



Board of Investment
Mauritius



Agro-industry

Rodrigues

AGRO-INDUSTRY

Rodrigues has an established reputation for its traditional agro-processed products. The agricultural and agro-processing sectors are viewed as important segments contributing to the economic development of Rodrigues Island. The geographic isolation of Rodrigues provides many advantages such as pest and disease free production, hence guaranteeing a quality produce which can be exported.

With a view to further modernize the agricultural landscape in Rodrigues Island, the Government of Mauritius and Rodrigues Regional Assembly are working together towards creating an enabling business and investment environment. Government's overarching objective of strengthening and modernizing the agricultural and agri-business sectors in Rodrigues will be achieved by

- transforming the sector into a commercial and export-oriented one;
- leveraging on technology and agricultural sciences;
- enhancing its competitiveness and fostering forward and backward linkages throughout the commodity value chains.

Much emphasis has been laid upon shifting from subsistence to cash crop farming and focus on value-added products.

Challenges

Rodrigues has witnessed a decline in the production of agricultural products over the years with a drastic fall in the area under cultivation (from 1,294 ha in 1990 to 379 ha in 2014). This can be attributed to mainly land abandonment and a lack of interest from the younger generation to work in the agricultural sector.

Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land tenure is an important factor limiting economic development of the island as most of the land belongs to the state.• Abandoned lands prone to soil erosion• Lack of a proper agricultural land cadastre
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortage of water supply
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of appropriate infrastructure to conduct agro-industrial activities such as slaughterhouse, food laboratory etc
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Absence of sound marketing channels
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fodder shortage (quantity and quality) for breeding animals;<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ High prices of agricultural inputs (seeds, manure, labour, feeds, agro-chemicals, glass jars, tools and equipment);
Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An ageing farmers' population as young people are not interested in this field.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low adoption of modern technologies

Opportunities

Specific crops production and processing and animal farming have been identified as key activities which may be further developed on the island and which offer important possibilities for the population and the economy.

<p>Lemons, Chilies and red beans production and processing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large variety of traditionally processed food items is available in Rodrigues. Demand for processed lemons, chilies and red beans may be boosted through the development of a structured processing industry, geared towards quality and adhering to the norms as prescribed in the Food Act 1998 enhancing its marketing potential.
<p>Animal Farming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pig farming and processing can be considered as there is an increasing demand for value-added products. Pork production is the dominant activity of the livestock in Rodrigues.
<p>Coffee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee is produced in backyards. 3 planters have planters 150 plants. Many visitors appreciate the quality of the Rodriguan Arabica coffee. Coffee can be promoted as a niche cash crop for Rodrigues, hence promoting diversification of rodriguan agriculture and increase the array of opportunities for our local crops.
<p>Bio-farming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the growing concern of consumers on the negative impact of agro chemicals, there is an increasing demand for safe fruits and vegetables produced sustainably. Farmers could be encouraged to eliminate use of synthetic agro chemicals and shift to environmentally friendly production approach namely bio-farming and zero-budget/natural farming. The agricultural sector can thus be developed, certified and marketed as being organic.

In recent years, Rodrigues has considerably improved the agro-processed products through enhanced packaging. These products fetch higher prices. Opportunities still exist in agro-processing through partnership with entrepreneurs from Mauritius.

Some examples include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La Compagnie Agricole de Labourdonnais has partnered with entrepreneurs in Rodrigues to grow lemon on a bigger scale on an extent of 8,000 m2 of land for juice processing; • The RRA is contemplating yoghurt production which would eventually be distributed in schools. Rodrigues does not have the expertise in yoghurt production. Hence the opportunity exists for one yoghurt producer from Mauritius to set up a production unit in Rodrigues; • The fowls currently being exported to Mauritius can be processed prior to exports. • The possibility for one Mauritian operator to set up a chicken processing facility in Rodrigues can be envisaged. |
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