

Global and Environmental Change and Food Systems of the Caribbean

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There could well be serious consequences due to changes in climate variability and in other regionally-important environmental factors for Caribbean food provision. This is because such changes not only directly threaten the production of food from land and sea for local consumption, but also threaten revenue generation from export crops and tourism which is needed to import food. Together, both factors will bring added complications for food provision in the region.

An interdisciplinary research project is being launched in the region as a collaborative exercise between regional institutions and the international research project “Global Environmental Change and Food Systems” (GECAFS). The aim is to determine adaptation strategies to cope with the impact of environmental change on food provision at both local and regional levels, and to assess the environmental and socioeconomic consequences of possible adaptation alternatives.

Local-level research addresses food systems in resource-poor communities which are based on fishing and locally-produced food crops. It aims to reduce vulnerability of sub-national food systems, especially in relation to changes in climate variability. Regional-level research aims to develop strategies to reduce the additional complications GEC would bring to regional food provision, especially given changing preferential export markets. Research results will help policy-makers at both national and regional levels analyse the socioeconomic and environmental tradeoffs of alternative natural resource management policies designed to respond to the additional challenges environmental change will bring.