

CARICOM Farmer of the Year 2025

Opening Ceremony – Caribbean Week of Agriculture

St. Kitts & Nevis | September 29, 2025

Her Excellency Marcella Liburd – Governor General St. Kitts & Nevis, Hon. Dr. Geoffrey Ian Hanley – Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Samal Duggins – Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries & Marine Resources, Representatives of the CARICOM Secretariat, Fellow Farmers and producers, Colleagues, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen Good Morning.

They say you reap what you sow. Today, I stand here on the shoulders of thousands who've sown with heart, hands, and hope.

It is with deep gratitude and great pride that I accept the CARICOM 2025 Farmer of the Year Award on behalf of The Best Dressed Chicken.

This moment belongs to every farmer in our network, every team member on the ground, every customer who chooses local, our Ministry of Agriculture industry support and every stakeholder who believes in the power of Caribbean agriculture. Together, we've made this possible.

At The Best Dressed Chicken, we're more than a company, we are part of a movement. For over 65 years, we've worked to build a fully integrated agricultural system. From breeder farms, hatcheries and feed mill to farms and finished products, all designed to serve one purpose: food security.

Today, with 73 farms and 249 poultry houses, Jamaica can produce all the chicken it consumes. That's not just a statistic. That's sovereignty on a plate. That's jobs in our communities. That's resilience in action.

But we don't do it alone. We partner with contracted farmers, providing them with quality chicks, balanced feed, expert veterinary care, and ongoing training, helping them grow stronger businesses and better livelihoods.

We've also embraced innovation at every level, from solar-powered farms and waste-to-energy systems to real-time digital monitoring and automated climate control. Every tool we use serves a bigger purpose: efficiency, sustainability, and long-term growth.

Across the Caribbean, we share common challenges, climate pressures, rising costs, and the global push for food independence. But we also share a powerful opportunity: to lead with purpose, and to feed our region with pride. Today our industry contributes 392,000 in full-time employment Jobs, JA\$62 billion in wages, and JA\$310 billion in economic activities to Jamaica based on a recent EY study conducted on behalf of the Caribbean Poultry Association.

This award strengthens our resolve to continue the fight for food security and innovation, from increasing local production to expanding our line of value-added products that meet the evolving needs of our people and our markets.

Let's keep feeding the future, building resilience, and proving that Caribbean agriculture is not just viable — it's vital.

Thank you, and may God continue to bless our farmers, our food, and our future.