

## United Farmers Aruba (UFA)

Date: 11 September 2025



### Public Statement & Open Invitation

United Farmers Aruba (UFA) shares Government's vision: stronger local food production, resilient livelihoods, and better use of land, water, and energy. UFA welcomes the Agri-Innovation Park—if *all* farmers are in the room, the rules are public, and technology fits Aruba. We're asking the Government for three safeguards, a public update on farmer priorities, and an open meeting to align next steps.

#### Our concern

So far, the public information regarding the project, including the Terms of Reference, does not adequately reflect input from the divers farming community Aruba has. It leans heavily toward imported greenhouse models and requirements that few, if any, Aruba-registered firms can meet. This risks excluding local farmers before design choices are even debated.

#### What is needed

1. **Structured farmer involvement:** Confirm a farmers' roundtable/working group tied to the AIP timeline, plus a nomination window so UFA can put forward representatives.
2. **Technology fit:** Solutions must reflect Aruba's climate, water, and existing agricultural systems, not just copy foreign models. Keep the process technology-neutral—not limited to *glastuinbouw* (glass-greenhouse) models.
3. **Transparency:** Publish evaluation criteria and their weightings, Q&As, and engagement logs. Scoring should give explicit weight to local teaming and knowledge transfer so capacity stays in Aruba.

**Priorities alignment:** The AIP should not replace key farmer priorities already submitted to Government (Land access & modernization of *huurgrond* rules \* Water access & quality \* Strengthening Santa Rosa's technical support \* Electricity connection & costs \* Customs for Agri-Tech \* Market access for local produce)

#### Our invitation

UFA invites Minister Geoffrey Wever and the agricultural team to attend our upcoming general meeting with members, held in the evening of every 2nd Wednesday of the month. Farmers deserve clarity and an open dialogue on how the AIP will move forward.

We remain constructive, but clear: Aruba's agriculture policy must be made with its farmers, not just announced to them.

On behalf of United Farmers Aruba,

*Diego Acevedo - Rose Barros - Rachell Tromp*