

# **Remarks**

**Senator the Honourable Aubyn Hill  
Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce**

**International Produce Safety Summit**

**Tuesday, September 26, 2023**

**Virtual Presentation  
(Recorded for transmittal)**

**Words: 574**

## **Salutations:**

- The Hon. Floyd Green – Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Mrs. Sancia Bennett Templer - Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Investment Industry and Commerce
- Mr. Wilfred Baghaloo - Chairman of the Standards Council, BSJ
- Dr Velton Gooden – Executive Director, Bureau of Standards
- Dr Mark Moorman – Director at the Food and Drug Administration Office of Food Safety
- Representatives from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), University of Georgia and Cornell University
- Heads of Agencies
- BSJ Staff members
- Media Practitioners
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure as Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Jamaica's Business Ministry, to greet you as you launch the **Summit on the USFDA Produce Safety Rule** hosted by **the Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ) in partnership with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).**

This training session is of critical importance to our farmers and all companies involved in the growing, harvesting, packing and holding of fruits and vegetables grown for human consumption.

At this event today are farmers, packing house operators, regulators, support agencies, and very importantly, exporters and potential exporters of produce to the United States of America. I am confident that most of you have heard my consistent call to action, to grow exports exponentially if we are to become a wealthy country.

The Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce (MIIC) is committed to improving collaboration between private and public sector partners locally and overseas to enable Jamaican businesses to produce exports of exceptional quality and win overseas customers and markets.

This Summit provides a tremendous opportunity for contributors to our food industry to benefit from a rich knowledge-sharing and capacity-building experience that will last well beyond today.

It is important that farmers and agro-processors are sensitized to the benefits of using international standards through product certification.

It is the accreditation of the certification bodies (such as the National Certification Body of Jamaica, NCBJ) that will allow your results to be accepted internationally.

Once the Certified Body (CB) is accredited by Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC) its

certificates will be accepted internationally. JANAAC is recognised by the FDA as 1 of 4 accreditation bodies around the world with the authority to accredit certification bodies that conduct food safety audits under ten (10) of the eleven (11) possible scopes of accreditation used by the U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Accredited Third-Party Certification Program (FDA-TPP) for a period of five years.

This will enable all our businesspeople, farmers, agro-processors and other manufacturers to be competitive, locally, regionally and globally. The consistent use of standards with an accreditation-based system will ensure

repeatability, traceability, quality and market access. –  
key elements in produce acceptance and product for  
exports.

The Food Safety Modernization Branch (FSMB) initiative  
aims to empower farmers and stakeholders to become  
compliant with U.S. regulations. We appreciate the FDA's  
role in launching the Produce Safety Network to assist  
farmers and regulators to implement the rule.

Over the next three days, as you engage in this summit,  
please benefit from the classroom training and

observations from your field visits. I urge you to maximize the opportunities that are afforded to you.

I encourage you to engage with the National Certification Body of Jamaica (NCBJ) whose certification products – the Certification of Agricultural Produce Programme, the Organic Certification, the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) programme as well as the internationally recognized ISO 22000: 2018 – Food Safety Management System offerings and the FDA-Third Party Accreditation process – will greatly enhance how you do business locally and enable regional and international growth. Your growth will in turn increase Jamaica's export numbers.



Though the United States produces much of its own produce, imports of fresh fruits, vegetables and tubers are growing. Jamaica must make sure it increases its share in this market.

Your participation today and your commitment beyond this three-day session will contribute significantly to your knowledge and expertise.

I trust that the deliberations will go well and will be beneficial for all stakeholders.

Thank you.

**Senator the Hon. Aubyn Hill**  
**Minister**