

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

THIS MONTH WE FEATURE RICARDO MOHAMMED, RESEARCH ASSISTANT II
ASSIGNED TO THE NORRIS DEONARINE NORTHERN WHOLESALE MARKET, MACOYA



*Ricardo Mohammed, Research Assistant II,
NAMDEVCO*

Data Collection impacts everyone, especially within the agricultural industry, data collection and market research is crucial. Here at NAMDEVCO, we understand the importance of data collection, not just for information dissemination amongst our stakeholders but the impact it has on decision making, as it enables a more equitable platform for all traders. Our research also entails market intelligence reports which illustrate new market trends and analyses volume and price variations at the Macoya market. In this regard, all stakeholders benefit from the research and data collection processes, as this information is made accessible at one's fingertips.

I am Ricardo Mohammed and I am currently the Research Assistant II at NAMDEVCO's Norris Deonarine Northern Wholesale Market, Macoya, where I have been employed for the past fifteen years.

Agriculture molded me. At an early age, I can safely say agriculture impacted my life tremendously. My fondest memories as a child, was growing up on my grandparents' dairy farm at Carlsen Field. There I milked cows, fed the ducks and chickens, in addition to helping my grandfather harvest his seasonal crops such as; pumpkin and watermelon which were then sold at the Chaguanas Market.

It's the little things that make a big difference. I take pride in my agricultural upbringing, as a matter of fact, I would say my background influenced my life choices, including my career path. In recollection, agriculture was a natural gravitation. As an adult, I was fortunate to transition into the sugar cane industry, in the Sugar Cane Cultivation Department specifically, at Caroni 1975 Limited, prior to joining NAMDEVCO.

Everything prepares you from something. I enjoy my daily functions at the Macoya market because it brings a sense of familiarity from my childhood experience. On my morning commute to the market, I am accompanied by a multitude of farmers, wholesalers and traders, all making their way to the same venue, at 3:00am. Interactions are key to my role in data collection. My team of Research Assistants and I collect price and volume data by individually networking with farmers/wholesalers at the market, who all hail from various parts of Trinidad - Biche, Rio Claro and Maraval are just a few. Prices are recorded periodically to determine a modal price, prior to reviewing and then uploaded to the system. I then perform the first phase of verification and thereafter compile the daily report of both price and volume of commodities which is then once again validated prior to public dissemination.

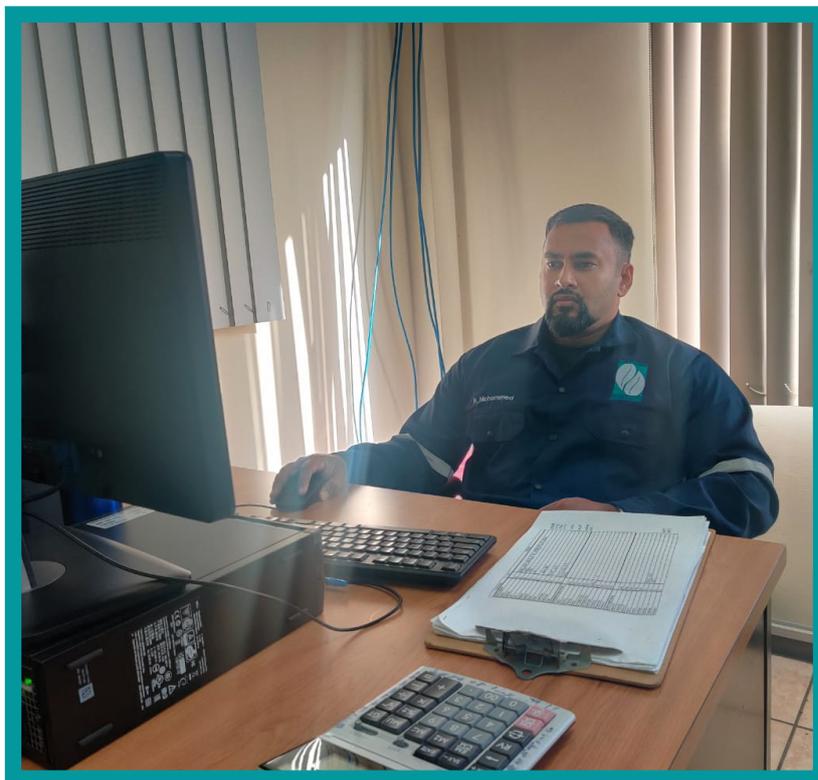
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Progress requires teamwork, especially as we navigate the challenges of the global pandemic. We are now reliant on the farmers and wholesalers to assist in the data collection process, by presently collecting information via phone calls, as opposed to face-to-face data collection. I must say we are grateful to our farmers and wholesalers who are very cooperative in their efforts to ensure the continuity of data collection, amongst our stakeholders.

My role at NAMDEVCO is really a platform, one that gives me the privilege to interact and engage with persons from all walks of life, throughout the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago, as the Macoya market is the largest wholesale market. I personally love witnessing trading at the market and feel humbled to make contributions through my data and research efforts, not just to the agriculture sector but to the economic development of our country.

We are all in this together! As we seek to overcome the challenges of this pandemic, I wish to urge all patrons of markets to please wash your hands, sanitize and wear your masks. Please practice social distancing and refrain from lengthy shopping times, be cautious and mindful as we look forward to seeing you all, the members of our market families, in the near future.



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