

## Gopee-Scoon hails reinvesting manufacturers



Minister of Trade and Industry Paula Gopee-Scoon

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Minister of Trade and Industry Paula Gopee-Scoon says 88 non-energy manufacturing companies invested approximately \$2.27 billion in their existing operations and created over 1,800 additional jobs.

Gopee-Scoon made this comment during the sod-turning ceremony on Tuesday to mark the beginning of construction of the Nutrimix Group's animal and pet food plant.

She described the plant as a true representation of strategic and successful diversification.

She said Nutrimix's bold step in backward integration within the agricultural value chain is needed as T&T seeks to achieve greater food security and the goals established by Caricom under the 25 by 25 initiative.

The minister noted that over the period January 2020 to December 2024, T&T imported an estimated 302 million kilogrammes worth of animal feed at a value of \$1.3 billion.

In contrast, the country has exported 13 million kilogrammes of animal feed at a value of \$60 million.

"This figure excludes dog/cat food and bird seeds. Looking at the export potential, the global import market for animal feed experienced significant growth from \$17.91 billion in 2020 to a peak of \$22.79 billion in 2022, before slightly declining to \$20.78 billion in 2023," she outlined.

The top importers in 2023, Gopee-Scoon said, were Belgium (US\$997 million), Germany (US\$953 million), and the Netherlands (US\$911 million), reflecting strong demand in European markets, while the United States (\$894 million) remains a key non-European importer.

For T&T, she noted the markets with the greatest export potential for animal feed are the United States, Barbados, and St Lucia.

Gopee-Scoon indicated that this country has also traditionally been a net importer of pet food and notably, over the period January 2020 to December 2024, a total of approximately 50 million kilogrammes of pet food was imported at a value of \$523 million. At the same time, 639,000 kilogrammes were exported at a value of \$8.3 million.

The minister pointed out that the global pet food market was valued at US\$126.6 billion in 2024 presenting an opportunity for entering the international marketplace and earning foreign exchange.

She said that the United States, Panama, and Chile are the top three greatest export potential markets.

Beyond the top three, other high-potential markets close to us include Guyana, Jamaica, Barbados, Belize, Saint Lucia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Germany, France, China, the UK, and Mexico.

Chief executive officer of the Nutrimix Group of Companies, Ronnie Mohammed, revealed that with the investment of approximately \$150 million, the state-of-the-art animal and pet food plant will include two pelletised lines for feeds, producing 20 tonnes per hour with extrusion lines up to five tonnes per hour: yielding greater efficiency and higher quality output. Such output will contribute both to import substitution and greater food security locally and regionally.