

# Farmers to benefit from Partners for the Americas-funded volunteer visits from shadehouse experts

By **Stabroek staff** | BUSINESS | FRIDAY, MAY 11, 2012

Having already benefitted from funding an expertise to support the creation of scores of shadehouses in communities in Guyana to enable the cultivation of hydroponically grown vegetables, local farmers will be securing further technical help from Partners of the Americas through a visit here by Rutgers University Professor Robin Brumfield, a specialist in farm financial management and greenhouse technology.

During her May 16-30 stay here Dr. Brumfield will conduct training designed to further enhance the efficiency of the hydroponic shadehouse method in farming in Guyana. Dr. Brumfield will work with hydroponic shadehouse vegetable operators from the Inter American Development Bank – funded Hydroponic Shadehouse Vegetable Production and Marketing Project, sharing her expertise with growers in Regions 2,3and 4 through field visits and classroom training.

The training is will expose growers and project staff to vegetable cost analysis, the development of enterprise budgets for vegetable crops and business planning.

In Guyana, hydroponics is considered a timely alternative vegetable production system of growing plants without soil, a practice being adopted by small farmers and non-farmers alike. The hydroponic technique is growing in popularity, in large part because it is possible to circumvent flooding in the cultivation of fresh, healthy vegetables throughout the year.

The Partners of the Americas' Farmer to Farmer programmes is also supporting visits to Guyana by Michael Driver, a graduate of the Veterans Sustainable Agriculture Training (VSAT) Program at Archie's Acres Farm in Valley Center, California, and Mr. Michael Harker, a former Peace Corps volunteer with experience in business management and consulting services relating to the agricultural produce industry.

Mr. Harker, who visits from May 11–27, will provide training in marketing hydroponic vegetables. He will assist local hydroponic vegetable producers in identifying key markets for their produce and will recommend strategies for marketing these goods to supermarkets, hotels, restaurants and individual households.