

## Still no resolution to Nutrien port fees dispute



Nutrien's Point Lisas facility. PHOTO BY NURTIE TRINIDAD

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Nutrien is assuring workers that all is not lost as discussions continue with the Government in their ongoing port fee dispute.

During an all-staff meeting yesterday, vice president and managing director Edmund Thompson told employees the company remains engaged with the Government to reach a mutually agreeable position. In the meantime, permanent staff remain employed.

Contracted staff have been reduced because the plants are no longer operational, leaving less work available. Some contracted workers, however, remain on site.

Last week, 350 contracted staff were released, but permanent employees continue to report for duty at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate in Couva.

Guardian Media understands many workers had expected to be told they were being laid off and were pleasantly surprised to learn they still had jobs.

On the related issue of the void in the carbon dioxide supply which Nutrien's shutdown has created, Massy vice president of Corporate Communications and Corporate Affairs, Dionne Ligoure, yesterday said the company's new arrangement ensures full supply capacity.

"The supply of carbon dioxide is enough for Massy Gas to supply our entire customer base. More than that, we can assure our customers this plan enables us to not just resume, but to maintain and provide redundancy in the CO<sub>2</sub> supply. To this end, I thank our diligent team at Massy Gas, Proman, NGC, PLIPDECO and other government stakeholders for their support and partnership," she said.

Massy's operations had been disrupted when Nutrien shut down its plant and Proman stepped in to fill the void.

Proman, when contacted again for an update yesterday, said it needed more time to respond to questions about whether it can continue supplying CO<sub>2</sub> to Massy or how long this can be maintained at the current price.

Industry experts have questioned Proman's ability to continue supplying the CO<sub>2</sub> on a long-term basis.

Guardian Media also reached out to Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, asking what she had been told about Nutrien's future in the country and what was being done to prevent the company from leaving. She responded that questions should be directed to the Minister of Energy.

Energy Minister Dr Roodal Moonilal has not yet responded.

Guardian Media understands the issue is expected to be discussed in Cabinet today.

On Tuesday, Massy Gas confirmed it had secured an alternative carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) supply through a new delivery arrangement with Proman, following the shutdown of Nutrien's Trinidad Nitrogen operations at Point Lisas.

In a joint statement, Proman, Massy Gas, the National Gas Company (NGC), PLIPDECO and other government agencies said the new supply line had been commissioned on schedule and at no additional cost to customers.