

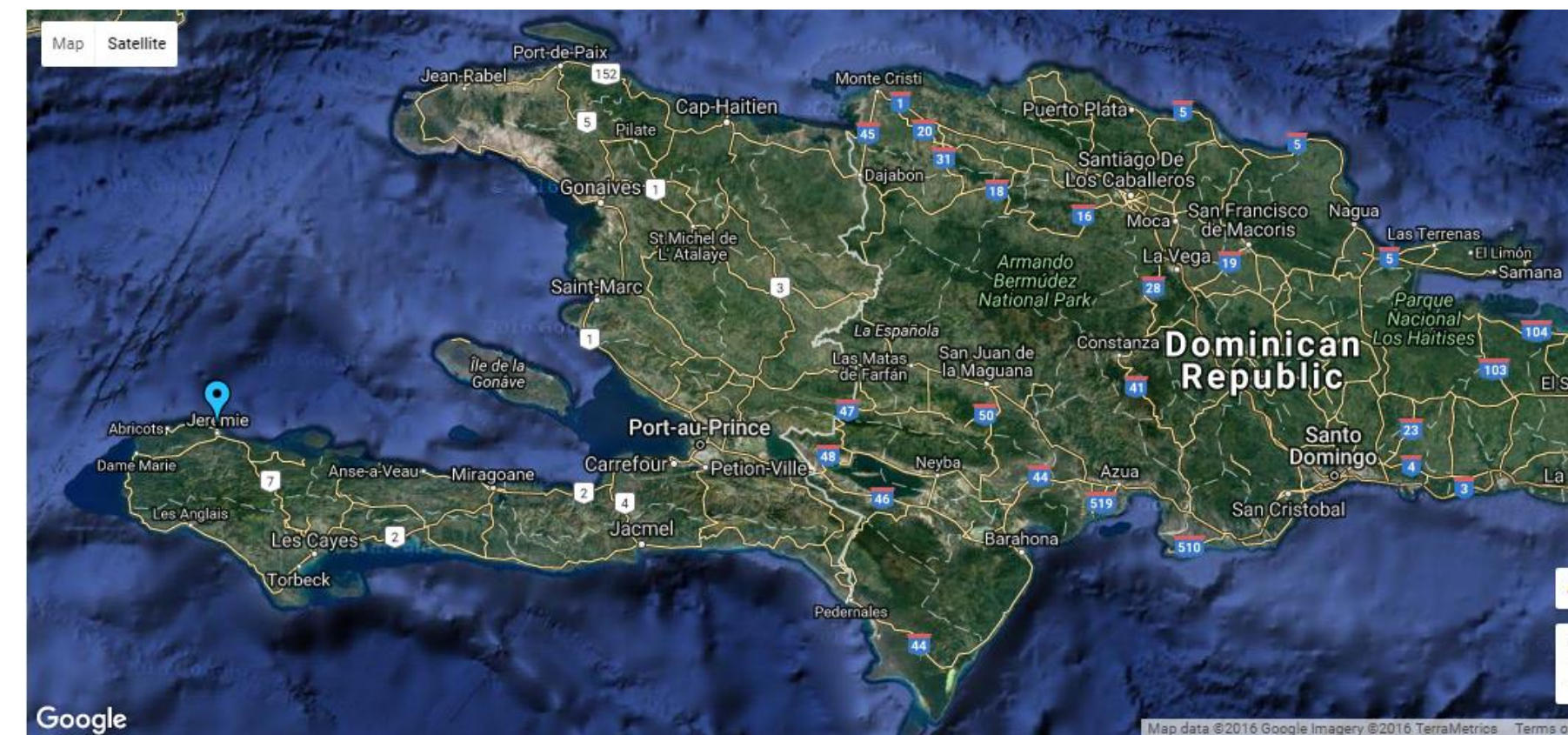


Creating Partnerships: Mississippi State University, Tennessee State University, and University of Jeremie



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In January 2016, a group of academics and agricultural experts conducted a week-long program at the University of Jeremie (UJ) in Jeremie, Haiti. The “Farmers Without Fences” group consisted of Dr. Christine Coker, Associate Research and Extension Professor of Urban Horticulture, Mississippi State University (MSU); Christian Stephenson, Hancock County Director, Mississippi State University Extension Service; Dr. Reginald Archer, Assistant Professor of Applied GIS, Tennessee State University (TSU); Kenny Swann, Bill Seeley, and Mike Hendley, farmers, Robertson County, Tennessee; and Louis Buck, International and Market Development Specialist, Tennessee Department of Agriculture. The trip consisted of a combination of tours, classroom instruction, and field demonstrations. The University of Jeremie began offering classes in 2012. The university offers degrees in teaching, nursing, theology, business, and agriculture. Over 130 students are presently enrolled in the agriculture program.



Instruction was presented seminar style with first through third year students in attendance. Topics included plant pathology, vegetable production, irrigation, and geospatial information systems. Seminars were translated from English to Creole by university faculty. In addition to classroom instruction, students and instructors toured the university’s agricultural plots and worked with students about current production challenges. One of the main challenges identified was irrigation. Currently, water is collected in two cisterns at the edge of the field. Water is then carried in watering cans, and plants are hand-watered individually. A demonstration of drip irrigation was met with interest by both students and faculty. Continued relationship building between UJ and MSU and TSU would enable greater capacity for UJ faculty and students to expand their agricultural programs. A memorandum of understanding has recently been reached between the University of Jeremie and Tennessee State University. Plans are underway to pursue a similar arrangement with Mississippi State University.

