

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Department Of Agriculture Said To Be Improving Irrigation System At Community Gardens On St. Croix

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ST. CROIX -- The Department of Agriculture announced on Monday that it is currently working to improve the irrigation distribution system in the Community Gardens on St. Croix, and began the installation process two weeks ago. D.O.A. staff along with farmers and hired help were busy laying, cutting and gluing pipes along the irrigation route as the trenching machine moved forward, according to the release.

Once the project completed, over 5,000 feet of three, four and six-inch PVC pipes will be installed, according to the release. A 23-horsepower trash pump with the capacity to pump 1000 gallons per minute will be used to pump water from three large earthen ponds into two storage tanks with a total capacity of 160,000 gallons. Upon completion,

the irrigation system will supply water to 35 crop farmers and enhance their production capacity.

“The project will provide a constant flow of water to farms in the area which would allow farmers to irrigate more efficiently hence improving productivity,” said D.O.A. Commissioner Carlos Robles.

D.O.A. said farmers in Community Garden were excited with the project and the relief that it is expected to bring, especially during the hot, dry summer months. “Growing crops during this time of year has always been a challenge for us; the improvement to the water storage and distribution system would make a huge difference,” said a farmer, who D.O.A. did not name.

The project is a collaboration between D.O.A. and the Virgin Islands Agriculture Advisory Group (VIAAG), and is funded by a \$43,000 Environmental Quality Incentive Program grant from the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA/NRCS). USDA/NRCS District conservationist, Rudy G. O’Reilly, assisted with the design and conservation plan for the project, according to D.O.A.