

Think outside the bank

Above the Bottomline

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF SIGNIAGLOBE FINANCIAL

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FARMING IN BARBADOS AFTER COVID-19 & LA SOUFRIÈRE

The pandemic first reached the shores of Barbados in March, 2020. Some people thought it would not get here, others thought it was inevitable, but what no one could've truly predicted was how much life would change from that point onward. Our Government came up with a plan to slow the spread of the virus as it swept across the country. This plan was to determine which sectors were essential and non-essential and shut down all non-essential businesses temporarily; while asking persons not to leave home, along with other directives to slow the spread of the virus.

Unfortunately, the agricultural sector was initially shut down - farmers could not sell their produce and others could not leave home to go to their farms. On our farm, we have layers (chickens that lay eggs specifically). We also sell a variety of vegetables and herbs: lettuce, thyme, chives, okras, and a selection of different produce during the year. As we all know, you cannot prevent chickens from laying eggs or stop plants from growing; we might be able to preserve some of the crops and slow the process of spoilage, but those 'hacks' can only last for so long. Despite the country being put on 'pause,' essentially dialing our demand down to zero, our supply continued at the same pace.

This created an oversupply of produce, some of which became spoilage and it also meant that our investments were not gaining any profits. We were operating at a loss. The country might've been on pause, but other aspects of farm life were not; the chickens still needed to be fed; plants still had to be watered; and expenses still had to be paid. It should also be mentioned that the agricultural sector did not remain shut down for long, as members of government recognised these issues and corrected them as quickly as they could. However, due to that week of no movement that led to a surplus of produce for weeks, the excess meant that produce was not being sold and profits were low, forcing us to operate at a loss.

We then had to think differently, as village shops were not allowed to open, and despite being farmers and having an outlet for "egg shops", we fell into that category as well. (That is where we sold the majority of our produce.) We then proceeded to make deliveries across the country and as the country opened more, we were also allowed to operate curbside pickups from our farm; all while





maintaining the mandated Covid safety protocols. As restrictions began to slowly lift, from July 2020 to December 2020, demand and supply returned to a level of normalcy.

Fast forward to the period January, 2021 to May, 2021. We were placed on lockdown again, however, movement was allowed and a lot more delivery companies started to pop up. This allowed us to sell our products, and more people began buying and selling eggs. Business was not optimal, but at the same time, we were doing better than when we were first placed on lockdown.

On April 12th, 2021 La Soufrière volcano erupted and due to Barbados' close proximity to St. Vincent and the Grenadines; paired with the direction of the winds, we received just over a week of ash fall with high levels occurring in the immediate days following the eruption. No one could move; there was no option but to stay inside because the air was filled with ash; breathing was difficult; the air constantly smelled like smoke and if you inhaled it, you could sometimes taste the grains of ash in your mouth.

For that period, no eggs could be sold but the chickens kept laying and we had to continue going out and feeding them. Despite the ash being supposedly beneficial for the soil, having it on the plants themselves caused a problem as consumers buying lettuce could taste the ash, creating further health issues if they were not washed properly. The process of properly cleaning hundreds of bunches of lettuce proved to be too time consuming and costly, causing us to have to dispose of the majority of our stock. Also, during that time, many vegetables spoiled and, like the lettuce, had to be destroyed.

As of May 2021, when this article was penned, we are managing to sell produce, however our supply is significantly more than our demand. As the ashfall has recently ended and the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions are slowly being lifted once more, I speculate that demand will once again increase as conditions within the country improve.



*By
Shaka
Brathwaite*



By Joan Brewster

Have you visited the HARP (High Altitude Research Programme) Gun in Barbados?

It's located on the southern side of the Grantley Adams International Airport. In the early 1960's a ballistic engineer, Gerald Bull, with the funding of the U.S. Military and the Canadian University were able to set up, what was at the time, the largest super gun (a whopping 120 feet) in the world on our beautiful island, Barbados. Given the proximity to the vast Atlantic Ocean and also the equator, this was the perfect spot for the test programme.

The intent of the project was to have a cheaper means of sending satellites to orbit space. This project was well received by residents who gained employment during its construction. However, they were not pleased with the effects the high caliber gun had; eventually damaging many homes and structures. The project ended in 1967 due to reduced funding. To date the gun is on the original site, a bit rusty, but noticeable.

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Join Ameera & Gabriel every Thursday at 3pm. as they live stream across our social media pages and stay up to speed with everything SigniaGlobe!



Get to know us!



INTRODUCING DESHAUN JONES

SG - What was your initial thought about coming to work here at SigniaGlobe Financial?

DJ - I was excited to join this company because it is my first job upon leaving SJPT.

SG - What do you do here at SigniaGlobe?

DJ - I am an Administrative Assistant; I search for customer files that are 'active'; scan them and put them in the system as electronic copies for easy access. Afterwards, they are boxed to be taken offsite to Secure Shred.

SG - What is your preferred beverage?

DJ - My preferred beverage would be water but as a "drink-drink" it would have to be a Sprite!

SG - List some of your hobbies.

DJ - My hobbies consist of football, gaming on a console or computer and helping others in need (if I know I can help). Ultimately want to add helping the homeless to my list of hobbies, when I am financially stable.

SG - What is your most memorable childhood experience?

DJ - The most memorable childhood experience I have had would be riding my bicycle outside with my friends.

SG - If you could only listen to one song for a whole week, what would it be?

DJ - Bizzie Gambino – "All the Hate"

SG - How have you grown as a person since joining SigniaGlobe?

DJ - My perspective has changed; I'm not taking life for granted and I am recognising all the great opportunities offered to me whether it be at home, work or on social media.

SG - Do you play any sports? If so, at what level?

DJ - I actually don't play any sports at the moment but I used to play football with friends on an amateur level.

SG - What is one thing no one knows about you?

SM - My love for singing and acting.

By Jelan Ward & Rashad Bostic

ONLINE LEARNING & YOU

Primary School Student:

- Q. How difficult or easy is it to use the online learning technology (computer, tablet, video calls, learning applications etc.)?
- A. It isn't difficult to use the devices. Logging into classes and submitting work is relatively easy.
- Q. How satisfied are you with the amount of time you spend speaking with your teachers?
- A. Not satisfied. The classroom setting allows for a better feedback session than online.
- Q. How often do you hear from your teachers individually?
- A. Not often; it's almost non-existent.
- Q. How difficult or easy is it to stay focused on your schoolwork right now?
- A. It is very difficult. I get restless sitting in front of the PC and not being able to interact with my friends.
- Q. Has online school affected your physical health?
- A. Yes! I am no longer able to run and play with my friends.

Secondary School Teacher:

- Q. How concerned are you about students' academic growth right now and why?
- A. I am very concerned; online classes has its pros and cons. A con would be what everyone agrees on - the lack of social interaction in school. I also recognise that parents generally do not take the necessary care and attention with the children and leave a lot this responsibility to the teachers and schools, so with the children being at home, some are being left behind. A positive to online classes, ironically, is the distractions and the joking that happens during face-to-face classes are now at a minimum. Focused students can do more work now than when in class with friends. This online environment really helped the students who are focused, but unfortunately, the delinquent ones became even more delinquent.
- Q. On an average, how many of your students regularly participated in your virtual classes?
- A. Between 90 - 95%
- Q. What kind of effect is the current learning model having on your social/emotional well-being?
- A. To be honest, it is very heavy. No one could have predicted this pandemic and we were not 100% prepared for this. There was no immediate effective training and a lot of my hours were taken up trying to prepare and structure my already-prepared syllabus to match this new learning model. We as teachers had to do more work to prep classes, find resources and retool, relearn and find new ways to get this information to the students effectively. My social and personal life took a huge hit as we had to do more work than we are being accredited for by society.
- Q. How difficult or easy has it been for you to implement the COVID-related safety measures and protocols in your building?
- A. Implementing these safety measures were very difficult. Classes still cannot be at full capacity leaving classes to be split in half in two different rooms while there is still one teacher. We now must go between the two classes for that class period. If students have electronic devices, they are able to listen in on the other class that the teacher is in which is counterproductive. It is also very difficult because the children are not constantly wearing mask or social distancing and the children are no longer focus because the social aspect is very much present again.

1st Year Secondary School Student:

- Q. How difficult or easy is it to use the online learning technology (computer, tablet, video calls, learning applications etc.)?
- A. Not easy! At times I am unable to join classes on time if at all.
- Q. How satisfied are you with the amount of time you spend speaking with your teachers?
- A. Not satisfied. Sometimes I feel more time is needed.
- Q. How often do you hear from your teachers individually?
- A. Not often. I hardly get one-on-one time.
- Q. How difficult or easy is it to stay focused on your schoolwork right now?
- A. Very difficult
- Q. Has online school affected your physical health?
- A. Yes. I never work out or run around anymore

4th Year Secondary School Student:

- Q. How difficult or easy is it to use the online learning technology (computer, tablet, video calls, learning applications etc.)?
- A. It is very easy because I am accustomed to using the devices and the applications are all easy to access.
- Q. How satisfied are you with the amount of time you spend speaking with your teachers?
- A. I would prefer to have more time to speak to my teachers.
- Q. How difficult or easy is it to stay focused on your schoolwork right now?
- A. Very rare. I hear from my teachers most of the time during classes.
- Q. How difficult or easy is it to stay focused on your schoolwork right now?
- A. It is fairly difficult to stay focused.
- Q. Has online school affected your physical health?
- A. No, it has not.

By Shanice Walkes



Jokes, jokes & MORE JOKES!



The Last Meal

Three prisoners are waiting to be executed and they are asked what they wished to have for their last meal. The Trini responds, "A Chicken Roti!" The warden serves him his roti, and then escorts him to his execution. The Jamaican requests Jerk Pork. The warden serves him his Jerk Pork, and then escorts him to his execution. The Bajan requests a bag of plums. The warden asks, "Plums???" "Yes, plums," says the Bajan. The warden replies, "But them outta season!" "So?" replies the Bajan. "I gine wait...!"

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A husband comes home from church, greets his wife and lifts her up. He then carries her around the house. The wife, surprised by her husband's actions looks at him and says, "Did the Reverend preach about being romantic?"

The husband looks at her and says, "No; he said we must carry our burdens and sorrows."

A Fly In The Beer

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One day, a Trinidadian, a Jamaican and a Bajan walked into a rum shop together. They proceeded to each buy a Banks Beer. Just as they were about to enjoy their creamy beverage, three flies landed in each of their beers. The Trini pushed his beer away from him in disgust. The Jamaican fished the offending fly out of his beer and continued drinking it as if nothing had happened. The Bajan picked the fly out of his drink, held it out over the beer and then started yelling. "SPIT IT OUT, SPIT IT OUT, YUH LICORISH BRUTE!"

by Ramon Boyce



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