

4. COMMISSION FOR AGRICULTURE, FOOD PRODUCTION, PLANT AND ANIMAL QUARANTINE, COOPERATIVES, FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND MARINE PARKS

- 4.1.1 The Commission for Agriculture, Food Production, Plant and Animal Quarantine, Cooperative, Forestry, Fisheries and Marine Parks is responsible, among others, to: boost crop and livestock productivity as well as local production; preserve and protect forest ecosystems; facilitate the promotion of diversified, emerging and innovative Cooperative Societies; and ensure the safeguard of marine resources through the protection of marine parks and marine reserves.
- 4.1.2 Its activities are organised under seven portfolios namely: Agriculture, Food Production, Plant and Animal Quarantine, Cooperatives, Forestry, Fisheries and Marine Parks.

4.1 Agricultural Research and Extension Services

- 4.1.3 The Agricultural Research and Extension Services (ARES) is the main technical arm of the Commission for Agriculture and is composed of several Units. Its main functions are, *inter alia*, to: disseminate good agricultural practices; ensure the compliance and dissemination of appropriate bio security measures; oversee the management and conservation of natural resources; and implement climate change programme to support risk and disaster management, among others.
- 4.1.4 The ARES is currently manned by a Manager who is assisted by officers at various levels including employees of the Workmen's Group.
- 4.1.5 A few common proposals have been made by the Unions and Management which include, among others: a re-organisation of the activities of the ARES comprising creation of a few grades; restyling and/or merging of some existing ones; and filling of posts.
- 4.1.6 The Union proposed for the creation of a dedicated grade of Scientific Officer/Senior Scientific Officer (Laboratory) which would be responsible to run tests on food, soil and crop samples. It is considered that since a grade of Scientific Officer/Senior Scientific Officer already exists, an incumbent in the latter grade could be entrusted laboratory-related duties. The Bureau has been apprised that presently an Agricultural Support Officer is performing related tests.
- 4.1.7 In many cases, additional information was sought from parties concerned to enable the Bureau to carry out a proper assessment. In sum, we are reinforcing the structure of ARES through the creation of two professional levels, namely Agricultural Engineer and Biometrician, while consolidating the Extension Services with a supervisory level of Senior Field Support Officer.

Agricultural Engineer (New Grade)

- 4.1.8 The Maintenance and Infrastructure Unit of the ARES is presently staffed by officers in the grades of Agricultural Superintendent and Senior Agricultural