

Labs Upgraded to Analyse Sugar, Salt and Fat in Food Products



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (standing, right), observes as representatives from the University of Technology (UTech), the Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ) and the Scientific Research Council (SRC) sign memoranda of agreement (MOA), which formalise their collaboration to carry out tests on specific food ingredients at the upgraded laboratories of the SRC and BSJ. They are (seated from left), President, UTech, Professor Stephen Vasciannie; Executive Director, BSJ, Hopeton Heron; and Manager, Product Research and Development, SRC, Dr. Charah Watson. Also pictured (standing from left) are Management Accountant, UTech, Marlene Salmon; Professor of Public Health Nutrition, College of Health Sciences, UTech, Professor Fitzroy Henry; and Director, George Alleyne Chronic Disease Research Centre, Caribbean Institute for Health Research, University of the West Indies (UWI), Barbados, Professor Alafia Samuels. The signing took place during a ceremony at the Spanish Court Hotel in New Kingston on Tuesday (August 27). PHOTO: Dave Reid (JIS).

- For the first time, Jamaica will have the capacity to analyse the sugar, salt and fat content of food products.
- This follows the upgrading of laboratories of the Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ) and the Scientific Research Council (SRC), to conduct these tests, at a cost of \$20 million, through funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada.
- The upgraded labs were officially launched on August 27, 2019.
- Minister Tufton, said this historically significant initiative will assist the Government in its drive to reduce the high prevalence of NCDs

Policy supports in JAMAICA: 2021 Sectoral Debate in Parliament

- Minister Tufton reported to Parliament on FaN project-supported laboratory analysis:
- **39% of foods tested contained trans-fats.**
- Half of those with trans fats had labels which stated “trans fat free”
 - Likely dumping from USA and other countries which have already banned trans fats
- 2022 FaN intervention with National Food Industry Task Force, starting with importers of oils
- Prof Henry presented “Towards a liveable minimum wage in Jamaica” based on the FaN vulnerability analysis to the Minimum Wage Commission.

