



**feeding
the world,
caring for
the Earth**



2014
International Year of
Family Farming

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summary

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The IYFF-2014 challenge

JOSÉ MARIA ZEBERIO

Executive Secretary of the World Rural Forum

Five years have gone by since in 2008, the World Rural Forum secretariat launched the campaign for the declaration of the International Year of Family Farming, IYFF-2014. The goal was successfully achieved thanks to the support of over 360 organizations and entities throughout the world that joined the initiative. May these lines convey our sincere thanks to all of them, and especially to the institution that promotes the publication of this magazine, the IFAD Mercosur Regional Program, which has so heartily contributed to the development of IYFF-2014.

Fortunately the first results have been noted even before its launch, set for November 22, 2013 in New York. Within the framework of the global Civil Society's IYFF-2014 Preparation Program, the creation of national committees led by the organizations of men and women farmers, fishermen, shepherds and indigenous communities has been promoted with the support and participation of other rural and social sectors, as well as public institutions.

The intention is that these national committees should incorporate as many farmers organizations and other representatives of civil society as possible, since, together with government representatives and international organizations, they are the three pillars required for the creation of an official national committee, or at least an official dialog on the improvement of agricultural policies.

This fruitful labor has already led to decrees and parliamentary statements recognizing the role of family farming, and even to the creation of national plans that aim to strengthen it.

The need to support family farming has found space in the agenda of many institutions and associations and has become a reference for those who have been striving for better public policies for the rural population. The challenge and the obligation now, during IYFF-2014, will be to promote public policies and practices that support the development and the future of family farming worldwide, and the work of so many men and women – farmers, peasants, artisan fishers, shepherds and indigenous communities. There is no lack of successful examples or authoritative voices vouching for the timeliness and convenience of strengthening family farming through specific policies and measures, as shown in the publication herein. This is a challenge that concerns us all; it involves the future of sustainable food production, a challenge that calls for true institutional commitment.

At the end of the International Year of Family Farming 2014, we shall look back and ask ourselves whether this celebration has really helped to recognize and promote the work of family farmers and to promote an irreversible process along those lines. Let us keep working and acting for an affirmative answer ■



ÁLVARO RAMOS

Regional Coordinator for the IFAD Program for Mercosur

Even before starting, the International Year of Family Farming has already achieved some of its goals. It has managed to mobilize family farming social organizations in the five continents, at least at top leadership level. Thus, it has driven the creation of several national and regional committees in various countries and regions. Furthermore, it has succeeded in engaging the international agencies specialized in this field -such as the United Nations agencies, funds, international development banks and cooperation agencies from other regional systems - in a virtuous debate on the characteristics of family farming as a socioeconomic category of organization of labor and agricultural production, and as an accumulation agent in the various economic processes.

These processes are creating a paradigm shift in the concepts of rural development and the efforts against poverty. This shift is based on two critical assumptions that should be known and shared:

- Family farming is not a synonym of rural poverty. This is a broad, heterogeneous category, and across the planet, although it does include poor farmers, it also includes producers with a huge capacity for work, change, investment and management of their own production systems, and who have close links with markets.

- Family farming is part of the solution to the problems derived from poverty in rural areas. This will be the case as soon as the fact is acknowledged and addressed with specific public policies that channel investment and public services not to compensate those excluded from the market but to promote capacity building, to encourage private production partnerships, to stimulate associativism and the generation of appropriate technologies that add value to the products and facilitate their trade.

IYFF-2014 should also be an instrument for the consolidation of new institutions and spaces for policy dialog, as well as for new forms of social organization, associative social economy enterprises that accumulate labor, know-how and capabilities to enable them to compete with the businesses created through the accumulation of capital, and markets.

Throughout its development and consolidation, the experience implemented in Mercosur with the creation of the Specialized Meeting on Family Farming (REAF) involved a number of strategic stakeholders, including the governments of the countries within the block led by Brazil – who has been clearly the pioneer in this matter-, family farming social organizations in the region - including COPROFAM, who was already striving to guide the regional integration process to cater for the interests and needs of family

farming in 1994; the United Nation's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which since the year 2000 has been steadily investing in capacity building to enable a public policy dialog, and organizational, managerial, productive and economic capabilities strongly linked to family farming organizations.

Currently the region enjoys multiple public policy instruments that have been discussed at REAF, and tested and implemented by governments. Moreover, there are instruments based on IFAD projects that were designed and implemented jointly with the governments, which have been adapted and adopted by family farming organizations, and which are currently being scaled and projected as permanent policies, with their own budgetary resources and a strong political endorsement. They are no longer theoretical or academic speculations; they have a human face and measurable social and economic outcomes.

This was not the case in the early 2000's. The vision of one single kind of agriculture and the vision of vertical policies for each production item, geared to technology and the commodities markets were aimed at increasing scale to gain competitiveness; this accumulation of size in the quest for competitiveness created a scenario of exclusion, not yet fully resolved.

However, at present there is general recognition of the existence of two different agricultures as ca-

tegories for the organization of work and production, forms of accumulation and market relations.

Today, people accept this and work at developing horizontal policies of systemic intervention that go beyond the farms or beyond what is exclusively understood as agricultural production. In order for these conquered policies and the related institutional space to persist and survive, a new generation of family farming policies would be required. The Mercosur experience works on several of these policies, including the list below:

- Access to and tenure of land, exploring associative forms of production of key inputs such as pastures, forages and grain for livestock feed, seeds.
- New light partnerships, as trade platforms between cooperatives from the same country or from different countries.
- Public investment in (hard) infrastructure, linked to investment in capacity building (soft) for the management and administration of the former by family farming social organizations and cooperatives, thereby jointly gaining scale and competitiveness.
- New legal formulas and ways to conduct public procurement of food, to include a relevant participation of family farming.



- New inter-disciplinary systems of technical assistance and rural outreach, focusing on the insertion of family farming in the market, in value chains and in food security.
- Rural social security policies that allow for a decent retirement for the elderly that recognize rural women's labor and contribution, assuring them a fair participation in work, in accordance with their own needs, together with a dignified and timely retirement.
- Policies that set the legal and technical framework for a re-organization of rural labor and an incentive for generational renewal with young social leaders and innovative rural entrepreneurs.
- Technologies appropriate for family farms that incorporate the commercial production process as a concern, resulting in the addition of value to the production and increasing its competitiveness. Conditioning, transportation, communications (ICTs), biotechnology are functions to build into the technological platforms for a competitive family farming.
- Adapting regional and international trade agreements through negotiations supported by technical bases stemmed from a political dialog within and between countries that allow and guarantee fair trade through

new food trade governance. Organizations such as WTO and ALADI have a clear mandate on this matter, and upon request of governments and social organizations, they should revise current trade agreements and regulations in the light of national and regional food security strategies, where family farming may play a strategic role in the production and supply of food.

- Policies for the adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its effects through joint public and private investment on early warning systems and climate risk management.

More examples are available in each country and region.

If IYFF-2014 is to be more than a mere celebration or an academic or rhetorical recognition, citizen representatives, lawmakers and political leaders of diverse philosophical and political orientation should become familiar with these concepts and hold debates on them, these new paradigms and policy instruments. Most of them have already been proven, and they can be evaluated and certainly implemented at a larger scale, because family farming social organizations, governments and IFAD has already done so in several countries and regions ■

point of departure



A unique opportunity

The dream came true on December 21, 2011, when the United Nations General Assembly unanimously declared 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming, IYFF 2014.

Behind were several years of intense campaign coordinated by the World Rural Forum and backed by more than 360 organizations: rural federations, NGOs, research centers... This had been a common goal joined by the government of the Philippines, who presented a draft resolution for the declaration of IYFF 2014 before the United Nations, and co-sponsored by forty countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Sierra Leone, Cuba, Spain, Colombia, Togo, Niger, Tanzania, Australia, Guinea, Thailand, India and Switzerland.

The Declaration was finally unanimously approved by the UN General Assembly; this was great news and a well-deserved recognition of the silent work of so many men and women – family farmers, peasants, indigenous communities, artisan fishermen and shepherds, whose work and potential have been so often forgotten and underrated.

But IYFF 2014 began with the declaration alone; everything remained to be done. Since then, the civil society has continued to work in its organization, trying to add new wills in favor of the rights of those engaged in family farming; likewise many governments and international agencies have joined the preparations for IYFF 2014, in dialog with the rural organizations. Not in vain, the foundations have been laid for a dialog between civil society, governments and international agencies across the world, to push the main goal of this international year forward: the aim is to attain public policies that support the activities of family farmers.

Indeed, IYFF 2014's top priority is to promote in all countries truly active policies that favor the sustainable development of family-based agricultural systems, provide guidance for their implementation, strengthen the role of farmers,

peasants and artisan fishing organizations, and raise awareness among the civil society overall of the importance of supporting family farming.

All this is to be done within the context of the fight against poverty, the search of food security and sovereignty and the achievement of a lively rural milieu, based on respect for the environment and biodiversity.

This progress in the development of family farming will directly contribute to the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, reduce child mortality, ensure the protection of the environment, promote gender equality and women's autonomy, and promote a world partnership for development.

IYFF 2014 is not seen as an end in itself, but as the beginning of a process in which, through a series of events, family farming and its various professional associations are granted the opportunity to become the key determinants of their own development.

In fact, IYFF 2014 has already opened up space in the agenda of many institutions, governments and associations that work in the field of rural development, agriculture and food, and has become a reference for those who struggle for better working conditions for the men and women both in the countryside and the sea. What remains now is to make absolutely the most of this unique opportunity offered by IYFF 2014.

This is a challenge for all, which no-one should miss; it should be especially addressed by those policy-makers that at all levels – municipal, national, regional, international or continental – are responsible for supporting the development of family farming.



Declaration

On December 21 2011. the United Nations General Assembly resolution 66/222 proclaimed 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming. The declaration states that “family farming and small agricultural holdings are an important basis for the sustainable production of food, aimed at achieving food security” and recognizes “the important contribution that family farming and small agricultural holdings may represent for the achievement of food security and the eradication of poverty with a view to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millenium Development Goals”. In addition it stated that, in collaboration with other international agencies and governments, FAO would be responsible for the official program of IYFF 2014, while encouraging governments “to carry out activities in the framework of their respective national development programs”.

Preparation of IYFF-2014

Three levels converge in IYFF 2014: civil society, international agencies and governments; while each has its own space, there is no doubt they will have many points of encounter in the activities to be organized in 2014.

Within the 2012-2013 Global Preparation Programme, the World Rural Forum has promoted the creation of national committees in support of IYFF 2014, a space where the aforementioned levels may also converge. These platforms, promoted by peasant and rural development organizations adhering to the IYFF 2014 campaign, stand out as true focuses of incidence and awareness in each country. During 2012 and 2013, Europe, America, Africa and Oceania witnessed the birth of the first national committees in support of IYFF 2014.



The main goal: improving public policies

- Recognition of family farming by the UN, international organizations and national governments.
- Recognition of peasant and indigenous organizations as essential interlocutors for the public authorities.
- Creation, expansion and strengthening of national and international platforms for the development of strategies and policies for the defense of a sustainable future for family farming.
- Increase of public investment in infrastructure and services to rural areas.
- Progressive recognition of the specific status of rural women through the use of tools of direct support (investment, credit, ownership, etc.).
- Increasing rural jobs, especially among the young.
- Technological and economic boost for agricultural research.
- Training programs and enhancement of skills.
- Increase in social awareness of the importance of family farming.
- Global, regional and national communication network to strengthen the bonds of solidarity and reciprocity between the urban and rural society.



Family farming

Within the framework of the International Year of Family Farming, IYFF 2014, FAO has come forward with a definition of family farming, which is shared by the coordinators of the Civil Society's IYFF-2014 Program: "The way of organizing production, including agriculture and forestry, fishing, shepherding and aquaculture, which is managed and directed by a family, and which is mostly dependent on family labor, engaging both men and women. Family and business are related; they evolve jointly and combine economic, environmental, reproductive, social and cultural functions".

point of departure



Why should family farming be promoted?

A reality in every continent, family farming, is facing huge challenges and uncertainties.

And yet, although in many places family farmers - men and women - have been forgotten and are neglected by policy makers, they continue to be the basis of sustainable food production in the world's effort toward food security and sovereignty, they play a key role in the management of rural and marine environments and their biodiversity; they are the source of significant cultural heritage of the local people in each country, and, in short, they are a fundamental pillar of the comprehensive development of nations.

1. Because it guarantees food.

Seventy per cent of the world's food is produced by family farmers.

- FF plays a key role in the fight against hunger and malnutrition.
- Small farms are often more productive and sustainable by unit of land and in terms of energy consumption.

2. Because it generates welfare.

Forty per cent of the world's households depend on family farming for their livelihood.

- Of the 3 billion people living in rural areas in developing countries, 2.5 billion belong to families engaged in agriculture.
- Family farming also contributes to the stabilization of the people settled in rural areas, to the preservation of historical cultural values and the generation of income and consumption.

3. Because it fights poverty.

It is at least twice as effective as other production sectors in preventing poverty.

- The farming-related growth of the GDP is at least twice as effective in reducing poverty as the growth of GDP related to other sectors.
- Farming and rural growth also benefit the urban poor, due to the abundance and accessibility of food.

4. It protects biodiversity.

It has great potential for the preservation of local varieties.

- Throughout history, mankind has tapped on some 7,000 plants to meet its basic needs. Today, fewer than 150 species are grown commercially, 30 of which account for up to 90% of the caloric intake in human diet, and four alone (rice, wheat, corn and potatoes) account for more than half of that caloric supply.
- In addition to being a source of crop diversity, family agriculture can assure its preservation through the use of varieties of seeds and indigenous livestock breeds that are well adapted to the various environments.

5. It counts on women producers

Women account for about half the agricultural workforce in developing countries.

- In most cases, it is women who cook and put food on the table, they are the ones that sell the farm's produce and look after the health of their families. They give birth to their children and are their first tutors.
- In developing countries, women contribute considerably to the farming workforce. FAO estimated this figure to be 43%, while UNIFEM estimates it at 60-80%.

Sources: World Bank, ETC Group, FAO, IFAD.



CARLOS ÁLVAREZ

Secretary General

Latin American
Integration Association

Family farming is a strategic activity for our countries. It impinges on their productive, economic and social dimensions, and should be an important factor to consider in the design of a model of inclusive development with social justice.

It should be viewed under the democratizing eye of ownership, land use and the more equitable distribution of wealth in our countries, given that the concentration and unrestricted purchase by foreign investors contribute to widening the gap of injustice and inequality. Governments that aim at an equitable and sustainable development should promote and assist family farmers, and particularly in terms of strengthening food and nutritional security strategies.

The Latin American and Caribbean region is very important in the production and trade of food globally. Overall, it is capable of feeding its own population and to help feed the rest of the planet. Furthermore, the region has water reserves and land resources to produce even more. Yet, the scourge of hunger and malnutrition continues to be present, and it still afflicts about 50 million people - which is a remarkable paradox for a region that exports food to the rest of the world.

Within this vast region there are striking asymmetries in the production of food. While there are countries that produce a large surplus, others are net importers, but there

are always items, products and production systems that can be supplemented through trade flows among the various countries that tap on these opportunities.

In our view, being food so easily available in the region, food insecurity is completely avoidable. The commitment and coordination of all sectors involved is required to address the main causes of food insecurity, together with greater resources and investments geared to increase the productivity of family farms - the main food provider in the region - and to design and adopt measures of specific policies intended to ensure access to food, especially among the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

Having 2014 been designated by the U.N. General Assembly as the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF-2014), we expect it will lead to the consolidation of the countries' public policies that ensure family farmers' access to production resources and to the improvement of their ability to engage in trade.

The food supply capacity in Latin America is characterized by differences and complementarities between the countries of the region. This opens possibilities to increase food-security-based intra-regional trade, through the adoption of measures that may help countries ensure the availability and access to food, facilitating the design and implementation of trade and cooperation mechanisms, so that family agriculture and the most vulnerable sectors may effectively benefit from increased trade and regional integration ■

GILBERTO JOSÉ SPIER VARGAS

**Minister of
Agricultural Development**

Brazil



In 2003 the Brazilian government began to incorporate family agriculture in its national development strategy, promoting the country's economic growth through the distribution of income and expanding the infrastructure and people's access to social policies. Since then, Brazil has included significant contingents of its people to production activities, incorporating a part of its society that had been historically excluded from access to consumer goods and services.

The concept of family farming was established by law to ensure that this type of farmers have access to a range of public policies. The Law defines family farmers as those producers of smallholdings that use family labor predominantly, and whose income is mostly derived from the farm operations.

This definition would include 84% of the Brazilian farms, ranging from poor farmers that barely make a living to highly productive middle class farmers.

The Program Brazil Without Poverty ensures transfer of income, associated with a non refundable financial incentive for production, with technical assistance and rural outreach activities. The primary aim is to ensure livelihood and the second is to generate marketable surplus, in a process of production inclusion, promoting the families' economic autonomy. In the case of landless peasants, the National Land Reform Program allows for the allocation of rural lots

purchased by the federal government or expropriated by law from landowners fail to comply with their social function. At present, there are 970,000 families settled as a result of the agrarian reform. Owners of very small holdings are offered the opportunity to purchase land through the National Land Credit Program.

For more dynamic farmers, or those whose level of production makes their farms profitable, the National Program for the Support to Family Agriculture provides credit and agricultural insurance, price assurance instruments, technical assistance and rural outreach, and includes a provision for the procurement of family farming products through the Food Procurement Program (PAA) and the National School Feeding Program (PNAE). The products purchased through the PAA are intended for ensuring strategic stocks, or they are offered simultaneously to public or non-governmental agencies that serve populations in a socially vulnerable status. Likewise, the Program simplifies the procurement process of food products to supply public schools in Brazil.

With these policies, we combine the strengthening of family farming with our pursuance of the country's food sovereignty and food and nutrition security of the Brazilian people ■



KADIDJA KONÉ

**Director of the African Institute for
Economic and Social Development
(INADES) in Côte d'Ivoire**

Western Africa

Why is it necessary and convenient to promote Family Farming?

The characteristics of family farming make it a model that should be approached by development policies. Agriculture is the main economic activity in Côte d'Ivoire; the country owed it its prosperity in the sixties and seventies, but it was also the origin of the country's decline in the mid eighties. This latter setback resulted from domestic policies that failed to adapt to the international situation, and to the clear fall of the prices of the country's major export crops, particularly coffee and cocoa.

Ivorian farming is practiced on small areas, both extensively and manually. The 2001 agricultural census revealed that the average size of holdings was 3.89 hectares.

Today, among other issues, decision makers need to put in place a number of measures to improve the situation of farmers, such as ensuring land tenure of small farms, define a policy for supporting and promoting family farming, and encourage the creation of processing units for the local products. In the field of research and development, the dissemination of existing integrated farming systems and further adoption of such systems should be encouraged; not only are they more environmentally sound, but they are also much more productive.

Your organization has supported the start up of many cooperatives devoted to the processing and marketing of several crops. To what extent has the promotion of these cooperatives improved the production and the producers' access to markets for these products? What benefits have they had on local development?

“ADOPTION OF INNOVATIONS BY
FARMERS OF BOTH GENDERS IS STILL
VERY WEAK, OWING TO THE LACK OF
ANY SUPPORT IN THE MANAGEMENT
OF THESE CHANGES”

The effects have been numerous. Through training programs conducted in the cashew sector, farmers gain ownership of good practices both at the culture and postharvest stages. The creation of a regional label, which we have also supported with a project, has enabled cooperatives to sell their nuts at prices above the country's average. An aspect to be highlighted is that marketing of farmers' produce has been enhanced by the adoption of SMS technology; with easy updates of market prices, farmers are now informed actors, with a greater control and bargaining power over retailers. All this allows for the professionalization and the growth of income of those farmers. On the other hand, the positive effects of support for cashew processing cooperatives spill out to the surrounding communities. Being mainly an activity performed by women, their livelihoods are improved with the salary they get, and in some cases they are even in a position to start their own small business, all of which facilitates the empowerment of women.

Innovation and access to technology are some of the challenges of family farming. What can be the contribution of the farmers' know-how from this point of view?

Access to information is still a challenge in rural areas. At the research level, Ivory Coast's National Agricultural Research Center is committed to finding new improved varieties and to introduce them in the rural environment. In terms of processing technology, in most cases the country depends on projects funded by its technical or financial partners. In any case, the adoption of innovations by men and women farmers is still very weak because of they receive no help to cope with changes. One way to put it is that the value of the local expertise is unfortunately underrated, because of people's tendency to privilege the *prêt à utiliser*, what is ready for use ■



LUIS ALMAGRO

**Minister of
Foreign Affairs**

Uruguay

These days it is extremely important to know and understand the concept of family farming in its full dimension. It is everyone's duty to understand that its economics are transcendent in Latin America, since it was this form of production that constituted the essence and origin of trade relations in our region.

But still more important is to understand family farming in its social and cultural dimensions. To value the unique bond of the people that are born and grow working the land, following the example of their parents and grandparents. These individuals learn that the value of land goes far beyond what is quantifiable in money or production yields.

Working the land is their way of life, it is part of their daily relationship with their families and their people. It is part of their identity. This they have learned and this they will pass on to the generations to come.

In this International Year of Family Farming it is the duty of the international community to ensure that this ingrained knowledge, transmitted from generation to generation, is acknowledged and protected. It is the duty of the international community to foster po-

licies and regulatory frameworks that promote and protect family farming institutionally.

Such protection involves creating a rights-oriented framework of policies that guarantees food sovereignty and security, as well as nutritional security.

It is necessary to highlight the fundamental role of family farming in the production of food in our region, since it provides 70% of the food staples. We should acknowledge this figure and act accordingly, creating a regulatory framework that facilitates domestic trade and the insertion of family production in foreign markets, both in our national policies and in international trade negotiations.

Likewise we must promote and protect the production systems used by these farmers, which entail major advantages for all mankind. Plant and animal species are protected and bred within their production environment. This allows for the existence of a large genetic variety available to all, since it is not concentrated in a few hands and is generously transmitted over generations. Without this acquired knowledge, the world's food supply would be jeopardized, since it would be in the hands of a few transnational corporations that prioritize profits, and not necessarily everybody's access of to quality food.

“THERE IS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE,
AND IT IS KEY TO THE SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH OF OUR SOCIETIES.
AT STAKE IS NO LESS THAN THE FOOD
SECURITY OF OUR PEOPLE.
LET US WELCOME THIS YEAR
OF DISCUSSION AND CONSTRUCTIVE
REFLECTION ON FAMILY FARMING”

The risks of ending up with monocultures concentrated in a few hands are highly likely, and the consequences of that are potentially dire, such as the creation of a uniform, hegemonic system from which there is no exit.

In this regard, it is urgent to allow more transparency in the agricultural food market, in view of the concentration and control exerted by some multinationals over production and trade, several of those companies are already settled and producing food in Uruguay and Latin America.

The best known consequence of the lack of transparency is the immediate and sharp increase in food prices when there is a sustained increase in the futures markets, complemented by very slow decreases in price when supply is reestablished, with a very considerable impact on inflation. Thus, consumers food purchasing capacity is severely affected by these practices, which increase proportionately with the volume of purchases or with the degree of centralization of production.

Offsetting these effects requires the creation of local markets based on a logic of proximity and short circuits that bring farmers closer to consumers and foster human relations in a dynamic of

sustainable growth, as they generate a very low environmental impact.

We need to create conditions to improve the quality of life associated with family farming. Families engaged in farming have the right to continue working on what they know and enjoy doing and producing, populating and humanizing the countryside. Migration to the cities should not be an obligation; it should be a decision taken freely and not due to the urgent need to meet basic needs.

This is the most dynamic segment of the rural environment, since its link with the local environment allows it to increase the income not only of agricultural households, but of that of non-agricultural households as well, injecting stimulus into the local economies.

In this regard, family farming and small producers guarantee the sustainable production of food aimed at achieving food and nutritional security and thus contributing to eradicate poverty.

There is much work to be done, and it is key to the sustainable growth of our societies. At stake is no less than the food security of our people. Let us welcome this year of discussion and constructive reflection on family farming ■

ESTRELLA PENUNIA

Secretary General
Asian Farmers' Association



“GOVERNMENTS SHOULD INCLUDE THE FARMING ORGANIZATIONS IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES”

Why is it necessary and convenient to promote family farming?

Family farmers feed the world and care for the earth. But why are their families among the poorest and the hungriest and most undernourished around the world? And why is it that family farming is not an occupation that is attractive to the youth? No farmer, no food. How can we attract the youth in smallholder agriculture? How can we make smallholder agriculture an occupation that brings decent lives to farming communities? How can we make family farmers be happy and proud and committed stakeholders in our efforts to promote food security and nutrition? We have to answer these questions.

How do commodity crops, such as palm oil or other export crops, affect the future of small Asian farmers? Could you share any positive experiences, where the promotion of Family Farming is improving the welfare of rural communities? Does this promotion have a positive impact on urban areas?

Family farmers plant both for food security and nutrition, as well as for cash/commodity crops, since farmers need cash for their families and other basic needs – such as education, health care, mobility and communication. We are promoting that farmers practice integrated, diversified, organic farming systems (IDOFs) and not monocropping of commodity crops. For example, under the coconut trees, farmers in the Philippines can plant perennial crops such as rubber, papaya, cacao, and coffee, and still under these perennial crops they can plant annual crops such as gabi (a local yam), ginger, and pineapple; and then they can also raise goats.

AFA emphasizes the importance of training farmers on some issues such as land rights, production models, etc. Which are the main threats that Asian family farmers face at the moment? And, above all, what measures could be taken by governments to improve their situation?

The most pressing challenges to overcome are access and control over basic production resources such as land, water and seeds, knowing that there is a phenomenon of landgrabbing, and growing monopoly of seeds; access to appropriate technologies, credit, and markets; adaptation to the effects of climate change such as drought, floods, extreme and unpredictable weather conditions. Many of AFA's member organizations struggle with helping improve their members' production and marketing technologies and systems, and with protecting their members' rights to and access or ownership of lands and other resources, Governments can enact policies and programs that secure family farmers' tenure over lands, forests and waters, upscale IDOFs and other agroecological farming technologies, build the entrepreneurial mindset and capacities of farmers, align agricultural research such that these improve the livelihoods of smallfarmers, and significantly involve farmers organizations, through their elected representatives, in decision making processes relating to agriculture and farming ■

COOPERATIVES DRIVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Cashew nut and a partnership and inclusion experience

It is quite obvious that family farming has been forgotten and neglected by the authorities in many parts of the world. However, many communities and farmer organizations have spent years supporting and promoting this activity and obtaining the tools to develop, update and promote their business. Through the support of development centers and organizations, these initiatives have again shown the huge potential of Family Farming for the sustainable production of food, for the opening of new markets and contributing to the well-being of rural communities.



Côte d'Ivoire is a clear example of this finding; the African Institute for Economic and Social Development (INADES) has worked there for many years supporting a program to promote Family Farming, based mainly on the improvement of cashew production and collection habits, as well as its processing and marketing.

Through this initiative, farmers have increased their bargaining power; they have been able to implement quality brands and organic certification, and to improve the quality of life of hundreds of rural women.

Cashew, also known as cashew nut, is today one of the strategic resources of Côte d'Ivoire, especially for the regions of the northern half of this West African country, that ranks among the leading countries in the production of this crop, along with India, Vietnam, Nigeria and Brazil. As a reference, Côte d'Ivoire produced 335,000 tons of this fruit in 2009.

The cashew nut is generally marketed in its dried form, requiring a laborious peeling process that in most cases is done by hand. In Côte d'Ivoire, these tasks have been mostly in the



Women in a processing unit. © INADES

IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE, THESE TASKS HAVE BEEN MOSTLY IN THE HANDS OF RURAL WOMEN, WORKING IN MORE OR LESS RUDIMENTARY AND ARTISANAL UNITS.

hands of rural women, working in more or less rudimentary and artisanal units.

Indeed, when processed, the value of cashew nut is increased from two to six-fold, as compared to unprocessed fruit. In 2009, for example, only 12,000 tons were processed in Côte d'Ivoire. Most of the production - approximately 98 % - was exported to India for processing.

* Information provided by INADES, Côte d'Ivoire.

The processing of the nut is a challenge that has attracted new players that have addressed it with different strategies. For some, its industrialization should be achieved through the installation of high-throughput factories, whereas for others, small cashew husking units should be preserved, to allow for the development of a local, sustainable processing. These units should include the rural communities that implemented the experience herein.

Seeking to support producers in their search of a system that would generate quality, and that would enable them to market the cashew directly from their country, since 1993 INADES and a European organization dedicated to the promotion of fair trade (Rongead) have endorsed several projects in the northern regions of the country, an area that is home to more than four million people.

This successful program is based on supporting cashew producers and the existing processing cooperatives, promoting new processing units and creating a network to share information about the cashew market.

In the Zanzan region, for example, the processing units that joined the program made significant progress; the equipment of the units improved remarkably, and they developed their

own hygiene modules. They also received support for the creation of a marketing platform and they obtained the organic certification after receiving proper training and developing an internal control system.

The platform generated by the pool of processing units allowed them to share costs, and enhanced everybody's marketing opportunities.

In other northern regions of Côte d'Ivoire, with the support of INADES, some communities promoted the creation of cashew processing cooperatives, mainly formed by women. Of the 216 people that were trained, 178 were women, and 15 were the leaders of existing platforms. In one of these regions, they even created the brand ACADY to promote their product in the domestic market. The cooperatives that operate under this label have succeeded in selling their production at prices above the market average. All these activities were completed with the creation of an ICT-based network to share information on the global cashews market. The network seeks to increase the stakeholders' knowledge about their own sector and their power to influence the price of the product. One of the tools designed to that end is an on-line platform that is used by growers, exporters and government services to disseminate and share their knowledge.



Women working in a dehusking unit. © INADES



Pooled marketing of cashew nut. © INADES

BOOSTING THE PROCESSING
COOPERATIVES HAS ENABLED
HUNDREDS OF WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE
IN A NOVEL AND COMPLEMENTARY
ACTIVITY, PROVIDING THEM WITH
ADDITIONAL INCOME TO IMPROVE
THEIR LIVELIHOOD.

This network has given producers new business opportunities; they obtained an average of 304 CFA francs per kilo of cashew in 2011, while the producers that did not join this project only got 290. In addition, this system has led to the pooled sale of the produce, and strengthened the farmers' bargaining power and their structuring capabilities. Furthermore, the communities re-invest part of these benefits in the production of other crops for the usual consumption of the population, further supporting food security in the community.

As the development of cashew processing cooperatives is to a great extent implemented by the women that manage them and work in them, hundreds of women participate in a new and supplementary activity. This provides them additional income to improve their livelihoods (including food, health care, schooling for their children, initiative...). These women receive training, and their salaries add to their empowerment. Moreover, many of these cooperatives re-invest their profits in training programs and education that improve the quality of life of their communities.

Once again, this experience shows that when ensured a favorable context, and with adequate public policies, family farmers can contribute to the qualitative progress of the community's –and even the country's - wellbeing. In Côte d'Ivoire, cashew cooperatives continue to advance in the quality of processing and have managed to consolidate their position as important sources of economic and social development.

More information is available at:
www.cotedivoire.inadesfo.net

SARANDI LTD. FARMER'S COOPERATIVE, EL SOBERBIO, MISIONES, ARGENTINA

Defying fate

By Carolina Aráoz¹

Several images flood people's minds when they hear about Misiones: its red soil, the mighty Iguazu Falls, the Jesuit ruins of San Ignacio, the production of yerba mate, tea and tung, exploitation of indigenous forests, sawmills, the production of tobacco and aromatic plants.

In the center of this beautiful province, on the shore of the Uruguay River, a delightful natural landscape stands out as one of the area's finest attractions. The ten-foot high Moconá falls interrupt the southeastern course of the Uruguay River for about two kilometers, attracting large flocks of tourists, eager for nature and adventure.

Very close to that beauty lays the town El Soberbio, the administrative head of the department of Guaraní and formerly the jangaderos area. The Jangaderos used to make their living carrying indigenous timber extracted from the lush Misiones native bush to various destinations. Today, the local population is close to 25,000, 80 % of which live in rural areas.

A major producer of citronella, the area was declared the national capital of essences, and each November they celebrate the Essence Festival. However, after the fall of the prices of these essences, this activity was partly replaced by the production of grains, followed by the strong entry of tobacco in 1995. Thus appeared the figure of the tobacco producer, whose work has always been closely linked to the big tobacco manufacturers that store and market the product. The main motivation of these growers (who typically cultivate 2-5 acres in family-run holdings) is to receive health coverage, since this activity is

deleterious to their health, not only because of the hard work involved, but also because of the agrochemicals used for tobacco plantation and their impact on human health. Some families produce vegetables for consumption and have some farm animals, including cows, but given the high demand for jobs required by tobacco, the small farmers' production of vegetables is generally limited to their own consumption.

Our story moves away from these traditional paths, and shows a twist of the predictable fate.

This story started several years ago, when a group of family farmers decided to change their lives, resolutely choosing something completely different, starting a novel dairy production project and further manufacturing of processed cheese, an absolutely innovative activity in the province. And another oddity:

THE TRUE LEADERS OF THIS STORY ARE WOMEN.



¹ Master's Degree in Agrarian Administration and Agribusiness, with specific training on agricultural journalism, and currently working for the magazine Agrópolis, a publication dedicated to the analysis of farming policies in Mercosur. She is also a freelance writer involved in communications and media. Formerly devoted to agribusiness consulting, she worked for a decade in the Farming Business Department of the largest private bank in Argentina, until 2002.



THE BEST PROJECTS ARE THOSE THAT ARISE SPONTANEOUSLY FROM WITHIN THE COMMUNITIES, LIKE THIS ONE. AND THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE A GOOD TECHNICAL OVERSIGHT, ESPECIALLY WITH WELL-ARTICULATED, LONG-TERM GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS LED BY COMMITTED OFFICIALS, TO HELP THE PROJECTS MATURE AND ACHIEVE DEEP ROOTS IN THE COMMUNITY.

The creation of a dairy farmers cooperative

Over ten years ago there was a visionary, Santiago Silva, who realized that in a village near his they needed fresh milk for the production of mozzarella and yoghurt. He noticed that when he saw an ad in a local newspaper, and that prompted him to consider supplying it from his native Sarandi, where some neighbors were already milking a few cows. Although for various reasons this idea did not actually prosper, it led to the creation of a consortium of dairy farmers in an area where the activity had never been developed.

The first step was to request the Municipality to improve and fix the roads to facilitate the shipping of milk. They also obtained support to buy a freezer for the cold storage of milk, and gradually the community and the members of the Sarandí Consortium went a step further, and worked out a proposal to add value to the milk they produced for family consumption, to further enhance their revenues through a new activity.

Seeing that the people in El Soberbio consumed a lot of cheese, they conducted a market survey to identify the demand and the most convenient type of cheese to produce.

Some history

This group of producers investigated large scale milk production and marketing experiences among their Brazilian neighbors, and implemented a similar venture, but on a smaller scale. Through a project of the Agricultural Social Program (PSA) and a loan from PRODERNEA (Project for the Rural Development of the Northeastern Provinces of Argentina, which was an investment program for rural areas led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries), in 2004 they improved the infrastructure of their farms and bought machinery for making cheese. PSA experts, together with some of the farmers, conducted a survey in the area to identify how many farmers would be interested and to determine the size of their stocks, so as to estimate the potential amount of product they would be able to offer. In 2006 they trained the farmers, and the factory was set up in the nearby area; they created a steering committee and started their cheese production. Finally, they started delivering the cheese, which was very well received in the shops of El Soberbio.

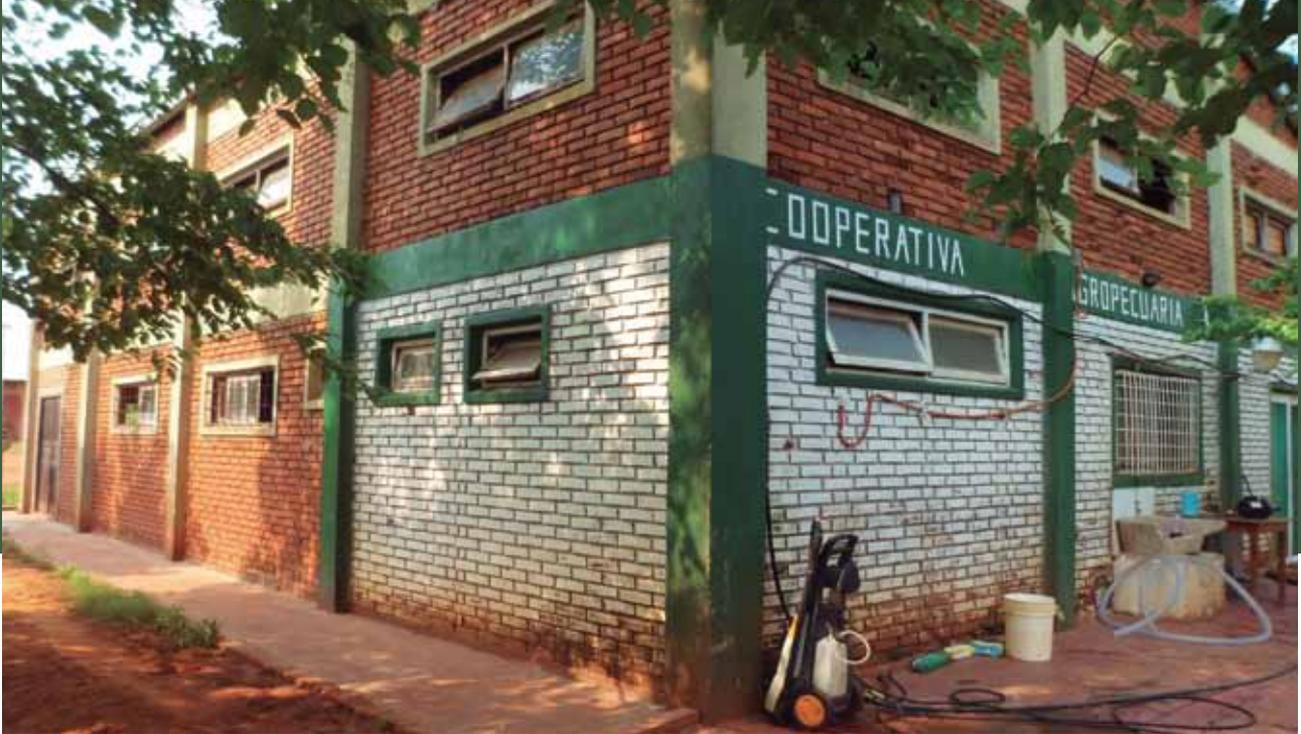
Andrea is one of the cooperative's key secrets; she got especially trained for the job, and today she is the group's cheese master. "My husband takes care of the cows and helps me with the house chores," says Andrea. "In older marriages the house work is typically in the hands of women, but of course, women also take care of everything on the farm. Younger couples, like my husband and me, tend to share much more. Men are no longer above women; things are more even now." Andrea is also the niece of the president of the cooperative, Adelar Schwingel, and one of the many women with a key role in this thriving community.

Ever since its creation, the key objective of this group was to diversify production, and to improve the local small farmers' families' revenues and their quality of life; but they also wanted to find new partial or full alternatives to the production of Burley tobacco

and address the crop's economic, environmental and health related risks.

Again, the key players of the dairy endeavor are women. In that regard, we were told by Doctor Gabriela Gartland - the Veterinarian of the Rural Development Office of the Province's Ministry of Agriculture - the hectares devoted to the production of tobacco have been steadily reduced, albeit not fully abandoned. By reducing that activity, men were able to help at the dairy farms, assuming responsibility of tasks such as feeding the cattle. "Curiously enough", she added, "the first 20 partners of the cooperative were men, even when women (partners or not) played a more important role in primary production. The Ministry of Agriculture's Unit for Rural Change (UCAR) was of key importance for them, since the Unit supported women through the Gender Program, so they could play an increasingly crucial part. In the learning process, they became aware of the importance of working in teams, partnership, supporting each other".

Cristina Silva, the first woman to become a member of the cooperative, tells us: "In these ten years, since we started with this dream from scratch, we have made extraordinary progress, because we have made the most of every single cent, each training activity, each good will gesture we were offered. Today we have this plant, the most beautiful in our beloved province - and here it is, in this small corner of the country. We are proud, and we intend to turn it into an emblematic symbol of the cooperative effort, at a time in history where individualism is incredibly strong".



The “factory”

Gartland goes on: “With a first loan from PRODERNEA, the group (which at the time included Santiago and 20 other farmers) installed the dairy plant in a kitchen of a community premise (FOPAR) and bought a thousand-liter vat, a cheese press, moulds and a boiler. In 2008, they received two additional credits from the program: one for the cooperative, used to buy a four-wheel drive truck, and another for the individual farmers. They started to make cheese, still as Grupo Don Santiago, with the support of PRODERNEA, a program that assisted them with training throughout the years, helping them to discover the advantages of associativism, and leading to the creation of a cooperative. In 2011 they formally created the Sarandi Limited Farmer’s Cooperative, and that year they were registered to operate at a national level”. It is important to highlight that until then El Soberbio only had the timber industry, so this cheese cooperative meant a new agribusiness in the area, becoming the second industry in El Soberbio.

The new plant was built in 2012 based on a project funded by the Special Fund for Tobacco (FET). Apparently they omitted a good production survey and the technical advice of the local experts. Today there is a factory ready

to process 15,000 liters of milk daily, when all providers together (22 members and 20 non-members, each of which with an annual average of 5 to 7 milking cows) produce 3000-5000 liters of milk per day, which turn into 60,000 kilos of processed cheese per month. The cheese is sold in town and the neighboring towns – 2 de Mayo and San Vicente. It might sound hasty to say that the factory is oversized, but there is certainly a gap between the primary production and the manufacturing capability that warrants further analysis, to abate the maintenance costs of the existing plant.

Cristina is less critical in that regard: “We started with municipal and national government credits. Government has supported us all along, but the worst difficulty is that we are closer to Brazil — just across the river— than to Argentina itself”. She believes that initially nobody gauged the importance of milk production and the potential addition of value resulting from the production of cheese. “I think that we surprised Government, because there were many projects that failed, but not ours. Government had to adapt, and we grew together. Our requirements often made them think. It was a continuous maturity process, there were some lacks of coordination, but we gradually adapted”, she pointed out.

What to do next?... several question marks

“The only objective of our project is to improve the quality of life of our small farmers, offering the community an excellent product – cheese, for the time being. Being the demand four times larger than our production, the only way we can grow is through the valuable support and intervention of officials that may help us get the elements required to assure the growth of the cooperative”, stated Silva. And she went on: “We have achieved a great leap in the manufacturing stage, but we still suffer some problems there; we should make uninterrupted progress in the area of primary production. In summary: we need good quality raw material. To that end, we need training and a close monitoring to improve aspects related to nutrition and animal health. We want to improve the farm infrastructure of each one of the farmers that contribute with milk”. Gartland also highlighted the importance of providing training on good practices.

These days, the Ministry of Production of the province of Misiones gave them a refrigerated truck for the collection of milk, 25 tanks for the farmers to store the milk on their farms, and the plan is to provide 25 cows – ten of which have already been given to farmers. There is still a debate as to whether those cows should go to the individual farms or whether several cows should be given to just a few farmers, to improve the milk yield per dairy farm, and consequently, ensuring more raw materials for the plant. The point would seem to be whether those farmers are really interested in turning into full-time dairy farmers. If that were the case,

what would happen with those that would receive no more cows? Wouldn't it be better for each of them to go on milking an annual average of 5 to 7 cows?

“From the point of view of the ministry, it seems reasonable to think that for the factory to operate properly the production of milk should be increased, so the farmers that produce best should own more cows”, reflected Cristina. “What should they do? Should the factory grow or should farmers grow individually? This is an issue that requires an honest in-depth analysis. Should the ministry give the same benefits to the farmers that did not take good care of their dairy farm, were careless about health issues, failed to plant pastures for their cows? Or wouldn't that be unfair for the farmers that worked hard at those issues?” she ended.

The analysis should not ignore the culture and habits of the local people of Sarandi: many years of tradition in the production of tobacco, and many years producing for self consumption at a limited scale. To what extent would it be positive to press in one direction or the other? Definitely, the best projects are those that arise spontaneously from within the communities, like this one. And there is no doubt that it is important to have a good technical oversight, especially with well-articulated, long-term government programs led by committed officials, to help the projects mature and achieve deep roots in the community. Otherwise, the local people will have nothing but a new disappointment.



SRI: A SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE OF PARTICIPATORY INNOVATION IN CAMBODIA

Family farmers, innovation pollinators

Over the years we have witnessed the progress and consolidation of industrial agriculture throughout the world. Far from offering the world enough food, this agricultural model, characterized by a high dependence on external inputs, has disrupted the landscape of rural production, threatening the preservation of natural resources.

In opposition to this dominant model, there is a host of cases that highlight the existence of viable, competitive and effective alternatives in the fight against global hunger and poverty.

This article echoes an innovative experience that is reaping significant rewards in the slightly more than ten years it has been implemented in several Asian countries: the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). We will describe the success achieved by the system, specifically in Cambodia. There, thanks to an alliance between farmers and technicians, further enhanced by a favorable political environment, SRI has become a successful example of innovation with a recognizable face, applied to small-scale farming.

Shelling SRI¹

SRI² is an alternative method of rice production that basically consists of applying holistic-global management to the ecosystem of plant, water and soil in search of optimal conditions for the development of crops.

The initial situation

Cambodia is a country in Southeast Asia, where approximately 60% of the population is dedicated to the cultivation of rice. Most are family farmers working small rice paddies of less than a hectare per family, with yields of less than two tons per year, and little or no access to other sources of income. In sum, small farmers live in poverty and often fail to meet their families' food security needs.



Members of Farmer and Nature Net implement the SRI with the support of CEDAC

¹ Information provided by AFA

² SRI was first developed in the 1980's in Madagascar by a French priest called Henri de Lalaunié, based on the observation of crop growing practices of local farmers. Nowadays, thanks to the support of research centers and experts, there is evidence of its effectiveness in more than 50 countries. Information provided by AFA

That was the situation encountered by Dr Yang Saying Komag around the year 2000³, when he decided to devote his efforts and professional knowledge to eliminate or alleviate the extreme poverty of Cambodian farmers. Along other experts from the Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC),⁴ he began an intense period of fieldwork observation and experimentation, with the aim of adapting available techniques to local conditions and improving rice production through SRI.

Far from intensifying the use of external inputs, this method intensifies the use of know-how, local resources and principles or ideas that can be adapted on a case by case basis.

Breaking with conventionalism

At the beginning of this odyssey, it was really difficult to convince farmers, who traditionally expected to achieve better results through the use of external inputs - such as improved seeds and chemical herbicides and fertilizers - that the best yields could be achieved by using less water and little or no external nutrients.

Nonetheless, Dr Koma succeeded in engaging 28 farms in the transformation process summarized below:

- Use of young, healthy, vigorous seedlings from a seed orchard;
- leaving more space between plants to prevent competition between them and encourage root growth;
- shallow transplantation to soil (1-2 cm deep) which ensures faster root growth;
- keeping good aeration of soil and avoiding saturation with stagnant water;

- Elimination of weeds and enrichment with compost to increase the biological activity of soil.

All these measures were aimed to strengthen the root system and aerial parts of the rice plant, boosting the plant's photosynthesis and metabolic process, leading to a higher yield of grains per plant.

Attesting to experience

The document *Producing More with less. The Triumph of SRI in Cambodia* prepared by Dr Yang Saing Koma gathers a series of figures and examples attesting that farmers who used the SRI method doubled or even tripled their yields while achieving substantial reductions in the use of external inputs.

Those 28 pioneers managed to achieve average yields of five tons per hectare, 150% more than the traditional model. This increase in productivity resulted in higher profits, part of which was destined to other crops.

In his analysis Dr Koma also mentions achievements at a human level, such as self-confidence gains for the farmers involved in the project, a boost to teamwork, the involvement of producers as coaches, promoters and multiplying agents for the method, the strengthening of the interaction between producers and CEDAC experts towards the common goal of continuous improvement.



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³ Cambodian agronomist that was awarded the Magsaysay Prize in 2012; *“his creative fusion of practical science and collective will that has inspired and enabled vast numbers of farmers in Cambodia to become more empowered and productive contributors to their country’s economic growth”*, <www.tveap.org>.

⁴ CEDAC, Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture, <www.cedac.org.kh>.

Situation at arrival

Thanks to this method, approximately one million Cambodians have overcome food insecurity, improving their opportunities to prosper. Currently more than 200,000 Cambodian farmers use the SRI method and most of them manage to attain the production levels required to access markets, to feed their families, putting an end to their dependence on the purchase of rice.

The efficacy of SRI in fighting poverty and hunger having been proven with the small rice farmers of Cambodia, the system is now being extended to other crops.



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Partnership and political context

The system's success has not been solely the product of agro-environmental techniques. The model would not have succeeded without the complicity created between research agents, producers and associations, together with the existence of a favorable political environment that supported the initiative by including the model in the national strategic development plan for Cambodia in the year 2004.

In this regard, the outcome of this experience highlights the importance of integrating environmental, social and political factors to support programs and measures aimed at guaranteeing food production that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. And this is where the dialog between administration and civil society becomes instrumental, when the various approaches are considered and when they start implementing inclusive initiatives.



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The Federal Government encourages the organization of family farming

The cooperative movement provides family farmers the possibility of strengthening production strategies, increasing income and gaining scale and access to markets.

Therefore the Federal Government encourages the model to add value and generate income in the rural areas of Brazil, through specific policies that facilitate access to credit, institutional markets and through acts of technical assistance and the strengthening of cooperatives.

To this end, it uses the Declaration of Suitability for Pronaf (DAP) which identifies cooperatives whose constituency includes at least 60% family farmers.

“Cooperativism is important, for example, for adding value, for storage and marketing, important steps in the family farming production system. Therefore, it is an instrument that ends up providing income and strengthening the sector” points out Válder Bianchini, Secretary of Family Farming of the Ministry of Agriculture.

In Northern Brazil approximately 1,800 families of extractivists are linked to the Acre Extractivist Commercial Union (Cooperacre) through more than 25 cooperatives and associations. The group sells nuts and fruit pulps typical of the region, such as açaí, cupuaçu and graviola. Joint work and public policies have resulted in significant changes in their lives of producers. “Many left extreme poverty behind” says Cooperacre president Manoel José.

Access to credit through Pronaf, the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming, was essential for the construction of a processing unit. The first funding, for R\$2 million, was made in 2009. Since then, investments have totalled more than R\$15 million. In addition, institutional sales made through PAA, the Food Acquisition Program, and Pnae, the School Meals Program, provide a boost to the cooperative’s economy.

The PAA enables the formation of stocks, allowing the cooperative to market the entire year and to harvest a larger amount of nut that

used to be wasted. In the last harvest 400,000 cans were processed. "This way one can market quality products and increase producer income by approximately 80%" says Manoel. All the fruit pulp - around 180 tons per year - is sold for school meals.

INSTITUTIONAL PROCUREMENT PROGRAMS ARE ALSO IMPORTANT FOR SELLING THE PRODUCTION OF ECOCITRUS - THE COOPERATIVE OF ECOLOGICAL CITRUS FARMERS OF THE CAI VALLEY.

This gaúcho cooperative sells around 30% of its production to PAA and Pnae. Founded in 1994, Ecocitrus is a model organization that manages even to export its products. The project started with 15 producers and nowadays it involves over 150 families directly. Work is carried out in such way that the farmers themselves handle the entire chain, from inputs production to marketing.

"Cooperation is very important to us. On the issue of marketing, for example, we can add more products and gain market price, providing a better outlook for farmers who were until then unable to sell their production. We were also able to add value and to eliminate the middleman, keeping the difference, explains Ecocitrus institutional relations manager Ernesto Carlos Kaster.

IN THE NORTH OF BRAZIL, APPROXIMATELY 1,800 FAMILIES OF EXTRACTIVISTS ARE LINKED TO COOPERACRE, A POOL OF OVER 25 COOPERATIVES AND ASSOCIATIONS.

Technology for the countryside and jobs in the industry

With an investment of approximately R\$ 5.7 billion in agricultural financing for the 2012-2013 crop - a 75% increase over the previous crop – Mais Alimentos (More Food) is one of the outstanding programs of the Brazilian Federal Government policy of agricultural credit.

It combines Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (Ater) and funds from the Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming, (Pronaf) to take technology to family farms. The goal is to enable farmers to increase productivity and income and to make them more competitive in the market. By doing so, the program contributes to the permanence of rural producers on the land, producing food and guaranteeing Brazilian sovereignty and food security.

Over R\$15.5 billion have been invested in five years of operation, improving the quality and efficiency of production. The list of products that may be financed through the Program contains approximately 4,500 items that comprising most of the agricultural and non-agricultural activities undertaken in the country.

The Program provides loans at lower interest rates and favorable terms of payment. Besides, thanks to industry agreements, equipment reaches producers at lower prices. Thus, in addition to strengthening family farming, the program provides an incentive for the Brazilian manufacturers of agricultural machinery and inputs, promoting technological innovation and maintaining jobs. Last year the number of companies that participated increased from 200 to 450.

Similarly, the Growth Acceleration Program (PAC2) – a program through which machinery is donated to Brazilian municipalities to improve the infrastructure of rural areas through the construction and maintenance of back roads and digging of wells for water storage – also generates jobs and income for the industry. Through these actions, the Federal Government will donate over 18,000 pieces of equipment to

5,061 municipalities, an investment of around R\$5 billion that makes the Federal Government the main buyer of domestic industry.

Each selected municipality will receive at least three pieces of equipment: a backhoe, a grader and a bucket truck. Municipalities in the Brazilian semi-arid region will also receive a water truck and a wheel loader. The action aims to improve access to rural areas, facilitating the flow of production and movement of people, goods and services, benefitting producers and ensuring cheaper and healthier food for the people.

Benefits can already be seen in the locations where the machines are operating. In Abelardo Luiz (SC) the working conditions of more than 110 producers in the Edson Adao Lins cooperative (Coopeal) are now easier. "Now we can access each corner of the municipality. Whether it rains or not, we can move about, which until recently we could not do due to the poor condition of roads. In the rainy season we would lose 15% of our milk production, and sometimes more, because we could not leave our homes for three or four days" says cooperative president Vilmar Antônio Basso.

IN ABELARDO LUZ (SC),
WORKING CONDITIONS ARE MUCH
EASIER NOW FOR MORE THAN 110
FARMERS GATHERED IN COOPEAL,
THE PRODUCTION,
MANUFACTURING AND MARKETING
COOPERATIVE EDSON ADAO LINS.



Andrés Berterreche, President of the National Colonization Institute
© Portal of the Presidency of the Republic of Uruguay

"FAMILY FARMERS
LIVE ON THEIR FARMS;
THEIR FARMS ARE THEIR LIVELIHOOD,
AND THEIR DECISIONS ARE DRIVEN
BY THE REASSUREMENT THAT
THEY WILL CONTINUE TO BE WHAT
THEY ARE, AND BY THE POTENTIAL
OF LEADING A DECENT LIFE."



Uruguayan Colonization Institute, an exports model

Although Uruguayans are “demure” with words, the National Colonization Institute is an agrarian reform institute, stated its president, Andrés Berterreche. “Moreover, at the same time that the reform gets known in Uruguay, the model is being exported to Argentina and Colombia”, he pointed out.

What is the National Colonization Institute (INC)? It is an autonomous entity that buys land and leases it to family farmers or rural workers who can not access land under regular market rules. Beneficiaries are charged only about half the rent.

In his office in the Old City of Montevideo, Andrés Berterreche received the IFAD MERCOSUR CLAEH Program. His appointment as president is an example of the positive developments that have taken place in the institute he directs, he explains. “In the past, this position used to be given to the fourth candidate that failed to get elected for a seat at congress; it was a place used to reward someone with a salary. But now that has changed. I gave up being a senator to come here, and I was minister”.

—What is the Uruguayan government policy to promote family farming?

—To answer that question we need to go 198 years back in history. Our nation was born with two concepts that are imbedded in our culture. One is the 1813 Instructions. Much of the national republican feeling can be tracked back to that event in our history, and it was built into a chip we all carry. The second is the Land Rules, which is the first concept of an agrarian reform in Latin America.

That forged our national cultural identity, and unbeknownst to most Uruguayans, land became part of our identity.

Artigas, our national hero, was defeated in his attempted revolution, and although years have passed, the issue of land has continued to be present, and land-related problems have been part of every conflict ever since.

Several policies and laws have been designed and drafted; a rural development bureau was created [...] and in 1948, the National Committee for Rural Promotion turned into the National Institute of Colonization.

—Why then?

—It was created with the aim set forth in Article 1 of Act 11029; I always say it is a legal poem. It goes: “For the purpose of this Act, the term colonization refers to the set of measures to be adopted in accordance with it, to promote a rational subdivision of land”. This is a cry against the

concentration of land ownership. He continued: “and the proper use of land, ensuring the enhancement and improvement of farm production and the settlement and welfare of rural workers”.

It was created in 1948, and it began with an original conception; government started to buy land... But then it all depends on the comings and goings of governments. There is a story I could never confirm, in which a lawmaker asked another, “How are you voting for this law, that is nothing short of Soviet?” And the other replied, “Do not worry, we are voting the law, but not the budget”. And the reality is that the Institute was kept at a very marginal level, despite being an autonomous entity.

Once, while I was participating in an activity in the city of Treinta y Tres, I noticed that the farmers would not talk about access to land. It seemed odd, so I asked the local opinion-leader what was happening there. He replied: “What happens is that if you conduct a survey, nobody will answer they want to be immortal. Access to land is not a possibility for them either. In other words, the Gauchos did not know they were entitled to apply for land. They did not know that all Uruguayans have the right to apply for land.

The Institute became more visible in the last administration”, he assured. “It was then that everything changed, and the plans are made considering development related to family farming. The INC becomes the best tool to access land for those that cannot reach it through the market.

This is implemented in a capitalistic dependent country, to provide solution to those left outside the market. It is not intended for those who already have the possibilities to access land (which was not always the case in the Institute’s history). Here, the issue is: if you can buy or lease outside the system, then do it.

With its 358,000 hectares, the Institute seeks to provide solutions to farmers that have land access problems or stability issues, and hired rural workers, either individually or in associations (in organizations or unions) so they can access land and become family producers.

There are people that say that “they are all businesspeople”. I do not agree. A typical capitalistic businessman is driven by profit. If he has a dairy farm and tomorrow soybean becomes more profitable, he will tear down the dairy farm and replace it for that crop. A family farmer lives on his farm; his farm is his livelihood, and his decisions are driven by the reassurance that he will continue to be what he is, and by the potential of leading a decent life. They follow different rationales.

—*The Institute is the true owner of the lands...*

—Yes, the institute has to move in the framework of the social ownership of land. I give you the usufruct and the production is yours, and if you have children that want to stay there, it can even be inherited, but ownership is not granted. Why? Because the agrarian reforms that provide ownership have systematically failed around the world. Because the capitalist logic is that of winners and losers; the latter end up selling the land to winners, and winners end up concentrating land. If I gave the beneficiaries the property of the farm, shortly after that I would have the problem back. That is why I lease, but not only do I rent at a price that is lower than the market price and under favorable conditions: and I give you something that market does not give you: stability. If you abide by all the norms, you may lease the land all your life.

—*What does abidance imply?*

—You have to pay a rent and produce - and produce well; on top of that, you cannot damage sustainability. You have to live on the farm, and cannot sublet it.

—*To what extent is the rent lower?*

—It is approximately 50 % less than the market price. For example, if the cattle revenue in the country is 80 dollars, we charge 40 (per hectare and per year). If you are charged 250 for the production of sugar cane, we charge 160.

—*What are the most frequent productions?*

—No. I refuse to answer that. It is a simplistic view. Farming is not an even world, and we have a host of different situations. The important thing is that there is a leaser that works the land in a social property system, moving away from the typical capitalistic business approach, as family farmer, where the priority is to ensure him and his family a decent and stable rural life. That is rural development. Actually, this is an institute that implements an agrarian reform, although here we are rather cautious with words.

Today, the INC acts to prevent agriculture from expelling cattle farms. All promissory sales of farms over 500 hectares must go through the INC, who has purchase preference. Furthermore, the INC sells state-owned land not used for its specific purposes.

—*How many beneficiaries are there?*

—Between 2,500 and 3,500. Why don't I have an exact figure? Because we are really emphasizing partnerships, and those are hugely dynamic. A cattle breeding farm today may have 32 producers, tomorrow 45 and day after tomorrow 100.

—*Is this model available in other countries?*

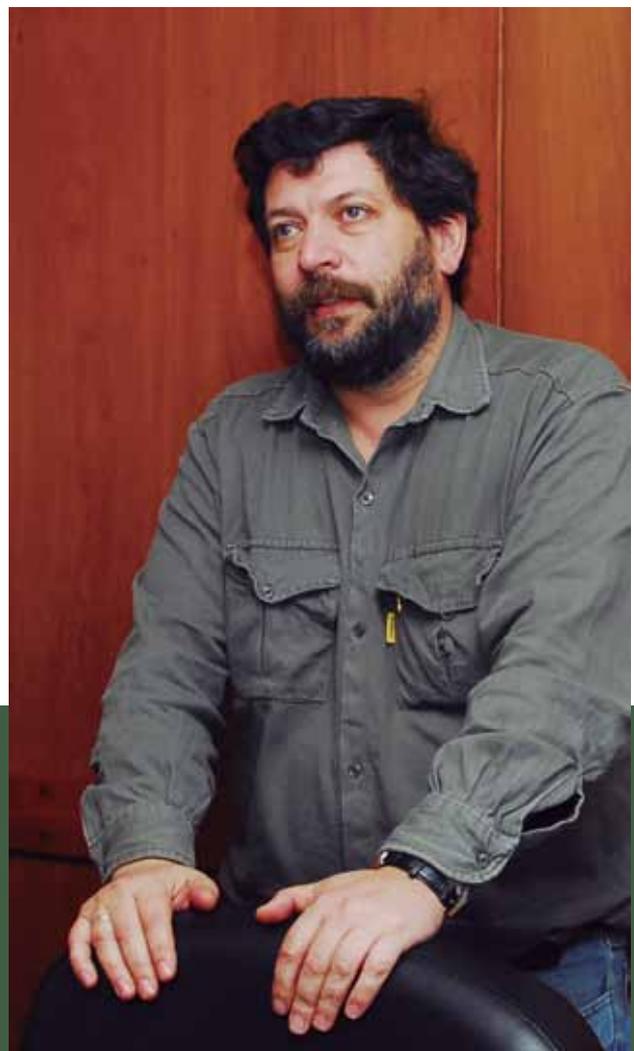
—We offered the Institute's model to Colombia, for their peace process, and we also received a delegation from Argentina, since they envisaged the possibility of implementing it in several provinces. That is, we are exporting the model.

Savings and sovereignty

The Uruguayan parliament is studying a draft law that is intended "to invest in sovereignty" as Berterreche puts it.

The draft law creates a trust that will enable INC to access 100 million dollars for the purchase of land during the next 25 years. This would be done through the pensions savings fund administrators (AFAP).

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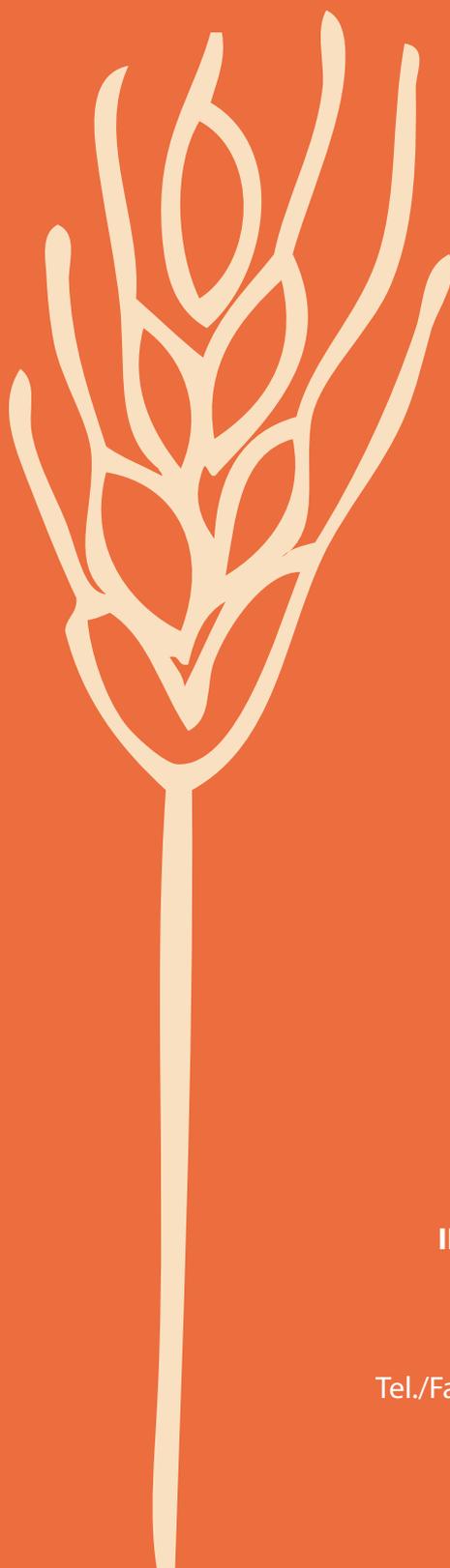


2014

International Year of
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