

The Virgin Islands Consortium

J.F.L. And Dept. Of Agriculture Form Partnership To Promote Healthy Living, Local Farm Industry

Business / **Published On August 24, 2017 10:52 AM /**

Staff **August 24, 2017**



ST. CROIX -- On Wednesday, the acting CEO of the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center (JFL) announced a partnership with the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture (VIDOA) to promote the sale of locally grown produce to the hospital, while at the same time promoting healthy eating within the healthcare system, JFL announced late Wednesday.

The two agencies hosted a meet and greet at the Virgin Islands Cardiac Center Wednesday evening to introduce the pilot initiative of the Farm To Hospital (FTH) program, and JFL's Acting CEO Richard Evangelista along with VIDOA's Commissioner Carlos Robles, signed a memorandum of understanding during the event.

“We are very pleased to be a part of this initiative that will not only benefit our patients and staff, but it will also support and promote the farming industry on St. Croix,” said Mr. Evangelista.

The new initiative is a collaborative effort and the goal of the FTH program is to promote the local farming industry while helping to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables through various avenues like the Farm to Hospital pilot. As part of the agreement, the VIDOA agrees to encourage and solicit Virgin Islands farmers to grow and sell their produce to JFL via the Agriculture department’s aggregate facility. JFL will in turn purchase all the agricultural products needed from local farmers via the VIDOA aggregate facility, once quality standards are met and after advance notification of availability.

During the FTH pilot, the VIDOA will also roll out the "Harvest of the Month" (HOTM) initiative, a program to increase awareness of local produce by highlighting one local fruit or vegetable every month on the hospital’s menu. JFL agrees to use the Harvest of the Month as an opportunity to educate patients, their families, visitors and staff, so the community can learn about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables.