me to come and see him to discuss how he would be able to support the JAS under that programme. So we want to look on it and sit down with him again as a part of that service provider.

Minister, do you want to respond to it now? Okay, the Minister wants to respond now but the Minister has to leave now, so that is why I was saying you need to ask the questions quickly so that we can register it because he had stayed a little time over.

MINISTER SAMUDA: Let me say the only way farmers are going to be able to become efficient -- because as a group even when you come together you don't have the kind of capital to buy the appropriate equipment, and if you even buy it you can't maintain it, so what I was saying to the President and also OSHA, is that we have to provide assistance to the farmers by providing them with equipment to be used, modern equipment, to be used on their farms and they pay a little something towards maintaining it and so on, so you can go much faster, you can produce better crops and come out of any difficulties you have without having a debt over your head. So that is what we are going to do. Okay?

MS. MORELAND: Our meeting is every 1st Monday of every month at Seville, so if I get any number for you I will keep you informed.

MINISTER SAMUDA: All you have to do is to give me a shout, just call my office and I will try my best to reach you, you hear.

MS. MORELAND: Thank you.

MINISTER SAMUDA: All right my darling. I am going to have to leave now because I have an appointment with the Ministry of Finance, so I am going to have to leave. I stayed a little longer than normal but I have really enjoyed this, and anything at all that you say now when I leave I will talk to the President and he will brief me on it and we will work together.

MS. MORELAND: Okay Minister, I am giving you a shout from Hanover, I need you to visit us.

MINISTER SAMUDA: Yes.

MS. MORELAND: You will get an award.

MINISTER SAMUDA: I will?

MS, MORELAND: Yes. We need the Minister of Agriculture in Hanover urgently. Thank you.

MINISTER SAMUDA: Okay dear, thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Give the Minister another big hand, another big hand. Thank you very much Minister for coming. (Applause)

I really wanted you to make the points quickly but the Minister is now leaving. Are there other points?

MISS CRAWFORD: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Go ahead quickly.

MISS CRAWFORD: Good afternoon, Icilyn Crawford, Inverness Farmers Group, south west St. Ann. We have a problem and it's water - the major problem is water and land space to farm.

CHAIRMAN: One second, just to let the Minister and his team know that lunch was provided, we should offer him, please let him know. We know you may not be able to wait for it but please offer the full delegation lunch.

Yes, please, go ahead.

MISS CRAWFORD: We have a major water problem in my community, in the community of south west St. Ann on a whole because we can only get water from water harvesting. Right now where I work we have a pond area, a natural pond, and I said the last time I came here what we are looking for. I heard them say some time ago that there was some organization that deals with ponding and they built some over in Clarendon. What we want to know is how we go about it and if we could get them to seal the pond so that when rain falls it carries all the water off the road so we have a natural catchment, and it serves several farmers in the area.

Also we have a problem with equipment because getting the men to work at \$2000 per day and giving them lunch and breakfast it doesn't work out for us, because a lot of the time we don't get any work done or minimal work done so you can't get to do the things that you would want to do.

CHAIRMAN: Can you write us and let's get your contact? We heard your recommendation - and your President is here and your Parish Officer is here.

MISS ROBINSON: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, Pansy Robinson from New Market, St. Elizabeth. We the people of St. Elizabeth from Middle Quarters straight to Jack's Gate have poor road conditions. We have the land lease and we have no roads to go in there on the farms. We have ponds there, we need it to seal because I wrote the Social Development Fund and they said last year they didn't have any money so I hope this year they have money that can help us to do our projects.

We do farming in New Market and New Market is one of the biggest markets in Jamaica and everybody comes to New Market from Sunday to Tuesday and I would like the Sunday market at New Market to cut out, we don't want any market on Sunday, we go to church on Sunday, we want market from Monday right back to Wednesday. When I am going to church I can't drive there to go to church and Jamaica has so many churches and we are a Christian country and we don't suppose to have market on Sunday.

CHAIRMAN: You are talking about you don't want to have market on Sunday?

MISS ROBINSON: No, we don't want any market on Sunday, because when we going to church we can't drive there.

MISS ROBINSON: We want road, we don't have any road.

CHAIRMAN: All right, we are going to ask -- come President Martin come and address this one for me.

MR. MARTIN: Okay, thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Well, in terms of the road from Middle Quarters to Jack's Gate you really wouldn't get funding from JSIF to really do that one.

MISS ROBINSON: I know. JSIF wrote me back - I wrote them and they said to contact them and I contacted them back and I don't get any contact back from them.

We as farmers who use the Kemp Road, we want...

MR. MARTIN: The Kemp Road?

MISS ROBINSON: Yes. Remember when flood come, you know, we have to use these by-pass, one 'round by the Dave River School and the one 'round by Kemp.

MR. MARTIN: But hear what happen now, do you know that all those by-pass roads are under the schedule of Central Government? Yes, they are under the schedule of the National Works Agency, all the by-pass roads, but even though you see me do a little work here and there NWA is scheduled to do them.

MISS ROBINSON: I know, but if you could speed up because we need those roads. I bought three donkeys and di donkey dem dead because stones get into their feet, and nuh car caan drive 'round deh and nuh taxi man naah guh 'round deh go pick up nuh load.

MR. MARTIN: All right, I have to be very brief. In terms of the market, you remember one time at the St. Elizabeth Parish Council we made an attempt to stop that Sunday market and had to bring it back because the people kept coming to us saying that Sunday market is one of the most vibrant business days for them, so it's really a challenging one because we stopped it already and we had to bring it back.

MISS ROBINSON: Look here Mr. Martin it's not the people who run the market, it's Parish Council who run the market and if Parish Council sey no market on Sunday then no market on Sunday.

MR. MARTIN: But we did it already and we had to bring it back because the people want it.

MISS ROBINSON: Use the police to take them off the streets on Sundays.

CHAIRMAN: I think what he is saying is, it's people power because the people called for it.

MISS ROBINSON: No, no, because a money dem want and we want to go to church, and we can't drive 'round there on a Sunday morning.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, from the JAS we take on everything. What you need to do - we will write to the Parish Council and make representation to say that this matter was discussed here and you want action and correction.

The earlier matter about the pond, I think Mayor Harris was suggesting what we will do. We will make representation to the different agencies to see what can be done as it relates to pond liners and support for the issue of rain water harvesting.

MR. THOMAS: Good evening Mr. President. I am Leroy Thomas, President of the Lime Tree Gardens JAS Group from St. Ann. My concern is bauxite mining in some areas of St. Ann.

Because you see bauxite is mined in most of the farm lands in that area and it seems as if they are not filling up the pits so that farmers can come and work back their lands. If the Minister and his Ministry can come together and let the company fill back these pits so that these farmers can get back some more land to work right now, because they are mining and they are not putting much top soil on these pits.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, all right, we take note of that.

MEMBER: Good afternoon, I am the President for the Dandross Pen JAS Group...

CHAIRMAN: Okay, we don't want any more to be added to the line, please.

MEMBER: I have noticed in my area that the sugar crop has been over and a number of cane fields still left there that have not been reaped, so I would want to know what is going on with the issue on the cane?

CHAIRMAN: All right, well, we will talk to the cane farmers but you should have raised that matter when the Minister was here, but we will find out and let you know.

MEMBER: Good afternoon Mr. Grant. I am the President of the Medley JAS Group in Hanover. I have three questions for you, sir. The first one is about the Farm Work Programme that was issued last year. I was selected in Hanover and I got no response from such time.

CHAIRMAN: Have you been called for interview?

MEMBER: Yes, just the interview.

CHAIRMAN: So your name is there, they can call you same time, they can call you six months after, they can call you one year after, they can call you two years after, or they can call you three years after.

MEMBER: Okay. I have two more questions for you. In terms of the Denbigh Showground here I think in terms of security, it's low, and why I say in terms of security, the Hanover pavilion was demolished and we packed up some zinc inside the back area and every sheet of those zinc is gone, so I think you have to have concern about security on this ground.

And the next one, I am a goat farmer and I have been to the Montpelier Show and the Hague Show over the years and in terms of trophies, two to three years straight now we don't receive any

trophy, Sir, and last year we were the winner, and those shows are JAS shows.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, we have the trophies at the office in St. James so talk to Mayor Harris after the meeting and he will arrange it for you.

MEMBER: Yes, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: Just as it relates to the security issue, yes, with the security we had a problem because between last Denbigh and this Denbigh we think we sustained losses to the tune of about \$10 million by people just coming in and stealing.

What we have done since then in this room we have the JDF and they are now on the ground, the police are over the President's Pavilion and we have also put in additional armed security.

We are going to give each of the parish pavilion a long term lease to develop their pavilion, and what we are going to do is to encourage the pavilion teams to use it on an all year round basis.

I met last week with a group in Clarendon, the Clarendon Chamber of Commerce along with the MP is working with us to see how we can get the citizens of Clarendon to help us to protect the Showground here. We think that a lot of things that happen on the Showground are done by even people who are close to the Showground.

MEMBER: That's true.

CHAIRMAN: We are going to step up the security in a big way, so it's a good point and it is something that we are addressing. Thank you very much.

MISS LAWRENCE: My name is Jean Lawrence from Sudbury. I am not pleased with the JAS because when St. James come here you can't get into the show, they are not properly taken care of when we bring the things down here, and I am so displeased with what they are going on with.

And my next point is, you cannot stop somebody's day for another man's day. If I worship on a Saturday it's my business, if you worship on a Sunday it's your business, so each of us do our thing our way, we are not supposed to spoil one day for another person. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN: All right, okay, let that stay where it is.

MISS RATTIGAN: Good after Mr. President, I am the same person who didn't know that they stole away my cows...

CHAIRMAN: They stole your cows?

MISS RATTIGAN: And I was promised that I would get something and I didn't. My name is Rema Rattigan from the Claremont JAS in St. Ann.

For the longest while from 2002 they are looking some lands for the farmers, we identified working lands and I heard that they have now given up, so I am asking if we could get some help that the farmers get some of the land so that they can do their farming.

I am asking you please - last year was 53 years of voluntary service and you promised that I would get an award and I did not get the award so I am asking you to look about it.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, can you reach out to her, get all her details for me, please. You have it. All right, we will address it.

MISS RATTIGAN: Thank you, I am looking forward to hear about the lands.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, and you are always at the Denbigh Show as well?

MISS RATTIGAN: Always, I never miss it.

CHAIRMAN: All right, there we go with a Denbigh Lifetime Achievement Award.

MISS FULLINGTON: Patrice Fullington...

CHAIRMAN: One second. We don't want her to leave, we want to recognize Mrs. Smith from the Department of Co-operative. Wave your hand let them see you Mrs. Smith. Okay, thank you very much. Yes...

MISS FULLINGTON: Patrice Fullington from the Hanover Association of Branch Societies. In terms of pages 73 and 74, I didn't get a chance to come to the mic for that. There are about four questions that were asked, however, two were accomplished and I must thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MISS FULLINGTON: In terms of house for Chester Grant, that issue where one house per parish. It's pending from last year. I noticed Mr. Emanuel was on leave and all of that so I wouldn't mind if he could look in that case for the Hanover house that was granted.

I want to know - the issue of the church, it's kind of different in Hanover but we have a different Parish Manager who cannot attend a church service whenever it's on a Sunday and she is new so I would like you to present her with or to have the By-Laws of the JAS, she needs a copy of that. You don't have any could give her?

CHAIRMAN: When you say the Parish Manager can't attend a church service on a Sunday...

MISS FULLINGTON: Yes, because of her denomination, and I am not going to get into that, sir, I am leaving that at your feet.

CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MISS FULLINGTON: We have a Goat Revolving Programme, when I read her report she was saying that the goat revolved three kids however two died, so I am asking you when the Revolving Programme lost through death what happens next when you have farmers in waiting?

CHAIRMAN: Okay, and what I would suggest is that we get some very good extension advice so we prevent that type of thing, because if an animal died then you don't have it and it can't revolve, and therefore, what should really happen is that the next animal becomes available be given to the next person in line and then the other person would have to wait a little longer because it's the death of the animal that would have caused it.

MISS FULLINGTON: Sir, I just want to add - not being mischievous - but during the time farmer Gray lost 20 goats and God and the JAS provided this Revolving Programme of 10 ewes and a ram. I at that time as 1st VP begged the Parish Manager to allow Mr. Gray since he was a very experienced farmer from way back to rear these goats, and I don't think this recurrence of death would have happened, but the President objected by saying maybe they would steal them again, however, they were not stolen but death took place, so sir, I want you to...

CHAIRMAN: Maybe we should look to review that Revolving Programme and get closer to it. Mr. Denver Thorpe, is he around?

MISS FULLINGTON: Yes, sir, he was at that table a while ago.

Okay, sir, the next thing I want to bring to the attention of...

CHAIRMAN: Mayor said that we are trying to do another programme as well.

MISS FULLINGTON: Thank you very much, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: It is a good programme and we should do it. I am going to ask for the support of the Regional Manager from Region 2 - Region 1 is here, and I would like to recognize our Commercial Manager, Mr. Derron Grant. Okay, and I want them to stay close to us.

Earlier on Mrs. Lee who is doing our numbers - and we want the Managers to stay close so when the farmers raise these issues we are feeling it, but Miss Murdock for the time being you would want to make a note for me even though it's not your region.

Go ahead Miss Pat...

MISS FULLINGTON: Yes, Sir, because you referred to the Mayor, sir, His Worship, I want to also add to Miss Murdock's page that whenever we actually advise, we the boss of the ABS advise, they don't listen in terms of the managers. When we begged of them the manager told us promptly - because the minutes are here to prove - that the Goat Revolving Programme was not that of the ABS it was her project; Sir, I am not being mischievous but just being honest.

CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MISS FULLINGTON: Sir, I think I am finalizing. In terms of the election that was conducted at the AGM, in my opinion it was null, void, and corrupt. I won't say much because I don't like to...

CHAIRMAN: What AGM, the last AGM?

MISS FULLINGTON: Yes, sir, the Hanover Association of Branch Societies, I need it to be looked into, sir, but I won't wash my linen here in public. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, we will look into that based on your presentation.

MR. GRAY: Yes, sir, my name is Clifton Gray, President of the Logwood Farmers Group. Now, from 2002 we have applied for some lands over in Orange Bay, that's in Logwood, and it happens that we have gone through all the process - all the process. We have reached the stage where we got an agreement that they said they were going to send us something to show to us what the agreement would be like. The only problem we had was -- they told us the price and everything -- they said if we lease the land it would take six months time. We replied to them and asked them if they could lengthen it to even a year or a year-and-a-half because when a farmer is on the land for six months it would be very short.

And, sir, from 2002 until now we have gone through the right process, we supposed to go through the thing the right way but it's like we haffi goh capture it, for until now nobody even reply to us and sey Mr. Gray, you people not getting the land because oonu too ugly ova deh or oonu too old, or whatever it is.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, we will make a note of that, and what you could do is to give us some more information.

MR. GRAY: The application was made through the JAS, sir, the JAS has all the information.

CHAIRMAN: Which JAS - which parish?

MR. GRAY: Hanover Branch.

CHAIRMAN: Right, so I am saying provide us with those details from the JAS.

MR. GRAY: Yes, Sir. The next thing, sir, I don't know if we are going to survive under this praedial larceny thing enuh, sir.

CHAIRMAN: You understand what I am asking for? So you are putting forward, and what I am saying is that, send us some details either through the Parish Association or directly and we will try and follow it up for you.

MR. GRAY: The President supposed to have all the information because I gave him everything to bring to you, sir, from last year, so I don't know what is happening.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, we will check with the President.

MR. GRAY: And the next thing now, sir, this praedial larceny thing, sir, I had 28 goats - 20 big ones and 8 kids - and they came to my farm and killed the 20 big ones and leave the 8 kids. Now, how are we to survive under conditions like that? 28 goats and they killed the 20 big ones - some with kids and some have young kids.

CHAIRMAN: That is a wicked act.

MR. GRAY: You have to approach praedial larceny from the people who are receiving the meat, you know sir, not the people who are going out there to steal, because the people who are stealing it cannot hide it for long, sir.

CHAIRMAN: That's a very powerful recommendation that we are going to put forward.

MR. GRAY: They cannot hide it for long, sir, so if you stop the people from buying it, the man caan keep di man cow fi too long or di man goat fi too long, or how much pound of meat pon him fi too long, so the problem is the people who are receiving it, sir.

CHAIRMAN: Somebody made that point already and we are going to hammer that out. All right, thank you very much.

Miss. Pinnock, Assistant Blood Donor Organizer - I have been making the announcement that you are to go by to donate blood, but is she still here to bring us a brief word of greeting, Miss. Pinnock? Can we put our hands together for her -- okay, she is coming.

We would like to just make some quick points.

I would like to read into the record the leadership in the parishes, and some are new:

Kingston & St. Andrew - Yours truly, Norman Grant;

Mr. Donald Berry - President/Portland;

Delroy Redway - Deputy Mayor/St. Ann;

Mayor Glendon Harris - St. James;

Mr. Rupert Scott - St. Thomas;

Dr. Hugh Lambert - St. Mary;

Mr. Denton Alvaranga - Clarendon: He is a new President and a new Board Member, he replaced Mr. Garth Tomlin, and we want to thank Mr. Tomlin in the record for his support and his contribution over the years, and we look forward to working with Mr. Alvaranga;

Mrs. Mildred Crawford is now the new President and Board Rep for St. Catherine and she replaces Mr. Richard Bennett and Miss Deloris Henry, and we want to thank them for their service and certainly to welcome Mrs. Mildred Crawford;

We also have a new President in Trelawny, Mr. Patrick White, who replaced Mr. Stewart, and we want to thank Mr. Stewart for his service and welcome Mr. White;

In Hanover we have Mr. Patric Service;

Mr. Owen Dobson - Westmoreland;

Mr. Cyril Martin - St. Elizabeth;

Mr. McArthur Collins - Manchester.

They are board member representatives for the parishes. Can you put your hands together for them as we recognize them?
(Applause)

The next matter was the Governor General's Greetings so we are going to move on.

ROLL CALL

CHAIRMAN:

Alright, the roll call. We have to agree to count who is inside? What you could do is agree that we read the registration record into the record. I don't like that, but all in favour? I am going to ask the representatives to call out your numbers:

Portland	-	42
St. Ann	-	43
St. James	-	36
Clarendon	-	30
St. Thomas	-	36
St. Mary	-	30
St. Catherine	-	35
Trelawny	-	49
Hanover	-	21
Westmoreland	-	20
St. Elizabeth	-	30
Manchester	-	75
St. Andrew	-	45

I want you to recognize Mr. Tony Maragh. This year we admitted and approved - we inducted the Pig Farmers Association as a Commodity Association of the Jamaica Agricultural Society, so we want to welcome him in a big way and to say that the pig farmers are on board with us. (Applause) Give him another hand. (Applause)

We are going to work on bringing in the fisher folks and others over the next 12 months.

ELECTIONS

The next item is the election of two positions, and just to advise you that the first one is the position of 2nd Vice President, and I would like to read into the record the following:

"The post of 2nd Vice President became vacant as a result of the passing of Mr. Royston Johnson in March of 2016.

In order to have a more regulated organization as it relates to the nomination for the election of the positions of President, Vice Presidents - 1st and 2nd - a motion was moved at the 119th Annual General Meeting on the 9th of July 2014, that the format adopted by our rules as it relates to the election of Direct Members' Representative be adopted for the positions of President, Vice Presidents - 1st and 2nd.

This means that the nomination for the position must take place at least one month before the Annual General Meeting of the JAS and the names of nominated persons can be entered on a ballot so that there be proper and orderly proceedings as it relates to the nomination processes.

At a meeting of the Board of Management held on Wednesday, the 4th, 2016, Mayor Glendon Harris was unanimously nominated to act as 2nd Vice President pending the ratification at the upcoming Annual General Meeting.

The nominations were due on the 13th. On the 1st of June nomination was submitted within the stipulated time frame and was duly signed by two members, and that was a valid nomination.

On the 22nd of June, 2016, a nomination was submitted for Mr. Lenworth Fulton but this nomination was submitted outside the stipulated time frame and therefore is not valid.”

And so before us today to be ratified by the AGM is the nomination for Mayor Glendon Harris that I will now ask someone to move and second in keeping with the Convention.

MEMBER: I so move.

CHAIRMAN: And seconder?

MEMBER: I second it.

CHAIRMAN: All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN: Any against?

MEMBERS: No.

CHAIRMAN: The ayes have it. We are going to ask Mayor Glendon Harris to come forward as I congratulate him as the duly elected 2nd Vice President of the JAS. (Applause)

The full team is yours truly as President, 1st Vice President - Mr. Donald Berry, and 2nd Vice President - Mayor Glendon Harris. (Applause)

So as the songwriter says 'We are together again, just praising the Lord'. All right, congratulations.

The second nomination is the election for Direct Members' Representative to the Board of the JAS.

The post of Direct Member became vacant. Mr. Pat Rose is due for retirement but he is eligible for re-election.

In keeping with Section 25 of the By-Laws of the Jamaica Agricultural Society not less than one calendar month prior to the date fixed for the holding of the Annual General Meeting the Secretary of the Society shall cause an advertisement or advertisements to be published in the daily newspaper requesting Direct Members to submit the names of not more than three persons to enter on a panel from which the Annual General Meeting will elect three persons to serve as Members of the Board of the Society. Each such nomination must be in writing and signed by at least two Direct Members and lodged with the Secretary of the Society not less than 14 days prior to the date fixed for the Annual General Meeting. Such nominations may be delivered personally at the office of the Secretary of the Society or send to him prepaid letter post so as to reach the Secretary by the prescribed date.

The names of the persons so submitted to the Secretary shall form the panel from which the elections to the Board shall be made at the Annual General Meeting in accordance with Section 9(1)(e).

Nominations were therefore due on June 22. At the 22nd June two nomination forms were received - one from Mr. Pat Rose. The forms were submitted within the stipulated time frame and were duly signed by two paid-up Direct Members. The result of that is Mr. Pat Rose being the only nomination remains as the Direct Member Representative on the Board of Management of the JAS for another three years.

Therefore, I will just ask for the appropriate motion for us to move and second the nomination of Pat Rose.

Moved by -?
Seconder -?
All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN: Any against?

MEMBERS: No.

CHAIRMAN: The ayes have it.

And Mr. Rose is here but I think he is in the lunch room because he has to have some meals.

So I would really like to commend and congratulate the two persons who were elected by this AGM to serve, and I look forward for us to continue the repositioning and transformation of the Jamaica Agricultural Society to the benefit of the membership.

Earlier on each time I call her name she is not in the room, Miss Josephine Hamilton, who is the Showground Manager. Is she here? Well, I have called her four times, when she comes back in I want her to be recognized.

I have to recognize Miss Audrey Watson who is the Councillor/Caretaker for the May Pen North Division.

Yes, this is the man; congratulations Mr. Pat Rose who has been elected again as Direct Member Representative on the Board of Management of the Jamaica Agricultural Society. Can we make him welcome at this time? (Applause)

I understand that someone beside the St. Elizabeth Pavilion took up a book with some important documents for Miss Watson and she is begging and asking that it be returned, it has some very important documents and therefore we are asking you to make sure that you return it.

Okay, we are now in the section for Resolutions.

MEMBER: I have a question to ask: How does the member that goes to the Board as Direct Member coordinates with the rest of members?

CHAIRMAN: All right, I am going to ask the three Direct Member Representatives to come forward - Mr. Pat Rose, Mr. Clifton Grant, and Mr. Hugh Johnson who is the President of the Small Business Association.

I am going to ask the other Vice Presidents to join us in a photo-shoot, but the question that you asked is how they will work with the other Direct Members, and one of the things that the JAS is going do is to have an active representation of Direct Members and to ensure that the Direct Member Representatives can liaison with the rest of Direct Members.

It's a very good question, and I am going to be meeting with the Direct Member Representatives because - let me explain to you, the business of Direct Members is to select persons with expertise that can bring value into the JAS.

Miss Hamilton, I called you five times, please walk let everybody know who the Showground Manager is. Give her a hand, she has been doing a tremendous job, a very, very good job, and her team. (Applause)

So these are persons with special skills and we are going to be drawing on them and we are going to be reaching out to the other Direct Members and I am going to be asking these Direct Member Representatives to join me to meet with the rest of Direct Members at least two times for the year so we can have certainly a very active and vibrant Direct Member Representative, but they are doing a tremendous job and I want to commend them.

Mr. Rose is strong in commerce and he is going to give us some support in JASCEL and Central Market - he was running T. Geddes Grant so he is going to give us some support.

Mr. Clifton Grant is a Trade Unionist, he heads our HR Committee, he is very equipped in that area, and we are going to continue to draw on him.

Mr. Hugh Johnson is Small Business Association, and therefore, we are going to rely on him to really connect the JAS with the Small Business Sector. So all of them will have a role and certainly we want to make it very active. And thank you very much for that excellent question.

MEMBER: Thank you, sir.

RESOLUTIONS

CHAIRMAN: Okay, Resolutions...

MR. STEPHENSON: Mr. President, again Lennox Stephenson, President for the Colleyville JAS Branch. As a resolution, Sir, at this 121st Annual General Meeting I am asking this conference to endorse that no member should sit on an ABS who is not coming from a fully affiliated branch because who does that person represent if that person doesn't come from a filed network? So I am asking, sir, please...

CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. STEPHENSON: Secondly, sir - I don't finish yet, sir - the second aspect is that where Direct Members are concerned only one member per parish can vote at this Annual General Meeting - how many can vote at this Annual General Meeting - Direct Members?

CHAIRMAN: Direct Members - only one Direct Member can vote at the Annual General Meeting but at the Parish Meeting all Direct Members can vote. So all Direct Members can vote at the Parish Meeting but when it comes to the Annual Meeting only one per parish can vote.

And just to respond to the first question, the Constitution of the JAS speaks to how the ABS is structured and if you are coming from an affiliated branch or you are a Direct Member and the Parish AGM votes for you to go on the Parish Executive that is constitutionally correct.

So what you are asking, if you want to reverse that it has to be a process of consultation and change, it just can't go like that.

MR. STEPHENSON: The resolution that I would be bringing forward, Mr. President, is to revisit the section of the Constitution which says one member can vote at a national AGM but all Direct Members can vote at a parish level.

I would love to see that, so I am asking this 121st Annual General Meeting to reverse that so that only one Direct Member selected by that body can vote because when you have all members voting at a parish what you find is that it can hijack the process of the branch network like what is happening in Manchester.

So, therefore, Mr. President I am asking that this Annual General Meeting revisit it because this Annual General Meeting has the power to revisit the Constitution and look at it, because if somebody wants to get rid of Norman Grant all they will have to do - one hundred people for one hundred thousand dollars - is to go and get all types of undesirables to come and bypass the process of the JAS which is 121 years old, please Sir.

CHAIRMAN: So this is what my suggestion is going to be, because remember you would have to send a resolution in writing...

MR. STEPHENSON: Yes, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: What I would suggest is that this AGM agrees and mandates the Board to have a comprehensive review of the JAS Rules and By-Laws with a view to having it reflect that of modern companies and organizations of this nature.

If that is agreed what would then be done is for us to engage a process to review, and it simply means that we would have to go parish by parish, we would have to get someone in as a consultant and drive that process, and I would say maybe by 2017 or 2018 we would be coming to the AGM to have the necessary amendment to that By-Law, et cetera. So Lennox, I wouldn't single out the one issue as it relates to Direct Member, I would certainly want to move it if somebody is ready to second it that this AGM empowers the Board to engage a process to review our Rules/By-Laws and our Regulations to bring them modern, and certainly to get the approval of the Annual General Meeting, whether it is the next one or the other one to come.

MISS FULLINGTON: I beg to second it.

CHAIRMAN: You beg to second it. What is your name?

MISS FULLINGTON: Patrice Fullington - Hanover

CHAIRMAN: So Tony moved it, and it is seconded by Pat. All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN: Any against?

MEMBERS: No.

CHAIRMAN: The ayes have it.

MR. COLE: Gary Cole, Manchester. Good afternoon everyone, good afternoon Mr. President. It's a pity that I didn't speak before the motion was moved, seconded and voted on. The suggestion that the member has made is not an unreasonable one but the definition of a Direct Member would be counter-productive to what a Direct Member is.

Now you cannot have an organization like the Jamaica Agricultural Society and you do not have Direct Members, you have to have persons who apply directly based on their position and their status in life. Not everybody will be able to be a part of a group and be represented or represents a group, there are persons based on their situation that we have to apply as Direct Members.

Now if you are going to form a committee of Direct Members where one vote per parish that is also suggesting that you abolish Direct Members and form them into a group. Look at it, if I apply as a Direct Member and he applies and you are going to bring us all together then what you are actually forming is a group, so the suggestion now is to totally abolish Direct Members which in my opinion is counter-productive, it cannot be that way.

Now if you are looking at the per parish and you are saying all right, you have 30 Direct Members and one vote, you are going to now have to go and set a standard where you say for every 20 Direct Members you have one representative; so for 40 you have two; for 60 you have three; and for 80 you have 4; you would now have to set up a standard. You cannot have 150 Direct Members in a Parish and only have one representative.

CHAIRMAN: So Mr. Cole I hear you, and that is a plausible, that's a very relevant suggestion, but what we are saying is what exists now based on the rules that is how it obtains, so the rules and the Law say one per parish.

MR. COLE: Yes, nationally.

CHAIRMAN: Nationally.

MR. COLE: Right.

CHAIRMAN: What you are saying are issues that we can take on board in reviewing the existing rules, so we agree with you, you know, but it is a process, and what we have said in the earlier resolution is let us engage that process to review.

MR. COLE: All right.

CHAIRMAN: And then what we would want to do, we want the same vibrancy at the parishes when the review people come around and then finally we vote on the amendments here at the Annual General Meeting or at a date to be fixed by the AGM or the Board.

Okay, a resolution from Handel Richards, New Ground, Lime Hall, concerning the roads in New Ground and water. There is no running water in New Ground and there are no pipelines in the district, also there are no roads, and almost non-existent at this point which makes it quite difficult to transport farm goods from the fields.

Concerns also exist regarding the pricing of pimento, praedial larceny, which has caused many to consider abandoning pimento as a crop, therefore there is need to be registered buyers for the pimento in order to deter these thieves.

This resolution is calling on the JAS to forward this to the relevant agency.

It is moved by Mr. Handel Richards and seconded by Oral Henry.

All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN: Any against?

MEMBERS: No.

CHAIRMAN: The ayes have it.

MEMBER: Mr. President I have two problems...

CHAIRMAN: Resolutions or problems?

MEMBER: Resolutions – resolutions. I wouldn't disclose one in the public but the second one is the bathroom facilities which are in a terrible condition.

CHAIRMAN: The bathroom facilities?

MEMBER: When you come from the bathroom there is no water to wash your hands and the Society is 121 years old.

CHAIRMAN: You mean today?

MEMBER: Right now. The Society is 121 years old and this condition must not exist, it's a shame.

CHAIRMAN: All right. Well, I wasn't aware of that but we will have to address it, but we had water here up to this morning.

MEMBER: None, no water, it's a shame and disgrace.

CHAIRMAN: Well, we should have had even some drums or something.

MEMBER: And I want that to be immediately paid great attention to right now.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, all right, sir.

MEMBER: Sorry Mr. President, I think it's not that there is no water, but apparently some of the things inside there, basin and all those things were stolen.

CHAIRMAN: Were stolen?

MEMBER: Yes, so you don't have proper water running to wash your hands - the pipes and things like that were stolen.

CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, there are some bathrooms around there you can come around and use these. There are bathrooms at the back, there are bathrooms all over - there are some bathrooms at the back here that you can use and there are bathrooms up at the President's Pavilion that you can use.

Before we move the Vote of Thanks - I am going to ask the 1st Vice President to prepare to do that - I would like to advise you that the Denbigh Agricultural Show is on July 30 to August 1, and to tell you that there are a lot of plans: the first day which is Saturday is the Ministry of Agriculture day; the second day is the Governor General's day; and the third day is the Prime Minister's day.

Denbigh is going to be bigger and better under the theme '**Grow what we eat and eat what we grow through climate smart Agriculture**'.

We have Children and Family Village; Health and Wellness Village; Organic Village; Youth in Agriculture; Tourism Linkage Village or Linkage Council; and we have a Symposium this year and the Diaspora Agricultural Task Force is coming on board to work with us.

The Admission is \$900 for day 1; \$1000 for days 2 and 3; and Children - \$400.

We want you to support the National Farm Queen Competition, it's a big, big event; Youth in Agriculture will also be big, and for the first time we will have a National Organic Champion Farmer and this is sponsored by the Diaspora to the tune of \$130,000.

We are also going to have a Domino Competition and we want each parish to prepare for their team, and we also have HI-PRO coming to sponsor the first Denbigh Jerk Competition.

The other competitions remain: National Champion Farmer, National Young Champion Farmer, The Rudolph Burke and The

Percy Broderick Competition, and we have committed a mobilization of \$300,000 per parish and we want to ensure that all parishes do their best.

We have a National Champion Woman Farmer; a Champion Commercial Exhibit; Champion Greenhouse, Banana, livestock, Coffee and Organic Farmer. So that and more are going to be a lot of excitement at the Denbigh Show.

The Minister talked about the Life Member status but that has been reactivated because we not only have life status but the honorary life status, but at this Denbigh Show we will also be awarding the Denbigh Lifetime Achievement Award and we are going to be saluting some livestock stalwarts in what we call the Wall of Excellence in the livestock area by naming and painting some pictures in the livestock area to really salute people who have certainly done well in the livestock area.

We also think that as a part of the partnership we should honour the person who donates the land which is Custos Muirhead, so in that area right at the fountain we are going to create what is called The President's Park where we will have the picture of the donor, all the Presidents from 1895, and it's going to be a nice area almost like Emancipation Park where you can come in and have functions and take pictures. We really want to dub it what we call 'Destination Denbigh' and really do a lot of work to transform the Showground. The Member of Parliament, Mike Henry, has committed his support along with a team here in Clarendon.

The final thing on Denbigh just for your information, is that JUTC will be offering rides to Denbigh from Spanish Town, Portmore and Half-Way-Tree.

I think we want to see how we can work with the tourist parish where either Knutsford Express or JUTA can come in and bring people from the hotels or from the North Coast, but we want you to make a big effort in bringing out a lot of farmers to the upcoming Denbigh Agricultural Show. It is July 30 to August 1 and we are hoping to have a big, big, big, big Denbigh this year, so we want you to come out and really have a great time.

Earlier on I indicated to you that the Farm Queen is not going to be around come Denbigh and we are going to ask the Farm Queen - can someone go and get the Farm Queen - to come forward to tell us how she did in the year and to make a special presentation and thank you.

MEMBER: In the meantime Mr. Grant, can you speak to the fare structure that JUTC will be charging to come in and out of the facility?

CHAIRMAN: I think for adults - we have it but I don't want to make any mistake, we are going to publish it.

MEMBER: Mr. President, I discovered that over the previous years after the show when you come back to run another show the other year the place has been vandalized. What are you going to do for us to not spend so much money? We noticed that the building has been vandalized, things have been taken out, pipes have been taken out and we have to spend money. We need to do something about it because we are the farmers who are spending our money in Denbigh and we can't afford for somebody to come here year after year after the show and take out everything, so we need you to have proper security. Right now I see that you have soldiers on the compound, I would like the soldiers to be here 24/7 every day, every night, to secure this place.

And finally, we discovered that the lights are not too good when we come to the show especially to the St. Catherine side, we realize that when we come up on Friday night by the time we are supposed to set up we are in total darkness, so what we need is a proper lighting system so we can come and do our thing. These are my two observations at Denbigh.

CHAIRMAN: Very good point, very, very good point. You know it is depressing to see how the persons vandalize the property, but if we are to put in the type of security that we need it's going to cost us \$20 million a year which we don't have, we don't have that, so what we are trying to do is to buy into the concept of utilizing the Showground on an all year round basis. And persons who have benefited - because I have done my investigation - and work on the Showground some of them are the same ones - Mayor and VP - who come back and tear it down, and I hear the news, I know but I cooling it.

But what you have said here today has given me more energy to ensure that we protect this asset - we protect this asset. A lot of people tell me sey dem born come see Denbigh and dem deh yah fi 20 years and 30 years and a Denbigh mek dem a eat food fi years and years, but it doesn't mean that they have a right to destroy the property of the farmers, and therefore, we are going to be doing everything we can to secure it.

The second point you made is also a valid point, the lighting, we need to improve that, and I have noticed that we have figured out the fish tank to get more areas, and we want to improve lighting and bathroom facilities. So the challenge that you have today we are really hoping we can overcome it going forward and make sure that you are proud of your Denbigh product and your Denbigh brand.

Before the Farm Queen comes I would just like to say to the meeting, as you would have known, that I was not re-appointed to the Senate in February but a lot of people still call me Senator and that is okay. I am happy that I have served fifteen years in the Senate and I thank both the Prime Ministers - Former Prime Minister Patterson and Former Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller for affording me the opportunity to represent the interest of the farmers.

Listen, I am here to work for the farmers and to work for the JAS. There are issues that we tabled here and we have to continue to agitate the need for better quality of life for the farmers and we will certainly be expediting those calls and those lobbies going forward. So thank you very much, and again I want to read into the record the thanks on your behalf for the representations that we made then.

Okay, can we welcome the reigning National Farm Queen, Miss Peta-Gaye Stewart, National Farm Queen for 2015-2016, to come and address you? (Applause)

MISS STEWART:

All protocol observed; ladies and gentlemen good afternoon. I must begin by saying that I relish and treasure every moment of my reign as National Farm Queen.

Upon winning the competition last year I received a scholarship to the College of Agriculture, Science and Education the premier agricultural institution in the English speaking Caribbean, and just when I thought that it could not get any better than this because the scholarship covered the first year of my Associate of Science Degree Programme the Jamaica 4H Clubs pledged to cover the second year of my tuition at CASE. (Applause)

And just when I thought that all right, this is it, yes, Peta-Gaye, you are so blessed, this just cannot get any better, the Jamaica Agricultural Society granted me a tremendous opportunity to visit Delaware State University in the United States for nine whole days.

I feel both excited, honoured and humble at the same time. I say I am excited because this is the first time that I am actually leaving my country so I look forward to a tremendous cultural and agricultural experience because I know that I will be exposed to different facets of their agriculture and I will definitely have some farm tours, courtesy calls, and I am sure that I will enjoy life on the United States campus.

Additionally, it is indeed a remarkable experience for me because what is tremendous is that this new component that is added to the National Farm Queen Competition should have taken effect this coming year but the Jamaica Agricultural Society has granted this privilege to me and for that I am eternally grateful.

I am humbled and blessed to have been given this extraordinary opportunity, and I say extraordinary because it is not very often that a young woman like me from rural Jamaica, Bonny Gate in St. Mary to be exact, gets an opportunity to visit one of the most auspicious universities in the United States of America. (Applause)

The Delaware State University was ranked 9th in 2014 as one of the historical black colleges and universities by the United States News and World Report and this year, ladies and gentlemen, Delaware State University will be celebrating 125 years, so I look forward to participating in that celebration, and I am even humbled and honoured to be on the right side of history.

I must say thank you to Miss Kimone Gooden and the other members of the Jamaica Diaspora Task Force which is one of our sponsors, also to Dr. Dyremple Marsh, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Related Sciences and the other DSU members who are planning and making great preparations for my arrival, and are excited as I am to post me right there at DSU.

I must definitely say a special thank you to Mr. Norman Grant and his team at the Jamaica Agricultural Society, you have indeed made this tour possible. I will do my very best to make you all very proud.

And I see the Parish Queens sitting in the audience, you look very beautiful, and unfortunately I will not be here for the Coronation but when I get back one of you will be crowned National Farm Queen 2016. I challenge each and every one of you to enjoy the journey, make the most of it, do your best, have fun and never ever forget that you are all winners and Queens in your own right. (Applause)

My year was a very colourful one, fortunately and unfortunately most of my time was spent at the College of Agriculture, Science and Education where I am a full time student so I really did not get a chance to implement a national project but I do have one, I do have a project proposal. My project is called 'The Idle Hands, Idle Lands Initiative, Empowering Youth Through Agriculture', and even after my reign ends I look forward to implementing that project because I believe that as young people we are charged with the responsibility to significantly contribute to the sustainability of the agricultural sector. Youths, we are young, we are vibrant and we are full of ideas so I believe that it is very important that we empower our youths through agriculture and definitely make it sustainable.

The staff at the JAS both in St. Mary and the Head Office whom I have worked with very closely have been very, very supportive of me, and at this time I want to use this opportunity to let them know how grateful I am for the hard work that they have done, and to demonstrate this I will be presenting a painting to demonstrate how grateful I am for the hard work that they have really done, and to demonstrate that I really appreciate their support. Mr. Grant I am going to ask you to come.

Mr. Grant, I want to present this to you and the team at the JAS.
(Presentation to Mr. Grant)

So ladies and gentlemen thank you so very much, I hope I was able to make you all very proud and I will do my very best to represent Jamaica and the Jamaica Agricultural Society very well at Delaware State University.

Thank you so much and have a good afternoon. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN:

Thank you very much. I just want to confirm, Madame Queen, that this painting is for me (laughter). So I thank you very much on behalf of the team of the Jamaica Agricultural Society for this lovely painting. Give her a wonderful, a wonderful hand.
(Applause)

And I am going to say something else, she is a touch of class. I think - I am jogging my memory - that of all we have done to many of the queens - where is Andrea and Miss Jackson - it's the first queen who has expressed her thanks in this way, and for that big her up. (Applause)

Come on queens...so the Queens for 2016-2017 the precedent has been set - indeed the precedent has been set.

You know sometimes it's like when a parent gives everything to their children and just a little thank you, it means a lot, because a lot of people think that it just happen like that, it is a lot of hard work, and Miss Stewart, I have a whole heap of respect for you just because of this. Give her another hand ladies and gentlemen. (Applause) Thank you very, very, very, very much.

Anyway, it has been a good day, we are a bit over time, so at this time I am going to be asking our 1st Vice President, Mr. Donald Berry, the man from Portland, the parish of my father's birth, one of the most beautiful parishes to come and move the Vote of Thanks.

VOTE OF THANKS

MR. BERRY: Thank you very much President, good afternoon everybody.

MEMBERS: Good afternoon.

MR. BERRY: How you feeling?

MEMBERS: Good, good.

MR. BERRY: You feel the Denbigh spirit?

MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. BERRY: All right. I just want to say thank you to just about everybody who has made this conference the success that it has received so far and you are going to put the icing on the cake in a little while after I leave this podium, but I just want to start from the beginning and to thank Prayer 2000 for devotion.

Then just after devotion all of you here participated in the amendments, corrections and confirmation of the Minutes, so you see you played a vital part of being here.

The President gave his opening remarks, which has brought us up to speed with what the JAS has done over the year and will continue to do with your support. Then the CEO came to us twice in presenting to us the auditor - the auditor who read the report to us and then he gave us the Annual Report.

Then comes the farmers again with questions to the Minister, to the President of the JAS, and I can assure you that most, if not all of these pronouncements that were made come next year chances are same place you will be getting some good and positive results.

The Speaker of the day, first time standing at this podium in the fashion he did and for the shortest time as the Main Speaker stayed here for about seven minutes at this podium, and for the first time that we have had the Main Speaker, the Honourable Karl Samuda, Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture & Fisheries, came down and interacted with the farmers, and he felt warm, he was so warm that by the time he came up here he was sweating. So ladies and gentlemen I want you to give a big round of applause to the Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries - please give him a big round of applause, thank you. (Applause)

And then we had our – should I say election or confirmation of the position filled for the 2nd Vice President. I do want to congratulate Mayor Glendon Harris for filling that position, so give him a big round of applause. (Applause)

And also in the same breath Mr. Pat Rose has retained his position as Direct Member Representative, so give Mr. Rose another big round of applause. (Applause)

And I want you to give the biggest round of applause to yourselves because if you were not here we would be here in vain. (Applause)

We want to thank the media, thank all the supporting staff of the JAS - Mr. Emanuel and the team, and all the other guests and members who came out to stay with us for the day and part of the day thereof. And last but not least all the Board Members who have supported this Annual General Meeting.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, and I will turn over the rest of the afternoon which will be not more than about three minutes, I hope, as we will be leaving here for the first time before five o'clock. So thank you very much and Mr. President. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN:

Thank you very much Mr. Berry for thanking all of us, and before I ask for the National Anthem and the adjournment I got a request and I told the member that I would have to seek the permission of the AGM, and if you agree then I can accede to that request but if you don't then that request is dead.

What the member had asked is if I could ask the Farm Queens who are here to take one minute to introduce themselves and to say what is their ambition in representing their parish, so if you would allow that then I will have it, but if not - just say your name and your parish. So you will allow them to do that or no?

MEMBERS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Okay. So we are asking the Farm Queens just to go to the mike or to come up, and then we will rise for the playing of the National Anthem.

(Introduction by the 2016-2017 National Farm Queen Contestants)

CHAIRMAN: So give them all a hand. (Applause)

It has been a good meeting; we are adjourning earlier than last year but I think we got through a lot of things.

We want to thank you all - and the VP has already done that - Miss Brown in particular, the process owner for the AGM, we want to commend her for the minutes and all those; the team that has the responsibility to execute; Mr. Emanuel, Miss Jackson, and all the officers who have played a critical role.

So see you at Denbigh on July 30 to August 1.

At this time we will have a verse of the National Anthem. Can we stand?

(Playing of the National Anthem)

CHAIRMAN: I now call for the motion of adjournment of the 121st Annual General Meeting of the Jamaica Agricultural Society.

Moved by....

Seconded by Vernon Michael.

All in favour?

MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN: Any against?

MEMBERS: No.

CHAIRMAN: This meeting stands adjourned. Thank you very much.

(Adjournment taken at 4:30 p.m.)