News Release

1st September, 2021

New Providence Agro-Village Project Begins

The Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources has recognized the international success of AgroVillages to significantly increase economic growth and employment generation in the agriculture sector.

Agro Villages, also known as Agro Parks, are a system of agricultural innovations that have been used to resolve the fundamental issues affecting food production. The systems such as production, food processing, labs, research, development, and retail services form the clusters of businesses that will utilize and benefit from the Agro Village

This epicenter will provide incubation and production improvements to businesses in this urban community. The incubation will increase the efficiency of technology and methods of farming, post- harvest handling, processing and marketing operations. This will lead to an increase in food production and a decrease in the cost of production. Increasing production will also increase employment opportunities for persons in activities such as handling, packaging, processing, transporting, and marketing of food and agricultural produce.

Mission

The Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources' (MAMR) mission is to facilitate the enabling environment for the modernization of the food and agriculture system in The Bahamas through the creation of an agro-industrial cluster that will generate a sustainable agricultural based infrastructure.

Objective

The objective of the AgroVillage is to provide a location for stakeholders to equally benefit from co-creation and sharing of knowledge obtained from agro initiatives, good agricultural practices and agro-technology. This can be achieved through an efficient use of natural and human resources to:

1. Create a space for the production of fruits and vegetables.
2. Co-create and share sustainable gardening and agricultural practices.

3. Encourage new and innovative value-added products to enter the local market while creating new income opportunities for residents.
4. Give residents access to purchase fresh, healthy food to improve health.
5. Reduce residents' monthly food costs.
6. Empower youth and build vocational skills.
7. Support community food self-sufficiency.
8. Provide recreational and community activities.
9. Reduce food wastage
10. Encourage recycling and repurposing of debris

Goals

Goal 1: Providing an optimal environment to foster a sustainable agricultural infrastructure for stakeholder's establishment and operation.

Goal 2: Implementation of agricultural related community projects including but not limited to education collaboration.

Goal 3: Increase the use of agro technology and equipment in the field. Technology such as hydroponics, aquaponics, aquaculture and other adapted climate smart adapted technical practices.

Goal 4: Providing access to personnel and literature that are agriculture and business management based through training workshops.

Current Stakeholders for Agro-Village, New Providence

Bahamas public sector:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources
- Bahamas Agriculture and Food Safety Authority, BAHSFA
- Ministry of Public Works
- Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute, BAMSI
- Bahamas Agriculture and Industrial Corporation, BAIC

Bahamas private sector:

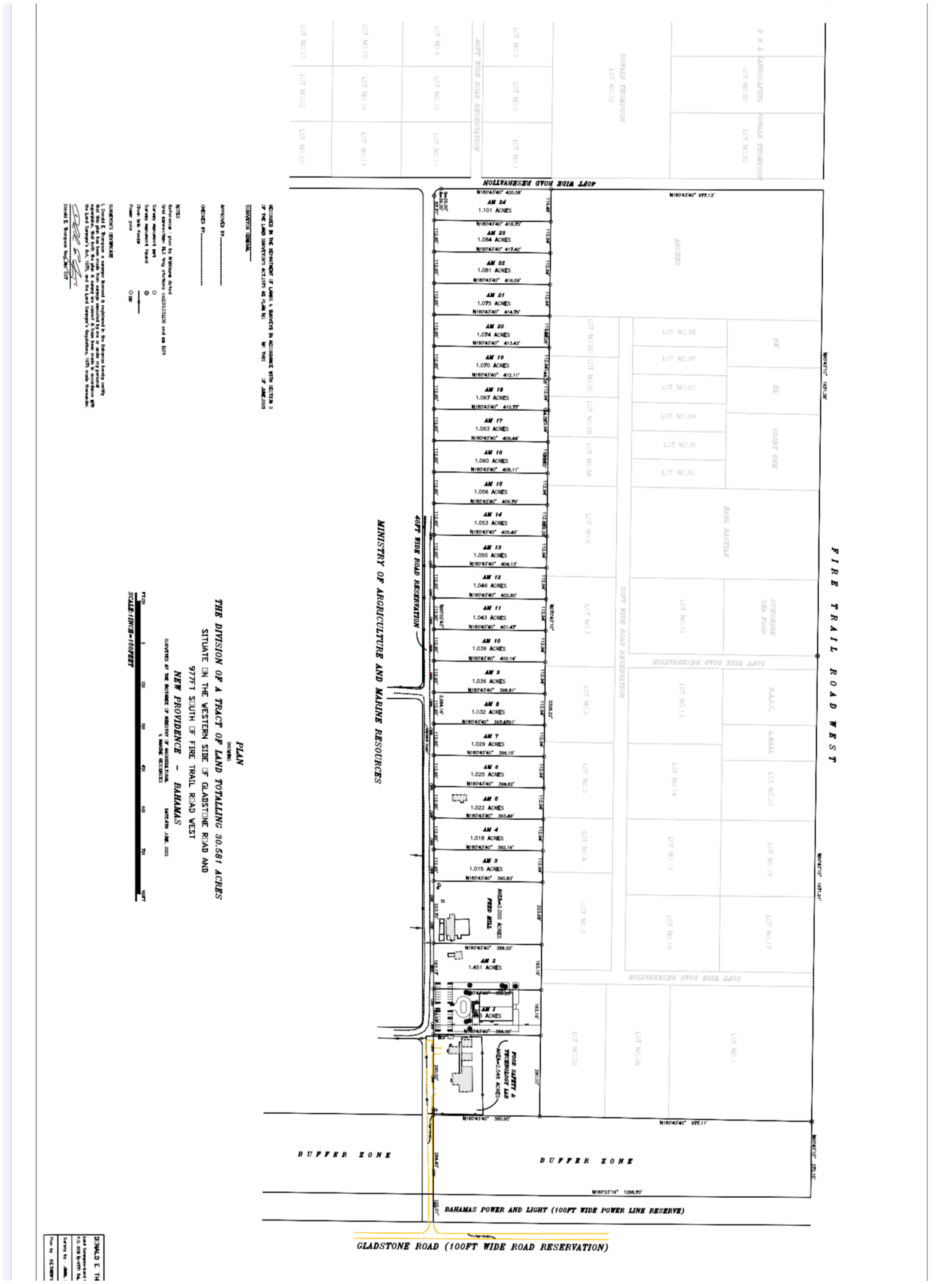
- Producers
- Processors

- Agro input supply companies
- Consumers
- Distribution companies
- Retail and wholesale companies

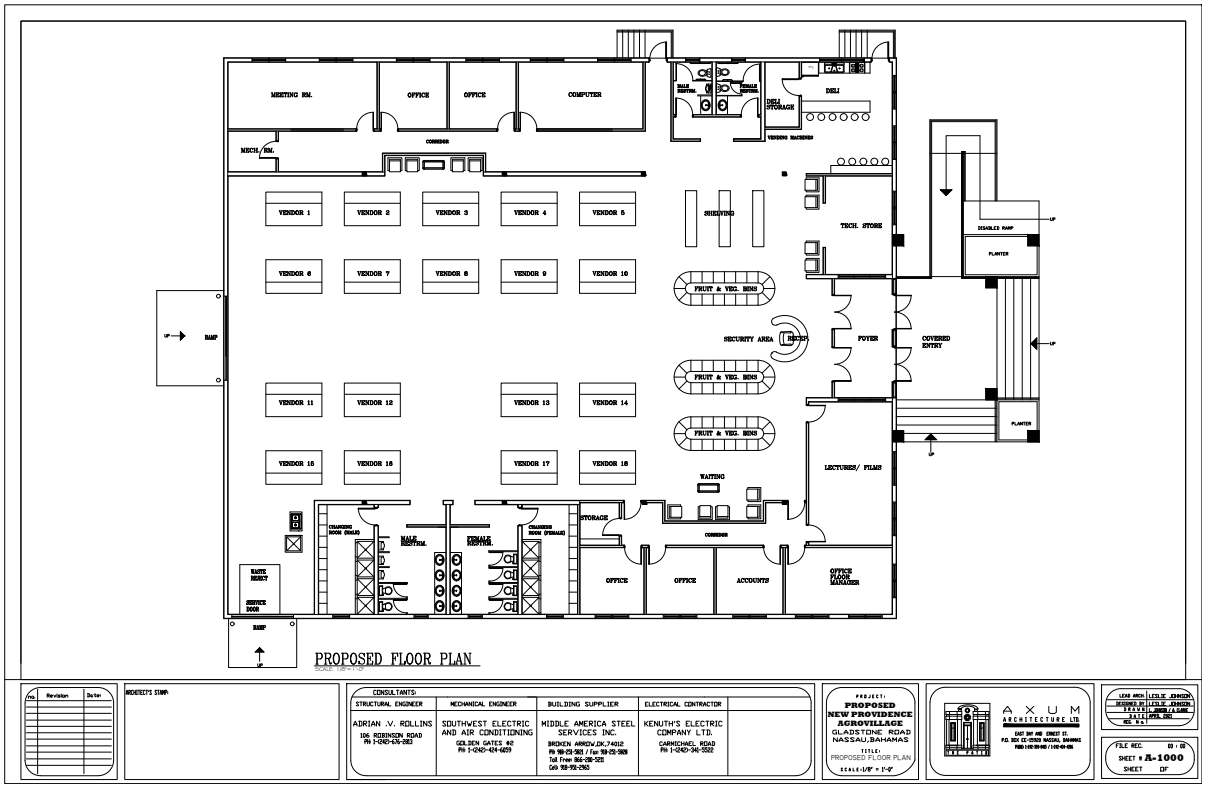
Regional Agriculture Organizations:

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO
- Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, IICA
- Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute, CARDI

Area Survey Map


PLAN
SHOWING
THE DIVISION OF A TRACT OF LAND TOTALLING 30.581 ACRES
SITUATE ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF GLADSTONE ROAD AND
977FT SOUTH OF FIRE TRAIL ROAD WEST
NEW PROVIDENCE – BAHAMAS
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MARINE RESOURCES
FIRE TRAIL ROAD WEST
BUFFER ZONE
BUFFER ZONE
BAHAMAS POWER AND LIGHT (100FT WIDE POWER LINE RESERVE)
GLADSTONE ROAD (100FT WIDE ROAD RESERVATION)

The New Providence Agro Village



The New Providence Agro-Village will feature:

Welcome Centre

The 12,000 sq.ft. state of the art, handicap-accessible welcome center will include, reception and waiting areas for tour guests, meeting room, FAB lab (explained in detail below), AgriTech/ Business Incubator, retail facility (where products in the Village are sold), offices, restrooms, weather station, storage facility, deli/café and separate building for cold storage and food lab.

FAB Lab

IICA has been asked to provide The Bahamas with a proposal to replicate the FAB Lab at IICA's Headquarters in Costa Rica. According to the "IICA Support to the Bahamas AgroVillage Proposal, 2021" the FAB Lab will be designed to demonstrate three main ideas and solutions:

*"1. **A General Area** – digital fabrication laboratories – is an area set up to inspire people and entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into new products and prototypes by giving them access to a range of advanced digital manufacturing technology. It is a technical prototyping platform for innovation, invention, collaboration and learning: a place to play and to create. It is a small-scale workshop offering digital fabrication comprising off the-shelf, industrial-grade fabrication and electronics tools, wrapped in open-source software.*
*2. **A display area** (similar to CIMAG at IICA´s headquarters) of a renewed vision of agriculture with exhibits about agriculture and applied technology combined with devices related to expanded reality and the Internet of things (IoT).*
*3. **A service area** that can provide services as the Agricultural Extension App (AgriExtApp), coordinating the flow of information and attention of requests from affiliated farmers. In addition, services regarding soil, water and crop management, collecting, analyzing data and mapping from network of weather stations and networks of farmers providing information from sensors on soil, water stress, presence of pests and diseases, etc."*

Science and Research Center

The research and development of the agriculture industry is dynamic and requires dedicated focus to constantly explore areas for agricultural improvement. The Agro village will facilitate scientific research through existing farms, colleges and institutions of higher learning (local or international), and organizations such as CARDI and IICA. The research will be facilitated through dedicated space in the Welcome Center and a designated area for experimental farming in the farming lots. In the Scientific Research Office there will be dissemination of information via media (in conjunction with the FAB Lab) and/or seminars and tutorials. This will result in the improvement of skills, knowledge and comprehension of the technical activities of the agriculture industry.

Farming Lots

In 2020, thirty five (35) acres of land on the Gladstone Road Agriculture Complex (GRAC) were approved for the AgroVillage. MAMR has received applications from 20 entrepreneurs engaged in various production activities (including but not limited to brassicas, alliaceous, lactuca, micro and other leafy green production, berries, peppers and other fruits, fruit tree propagation, ornamentals, processing of fruit beverages, sauces and coconut products,, egg, poultry and rabbit production, as well as sustainable fertilizer and mulch production). These businesses

have all been approved for participation in this initiative. These farmers were asked to present business plans that were rigorously evaluated based on the following:

(1) Business rationale,
(2) Specific experience of the sponsor relevant to the industry,
(3) Adequacy of the business plan (including product demand, quality and design, market targets, market penetration strategy, production capacity, operational plan),
(4) Financial soundness (including capital adequacy, viability of projections and sufficiency of cash flows),
(5) Suitability of transfer-of-knowledge program,
(6) Projected environmental impact,
(7) Projected economic impact,
(8) Sustainable development goals identified,
(9) National development goals identified and
(10) Risk assessment (including risk identification and specificity of mitigation activities proposed)

The process was a lengthy, thorough one that provide entrepreneurs with a framework for the level of business acumen that is expected of them.

Conclusion

The New Providence Agro-Village is one of six Agro-Villages that are slated to be established throughout the country. Grand Bahama and New Providence are the first followed by Eleuthera, Exuma, Abaco and Andros. Nestled in the middle of the agriculture zone, on a 35 acre spread, New Providence will be beacon in this transformational initiative.