GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Details Anti-Crime Strategies

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(Director Featured on Panel at Anti-Crime Summit)

The Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr. Theodore E. James, has identified several issues affecting the agriculture and fisheries sectors. He was speaking on Thursday, 25th September, as part of a panel of governmental organisations discussing crime trends and factors contributing to crime, on the second day of the Virgin Islands Anti-Crime Summit.

Mr. James pointed out that there is destruction of property occurring at Paraquita Bay, with farmers sabotaging each other by breaking water lines. He revealed that animals are trespassing on properties and destroying crops, and there is illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

“We are encouraging farmers to report their issues to the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force on theft of crops and livestock,” the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries stated.

According to Mr. James, recommended strategies to address criminal activities include the implementation of closed-circuit television in high-risk areas, finalising the Land Use Policy for Crown Lands, conducting onshore and offshore surveillance in collaboration with police and customs, and hiring additional staff to enforce legislation.

In addition, he said there are plans to purchase enforcement drones, coordinate training in drone surveillance technology, and update regulations to allow the use of images, video, and other media as evidence. He said the department is also looking to provide Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) training for staff so they can join the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force and the Customs Department for sea surveillance.

The Director emphasised the importance of ongoing education, stating, “Part of our strategy is to launch educational campaigns to remind dog owners of the law and penalties, remind owners of registered dogs to renew registrations annually, conduct dog registration drives, and implement administrative fines through a ticketing system.”

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About:

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is a department under the Premier’s Office of the Government of the Virgin Islands. They are mandated to promote and regulate the agricultural and fisheries sectors to ensure that food produced and harvested within the Virgin Islands is safe, nutritious, and sustainably produced, while protecting the natural environment, enhancing economic growth, and improving the social well-being of Virgin Islanders.

Photo Credit: Mr. Ronnielle Frazer | DIPR

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