

Moss Gloss

The introduction of sea moss farming into the island nation of St.Kitts and Nevis offers hope for new jobs, alternative livelihoods and food security

As production from marine capture fish species fluctuated over the past decade and a half, the Department of Marine Resources in the island nation of St.Kitts and Nevis became concerned about the sustainability of the livelihoods of fisherfolk. In order to diversify the risks associated with the fluctuation in the catch of marine species, the Department contacted the Department of Fisheries in Grenada for assistance with the mariculture of sea moss (*Eucheuma cottonii*). Grenada is one of the leading countries in the Caribbean region in sea moss propagation.

The origin of the *Eucheuma cottonii* species is South East Asia. *Eucheuma cottonii* became commercially viable in the Philippines in 1974. It was then introduced to some South American countries and later to Grenada. Now it has come to St.Kitts and Nevis. 

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In St.Kitts and Nevis, a number of marine sites were identified for sea moss cultivation. A few pilot plots were cultivated as demonstration for fisherfolk. A number of fisherfolk organizations in the Federation of St.Kitts and Nevis have been identified to grow the sea moss while the Department of Marine Resources will be responsible in finding markets for the product when it is converted into sea moss drink.

Sea moss is a cash crop that has the potential to create new jobs within developing countries. It was introduced as a viable means of providing food security and alternative livelihoods in light of unpredictable fish landings affecting fishing communities and threatening their livelihood development.

This piece is by **Marc Williams** (marcwill3@aol.com), Director, Department of Marine Resources, Paul Southwell Industrial Site, St.Kitts and Nevis

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