

LEADERSHIP *in* Agriculture

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Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

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The road to the top

Discover the reasons behind the success of some outstanding agricultural entrepreneurs

- ✓ PRONACA
- ✓ DOS PINOS
- ✓ N.L. STEVIA S.A.
- ✓ The Bohemian Alps Vineyard
...and much more

The ten commandments
of the agroleader

Lola: a success story in
sports and in agriculture



IICA



Emotional intelligence: the secret to successful entrepreneurship?



LEADERSHIP
in Agriculture

Credits

LEADERSHIP *in* Agriculture

Leadership in Agriculture is a publication of the Center for Leadership in Agriculture of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). Founded in March 2008, the Center's mission is to be a specialized center which promotes a new generation of leaders with a global vision who can create a modern agricultural sector that contributes to integral sustainable development, food security and rural prosperity in the Americas.

The Center stimulates the broadest possible access to information on leadership required for agriculture and rural life. To do so, one of the main tools is the magazine **Leadership in Agriculture**, which offers success stories and thoughts from experts, as well as methods and tools to consolidate leadership skills.

The Center falls under the Directorate of Technical Leadership and Knowledge Management of IICA.

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We must make the rural sector attractive

T

he size and the importance of the agricultural and rural sectors, and the contributions of both to economic and social development, have been overlooked for years. The time has come to change that way of thinking. We can no longer sit back and watch as young people leave rural areas in search of opportunities in the big cities of their countries or, even worse, of other countries. We must make the rural world attractive enough that young people will want to stay. We must understand that the potential of our countries is in the rural areas, where there are opportunities to reduce poverty and generate wealth, which must be distributed equitably in urban and rural areas. This is the only way we will be able to improve the lives of our citizens.

For this to become a reality, it is necessary to convince decision makers of the need to give our rural areas the attention they truly deserve and promote investment there. However, before this can happen, there must be people in the agricultural and rural areas who are convinced, dedicated and trained to lead the process of change. In other words, we need new leaders



*Hernan Chiriboga
Coordinator of the Center for
Leadership in Agriculture, IICA*

because the current generation has been unable to bring about the necessary changes.

The principal function of the Center for Leadership in Agriculture is to train those new leaders and give them the tools they need to be leaders. For its part, the objective of this magazine is to show, with actual examples, that with effective leadership the rural world can become the most important sector in stimulating the growth of our economies.

We must remember that AGRICULTURE IS IMPORTANT THREE TIMES A DAY and that, as winner of the Nobel Peace Prize Dr. Norman Borlaug has said "Civilization as it is known today could not have evolved, nor can it survive, without an adequate food supply." We must, therefore,

produce more and higher quality food in a more sustainable manner. That is the only way for food security to become a reality and for our peoples to be healthier, thanks to sound nutrition.

In the rural world, it is more important to prevent than to cure because prevention is both more inexpensive and more profitable. The conditions must exist in rural areas that will make them attractive and profitable. For this to happen, it is necessary to provide services that will make a better quality of life possible, such as credit programs, technical assistance, training, infrastructure, communications facilities and others.

This issue of our magazine focuses on undertakings that are generating sustainable development in different regions of our hemisphere. We present an experience in leadership and entrepreneurship of a small-scale producer in the United States who tells us about how he succeeded and grew to be influential in his community and region. We also present two successful experiences in Central America. The first is the case of Lola Molina, a young leader from Guatemala who tells us how she succeeded in sports and then in agriculture by applying the principles and values of leadership. The second case, which is a clear example of the saying “there is strength in numbers,” refers to the Dos Pinos Cooperative in Costa Rica. This company, which belongs to the dairy farmers who are members, processes more than 1 million liters of milk per day and pays one of the highest

prices paid anywhere in the hemisphere for milk purchased on the farm. We also present the experience of a young leader from Trinidad and Tobago, Lorraine Waldropt, who has positioned the cacao of her country on the international market, generating opportunities for Caribbean producers.

Another article deals with the PRONACA agribusiness, located in Ecuador, which is promoting the improved well-being of a large number of small-scale producers by working with a clear vision of the need to generate value in all agricultural chains and retain the trust of suppliers and clients. Also included in this edition is the case of the NL Stevia Company, which is promoting the processing and marketing of Stevia, a natural sweetener found in Paraguay. It has succeeded in improving the quality of life for local growers, has created a new agrifood chain in the country and plans to offer the world a healthier sweetener. Lastly, we present an experience which shows how we can achieve effective leadership and undertake successful ventures with the proper use of emotional intelligence.

As evidenced by all the examples presented in this issue of the magazine, for the rural areas of our hemisphere to be a place where new generations will want to work and live and generate well-being and progress, it is necessary to have leaders determined to strengthen rural entrepreneurship ■

Contents

Letter from the editor

We must make the rural sector attractive

Hernan Chiriboga, Coordinator of the Center for Leadership in Agriculture, IICA

3

New leadership at IICA

6

Keys to success

The 10 qualities needed by the man or woman who decides to focus his/her energies on transforming agriculture and rural life.

8



Cases of agricultural leadership

Entrepreneurial vision:

Transforming the dream into reality

The author teaches other rural entrepreneurs how to develop a vision and set goals... He tells us how he developed his own vision and what he did to achieve his goals.

13

A passion for agriculture and for life

A young leader from the Caribbean tells her story and how fatherly advice gave her a passion for the land and agriculture.

19

Dos Pinos: achieving better results by working together

Learn more about this successful model agricultural cooperative in Central America and the battles it has won.

25

PRONACA: agricultural leadership from the heart of the Andean Region

Five decades ago it was little more than a dream. Today, it is a vigorous agribusiness known for high value added production and a special relationship with suppliers and customers.

31

The challenge: to help sweeten the world

In Paraguay, a native plant has generated an interesting experience in leadership. The firm is known as NL Stevia.

39

Leadership in agricultural information services: The SIDALC initiative

Learn how, thanks to technical cooperation provided by IICA, more than 150 institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean have been able to operate an agricultural information and documentation system dealing with agriculture, the environment, food and related topics in the hemisphere.

43

Lola's remarkable career change: from sportswoman to farmer

Cycling taught her discipline and perseverance. Meet Lola Molina, a woman who applied what she learned from her sport to her dairy farm, and who believes in the ability of people to learn and be better human beings.

49



Trends

Emotional Intelligence: The secret of successful entrepreneurship?

Attempting to find the secret of success of certain entrepreneurs, researchers today tend to focus on the world of emotions.

55



CLA in action

Inauguration of the Center for Leadership in Agriculture (CLA) in Paraguay

64

Three ministerial forums

The IICA Center for Leadership in Agriculture held forums with the ministers of agriculture of Haiti, Peru, and Mexico.

66

New Leadership at IICA

Victor M. Villalobos, from Mexico, has been at the helm of the Institute since January 15, 2010.

Victor M. Villalobos is the new Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). He took office during an official ceremony held at IICA Headquarters, in Costa Rica, on January 15, taking over the reins from outgoing Director General Chelston W.D. Brathwaite.

The event was attended by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias Sanchez; the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Jose Miguel Insulza; the Chairman of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) and Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of Jamaica, Christopher Tufton; the Ministers of Agriculture of Costa Rica, Javier Flores, and Mexico, Francisco Mayorga; many members of the

VICTOR M. VILLALOBOS TOOK THE OATH OF OFFICE AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF IICA ON JANUARY 15, 2010.

diplomatic corps accredited in Costa Rica, and special guests from throughout the Americas.

Villalobos was elected at the Fifteenth Regular Meeting of the IABA, held in Jamaica on October 30, 2009. He won the election by a comfortable margin, which reflects the acceptance, on the part of the member countries, of his plans for the Institute and the participatory style of leadership that has characterized him throughout his distinguished career at the service of the rural sector of Mexico and the Americas.

The new Director General outlined the priorities for the Institute's work for the 2010-2014 term, including efforts to strengthen the agrifood system. Given the impact of the production and commercial chains on the rest of the

economy, technical cooperation must focus on productivity and competitiveness. "This will involve genetic improvement, the transfer of appropriate technologies, access to markets for agricultural products and the adoption of and adherence to sanitary and phytosanitary standards, etc." he stated.

Directing his attention to the personnel of the Institute, he said "Help me help the countries. Each of you is necessary and I ask you to join with me in sharing knowledge and becoming true agents of change in those areas in which our contributions can have an impact."

Below is a biographical sketch of Dr. Villalobos. We wish him every success and are certain that, under his leadership, the agricultural sector of the Americas will benefit greatly.



Head table at the Oath of Office ceremony for the new Director General of IICA

A negotiator ... a leader



*Dr. Victor M. Villalobos,
Director General of IICA.*

Dr. Villalobos is a well recognized expert in the agricultural and biological fields, as well as in the natural and genetic resources fields. He is recognized in the Hemisphere for his many outstanding contributions in these areas.

Dr. Villalobos has worked in a variety of positions such as full professor, research leader, international appointee, government official, administration executive, government mediator, and leader for multidisciplinary groups on analysis and decision making.

In 1976 Dr. Victor Villalobos obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Agronomy at the National School of Agriculture in Chapingo, Mexico; in 1979 he obtained his Master of Sciences in Plant Genetics at the Graduate College of Chapingo; and in 1983 he obtained his Ph.D at the University of Calgary in Canada (he wrote his thesis on Plant Morphogenesis). In the course of his long career, he has made major contributions and has supported

HE HAS RECEIVED VERY IMPORTANT AND DISTINGUISHED AWARDS FOR HIS OUTSTANDING SCIENTIFIC AND ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS.

innovations in the areas of plant production and natural resources conservation.

Dr. Villalobos has been appointed two times by the Mexican President as Undersecretary in the Federal Government, the first time as Natural Resources Undersecretary for the Secretariat of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries (SEMARNAP), the second time, as Agriculture Undersecretary for the Secretariat of Agriculture, Ranching, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA).

As a researcher, Dr. Villalobos has encouraged the use of agriculture biotechnology as a tool for sustainable production, and to ensure enough food production for Mexico and the world. Based on his long experience and several fields of expertise, Dr. Villalobos has published two books: "Tissue Culture Contribution to Plant Improvement and Conservation" (1982); and "Transgenic Plants: Opportunities and Threats" (2007).

Dr. Villalobos has also been involved with international organizations for technical cooperation. He was the Director of the Agriculture Division (1986-1990) in the Tropical Agronomic Center for Research and Teaching (CATIE). He has also served as the Executive Official on Biotechnology (1990-1995) and President of the Board of Directors (1999-2003) of CATIE.

Dr. Villalobos has been instructor for undergraduate and graduate programs at the Autonomous University of Chapingo (UACH); the Graduate College in Agriculture Sciences (COLPOS); and the Center for Research and Advanced Studies of the National Polytechnic Institute (CINVESTAV). Internationally, he has been an instructor in the Tropical Agronomic Center for Research and Teaching (CATIE). Dr. Villalobos has been instructor for advanced courses in Argentina, Austria, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Jordan, Iran and Venezuela, among others. He has also been the major professor for seven undergraduate and eleven graduate students.

Dr. Villalobos has received very important and distinguished awards for his outstanding scientific and academic contributions. He is a member Royal Agriculture and Forestry Academy of Sweden; Honorary Doctor's Degree of CATIE (2004); Member of the "Scoping Team" for the Consultant Group on International Agriculture Research (CGIAR); Member of the Science and Technology Commission for the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) and California University (UC-Mexus). The President of Mexico distinguished Dr. Villalobos for his contribution on agriculture biotechnology. He is Professor Ad Honorem for the Graduate College of Chapingo and distinguished alumni of the Autonomous University of Chapingo.

Keys to success

In the rural sector, where more than half of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean live, the need to develop a generation of young leaders has not been given the attention it deserves. At present,

for leaders who can promote economically and ecologically sustainable food production. These leaders must also encourage others to tap the opportunities provided by agrotourism, agroenergy, scenic tourism and other activities.

In response, in 2008, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) created the Center for Leadership in Agriculture, a novel initiative aimed at promoting a new generation of leaders with a global vision and capable of modernizing the agricultural sector and contributing to the

was reached. In addition, the Center undertook actions aimed at improving the leadership skills of decision makers by enhancing their negotiating and communication skills, showing them how to strengthen teamwork, and ensuring that they possess the qualities and capabilities needed to promote development in the rural milieu.

The leaders who possess those qualities and capabilities constitute the new generation of leaders that are needed in the rural sector today. They must think on a global scale, but take action at the local level, and be focused on values. They must tackle the challenge of making the rural sector more attractive to young people. In other words, the sector must offer young people opportunities that will stop them from migrating to the cities, where there are already too many people and too few options.

The Center for Leadership has prepared the following summary of the qualities of an agro-leader, which can be printed and posted in an office or carried in a wallet.

To effect changes and generate more and better opportunities, leaders with the following characteristics are needed:

THE 10 QUALITIES NEEDED BY THE MAN OR WOMAN WHO DECIDES TO FOCUS HIS/HER ENERGIES ON TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE

there are numerous publications, experts and centers that specialize in leadership, but most are focused on leadership in the field of business administration, which has hindered the development of leaders for the agricultural sector.

The world population continues to grow and we must eat three times a day, creating the need

sustainable development of agriculture, food security and rural prosperity in the Americas.

From its inception, the staff of the Center has been working to identify the qualities a leader in the agricultural sector must possess. After almost two years of discussions with more than 700 such leaders, a consensus

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF THE AGROLEADER

- 1 Take care of yourself, your family, and the members of your community. Be interested in the well-being of all including nature and biodiversity.
- 2 Define a vision for the future and share it with the community, attaching priority to those activities that will lead to the achievement of goals.
- 3 Begin by leading others and then share leadership with them. Results must be the consequence of the efforts of all.
- 4 Live value-centered leadership. Walk the talk.
- 5 Be courageous and not afraid of taking risks. Try to find innovative solutions to problems in the rural sector.
- 6 Partner with others who share similar objectives. Encourage teamwork based on active listening and the development of trust.
- 7 Cultivate and maintain good relations and contacts with decision makers in the rural sector.
- 8 Foster the development of talent and empower the members of your team. Bring out talent in others, encouraging innovation.
- 9 Seek your own continual improvement and that of the members of your team.
- 10 Have a positive influence on others, always in pursuit of common objectives.

Cases of agricultural leadership





Photo: Courtesy of Lola Molina

From all corners of the hemisphere, success stories and personal accounts of entrepreneurs from today and yesterday



Photo: Photos.com

Entrepreneurial vision: Transforming the dream into reality

The author teaches other rural entrepreneurs how to develop a vision and set goals...He tells us how he developed his own vision and what he did to achieve his goals

*Bruce Bostelman¹
Entrepreneurial farmer in Nebraska, USA.*

FOR THE ENTREPRENEUR, LEADERSHIP IS MORE THAN LEADING: IT IS LEARNING, DEVELOPING IDEAS AND BRINGING THEM TO FRUITION.

Leadership is the opportunity to take an idea, concept or principle and apply it in practice through the creation of frameworks that provide a final development or outcome. For the entrepreneur, leadership is more than leading: it is learning, developing ideas and bringing them to fruition. It is also about developing individuals by allowing them the freedom to be productive, well rounded and self-confident. Leading is finding the right people with the right skills to do the job. Leadership is not a once in a lifetime event; it is a process of always educating yourself and learning from your mistakes and helping others to succeed.

The question is, how does one do that on the farm? As an agricultural entrepreneur, there are many opportunities that I have seized on to practice what I preach. I am a founder and presently sit on the Board of Directors of a company called Nebraska Woody Florals (nebraskawoodyflorals.com). My business management skills and years of experience as a paralegal allow me to help the directors understand their roles and responsibilities. I also work with the Nebraska Cooperative Development Center (NCDC) to provide training to our directors and employees. This includes practical training such as developing budgets and training plans, and leadership training in areas such as developing a vision and setting goals.



¹ Bruce Bostelman, an entrepreneurial farmer in Nebraska, USA. Nebraska Woody Florals, Heartland Nuts-N-More, Bohemian Alps Vineyard. Brinard, Nebraska 68626.

WE STARTED OUT AS AN OUTSIDER SINCE NEITHER MY WIFE'S FAMILY NOR MINE ARE FROM THIS AREA. SKEPTICISM AND EVEN OUTRIGHT RIDICULE SURROUNDED US AS WE STRUCK OUT WORKING ON THE FARM.

I am also a director for Heartland Nuts-N-More (heartlandnutsnmore.com) and this is a challenge in terms of leadership. Basically, we are an assortment of farmers, hobbyists, and professionals who produce nut meats that a local cooperative processes and sells. We currently sell nut meats but we are slowly working to expand our product lines. This is a slow process and provides many challenges, as our board is comprised of

varying interests. Learning to communicate with a variety of different individuals has been a key factor in making this work. Having worked with many diverse interests over the years has helped prepare me to better communicate with our directors and help them better understand the needs of the business.

I would be remiss if I did not mention education, and I do not mean just formal education. I am continually learning and seeking out opportunities that will stretch me and help me continue to develop. Most recently, I graduated from the Nebraska LEAD program. A two-year program designed to develop leaders from our rural communities to prepare them for greater leadership roles and to help them better understand their state, country and the world as a whole.

BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE ARE ABLE TO BETTER WORK THROUGH ISSUES IN THE VINEYARD, PRODUCE EXCELLENT GRAPES AND MAKE AWARD-WINNING WINES.



Land for a vineyard

How did I get interested in all of these activities in agricultural entrepreneurship? I was raised in a small town called Superior, located in south central Nebraska, during a time when the town was vibrant and growing. Although we lived in town, I had extended family in the farming community in both dairy and beef cattle. I helped out on the farms with milking, feeding calves, haying and most general chores around the farm. My wife, Jan, is also a native Nebraskan with extended family engaged in farming.

After 20 years of service in the United States Air Force, my wife and I moved back to Nebraska. I have always enjoyed

working with my hands, growing things and the challenges that come with new projects. While I was still in the military, the wine industry in Nebraska began to take shape. This really caught my interest and I began attending workshops on growing grapes and learning as much as I could. After I finished my military service, we moved back to Nebraska with a vision to look for land to start a vineyard. We found the land we were looking for, but this farm had no improvements on it; we have literally had to build it from the ground up.

Our farm is 160 acres and is located in Butler County, Nebraska, near a small village called Loma. This area is unique as it is called the Bohemian Alps, named after the strong Czech and German heritage and made up of rolling hills and diverse timbered valleys with spacious pastures accented by tilled farm ground. Our farm is diverse in nature and a first in many respects for this area and for Nebraska. We have a three-acre vineyard, we grow ornamental plants, called woody florals, for the floral and design industries and we have started our own cultivar black walnut and northern pecan orchard. We also maintain virgin prairies, maintain Conservation Reserve Program acres, and rent out tillable acres.

I first became interested in growing grapes approximately 20 years ago while still serving in the military. The grape industry was just starting in Nebraska and I was fascinated by it. Talking with friends in Sonoma, California, we realized that just about anyone can grow grapes but the key is to

GROWING ORNAMENTAL PLANTS FOR THE FLORAL INDUSTRY SOUNDS GREAT, BUT THIS ENDEAVOR HAS TAKEN ABOUT SEVEN YEARS TO COME TO WHERE IT IS TODAY.

grow high-quality grapes while working closely with customers, the wineries, to produce quality of grapes they desire. It was then that I determined to learn all that I could about growing grapes. I have attended annual conventions, numerous workshops and other educational opportunities presented by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and the Nebraska Wine and Grape Growers Association (NWGGA). I also became a reader of several publications on grape growing and wine making. All of this knowledge just increased my desire to grow grapes and, after we bought our land, we began the process of turning our dream into a reality.

We have raised many eyebrows in the farming community around here. We started out as an outsider since neither my wife's family nor mine are from this area. Skepticism and even outright ridicule surrounded us as we struck out working on the farm. Our dream, The Bohemian Alps Vineyard, first took roots in 2002 with our first half-acre planting of LaCrosse and St. Croix grapes. We have since

expanded our vineyard to three acres and have added Traminette, Frontenac and de Chaunac grapes to our farm. We currently sell grapes to two Nebraska wineries: Makovicka Winery and James Arthur Vineyards. We are also active members of the Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Association (NWGGA).

I feel you do not really understand the meaning of "a wine is only as good as the grapes it is made from" until you have grown, crushed, fermented and bottled your own wine. This process has really impacted how I manage my vineyard, because the flaws I have on the vine will show up in the wine. For the time being, we are content with raising high-quality grapes for the wine industry. By working together, we are able to better work through issues in the vineyard, produce excellent grapes and make award-winning wines. We are looking to do more in wine development in the future but we have not settled on what that will exactly entail. This may be estate wines, private labels, a winery or a combination of some sorts. We are in the process of developing our vision for the future.

We are in a constant state of improving our processes and this is key to being successful as an

THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE BOX AND THEN CONVINCING OTHERS TO PURSUE AND STAY ON TRACK IN THIS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT STAGE IS A CHALLENGE IN HOW TO NOT STEP ON OTHERS' TOES AND CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD.

entrepreneur. We are currently conducting research on our vines that will be completed in the coming years. We undertook this research in response to research we have read about in other countries with similar plantings. Our research includes things like canopy management and under trellis and trellis management practices. It is important to keep abreast of research and do your own in order to remain on the cutting edge.

A flourishing business

Another part of our diversified business is our one acre of ornamental plants, called woody florals, which we grow for the wholesale floral and designer industries. We call this part of our business Willow Wood Gardens. We grow a variety of woody plants for harvest and sale as a dormant stem product. These stems are unique in color and shape and some are sold as forced flowering stems in the late winter. These stems are traditionally used around the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas and provide a winter-long bouquet of color and design in large container arrangements. Many large cities in the U.S. use these stems in such a manner. Growing ornamental plants for the floral industry sounds great, but this endeavor has taken about seven years to come to where it is today. Most of what we are doing has a direct correlation with work that UNL has completed in many of these areas. We have partnered with

I FEEL STRONGLY THAT SMALL FARMS ARE A KEY AND VITAL ASPECT TO RURAL PROSPERITY.

the Forestry Department at UNL in the research and development of this new industry to Nebraska. For example, the work that Dr. Scott Josiah has done provided us with the framework to start a business. We initially worked with Dr. Josiah in his research plantings to include all aspects of plant identification and development for Nebraska soils, marketing and packaging. Based on our research into current trends, market potentials and the amount of stems it would take to be successful, we decided to form a cooperative that now has 45 members. Finding the right people with the right skills in marketing was a key to developing our strategy as a business.

Diversification has been the key

The newest part of our operation is our orchard. We have planted native black walnut and northern pecan trees that we will eventually graft scion wood on to for cultivar black walnuts and pecans. The Nebraska Nut Growers Association has conducted research for over 40 years into nut production and from this research we are able to select the best cultivars to grow the healthiest nut meats. Nut Production is a very challenging concept and business to develop. Working with UNL,

the UNL Food Processing Center and the Nebraska Cooperative Development Center (NCDC) has enabled us to think outside the box and begin to develop the Heartland Nuts-N-More Cooperative into a one-of-a-kind business. We have stereotypes to overcome in the cultivar black walnut and the northern pecan markets. Creating niche markets, such as locally grown and heart healthy, takes time and patience as well as a lot of creative funding. Thinking outside of the box and then convincing others to pursue and stay on track in this research and development stage is a challenge in how to not step on others' toes and continue to move forward.

The more traditional aspect of our farm is the hay fields and row crop ground. The virgin prairie fields have diverse and rare plants about which we are learning continually. Our hay is utilized by neighbors in their cow/calf operation. I rent the tilled ground to another neighbor and he primarily raises soybeans and corn.

What we have tried to do with our farm is create an example of what a small farm family may do to diversify in crop production through value-added agriculture, thus creating or maintaining a yearlong cash flow. We have utilized marginal ground to improve income potential in a

manageable program that we feel may provide enough income to keep the family working on the farm and not having to take extra, off-farm employment. This we feel is important, especially with young families.

How does this work? To be specific, our woody florals planting is an example of a “row crop” that can be raised quite easily, in our case in a flood easement, creating a revenue

stream during the winter and into the spring. The grapes utilize pasture ground and are harvested at the end of the summer. The nut meats, which function in a riparian buffer, are harvested at the end of fall. Prairie hay is harvested during summer while row crops are harvested according to the grain crop.

I feel strongly that small farms are a key and vital aspect to rural prosperity and the more opportunities we can realize as small farmers, the more diverse

and prosperous we may become. This combined with direct retail sales of our products to increase our revenue potential. I would like to provide the opportunity to be a resource for others to come and learn about what we are doing and how they may be able to apply our concepts/practices to their situation. I think this is key to promoting prosperity in the agricultural sector. By being a resource to others, we encourage growth that will help us all to be more successful entrepreneurs in agriculture ■





Photo: Lorraine Waldropt-Ferguson

A passion for agriculture and for life

A young leader from the Caribbean tells her story and how fatherly advice gave her a passion for the land and agriculture.

*Lorraine Waldropt-Ferguson
Young Caribbean Leader. Trinidad and Tobago*

“AGRICULTURE IS THE ONLY WAY FORWARD FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD. IT BEARS FRUIT TO THIS WORLD- FOOD, WELFARE AND MOST OF ALL PEACE,” HE SAID.

For as long as I can remember, my dad has always been (and still is up to this day) an avid advocate for agriculture and its rightful place in a world of techno-industrial extremists. As a child I didn't understand his passion. His yesteryear tales of growing up with six brothers and two sisters, limited material and monetary wealth and abundant farm resources were noise rather than music to my ears. His recollection of being teased at school for his rural chores and the hard work he and his siblings had to endure just to put food on the table didn't stir much emotion from my 80's mindset. "They used to call me cowboy because I used to tie

the cows every morning before school. Doulin was my favourite cow and my mother would scold me if I neglected her!" he would chant at his favourite nighttime storytelling moments. On another day he would boast to my sister and I of how my grandmother successfully raised eight children out of farming and he beat his chest at the great respect my grandfather earned as a manager of a large cocoa estate. Sadly, back then I was too preoccupied with cartoons and the best toy on TV to appreciate his message.

As I got older, in my teenage years, my dad would come home late after a hard day's work as a Government Agricultural Officer. His sincere smile would be the perfect interlude... but this time his fables were not about his childhood but of farmers who reaped a great crop on good days and on bad days the frustration they felt with a flood or bad

plant disease. But even when he brought home fresh fruits and vegetables from his day's exploits or he urged us to assist in our backyard garden, I still didn't get his message. When my mom, a teacher, cooked her best dishes of complex carbohydrates and healthy vegetables, I longed for the processed unhealthy foods my friends enjoyed but I dared not complain because natural food was the status quo of my household.

Change begins

My father's message finally began to unravel when I entered University. I had decided to study Agriculture- not because I wanted to be like daddy or my other paternal and maternal uncles and aunts who were also into agriculture, but because I wanted an

easy educational path. Some uninformed source told me agriculture was an easy major and I jumped to it because “easy” was my middle name.

My first University year marked my transformation. My first lesson- it’s a misconception that agriculture is easy! I learned that agriculture covers the widest scope imaginable. Sociology, biology, physics, engineering, and economics- you name it all these subject areas fall under the umbrella of agriculture. I became aware of the challenges farmers faced in a culture where

when you stated that you were an “agriculture student” you were ostracized and jeered because it was perceived to be an extension of “bush” science, a petty rural career not fit amongst the engineering, business and medical hall of fame. I remember promising myself to make the leap to another field of study for my post-graduate year as my peers discredited my humble educational choice. The only inspirational and motivational voice came from my family- my ever supportive mother and by all means my encouraging

comfortable; this mode of work wasn’t my calling.

One day my dad had a chat with me. At this time he had retired from the Ministry of Agriculture and he was now managing the Prism Agri Estates Co. Limited, one of the largest diversified cocoa estates in the region owned by a big local business man. “Come and work on the estates, I guarantee you your life will change by this experience. Then and only then will you understand the message I have been imparting to you all these years. Agriculture is the only way forward for a sustainable world. It bears fruit to this world- food, welfare and most of all peace,” he said.

MY FIRST LESSON- IT’S A MISCONCEPTION THAT AGRICULTURE IS EASY!

Dad who still had his message to share.

Upon graduation, I prayed hard that my first job would be in an office where I could wear pretty business suits like my girlfriends and strut in heels like the executives do. Not that I abhorred tall boots, muddy fingers and toil in the sun, but I believed that this way was the way to go. The Lord answered my prayers and I landed a job at the Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board Office, smack in the middle of the capital of Trinidad, Port-Of-Spain.

Faced with the dilemma of what was “cool” versus what I thought was “necessary”, I decided to take up my Father’s challenge as assistant manager to the estates and since then my life has been nothing but challenging! But there is a silver lining to this story.

Challenging indeed, my work life has been, but at the same time growth-inducing...

I first believed

My growth curve began from the very first day of work, a baptism of fire in the fields I called it. Dealing with an out-of-classroom experience and seeing the real world of crop husbandry and real



She thought she would go through life in high heels...

UPON GRADUATION, I PRAYED HARD THAT MY FIRST JOB WOULD BE IN AN OFFICE WHERE I COULD WEAR PRETTY BUSINESS SUITS LIKE MY GIRLFRIENDS AND STRUT IN HEELS LIKE THE EXECUTIVES DO.

risks of disease, natural disaster and the human resource factor (aging but experienced labour force), I was surprised at the behind the scene details. But I reaped rewards amidst adversity. Within my first year on the estates, I acquired my Masters Degree in Agricultural Economics (my final year project, A Decision Support Model for Cocoa) and I learned how to grow my own food.

The estates, challenging I must admit, but inspiring...

Regular cars weren't sufficient transport to the estates which were located in South (Henry Estate), Central (La Maraquita Estate) and Eastern (La Louisa) Trinidad; the terrain was very treacherous (and certain parts still are up to this day). So, I improved my driving skills and began driving a less dainty vehicle- a big 4 wheel van! So much so I mastered the wheel and became an even better driver than my husband!



With her father on the cacao "plantation".

"COME AND WORK ON THE ESTATES, I GUARANTEE YOU YOUR LIFE WILL CHANGE BY THIS EXPERIENCE".

Hidden in the challenge was also an educational escapade...

I discovered that Trinidad and Tobago possessed one of the best fine or flavoured cocoa flavours in the world and that this

flavour was the prime ingredient for premium dark chocolates. "A rare exquisite flavour well sought by elite confectionaries for vintage chocolates," I heard an Italian chocolate manufacturer say once at an estate meeting.

The rural life was by all means challenging but self-changing as well...

I realized that the field was a good place for a fight, especially in the debate of traditional versus contemporary methods of farming. For the first three years of my tenure on the estates I got into arguments with workers and my Dad. Why? They didn't embrace the new technology and farm management principles I had to offer and I couldn't understand

the applicability of their old methods. Eventually we all came to a compromise in order to get the estates on track. This experience taught me more than conflict resolution. It made me see the versatility of combining old with new for goal accomplishment. I became more tolerant of other people's beliefs and customs.

Today, it's a bustling economically turbulent year 2009 that's nearly over. A whole new scenario: good, bad or indifferent awaits in 2010. The world recession has largely impacted the estates due to financial crashes in the empire of the owner of the farm and the viability of the company is threatened. But in hindsight, I am thankful for the many lessons I have learned and most importantly my father's message is loud and clear in my mind. The uncertainty we now face on the estates with regard to financial sustainability is frightening, but my dad and I see it as the ultimate challenge.

Another source of inspiration

Strangely, the current situation has not made me regret my decision to enter the field. So many great things have come my way since I answered my father's call.

My appreciation for the natural unprocessed menus my mother used to cook in years gone by has heightened and my health has improved as a result. And now, I influence others through the local newspaper to eat healthier and grow their own food. I

have also traveled to Ghana, Africa, the Caribbean, London and the USA representing Trinidad and Tobago in cocoa and agriculture- not a bad travel resume for a farmer, I would say. Nevertheless, my most life-changing trip happened in September 2009 when I represented Trinidad at the IICA Second Hemispheric Forum for Young Leaders in Agriculture in Costa Rica. I got the golden opportunity to meet many influential people- motivators, exemplars and young leaders in agriculture like myself from the Americas, Canada and the Caribbean. When I returned home to Trinidad after the Forum, I didn't meet a perfect Prism Agri Estates; actually things got worst as the prices declined drastically in the international cocoa market.

However, remembering the advice bestowed to me at the Costa Rica Forum by one of the presenters from the IICA Center for Young Leaders in Agriculture, Hernan Chiriboga- "Try to make your farm work...knock on all doors of opportunity, don't give up!", I reenergized my optimism and began my drive to save the estates from closure.

Furthermore, another interesting thing happened on my return home after the Forum. A woman who has breast cancer, Paula Chester-Cumberbatch, approached me in a chance meeting and asked me for support in setting up an organic farm to provide food and counseling for adults and children who are terminally ill.

I REALIZED THAT THE FIELD WAS A GOOD PLACE FOR A FIGHT, ESPECIALLY IN THE DEBATE OF TRADITIONAL VERSUS CONTEMPORARY METHODS OF FARMING.



Photo: D. Sukha

The work on the farm both challenged and inspired her.

MY MOST LIFE-CHANGING TRIP HAPPENED IN SEPTEMBER 2009
WHEN I REPRESENTED TRINIDAD AT THE IICA SECOND HEMISPHERIC
FORUM FOR YOUNG LEADERS IN AGRICULTURE IN COSTA RICA.

The concept of the farm is- “Self-healing through eating organic”. “My life has been tough, but, in retrospect it has been fairly easy as I always have the peace of mind that things could be worse.

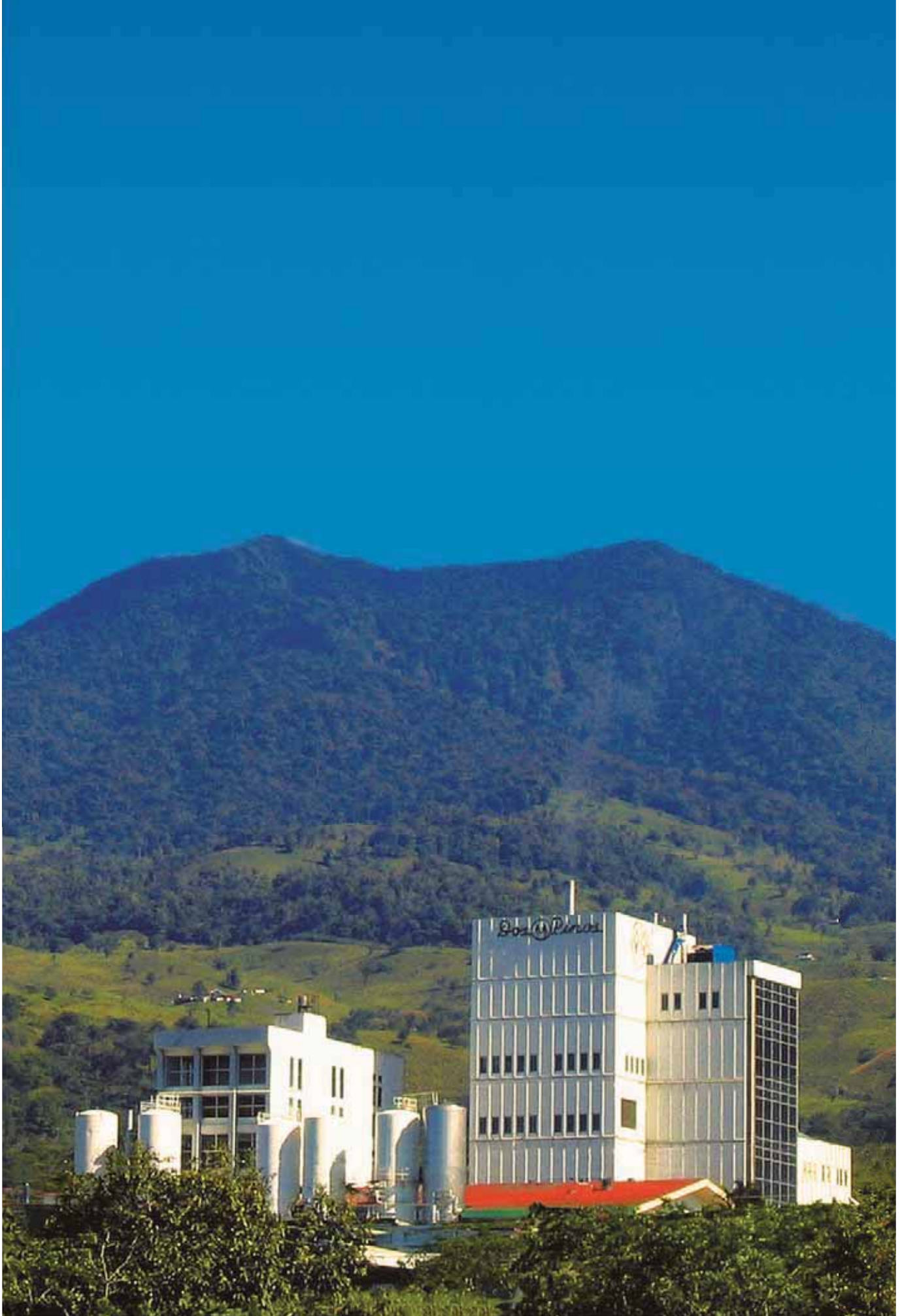
A recent battle with breast cancer has also tested my spirit but as with any other stumbling block I choose to turn it into either a stepping stone or cornerstone. My initiative, the Manzan Vista Development is my cornerstone, conceptualized to provide others with what I needed most to support my battle, i.e., physical re-engineering, psychological therapy, nutritional aide, and the environment to recuperate from my disease. The development’s primary intent is to use animal husbandry and organic farming for the benefit of the terminally ill, a healthy, wholesome source

of food the highest priority on the list,” declared Chester-Cumberbatch in her proposal. Her clash with cancer has unearthed a new commitment to provide others with a healthy option to healing.

It is for this reason that I can never turn my back on agriculture. Agriculture can surpass all boundaries and make a difference in many lives. Incidentally, Chester-Cumberbatch is but one of the new breed of proactive agriculturalists emerging out of a desire for a more food secure and poverty free world. This inspiration has led me to embark upon a new company with my dad specialized in agricultural consultancy and other agro-services.

In conclusion, the world will be a healthier place if we can just wake up and smell the coffee in this

time of war, economic turmoil, food shortage and poverty. But first, we need to understand where the coffee came from. If you guessed the source of the coffee as a well-conserved soil and natural environment, insert the hard work by the farmers and the supporting framework of all stakeholders such as the fertilizer/chemical companies, the governments, the technological and manufacturing sectors and other related agencies, then you’ve hit the target. But any one of these facets can’t work without the other, all is equally important. Appreciation of this fact will inspire pro-action in the world agro-sector and hopefully hungry mouths will be fed and the future will be secure for upcoming generations. Perhaps, the time has come for world leaders to take heed of my dad’s message- “Agriculture is the glue in the fabric of life; man can’t work if he can’t eat!” Food for thought indeed! ■



Courtesy of Dos Pinos

Dos Pinos:

achieving better results by working together

Learn more about this successful model agricultural cooperative in Central America and the battles it has won.

Paola Rojas Garcia
Member of the Group of Cooperative Leaders Dos Pinos Joven

For over six decades, the cooperative model has proven to be a successful development alternative in Costa Rica's dairy industry.

What began in 1947 as a group of 25 milk producers has become a large organization that today has 1383 members and provides a source of income for over 54,000 people in Central America.

The cooperative model implemented by the Cooperativa de Productores de Leche Dos Pinos R.L. has had an impact on a number of milk-producing regions in Costa Rica, including the metropolitan area, the northern and Caribbean regions,

DOS PINOS HAS ACTIVELY INFLUENCED THE DEVELOPMENT OF DAIRY-FARMING AREAS, WHERE THE CHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE COOPERATIVE ARE REMARKABLE.

and the province of Guanacaste, where it has acted as an agent of economic democratization and a means of transferring wealth from urban centers to rural areas.

Drawing on the values of the cooperative movement, such as cooperation, justice, solidarity, mutual assistance, leadership, humility and members' well-being, Dos Pinos has actively influenced the development of dairy-farming areas, where the changes that have taken place since the founding of the cooperative are remarkable.

Most of the model's success stems from the creation of the Administrative Council, which comprises seven dairy entrepreneurs who believe it should be easy to become a

member of the cooperative, in order to share the development achieved with an increasingly large number of individuals and communities.

Technology at the service of consumers

Since its earliest days, the cooperative has made every effort to employ state-of-the-art technology, to offer consumers high-quality products that will have a positive impact on their health.

Dos Pinos has a long list of operational achievements that reflect its status as a pioneer

in Costa Rica's dairy industry. In 1955, it constructed the first powdered milk plant in Costa Rica. Ten years later, it built the Animal Nutrition Laboratory, in Pavas, to produce feed concentrates for animals designed specifically to meet their nutritional needs. In 1967, the cooperative introduced the system of refrigerated trucks, the first to be used in the country's dairy industry, and the system of collecting fresh milk from farms,

IN 1955, IT CONSTRUCTED THE FIRST POWDERED MILK PLANT IN COSTA RICA.

guaranteeing a plentiful supply. In 1985, Dos Pinos introduced the Tetra Brik packaging system, which facilitates milk distribution, and the *Tetra Brik* Aseptic system, extending its products' shelf life to over three months and making it possible to transport and store them in very remote areas, as no refrigeration is required. As the Cooperativa de Productores de Leche Dos Pinos continues to grow, in 2007 the firm processed over one million kilos of milk per day for the first time.

A company focused on growth

Dos Pinos' first foray into the international market was in 1965, when it began exporting to the Central American countries. The Cooperative's exports are now worth over US\$40 million per year and the markets include the United



At the beginning, there were only 25 pioneers.

AS THE COOPERATIVA DE PRODUCTORES DE LECHE DOS PINOS CONTINUES TO GROW, IN 2007 THE FIRM PROCESSED OVER ONE MILLION KILOS OF MILK.

States, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and the Colombian island of San Andres.

Dos Pinos also has the two largest dairy processing plants in Central

America. El Coyol, Alajuela: an industrial complex over 60,000 square meters in size that has production lines for ultra-pasteurized and fresh products, and ice cream. These facilities were the first in Latin America and the Caribbean to produce

specialized types of milk under complex technical conditions. The plant in San Carlos: produces powdered milk and cheeses, processing 400,000 liters of milk every day. There is also a plant in Ciruelas, capable of producing 65 metric tons of feed for dairy cows per hour. In the short term, Dos Pinos plans to manufacture food for other species, such as poultry, pigs, horses, dairy goats, pets, tilapia and shrimp.

Dos Pinos benefits the country

The contributions made by Dos Pinos have had a positive influence on the health of Costa Ricans. The Cooperative's greatest achievement in this field has been to make Costa Ricans one of the highest per capita consumers of dairy products in Latin America.

It is estimated that the average Costa Rican consumes nearly 200 liters of dairy products per year, a figure only surpassed in the Americas by Uruguay and Argentina, where consumption is around 233 liters per year. This means that the inhabitants of Costa Rica consume more dairy products than citizens of other nations with higher levels of development, such as Colombia (150 liters per year), Chile (143), Brazil (118) and Mexico (117).

High consumption of dairy products has done much to improve child nutrition levels, the average life expectancy of Costa Ricans and national public health indices.

DOS PINOS ALSO HAS THE TWO LARGEST DAIRY PROCESSING PLANTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

Working with the Family Allowance Department of the Ministry of Health, Dos Pinos has also helped distribute milk to poor families throughout the country, at a special price. This is a clear example of the influence that the cooperative's efforts and commitment have had on the nutritional health of Costa Ricans.

Health: its main business

Given its unparalleled nutritional characteristics, milk is one of the most complete foods. The valuable contribution it makes to nutrition is essential at all stages of life.

Milk is the best source of calcium, as well as of phosphorus, magnesium, potassium and vitamin D, which are needed to guarantee good bone health from childhood to adulthood, to facilitate growth, keep the body healthy and prevent osteoporosis.

Innovation: the key to its continued existence

Dos Pinos offers over 400 different products divided into the categories of milk,

ice cream, dairy creams, cheeses and yogurt.

The Cooperative has always been on the cutting edge as far as the nutrition sciences and technology are concerned, developing a series of functional products that promote good consumer health.

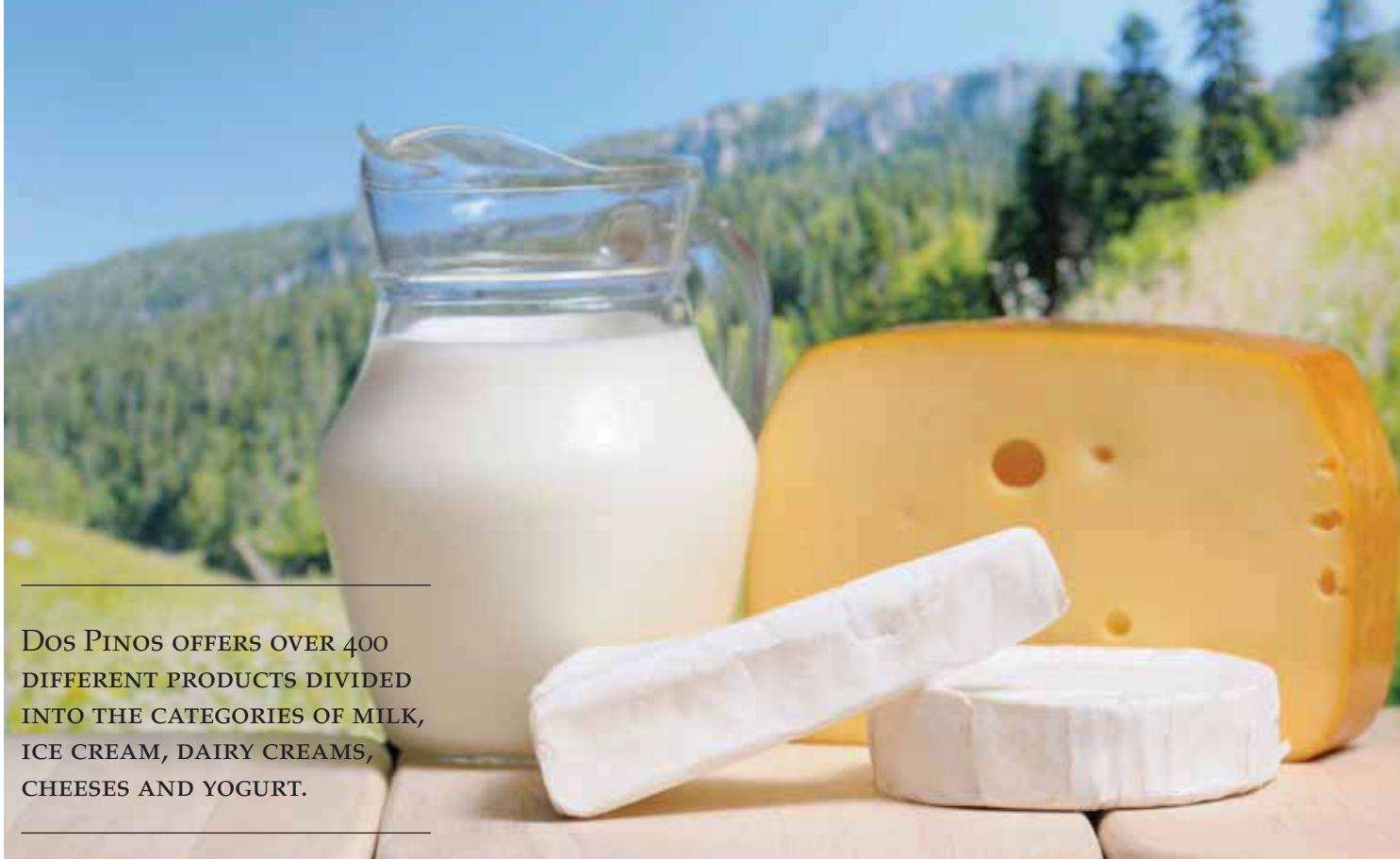
Dos Pinos has added functional ingredients to its products that provide additional benefits, such as inulin, an active soluble fiber that has prebiotic properties and is present in products like DisFruta, Yogurt Ice Cream, Yogurt InLine, Duo and 100% Natural Orange Juice.

Quality, innovation and technology, combined with the values of the cooperative movement, have maintained its customer base and are the keys that will ensure its products will continue to appear on the tables of consumers - "Always producing something better!"

DOS PINOS OFFERS OVER 400 DIFFERENT PRODUCTS DIVIDED INTO THE CATEGORIES OF MILK, ICE CREAM, DAIRY CREAMS, CHEESES AND YOGURT.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE AVERAGE COSTA RICAN CONSUMES
NEARLY 200 LITERS OF DAIRY PRODUCTS PER YEAR.





DOS PINOS OFFERS OVER 400 DIFFERENT PRODUCTS DIVIDED INTO THE CATEGORIES OF MILK, ICE CREAM, DAIRY CREAMS, CHEESES AND YOGURT.

Program for Recycling Tetra Pak Packaging ¹

Appealing to the country's environmental awareness, and in keeping with its social responsibility, the Cooperative is promoting a program for the recycling of its Tetra Pak containers.

The company's production process mainly generates two kinds of Tetra Pak cartons that can be recycled:

- The cartons discarded at the plant, not used for quality control and other reasons.
- The cartons that are purchased and then thrown away by consumers.

All the cartons discarded at the plant are currently recycled.

Dos Pinos is implementing a program to collect the cartons used by consumers. Six municipalities, some private collection centers and educational centers are already involved. This project is being carried out under the company's Environmental Management initiative.

The cartons are recycled by means of a process that uses water and agitation to separate the paper from the plastic and the aluminum. The paper extracted is used as raw material in the paper industry to manufacture

cardboard boxes, other types of paper and even advertising materials.

As the plastic and aluminum cannot be separated, they are turned into sheets that are used as building materials and can replace melanin or fiber cement.

Other items produced are corrugated roofing sheets, school desks and even houses for pets. This shows that recycling inputs and adopting ecological innovations can lead to the creation of useful products that generate additional income for the businesses that make them.

¹ Dos Pinos. Project of the Environmental Management Department. Under the ISO 1401 standard. Contact Center: phone 2437-3535



PRONACA: agricultural leadership from the heart of the Andean Region

Five decades ago it was little more than a dream. Today, it is a vigorous agribusiness known for high value added production and a special relationship with suppliers and customers.

Paul Benavides Mosquera

Information and Communication Specialist, IICA Office in Ecuador, responsible for technical cooperation actions in the area of sectoral and trade-related information.

PRONACA is a consolidated agribusiness that produces wholesome, quality food for Ecuador's families. Founded nearly 50 years ago, it has since become one of Ecuador's most important sources of employment. As a dynamic agribusiness, it ensures that the activities of both the company and producers are carried out with integrity and based on clear, transparent policies. In the early days, PRONACA stood for "The National Poultry Processor" but once the company began diversifying and generating value added with new products in other areas the name was changed to "The National Food Processor."

This article contains a summary of an interview with one of the firm's founders and current Executive President, Mr. Luis Bakker Jr., who says that everything started with his interest in agriculture, in particular a poultry operation on a farm owned by his parents. He began with commercial egg production and then added the production of chicks. His first company was called INDIA. PRONACA came into being in the 1970s. The company has been, and always will be, willing to embark on new ventures and share its expertise and capabilities with others who have the same agricultural vision and vocation, and has is especially interested in developing the countryside and satisfying the needs of consumers and customers.

PRONACA has created technology and established development programs in the countryside, designed innovative production systems, with social and corporate accountability with regard to matters such as protection of the environment, support for education and quality assurance. It has been respectful of the

public sector, contributing to Ecuador's development. It has pioneered exports of agricultural products with value added and recently began marketing locally developed brands in international markets.

The company is especially proud of its system of regular suppliers ("productores integrados"). This model has made it possible to promote the growing of corn, rice, heart of palm and artichokes, and produce poultry meat and beef in partnership with hundreds of small- and medium-scale crop and poultry farmers. The farmers receive supplies of inputs and technical assistance and their production is then purchased at fair prices. The company is currently experimenting with the production of sunflower and sorghum and manioc flour, with promising results.

The fertile countryside is a source of great opportunities but most resources are underused. Successful initiatives have shown that, with appropriate technology, high-yield seeds, quality inputs and technical

assistance, it is possible to achieve higher productivity and increase the financial return per hectare.

Through its “integration” and agricultural extension programs, PRONACA promotes agricultural activities in rural areas of Ecuador, creating a stable market for the farmers whose production it purchases directly.

The company aims to tap the country’s agricultural potential and obtain all its raw material from local farmers. As a private concern, it works with the State to create better conditions in the countryside. Its goal is to try to improve the quality of life of rural dwellers and play a part in a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. For the last two years, it has been a member of the Inclusive Business Program promoted by the National Government, through the Ministry for the Coordination of Social Development, supported by the Business Council for the Sustainable Development of Ecuador (CEMDES) and the Netherlands Cooperation Service (SNV).

The firm works with farmers in a partnership that is mutually beneficial. Farmers know that the sale of their production is guaranteed, while PRONACA has suppliers who offer raw materials of the highest quality. It is a win-win process that never loses sight of

IT HAS PIONEERED EXPORTS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WITH VALUE ADDED AND RECENTLY BEGAN MARKETING LOCALLY DEVELOPED BRANDS IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS.

the long-term vision. Farmers receive cutting-edge genetic technology in their seeds as well as a package of technology that will allow them to increase their yield per unit of surface area.

Identity, values, mission and vision

PRONACA cultivates a set of corporate values that inspire its managers, technical personnel and workers to meet new service and production targets. Those values include the following:

- a. Quality. Products and processes in which the consumer can have total confidence.
- b. Integrity. Work based on honesty and transparency, and clear, transparent standards.
- c. Innovation. Continuous improvement in products and services. Research and development with the best technology.
- d. Leadership. Pioneers in areas of agricultural, industrial and service development.
- e. Progress. Dignified employment is created with

investment in agricultural and industrial productivity.

- f. Accountability. Strict practices linked to environmental protection and social development.
- g. Humility. Do not allow achievements to go to your head.

It is a company that believes in its country, in its people, and in their development. It is a leader in food quality and security, innovative and creative, with a keen sense of social responsibility, concerned to maintain a balance in the environment. Its vision is to be a leader and an innovative enterprise in the national and international food industry, satisfying consumers and customers with optimal quality and excellent service.

PRONACA and the agricultural “wheel of success”

This is a didactic way of describing the systematic and interdependent operation of several factors, including:

- a. High-quality seeds. Certified products to achieve optimal results in terms of productivity and efficiency.

PRONACA PROMOTES AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN RURAL AREAS OF ECUADOR, CREATING A STABLE MARKET FOR THE FARMERS WHOSE PRODUCTION IT PURCHASES DIRECTLY.



Workers at heart of palm packing plant.

THE FIRM WORKS WITH FARMERS IN A PARTNERSHIP THAT IS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL. FARMERS KNOW THAT THE SALE OF THEIR PRODUCTION IS GUARANTEED, WHILE PRONACA HAS SUPPLIERS WHO OFFER RAW MATERIALS OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY.

- b. Nutrition and health. Good-quality, environmentally-friendly agricultural inputs.
- c. Good crop management. Use of economic and human resources.
- d. Infrastructure. Access to equipment and new technology with specialized technical support.



THE WHEEL FOR SUCCESS
IN AGRICULTURE

All this is underpinned by permanent marketing, sales and quality customer service. The company has a large, efficient food distribution system that has become one of its strengths in the marketplace.

Its success can be attributed to these factors.

PRONACA's agricultural programs

By means of these programs, PRONACA aims to boost national production substantially, with its efforts underpinned by good agricultural practices and formal agreements with farmers. The activities generate wealth throughout the chain and employment in rural areas of the country, and savings in foreign exchange. An “integration” model is used that provides support to farmers throughout the cultivation phase, with the purchase of their production guaranteed.

PRONACA's agricultural programs include:

- a. **Rice program.** In operation since 2001. Involves 120 farmers in the areas of Daule and Babahoyo, who receive technical assistance. 7000 hectares are cultivated. Per hectare productivity is 33% higher than the national average and the program provides 10,500 direct jobs and thousands of indirect jobs.
- b. **Corn program.** Comprises 300 farmers and 18,000 hectares of corn are planted each year. Farms are 2.5 times more productive than other production units in their respective areas. PRONACA purchases an average of 180,000 metric tons of corn, equivalent to roughly 45% of Ecuador's total harvest.
- c. **Heart of palm program.** Involves 5000 hectares of heart of palm plantations.



In 2008, 70 containers were produced and exported each month, with 148 farmers involved in the program. In 1992, INAEXPO was created and development of heart of palm production got under way. In 2000, it became, and continues to be, the world's largest exporter of heart of palm.

- d. **Artichoke program.** Comprises 117 farmers involved in the project in Carchi, Imbabura, Pichincha, Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, and Chimborazo, with 500 hectares under cultivation. A new product with a viable export market (the main one being the USA).
- e. **Poultry program.** This was the company's first “integration” program. It

began in 1980 and currently involves 52 farms in the Sierra, Santo Domingo and Bucay. The program accounts for approximately 42% of the company's chicken meat production and is targeting 50% over the next few years.

- f. **Beef program.** A Livestock Genetic Improvement Program was implemented to improve the quality and standard of the meat produced. An “integration” program for stock raisers is also planned, providing qualified technical assistance and based on management, feeding, health and biosafety programs that comply with PRONACA standards.

Under its “integration” programs, PRONACA receives corn, rice,

AN “INTEGRATION” MODEL IS USED THAT PROVIDES SUPPORT TO FARMERS THROUGHOUT THE CULTIVATION PHASE, WITH THE PURCHASE OF THEIR PRODUCTION GUARANTEED.

heart of palm, artichoke and fattening chickens at collection centers located in all of Ecuador's productive regions, sharing technology, knowledge and recommendations in the countryside with the farmers who form part of the programs.

PRONACA's Agricultural Research

The goal of the research programs is to improve farmers' productivity by means of trials of the crops that PRONACA uses as raw material, to incorporate them successfully into the formal agricultural sector. PRONACA's research and development division is the key to the company's continued progress. With its emphasis on scientific studies and the implementation of new technologies, the aim is to introduce innovations into operating processes and develop new products, and thereby make crops more competitive, efficient and profitable.

Agricultural support unit

The Industrial and Agricultural Corporation, INDIA, is the PRONACA agricultural unit that provides services to crop farmers and poultry and livestock producers, offering quality products and inputs and technical assistance programs. INDIA

PRONACA'S RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION IS THE KEY TO THE COMPANY'S CONTINUED PROGRESS.

promotes the cultivation of rice, corn, soybean and other crops, through "integration" programs under which it offers different alternatives through a broad range of products for which credit is available and technical assistance is provided.

PRONACA has also opened up new fields in the food sector with

meat products, canned foods, rice, sea products, foods with value added and foods for export.

Quality-assured inputs and permanent technical assistance mean that, working with PRONACA, farmers achieve higher production and better quality and have smaller losses and their operations become more profitable.



PRONACA encourages producers to increase their yields.



Luis Bakker Jr., visionary founder and current Executive President of PRONACA.

now experimenting with fruits and vegetables. Go to La Estancia (farm) on the weekends to get out of the city. My father knew what he wanted sixty years ago. (A leader must always have a clear vision)."

"If you do not take things seriously and do not worry about how much you could lose, you get fat and life passes you by, you do not enjoy your success. Only when you have had to struggle to achieve your goals do you really enjoy it. For example, in 1976, there was an outbreak of typhoid on one of our farms and we lost all the laying hens and the eggs for incubation. We went to the Ministry of Agriculture to request import permits, I traveled to Peru and brought back 17 million eggs. The situation was so serious I could not sleep, I developed chronic fatigue syndrome, I was sick with worry, we were

technical assistance, oversees the animals, etc. Everything required to achieve a first-rate product and, above all, to ensure a fair purchase and price. That is how we operate, and we do not leave our partners to fend for themselves at any point in the chain. The price established ensures stability in spite of the many ups and downs. Sometimes we turn a big profit but on other occasions, we lose our investment. These contracts ensure stability for the suppliers. Changing the producers' mindset has been a challenge. We encourage them to view themselves as entrepreneurs who negotiate on equal terms with other companies, where the premise is one of "win-win." We began in the highlands, then expanded to include areas closer to home. The most important thing is to grow with values, the team we have created here at PRONACA is the success factor.

Success factors

PRONACA's Executive President, Mr. Luis Bakker Jr., says it was his father who invited him to venture into a different country, with different customs, and take on new challenges. "What we are now is what he envisioned. In a letter, he listed the seven things that we had to do. Have a lot of hens and pack the eggs in dozens in cardboard boxes. Breed male chicks separately for fattening. Have plenty of bees, to pollinate the flowers and obtain honey. Grow lots of flowers to sell. Have a small shop in Quito to sell the eggs, chickens, honey, flowers, etc. (we never did that). We are

ACCORDING TO MR. BAKKER, HIS FATHER KNEW WHAT HE WANTED 60 YEARS AGO, BECAUSE HE, LIKE ALL LEADERS, HAD A CLEAR VISION OF THE FUTURE.

bankrupt. My children saw me in that state and then watched me recover. That has made them responsible people, because they have experienced all sides of life."

PRONACA, an attractive production model for farmers

"We call the model "integration." The "integrator" is the person who delivers inputs, provides

People feel they play a key role on the road to success and that the company belongs to them. I have now passed on leadership of the company to Juan Rivadeneira and my role is to provide support, after making all the decisions for over 50 years."

"This has allowed to me to be more of a strategist than an executor. This has breathed new life into the company and the change has been a positive one. The success achieved is down to the work of each employee. This change of management, our belief in what we do, our excellent professionals

and the fact that we are not afraid to lose have also permitted us to have faith and venture into other markets. For example, PRONACA and its regular suppliers (integrados) now have the biggest heart of palm exporting company in the world.

PRONACA and its impact on Ecuador's economy

"I gauge the firm's impact in more than simply financial terms. Ultimately, it is something more permanent, the businesslike approach people have adopted in their activities. Farmers now rely on us, and on others, and many companies believe in and rely on their suppliers. Our principle has always been that we must "inspire confidence." Then there is the willingness to share - we share our research, our mistakes and the lessons learned. We share all these experiences with our partners to make them feel part of the business."

To achieve success

"You must have a goal, be clear about where you are headed and what you want to be, and understand what you are doing. It is like being on a ship and embarking on an adventure. But you must know what direction

to take, the idea is not just to live life for life's sake but to live for "something," know exactly where you are headed, not just anywhere. Without a goal, you may end up anywhere or get there too late."

"One tip I received that worked for me was that you have to have a vision. One time I took three small pieces of paper and I wrote, "I want to own my own house." I put one piece of paper in my wallet, another in my desk and kept the third in my room. How I obtained my house is not important (my father lent me money, I took out a bank loan, I saved). Today I own my own house. The important thing is that I set my sights on that goal and I achieved it. Then I wrote that I wanted to own my own company, and I have achieved that. I was a little more ambitious and I wrote down "I want to be millionaire," like the television program, and here we are."

"Another key thing is to maintain the good reputation you achieve, having and building a good reputation is very important, but also a tricky thing. Credibility."

"I would also advise entrepreneurs to measure what they have achieved. Unless you compare your dreams with your accomplishments and establish timeframes, they will never be more than good intentions. The idea is to convert them into goals. You can't just say, "I want such and such," you have to focus on "when I am going to achieve it."

"Above all, you must be prepared to take a loss. In any business, you have to think about how

much you are willing to lose, not how much you want to make. Using that approach, I propose scenarios that protect me from failure and ensure me success. Our success has been due to our readiness to venture into new areas, to take risks."

Successful experiences

Mr. Pedro Riera, a farmer in the area of Mata de Cacao, a regular supplier ("integrado") since 2003, says, "Security is worth 100% more than anything else." There is no downside to working with PRONACA, we have the inputs we need, a guaranteed buyer, access to credit, and first-rate technical personnel to advise us on what we should do. PRONACA is truly transforming small farmers into agricultural entrepreneurs."

Ms. Soledad Montenegro, a farmer who has been involved in the "integration" scheme since 2005 and produces artichokes, says, "In this activity it is important not only to receive but also to give, and I have found that PRONACA's management and workers apply that philosophy. They are concerned not only to produce as much as possible but also to protect the soil and the environment. My experience has been good because we are not just buyers and sellers; we are partners in a joint project. My problems are their problems, my successes are their successes and we also share our failures" ■



Photo: NL Stevia S.A.

The challenge: to help sweeten the world

In Paraguay, a native plant has generated an interesting experience in leadership. The firm is known as NL Stevia.

*Fabrizio Javier Zucchini Almiron
Information and Documentation Specialist, IICA Office in Paraguay*

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Stevia is a company which, looking ahead to the future and with an eye to changing eating habits around the globe, has begun to industrialize Stevia, a nontraditional crop of Paraguay, known locally as *ka'a he'e*,¹ which is gaining in popularity by leaps and bounds.

Less than a year after the inauguration of its plant in Ypacarai, some 40 km from the capital Asuncion, this company has had a major economic and social impact in communities located in poor areas of the country. In addition, agreements with important multinational companies will soon make it

THE PLANT IN ITS NATURAL STATE HAS LONG BEEN USED BY GUARANI NATIVES AS A SWEETER.

possible not only to increase production capacity, but also to build a new processing plant in Caaguazu, which is even further away from the capital.

This revolution, even though in the early stages and barely noticeable in economic terms, has taken place thanks to heavy demand for Stevia, given the fact that it is safe for use by humans and to the growing interest in the product shown by the most important beverage manufacturers in the world.

The story behind Stevia

Stevia Rebaudiana Bertoni, known as *ka'a he'e* or simply Stevia, is a plant which still grows in the wild in Paraguay, in particular in

the eastern part of the country, growing in sandy soil with good drainage.

T

he plant in its natural state has long been used by Guarani natives as a sweetener. Between the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, a scholar named Moises Bertoni³ obtained samples of *ka'a he'e*, which he gave the botanical name *Stevia Rebaudiana Bertoni*.

All of this would be simply an anecdotal comment on one more crop in a country where agriculture prevails were it not for its extraordinary qualities, especially that of being a zero-calorie sweetener. In its natural state, Stevia can be 10 to 15 times sweeter than sugar, and in processed form up to 200 times.

1 Ka'a he'e is the common name for stevia in the Guarani language. It means Sweet Herb.

2 Moises Bertoni (1875-1929) was a Swedish scientist, researcher and writer who lived in Paraguay for most of his life.

PARAGUAY IS IN A POSITION TO BECOME THE LEADING PRODUCER AND MAKE STEVIA ONE OF ITS PRINCIPAL EXPORT PRODUCTS.

Focuses of action 2008-2013

This product has many beneficial properties and is currently marketed as a sweetener for food, as a medication to treat diabetes and regulate blood pressure, and as an agricultural input, as an ingredient in balanced feed (given its antioxidant qualities) and as fertilizer.

Stevia is the perfect substitute for sugar and artificial sweeteners and, as such, can contribute to a healthier diet. Continental China and other Asian countries are currently the largest producers in the world. However, because the plant is not native to those regions, yields are limited. Consequently, Paraguay is in a position to become the leading producer and make Stevia one of its principal export products, along with soy and soy by-products and beef.

Studies conducted in the late 1990s indicated that Paraguay would have the capacity to install and operate at least 10 processing plants similar to that of NL Stevia. If this were to happen in the short or medium term, the impact on family agriculture, and of course on overall economic and social development in the country, would be huge.

- To increase the total area under cultivation to 12,000 hectares (currently some 1,500 hectares).
- To increase value added through its industrialization.
- To declare Paraguay the place of origin of Stevia.
- To open markets for Stevia in the European Union and the United States markets as a food additive.
- Goals for 2013: 80,000 jobs and exports totaling US\$55 million.

Source: Stevia Sectoral Negotiating Group, Investment and Exportation Network (REDIEX) of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. 2009.



The first processing plant opened in 2008.

NL STEVIA IS ONE OF THE LEADING COMPANIES IN TERMS OF ADDING VALUE TO PRIMARY PRODUCTION.

The challenge ahead

NL Stevia, whose plant was inaugurated in December 2008, processes Steviol Glycosides, which give the leaves their sweet taste, and has the capacity to produce up to 24 tons of 90-92% pure Stevia per year. The second plant, expected to be built in 2010, will have a capacity of 400 tons a year.

To date, Paraguay has long been mostly a supplier of raw material. Today, the vision is changing and more and more businesses there are venturing into processing.

NL Stevia is one of the leading companies in terms of adding value to primary production, a process which takes into consideration all the links of the chain.

The NL model

NL Stevia is a participatory and inclusive business which has adopted a “win-win” approach. Senior managers meet periodically with family farmers from different regions who supply the raw material, agreeing to purchase their harvests. They also pledge to advise them on techniques for

cultivating Stevia and their other crops and to provide each family with support in the areas of health and nutrition.

The company implemented a traceability system that makes it possible to identify each one of its 2,000 growers/suppliers, as well as the product they deliver to the company’s collection center.

Of course, quality standards are a part of the manufacturing process at the plant, which is certified by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and complies with the HAACP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) standards defined by the Codex Alimentarius ■

QUALITY STANDARDS ARE A PART OF THE MANUFACTURING PROCESS AT THE PLANT.



Entrepreneurs and producers entered into a win-win partnership.



Photo: Rata Cartin

Leadership in agricultural information services: The SIDALC initiative

Learn how, thanks to technical cooperation provided by IICA, more than 150 institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean have been able to operate an agricultural information and documentation system dealing with agriculture, the environment, food and related topics in the hemisphere.

Federico Sancho
Head of Publications and Documentation at IICA

Most people today are familiar with the concept that information equals power. Information is therefore a key resource for the development of the agricultural and forestry sector in general and as an element of the leadership of institutions that promote the sector. This calls, among other things, for well-defined strategies for the management and use of information by producers and policymakers interested in overarching objectives such as efficiency, quality, innovation, competitiveness and continuous learning.

Information management within organizations refers to the latter's capacity to identify,

organize, store and disseminate important information as and when required. Of course, over the last two decades the ways in which organizations do this have changed drastically. The digital information society is very different from its analogue predecessor. Information that was previously hard to come by is now available in abundance, and knowledge is multiplying very rapidly. Since the Internet was created and it began to be used intensively as more than a communication tool, the way in which knowledge is shared and generated has been revolutionized.

We have all become so dependent on the platform that the Internet provides today. There are tens of millions of websites, 550 billion documents

available, 1.4 billion users and 183 billion emails. Moreover, 1000 scientific books are published every day. Figures like these make it obvious that human beings are incapable of managing all the information that is produced. According to Google Inc., consumers already spend up to 14 hours per week on the Internet, the same amount of time they devote to watching television.

The huge amount of content or information available is undoubtedly a problem that contemporary societies have to address, and the agricultural and forestry sector is no exception. A search for the word "agriculture" using the Google engine generated 51,500,000 entries in Spanish and 192,000,000 in English. Faced

THE HUGE AMOUNT OF CONTENT OR INFORMATION AVAILABLE IS UNDOUBTEDLY A PROBLEM THAT CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES HAVE TO ADDRESS.

with such an abundance of data on the Web, users or consumers of content - in our case, researchers, transfer agents, extension workers, academics, students and producers - require and demand specialized systems that will provide them with capsules of timely information tailored to their needs.

Given the abundance of data available, it may seem paradoxical that organizations are faced with another problem: how to organize the information they themselves produce and thus prevent the institutional memory from being lost. Most of their original information and content is not on the Internet, either because it is not available or gets lost in the bureaucracy, or simply because there is no solid culture for sharing our knowledge. *Where should all that valuable information be? And, who could help us organize it?*

Libraries have been responsible for identifying, organizing and disseminating information for hundreds of years. By safeguarding a great deal of the world's memory, they facilitated the construction of new knowledge. Described below is the experience acquired by over 150 Latin American and Caribbean institutions that, with technical cooperation from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), for the last ten years have been operating an information and documentation service for agriculture and related areas in the hemisphere. The network is a leader in ideas, concepts and practices for managing this enormous resource for agriculture, the environment and food in the Americas.

MOST OF THE INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION AND CONTENT IS NOT ON THE INTERNET, EITHER BECAUSE IT IS NOT AVAILABLE OR GETS LOST IN THE BUREAUCRACY, OR SIMPLY BECAUSE THERE IS NO SOLID CULTURE FOR SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE.

The agricultural information and documentation alliance of the Americas (SIDALC): Ten years of experience

SIDALC is an international information service on agriculture and related subjects involving a group of institutions based in 23 countries of the Americas that network to share full-text documents and reference information. Created in 1999 with funding from the Kellogg Foundation, it has since become one of the most important platforms for accessing knowledge in LAC. It currently provides access to 2.1 million references and over 99,000 full-text documents stored in 266 national databases maintained by specialized agricultural institutions. The service facilitates access to information organized by libraries and other documentation centers specializing in agricultural, livestock, environmental, forestry and related subjects.

SIDALC is an open access service that does not require registration; the address is www.sidalc.net.

The website has a search engine (Agri2000) that provides access to the digital collections available, including full-text documents, audiovisual materials and photographs. SIDALC is also a member of other agricultural, environmental and forestry information systems based in several countries of the Americas, thus permitting the actors in agriculture and rural territories access to information and knowledge related to those areas via a single website.

SIDALC's success is based on the fact that it has interconnected the huge intellectual capital available in at least 158 national agricultural information institutions and networks. By providing a link for the management and dissemination of information, it has encouraged the institutions to permanently expand and modernize their services in line with the new paradigms of the information society. Supporting the different levels and processes of modernization has been one of IICA's tasks for over six decades, strengthening libraries and specialized information units in the hemisphere as well as the professionals involved in providing their services.

In fact, SIDALC grew out of earlier initiatives aimed at knowledge and information management, all promoted by IICA. These include the Orton Commemorative Library (founded in 1943); the

SIDALC IS AN OPEN ACCESS SERVICE THAT DOES NOT REQUIRE REGISTRATION; THE ADDRESS IS WWW.SIDALC.NET

Scientific Exchange Service (SIC), created in 1958; the Inter-American Association of Agricultural Librarians, Documentalists and Information Specialists (AIBDA), founded in 1965; and the Inter-American Agricultural Information System (AGRINTER), created in 1972.

The implementation of the SIDALC was made possible thanks to the technical leadership assumed by IICA and CATIE and the participation of a large number of national, regional and international institutions that, for over a decade, have unselfishly promoted the idea that “sharing information is power.” These organizations and their countries have benefited directly by reorganizing their services and making them more visible, which also makes an effort of this kind more sustainable.



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SIDALC WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP ASSUMED BY IICA AND CATIE.

In that sense, SIDALC can be said to be multifunctional, because it is, first and foremost, a community of agricultural, forestry and other information specialists located in different institutions of the Americas interested in providing open access services. As members of a permanent consortium, they form a virtuous circle, collaborating with one another to “share a little so that all can have more.” The specialized librarians are responsible for developing the information architecture of their respective countries, making them key players in the development of SIDALC’s content. Involved in providing the service are at least 300 agricultural and other

information professionals with a great capacity to meet knowledge needs.

SIDALC is also flexible and extremely respectful of its members. Member institutions are clearly identified and SIDALC respects the policies of those who charge for delivering their services. The tool is not a “straitjacket” or an exclusive type of structure. On the contrary, it adopts a wide range of standards, methodologies and databases keyed to each organization and country. The most important sources of information are catalogues developed with databases in MICROISIS (the name most commonly used to

describe the CDS/ISIS version for personal computers) under different formats as MARC, ECLAC and others.

In fact, this is SIDALC’s biggest competitive advantage, since an open hemispheric system linking over 20 national networks facilitates the sharing of data and interoperability, affords access to specialized knowledge using a meta search engine called AGR12000 and makes it possible to share search results with any part of the world via the Web.

Another of the system’s strengths is its content. The fact that it is able to integrate entire collections of libraries specializing in

1 CDS/ISIS is an advanced non-numerical information storage and retrieval software developed in 1985 by UNESCO. It was developed to meet the need identified by many institutions, especially in developing countries, to speed up their information management activities with the use of modern, relatively inexpensive technologies (UNESCO, 2008).

agriculture is a “seal of quality” as far as the available materials are concerned. The institutions are increasingly uploading full-texts versions of their intellectual production, which is another plus. It guarantees that the content is very important and keyed to the interests of productive sectors. Many organizations are also very keen to organize the knowledge referred to as the “institutional memory,” ensuring that it is preserved and used and avoiding the duplication of previous work.

A further positive aspect of the system has to do with the users of SIDALC, who, like any other service, drive its development. At the beginning of 2007, SIDALC authorized the Google search engine to index its content and since then the average number of visits to the site has risen from nearly 3000 per month to 25,000 per day (in 2009). IICA recently signed an agreement with Google that will allow members of SIDALC to begin digitizing old files that will be 100% visible on the Web.

Another outstanding characteristic of SIDALC is that, with the follow-up provided by IICA and the support of its member institutions, it is possible to mobilize human resources and information between countries and regions. This serves as a catalyst for change, promotes and gives support to national information management initiatives and encourages the

dissemination and transfer of successful experiences in this field.

More than an online information service that benefits thousands of Web surfers, SIDALC is a mechanism for permanent dialogue among information specialists who, within the framework of each country’s agricultural information network, meet to propose solutions to common information problems, including: lack of access, failure to establish policies, information illiteracy, misuse of technologies, lack of resources and integration and the duplication of efforts. Consequently, as SIDALC celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2009, the members decided to call it “The Alliance” for agricultural, food-related, environmental and forestry information and knowledge.

How can organizations become leaders in the field of agricultural information?

- By strengthening the work of their information specialists, including librarians, documentalists, communicators and IT

experts, who should be integrated into their organizations’ knowledge production processes. The model of “working within four walls” is not only inefficient but also outdated.

- By incorporating organized original content or the indigenous knowledge of our countries. Gray literature such as theses, reports and project documents give greater, unique value to the idea of sharing full-text information that is not available in commercial systems.
- By facilitating access to those and other collections that date from before the digital age, digitizing/preserving historical printed material of great intellectual value.
- By avoiding making investments in static websites with little visibility that are difficult to integrate into larger information systems. Efforts that are isolated or separate from the main currents of knowledge production are often unsustainable and a very expensive drain on the already limited resources being invested in knowledge management.
- By recognizing, at both the national and international

2 Today, it is visited by 130 million Internet users per day, and Newsweek magazine ranks it among the best search engines in the world.



PROVIDING INDIVIDUALS WITH INFORMATION IS NOT THE SAME THING AS SOLVING THEIR PROBLEMS.

levels, the importance of setting up information networks via libraries and specialized documentation centers that can share resources. Given the abundance of information available, networking is the only viable option.

- By establishing inter-institutional consortia that permit better use of resources and greater access to specialized data banks.
- By increasing users' demand for services and the positive impact on the reference services of specialized libraries in rural communities with limited Internet connections.
- By improving users' information skills and their involvement with the new information and communication technologies.
- By taking advantage of open access to the tools,

methodologies and useful content available on the Web.

- By linking up with international information systems, a key requirement in the processes of accrediting the quality of institutional services, for example in the case of university courses.
- By sharing experiences with specialists and institutions at the global level, which helps to identify opportunities and find solutions to common problems.
- By making their institutional collections visible worldwide via sidalc.net and google.com

Apart from the computers and Web access of our institutions' "expert users" or "immediate clients," it is still difficult to pinpoint and verify concrete results in the form of communities, and local actors such as farmers, who are already taking advantage of the services available.

When designing solutions, it is vital to define the end users and their needs and ways to reach them with pertinent information. This is one of the most complicated aspects of information management; needs are always very volatile and no one asks for something of which they are unaware.

Providing individuals with information is not the same thing as solving their problems. Providing solutions to their problems means possessing both useful information and the ability to place it in the context of the user and his or her surroundings.

The new trends related to knowledge management, which is very fashionable in contemporary organizations, have created fresh and innovative opportunities for repositioning and modernizing the information services that exist in the Americas, mainly libraries. The opportunities created in the future will be extremely useful for agricultural leaders who are willing to implement the changes needed to fashion a more prosperous world ■



Courtesy of Lola Molina

Lola's remarkable career change: from sportswoman to farmer

Cycling imbued her with discipline and perseverance. Meet Guatemalan Lola Molina, a woman who put the sport's core values into practice on her dairy farm and believes in people's capacity to learn and be better human beings.

*Interview: Hernan Chiriboga, Coordinator of the Center for Leadership in Agriculture
Writer: Sergio Pacheco, journalist, IICA Office of Public Information*

Pedal as hard as you can till you cross the finishing line" was the simple but extraordinary formula that Maria Dolores Molina used in her sporting career. Better known as Lola Molina in her native Guatemala, the former cyclist who won medals in international competitions now applies the same commitment to initiatives aimed at developing an agricultural enterprise specializing in green business and training.

She blazed a trail for sportswomen in her country. Her many achievements included winning the Central American cycling time trial championship, being crowned Pan American cycling

champion, twice taking first place in the Women's Tour of Guatemala and twice participating in the Olympic Games, where she gave an outstanding performance in the road racing discipline.

Lola is now a successful farmer, having implemented a management model based on scientific and practical research on the Rancho Figueras family farm. Use of the model has led to improved productive processes on the dairy farm and optimized procedures that guarantee efficiency and high productivity.

The Center for Leadership in Agriculture decided to talk to Lola about her achievements and the values that enabled her to become the woman she is today.

How did you get to where you are today?

First, it is due to my parents, who have always been an example to me of how people should live their lives. Second, it is due to the passion I have felt since I

was a child for horses, dogs, and animals of every kind. My family had a farm in the Department of Izabal that we used to visit every two weeks. There I had the opportunity to be close to nature. It was there I developed a desire to study something related to animals; I considered biology, veterinary medicine, and animal husbandry. I didn't know exactly what to study but I knew it had to be something that would allow me to be close to animals. When it came time to go to college, I enrolled at the School of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Husbandry. I liked animal husbandry best and that was what I majored in. I've always loved being in contact with nature and that was why I also liked to exercise and got started in cycling.

What was the key to your achieving your goals?

Perseverance. In cycling, you have to be constant, day after day, and be patient, as nothing



Organic cheeses already are being produced on Lola's family farm, Rancho Figueras.

is achieved overnight. In cycling, your legs have to be able to endure long distances, for which perseverance is essential. The same could be said of farming.

How did you begin your dairy operation and how did you make it work?

I have great respect for nature. When I became involved in cycling and then found myself the mother of two small children, I didn't have time for animal husbandry and agriculture. I gave genetics classes at university and I liked that a lot, but for nearly ten years I couldn't devote time to agricultural activities. After participating in the Olympic Games on two occasions, I felt I had achieved my goals in sport and realized my dream. So, I decided to return to agricultural activities, which has made me very happy.

What values that are important in sport have you applied to your work in the agricultural sector?

Discipline. Sport is a lifestyle that permeated every facet of my life

and taught me to be methodical and to organize and plan. Riding a bicycle is not a simple thing, because everything has to be planned with a lot of discipline, even your diet and your rest. You must respect the need for planning by being as disciplined as possible. In our culture, you are not taught to be disciplined or to persevere and become better, so it is difficult for us to achieve our goals sometimes.

How have you implemented the new production model at Rancho Figueras?

Rancho Figueras is a success because of the capacity of its human resources. We know that teamwork ensures the well-being of everyone. We are also convinced that training our people put us on the road to success. There would be enough food for everyone in the world if we respected nature and protected its basic resources, such

as water. This can be achieved through training, but a few days ago I heard that only three percent of Guatemalan farmers participate in some form of training.

What do decision-makers need to know to promote rural development?

A Finnish friend once told me that when a woman was placed in charge of his country's agriculture she took advantage of every political speech she made to stress that the biggest need in agriculture was training. There is no other way; we have to educate all our people, from children to adults. We need to make an enormous training effort to help us achieve better results. Rancho Figueras wants to become a technical institute for training in the use of inseminators, milking machines, biodigesters, etc. Many people in our sector are afraid to invest in people; a lot of farmers invest in tractors, but not in people. A big problem is the fact that there are not enough schools in rural areas to train people and training them in the cities is a non-starter. One solution is for farmers to take an interest in training their workers. That is our main concern, so our farm is a place with better human beings.

What is your goal for your farm?

Our farm began operations in 2005, so we haven't been working for long, but I want us to

FOR LOLA, TRAINING PEOPLE IS THE CORNERSTONE OF HER EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THEIR DEVELOPMENT.

Leader

by vocation

Full name: Maria Dolores Molina

Date of birth: 2 August 1966

Country: Guatemala

Profession: Animal husbandry

Sport: Cycling



process our own dairy products. That is our goal. Our products should reach consumers who appreciate organic products. I realize it's an uphill struggle, just as it was when I was a competing cyclist, because in the milk business there is no

fair trade. We sell high-quality milk and are launching the first cheeses we have managed to produce organically. We also produce part of the energy we require using a biodigester and are improving our land with organic fertilizers. We aim to

be a "green island," because the production models in our area are destroying the soil. I tell many farm owners that in a few years their business will become untenable, because they are using productive models that do not respect nature ■



Perseverance and discipline are characteristics that this successful woman managed to transfer from sport to agriculture.

Trends





*According to experts,
emotional intelligence is
essential in creating successful
businesses. Learn why.*



Emotional Intelligence: The secret of successful entrepreneurship?

Attempting to find the secret of success of certain entrepreneurs, researchers today tend to focus on the world of emotions.

Amy E. Boren, Ph.D.

International Liaison, Research Assistant Professor, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Specialist in Leadership, Center for Leadership in Agriculture, IICA.

RESEARCH INDICATES THAT POSITIVE EMOTIONS MAY
ENHANCE ENTREPRENEURIAL CREATIVITY, INCLUDING
OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION.

Entrepreneurship... the very term is redolent with the passion, energy, and creativity ascribed to the men and women who forge new business ventures by discovering, generating, and stimulating opportunity. Because of the mystique surrounding the popular image of entrepreneurs, they have been the focus of much academic investigation over the last three decades. Researchers have tried to unlock the secrets of successful entrepreneurs, classify their personality types, and explore their cognitive processing, but with disappointing and often contradictory results. In light of these weak results,

some academics have called for a shift in the focus of research in entrepreneurship; a shift away from the individual characteristics of entrepreneurs and toward the interactions of the entrepreneur with others, and with his or her environment.

An emerging, and very promising, stream of research on entrepreneurs pertains to the role of affect – feelings and emotions – in enhancing the potential success of entrepreneurial ventures. For example, research indicates that positive emotions may enhance entrepreneurial creativity, including opportunity recognition (Baron, 2008). Additionally, entrepreneurs who display passion – positive, intense feelings – about their ventures tend to be more successful than those who do not display passion (Baum &

Locke, 2004). Positive emotions also influence an entrepreneur's ability to turn past experiences into present solutions through heuristic processing (Baron, 2008), and to deal effectively with the persistent stress (Carver & Scheier, 2001) that often plagues entrepreneurs.

While this line of research holds much hope for enhancing our understanding of entrepreneurship, it is limited in that it tends to perpetuate the iconic image of the entrepreneur as the driven genius working alone. However, the truth is that the success of most entrepreneurial ventures hinges not only on the individual characteristics of the entrepreneur, but also on the entrepreneur's ability to recruit and manage employees and clients (Baron & Hannan, 2002).

Recent research on emerging businesses indicates that the ability to effectively manage the human side of the business plays a critical role in the success of a new venture (Barber, Wesson, Roberson, & Taylor, 1999; Graham, Murray, & Amuso, 2002; Chandler & McEvoy, 2000). Recruiting, hiring and developing employees are important in any business, but can be especially critical for an

to invest (Mulligan & Hastie, 2005). Additionally, emotions affect the perceptions of investors and clients regarding the favorability of the venture (Mulligan & Hastie, 2005). Each one of these themes is vital to the success of any business, but for an entrepreneurial venture that is attempting to gain competitive advantage in the market, these themes are fundamentally important.

emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1989). This capacity to recognize and regulate emotions may serve as a tool that helps perceive contextual clues more easily, managing our relationships more effectively and motivating ourselves and others to achieve goals.

Emotional intelligence can be categorized into four major areas, or branches, which describe the skills associated with each area (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The first branch of the model is perceiving emotion. This fundamental area of emotional intelligence consists of the nonverbal reception and expression of emotion. The capacity to translate feelings into appropriate visual representations, such as facial expressions and other nonverbal gestures, and to accurately interpret those expressions in others, is a fundamental underpinning of emotional intelligence. For entrepreneurs, the ability to understand and accurately express nonverbal emotions as well as interpret the emotional expressions of others is extremely important for a number of reasons. Primarily, the awareness of nonverbal expressions will help entrepreneurs in relating to clients and employees alike.

The second branch of emotional intelligence is using emotions to facilitate thought (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotions are often construed as separate from cognition, but research in cognitive processes indicates otherwise. Recent studies in brain functioning indicate that the area of the brain associated with logic

WHILE THIS LINE OF RESEARCH HOLDS MUCH HOPE FOR ENHANCING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP, IT IS LIMITED IN THAT IT TENDS TO PERPETUATE THE ICONIC IMAGE OF THE ENTREPRENEUR AS THE DRIVEN GENIUS WORKING ALONE.

emerging venture (Baron & Hannan, 2002). Additionally, the capacity to relate to prospective clients is imperative to the progress and success of the business. One of the most crucial aspects of employee and client management has to do with how skillfully emotions are handled.

In the workplace, studies reveal how emotions affect job perception and attitudes, such as satisfaction (Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, & de Chermont, 2003; Weiss, 2002), work commitment (O'Neill, 2009), leader/follower relationships (Dasborough, Ashkanasy, Tee, & Tse, 2009), performance outcomes (Johnson, 2008), decision-making (Isen & Labroo, 2003) and evaluations and judgments (Cropanzano & Wright, 1999). In the recruitment of new clients for an emerging venture, research indicates that emotions play a significant role in the decision of a potential client

The vital role played by our emotions

In light of the increasing evidence surrounding the vital role that emotions play in facilitating the success of emerging ventures, savvy entrepreneurs may find it beneficial to begin enhancing their capacity to understand and manage both their own emotions as well as the emotions of others. In current management parlance, these interpersonal awareness skills are collectively known as emotional intelligence. Defined as the ability to monitor one's own feelings and emotions as well as the feelings and emotions of others, emotional intelligence assists in the identification, definition, and processing of

ONE OF THE MOST CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF EMPLOYEE AND CLIENT MANAGEMENT HAS TO DO WITH HOW SKILLFULLY EMOTIONS ARE HANDLED.

SAVVY ENTREPRENEURS MAY FIND IT BENEFICIAL TO BEGIN ENHANCING THEIR CAPACITY TO UNDERSTAND AND MANAGE BOTH THEIR OWN EMOTIONS AS WELL AS THE EMOTIONS OF OTHERS.

and reason is not separate from the area associated with feelings and emotion; rather, the two areas interact at a neural level (Cohen, 2005). Emotional intelligence promotes the integration rather than the separation of these two important areas of the brain. In essence, this branch of emotional intelligence explores our ability to calibrate and adjust our thinking so that cognitive tasks make appropriate use of emotional information. What does this mean to the entrepreneurs? Researchers have found, for example, that creativity is generated by emotion. Creativity is construed as the ability to cognitively construct an idea or concept inspired by emotions. For entrepreneurs, the capacity to be creative is fundamental to the survival of the venture; hence, the ability to formulate original ideas triggered by emotions is of the utmost importance.

The third branch of emotional intelligence is understanding emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The ability to comprehend one's own emotional messages and those being conveyed by others comprises the basic precept of this branch of emotional intelligence. Once the accurate discernment of an emotional message has occurred, the capacity to make rational judgments about those messages needs to be in place in order to assure that an appropriate response follows. In other words, this branch deals with the capacity to discern

emotional information about interpersonal interactions, follow the transitions from one emotion to another, and process verbal information regarding emotions. For the entrepreneur, the ability to understand emotions assists in enhancing interpersonal

FOR ENTREPRENEURS, THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCURATELY EXPRESS NONVERBAL EMOTIONS AS WELL AS INTERPRET THE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS OF OTHERS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS.

relations in numerous ways. For example, the ability to accurately comprehend the emotional messages being conveyed by potential clients can help entrepreneurs to modify their behavior in order to more comprehensively address clients' needs.

The fourth and final branch of emotional intelligence is managing emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This branch of emotional intelligence is the pinnacle of the model and is contingent upon understanding the other branches of emotional intelligence. In particular, managing emotions can be described as the capacity to actively and voluntarily regulate emotional expression, particularly in relation to others, which is essential to promoting one's own and others' personal and social goals. The ability to manage the



THE ABILITY TO ACCURATELY COMPREHEND THE EMOTIONAL MESSAGES BEING CONVEYED BY POTENTIAL CLIENTS CAN HELP ENTREPRENEURS TO MODIFY THEIR BEHAVIOR IN ORDER TO MORE COMPREHENSIVELY ADDRESS CLIENTS' NEEDS.

emotions of self and of others is an important skill for entrepreneurs to develop. For example, in relation to entrepreneurs, the regulation of emotions assists in maintaining calm in stressful situations. With respect to the regulation of others' emotions, the entrepreneur can help inspire employees to work hard through an understanding of this branch of emotional intelligence.

The beauty of emotional intelligence is that the skills and abilities that comprise the model are not trait based, but rather are developable. For those interested in further developing their emotional intelligence skills, the following suggestions should be helpful.

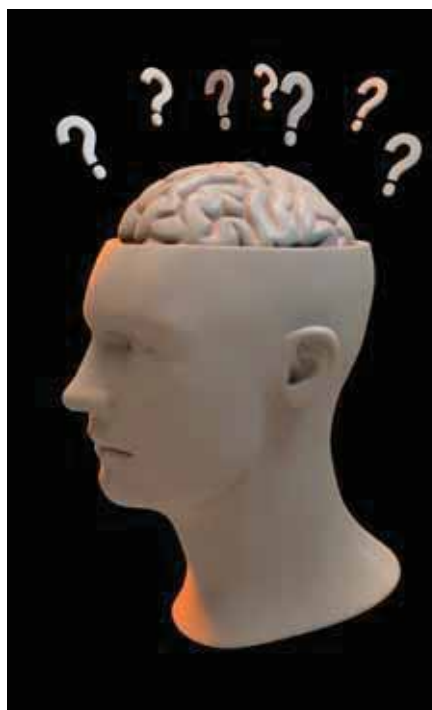
Develop your emotional intelligence

L First, get to know yourself. Awareness of who you are and how you are is the launch pad for a deeper understanding of your emotions. When you feel an emotion, begin asking yourself why you feel that way. Explore the source of your feelings. Examine how you manage your emotions. To help you on your journey toward self-awareness, you will find at the end of this article a self-assessment on emotional intelligence. Take it and use it as a tool for self-discovery.

Educate yourself on emotions. Learn to recognize the difference between thoughts and feelings. Find out about the basic human emotions and start asking yourself

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IS AN EXCITING AREA OF RESEARCH THAT SHOULD PROVE BENEFICIAL TO ENTREPRENEURS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE OF ALL KINDS.

how you feel at different points in the day. Start adopting an attitude of emotional acceptance. For example, instead of ascribing the source of your emotions to others (i.e. "You make me mad!") begin owning your emotions (i.e. "I feel angry."). By taking ownership of your emotions, you begin developing an awareness of how you feel and how to engage your feelings.



Recognize and validate the emotions of others. As you begin discovering more about your own emotions, start developing an awareness of the emotions that others may be experiencing. Start listening to others without judging and acknowledge that you understand what they are feeling. It is not necessary to

agree with how another person feels; the goal should merely be to understand how the person feels. If you find yourself becoming defensive or judgmental, ask yourself why and explore your own emotions more deeply.

Start consciously using your feelings when engaging in decision making. Too often people have been trained to make decisions based solely on the facts. Begin to challenge this assumption and explore your emotions before making a decision. Ask yourself feeling questions, such as, "How will I feel if I do this?" or, "How will my employees feel if I do this?" Purposely engage your emotions to give you a clearer picture of the situation prior to making a decision.

Finally, as you make progress on your journey of emotional literacy, start to set emotional goals for yourself. This taps into the fourth branch of the emotional intelligence model in which we engage in managing our emotions and the emotions of others. Begin to envision how you want to feel and how you want others to feel. Start asking yourself how you can create an environment that will stimulate those kinds of emotions. Question how you currently manage your emotions and imagine how you would like to manage them. As unusual as it may seem to set feeling goals of this sort, it may take a stretch of the imagination to get you to

move beyond the ordinary and into the extraordinary.

Emotional intelligence is an exciting area of research that should prove beneficial to entrepreneurs and business

people of all kinds. By tapping into this previously underutilized and often ignored domain of the human psyche, we should be able to more holistically manage ourselves and our businesses.

IN RELATION TO
ENTREPRENEURS, THE
REGULATION OF EMOTIONS
ASSISTS IN MAINTAINING CALM
IN STRESSFUL SITUATIONS.

Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment*

For each statement below, decide which response best indicates your attitude or position – your level of agreement with the statement. Circle the number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) which best describes your perception.

1. I am keenly aware of the feelings of other people.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I am gifted at sensing what others around me are feeling.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I pick up the subtle signals of feelings from another person.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I have good insight into how others are feeling.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I am astute at reading others' reactions and feelings.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I have an aptitude for reading others' feelings.

1 2 3 4 5

7. My emotions are rarely out of control.

1 2 3 4 5

8. I can shrug off a foul mood and go on with my day.

1 2 3 4 5

9. I feel positive emotions more strongly than other people.

1 2 3 4 5

10. I can regulate my moods so that they don't overwhelm me.

1 2 3 4 5

11. I rarely have emotional battles inside me that interfere with my thoughts.

1 2 3 4 5

12. My feelings are rarely so intense that I feel overwhelmed.

1 2 3 4 5

13. I have good people skills.

1 2 3 4 5

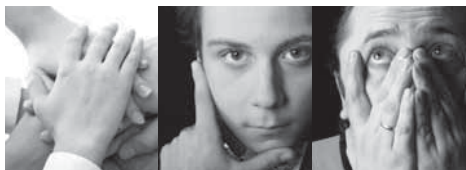
14. People seem to enjoy interacting with me.

1 2 3 4 5

* Adapted from Carson, K.D., Carson, P.P. & Birkenmeier, B.J. (2000). Measuring emotional intelligence: Development and validation of an instrument. *Journal of Behavioral and Applied Management*, 2(1), 32 – 44.

15. I am good at interpersonal relationships.
1 2 3 4 5
16. Socially, I could be described as easygoing.
1 2 3 4 5
17. I have good social skills.
1 2 3 4 5
18. I could be described as a team player.
1 2 3 4 5
19. I am always aware of my moods.
1 2 3 4 5
20. I have good insight into what makes me tick.
1 2 3 4 5

21. Whenever I'm in a foul mood I always know it.
1 2 3 4 5
22. I don't have difficulty describing my feelings to others.
1 2 3 4 5
23. I can put my feelings into words.
1 2 3 4 5
24. I always know that I'm in a nasty mood before others point it out.
1 2 3 4 5



Total points:

This instrument measures four domains of emotional intelligence: empathic response, mood regulation, interpersonal skills and self-awareness. To calculate your score, add up the numbers that you circled. The interpretations of your score are found below.

96 - 120: You perceive yourself to be highly emotionally intelligent. You see yourself as readily able to regulate your emotions, sense the emotions of others, and you feel at home in social situations.

You are aware of who you are and how you are.

72 - 95: You perceive yourself as moderately emotionally intelligent. You can regulate your emotions in most situations, tend to sense others' emotions accurately, and feel comfortable in social situations most of the time. You are self-aware most of the time.

48 - 71: You perceive yourself to be somewhat emotionally

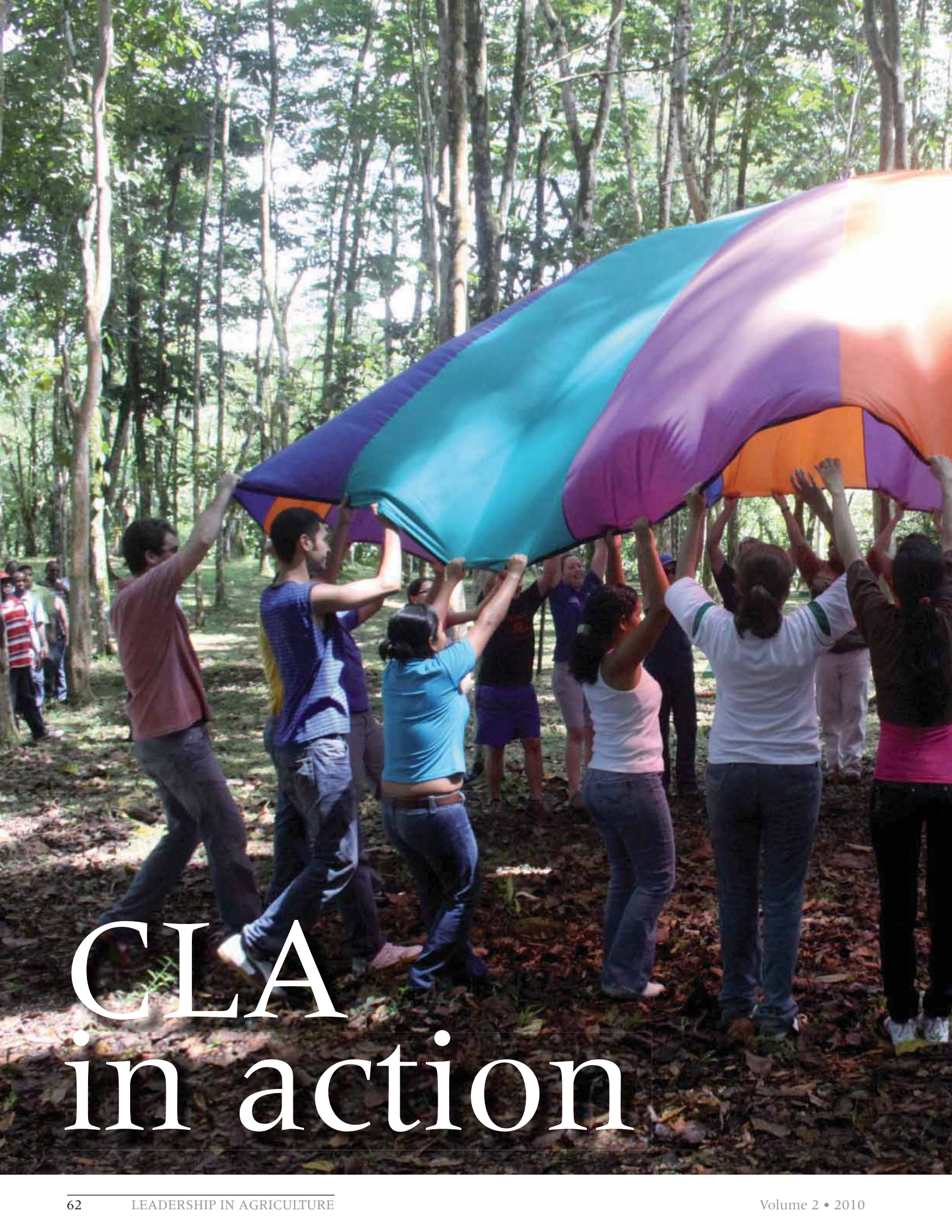
intelligent. You sometimes regulate your emotions, at times you sense the emotions of others, and sometimes you feel comfortable in social situations. You are somewhat self-aware.

24 - 47: You do not perceive yourself to be very emotionally intelligent. You tend not to regulate your emotions, tend not to sense the emotions of others and tend not to feel comfortable in social situations. You may not be very self-aware.

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CLA in action



What is needed today are leaders who will promote a renewal of agriculture.

Inauguration of the Center for Leadership in Agriculture (CLA) in Paraguay

The center will be fundamental in promoting the emergence of young leaders who are convinced of the importance of the sector.

*Norma Villalba and Nestor Molinas
Joint Coordinators, CLA Paraguay*

The center was created following two technical cooperation activities that took place in Paraguay in August 2009 - the First Regional Forum for Young People in the Southern Region and the First National Forum on Leadership for the Rural Development of Paraguay. At both events, the participants discussed the creation of a Network of Young Leaders for Family Agriculture and highlighted the need for the School of Agricultural Sciences (FCA) of the National University of Asuncion, Paraguay, to set up a permanent center.

The new Center for Leadership is, therefore, part of the School of Agricultural Sciences at the National University. Indeed,

the center's creation was made possible thanks to the FCA's good relations with national and international institutions and the results of its programs and projects. The FCA's team of professors, students and officials is renowned for its soundness and expertise.

The Center for Leadership in Agriculture (CLA) was created and implemented to strengthen leadership in agriculture among the professors, students and producers who participate in extension programs, services and research.

The center was inaugurated on 9 November 2009. The participants in the opening ceremony included Pedro Gonzalez, the Chancellor of the National University of Asuncion, Lorenzo Meza L., Dean of the School of Agricultural (FCA), Miguel A. Ruiz Diaz, Deputy Dean of the FCA, Alex Barril, IICA Representative in Paraguay, Hernan Chiriboga and Juan Caliva, Coordinator and Education Specialist, respectively, of the Center for Leadership in Agriculture at

IICA Headquarters, Luis Zarza, Education and Training Specialist of the IICA Office in Paraguay, and Elisa Ferreira, Director of the Engineering in Human Ecology course, and specially invited professors and students.

The first activity to be held following the center's creation was a leadership forum for the faculty of the FCA, in which 34 people took part. The forum's organizers used participatory and experience-based methodologies to create a friendly, relaxed setting that facilitated learning and the promotion of the use of innovative strategies to ensure the interest and involvement of leaders in agriculture.

During the forum's inaugural ceremony, the Dean and Deputy Dean of the FCA introduced the coordinators of the new Center for Leadership in Agriculture, professors Norma E. Villalba and Nestor Molinas V., research professors of the National University.



Inauguration of the Center for Leadership in Agriculture (CLA) in Paraguay.

Why is leadership in agriculture important? Because agriculture needs to be renewed to promote the efficient development of small farmers, so they can produce enough food to make their families economically self-sufficient, and to preserve and protect natural resources. The activities of these farmers should result not only in the production of basic raw materials but also in the farmers' integration into production chains, developing local and regional markets. If this is achieved, agriculture will become a more dynamic economic sector and agricultural workers will become financially solvent. This, in turn, will motivate them to work to make their rural communities more prosperous.

Training new leaders for agriculture calls for a comprehensive, multidisciplinary vision focused on values and committed to change and capacity building. Educators have to realize that more than just a piece of land is needed, more than what it can produce

and the knowhow required to farm it. Agricultural work is permanent and the results and the opportunities involved go beyond the production of basic raw materials. Developing leadership skills in the professors and young people of the School of Agricultural Sciences is an innovative strategy for promoting human development and the social transformation of our economies. *"For that we need leaders who are clear and convinced of the importance of the agricultural sector in our economies."*

This center will make a major contribution to the emergence of new young leaders who are keen to take the country's development in a fresh direction. Who are these new, trailblazing leaders? They are the students, the reason for this school's existence. The faculty members of this academic center are the architects of this noble mission to train young professionals. The country's

TRAINING NEW LEADERS FOR AGRICULTURE CALLS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE, MULTIDISCIPLINARY VISION FOCUSED ON VALUES.

entire population will have access to the continuous education programs with emphasis on the training of leaders.

The FCA has four branches and a section in the Chaco. It offers five courses that are increasingly in demand, with 3117 registered students who represent an almost inexhaustible supply of potential leaders. However, the FCA does not only focus on its students and professors. In the short and medium term, Paraguayan society will have new people who will make a difference in this country, but the faculty's projection is global and long term. These are the objectives of the FCA's Center for Leadership.

Three ministerial forums

The IICA Center for Leadership in Agriculture held forums with the ministers of agriculture of Haiti, Peru, and Mexico.

IICA's Center for Leadership in Agriculture (CLA) is responsible for the Forum for Leaders, a program especially designed for new ministers of agriculture and other agricultural sector decision-makers in the Americas. Its aim is to inspire a new vision of agriculture and rural life capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

Between May and August 2009, the CLA organized meetings for the ministers of agriculture of Haiti, Joanas Gué (5-7 May), Peru, Carlos Leyton (28-29 May), and Mexico, Alberto Cardenas (27 August).

In addition to providing an opportunity for dialogue, these forums generate inputs for updating the national technical cooperation agenda on which the Institute bases its activities in each country. The discussions highlight complex agricultural issues and the sector's many links with other areas of the economy (such as tourism, industry and public health), as well as the important

role that agriculture is called upon to play in tackling global challenges like poverty, food insecurity, climate change, malnutrition, transboundary diseases and the multilateral trade negotiations.

The Forum for Leaders in Agriculture also focuses on change as part of a continuous process of learning and feedback designed to align and support the modernization of agricultural institutions in response to the new challenges, consider the different scenarios for future agricultural policy, production, and trade, and share knowledge with other national and international institutions.



The Haitian delegation took part in the Forum for Leaders in Agriculture that the Institute organized especially for them.

Haiti

Minister Joanas Gué called for more investment in his country's agricultural and rural sector and said the expanded vision of agriculture that IICA had been promoting for a number of years was entirely consistent with the one promoted by his country's Ministry of Agriculture. "We need a strategy that will make it possible for us to increase investment in the sector," he said.

On his visit to Costa Rica, Gué was accompanied by the Deputy Director of Haiti's International Cooperation Division, Colette Blanchet, the head of the Agricultural Economics and Planning Department, Laurence Charleston Elisée, the IICA Representative in that country, Alfredo Mena, and the Representative's assistant, Emmanuela Charles.



Pictured from left to right, during the Forum for Leaders in Agriculture, are the Representative of the IICA Office in Peru, Freddy Rojas, the Minister of Agriculture of Peru, Carlos Leyton, and the Director General of IICA, Chelston Brathwaite.

Peru

The then minister, Carlos Leyton, took advantage of the forum to set priorities that would make it possible for him to expand IICA's cooperation agenda in Peru. The priorities established were related to the development of public policies for sustainable territorial rural development, the analysis of the effects of climate change on agriculture, and the development

of mechanisms for enhancing the competitiveness of smallholdings in his country.

Peru's Ambassador to Costa Rica, Moises Tambini del Valle, also took part in the forum. The minister and the ambassador took advantage of the opportunity to meet with the Director General of the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), Jose Joaquin Campos, to gain a better grasp of that institution's activities and to explore the possibility of

Peru becoming a member of the organization.

During the activity, Leyton visited the INCAE Business School, where he met with the Regional Manager of Executive Programs, Silvia Poll, and the Coordinator of the INCAE/CATIE Master's Degree Program in Agribusiness, Bernard Kilian. The discussions focused on the first steps towards the signing of an agreement under which Peruvians would receive training in agribusiness.

Mexico

During the third forum organized in 2009, the then Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food of Mexico, Alberto Cardenas, underscored the importance of IICA's hemispheric work.

"President (Felipe) Calderon's hope and expectation is that Mexico will develop very close ties with Central America, the Caribbean, and South America, and we believe that an institution like yours can help facilitate that unity," Secretary Cardenas said.

"IICA has done its part by helping (its Member States) to address variables such as food price

speculation, certain bioenergy policies, climate change and the economic recession; for that reason it is essential that we back the institutions that coordinate our efforts," he went on.

The Mexican delegation included Dr. Victor M. Villalobos, Director of International Relations of SAGARPA, who was subsequently elected to serve as Director General of IICA for the period 2010-2014.



In the foreground the Director General Emeritus of IICA, Chelston Brathwaite, the then Secretary of Agriculture of Mexico, Alberto Cardenas, and the Director General of IICA, Victor M. Villalobos.

YOUNG people committed to AGRICULTURE in the Americas

April-november
2009

Our Center for Leadership in Agriculture is dedicated to training young leaders. We hold hemispheric, national, regional, and territorial forums to facilitate the acquisition of holistic knowledge about the megatrends that are changing the world. In 2009, we carried out the following twelve forums in nine countries of the Americas.

● URUGUAY

National Youth Forum to Train Agricultural Leaders

20-24 April 2009

Thirty-six young leaders took part in this forum, drawn from the Rural Youth Association of Uruguay (ARJU), the Youth Committees of the National Milk Producers Association (ANPL) and the Federated Agrarian Cooperatives (CAF), the Rural Youth Federation (FRJ), the Uruguayan Federation of CREA Groups (FUCREA), the Agrarian Youth Movement (MJA) and the IICA Office in Uruguay. The activity took place in Montevideo.



● BOLIVIA

Territorial Forum for Young and Indigenous Leaders

16-17 June 2009

This forum was held in the community of Choquenaira, Viacha, in La Paz. Thirty-eight young rural and indigenous leaders participated, including community and municipal leaders, agricultural promoters and economic entrepreneurs. In organizing the event, the Center received support from the Center for Research and the Promotion of the Rural Work Force (CIPCA), the Rural Academic Units of Bolivian Catholic University (UAC/UCB) and the IICA Office in Bolivia.

National Forum for Young Professional Leaders

18-19 June 2009

This activity took place in Coroico, some 100 kilometers from the city of La Paz. Nearly 40 young professional leaders participated, from the Ministry of Rural Development and Land (MDRT), the National Institute for Agricultural and Forest Innovation (INIAF), the Technical University of Oruro (UTO), the Rural Academic Units of the Catholic University of Bolivia (UCB), and the World Food Programme (WFP). The General Directorate of the Rural Academic Units of the UCB, the "Carmen Pampa" Rural Unit of Coroico, the UTO, and the local IICA Office provided support for the event.



● HONDURAS

First Territorial Forum to Strengthen Organization and Leadership

24-26 June 2009

Held in the city of Yoro, this forum involved Tulupan indigenous leaders from the communities of Ocotal, Caido, Jicarito, El Tablon, San Juan, Yoro and Yorito. It was organized with the collaboration of the Yoro Indigenous Producers Association (APROINY), the Yoro Valley Agricultural Cooperative (COAVAY), the Agricultural Innovation Network Project (Red SICTA) and the IICA Office in Honduras.



● PARAGUAY

First National Forum for Young Leaders

3-4 August 2009

This forum, which took place in the capital of the Department of Caaguazu, Coronel Oviedo, attracted 35 young leaders from different areas of the country. The IICA Office in Paraguay organized the meeting in collaboration with the Youth and Gender Directorate of the General Planning Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Paraguay (MAG) and the Human Ecology Department of the School of Agrarian Sciences of the National University of Asuncion (ONE).

First Regional Forum for Young Agricultural Leaders in the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) countries

5-7 August 2009

Seventeen young leaders from the Federation of Rural Associations of MERCOSUR (FARM), from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay, took part in this activity, held in the Department of Caazapa, Paraguay. One of the results of this forum, organized by the Federation and the IICA Office in Paraguay, was the creation of a virtual network of young agricultural leaders to share experiences and take advantage of commercial, educational, and job opportunities. The network was integrated into the Inter-American Network of Young Agricultural Leaders.



● GRENADA

First National Forum for Young Leaders in Agriculture

16-18 September 2009

Twenty-one young leaders took part in this forum, all of whom work for their country's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The collaboration of the IICA Office in Grenada made the activity possible.



● COSTA RICA

Second Hemispheric Forum on Leadership in Agriculture

7-11 September 2009

The second Hemispheric Forum on Leadership in Agriculture, organized by the Center for Leadership in Agriculture, took place in San Jose, Costa Rica. The theme of the event was "Capacity building for human prosperity, energy security and environmental sustainability." Some 68 young leaders participated, drawn from public and private institutions in all parts of the Americas and IICA's Offices in its Member States. The participants reaffirmed their commitment to agriculture and pledged that, on returning to their countries, they would disseminate the knowledge they had acquired, empower young people, and work on behalf of their peoples.



● PANAMA

National Forum for Rural Youth

22-24 September 2009

This forum took place at the headquarters of the National Agriculture Institute (ENI), located in Divisa, in the province of Herrera. Some 52 young people from different regions of the country participated. Experts from the Agricultural Research Institute of Panama (IDIAP) were on hand to provide support. The event was used to promote the participation of the young leaders in the formulation of the Central American Rural Development Strategy with a Territorial Approach (ECADERT).



● CHILE

First National Forum for Young Leaders

5-8 October 2009

Thirty-four young leaders from 13 Chilean small farmers' organizations took part in this activity, which was held in El Cajon del Maipo, south of Santiago, Chile. Support was provided by Chile's Agricultural Development Institute (INDAP), the National Youth Institute (INJUV) and the local IICA Office.

First Meeting of Young Leaders in Los Rios Region

29 October 2009

This forum, which was held thanks to the collaboration of the INDAP, the Southern University of Chile (AUCH) and the local IICA Office, took place in Rio Bueno, in Los Rios region. Forty young rural leaders from the area took part and created the Young Leaders Network of Los Rios Region, to stimulate leadership in the area and promote the creation of a school for the training of rural leaders.



● PERU

First National Forum for Young Leaders

2-6 November 2009

This event was carried out in Lima, with the participation of nearly 40 young leaders from the province of Huara and fourteen other regions of the country. Support was provided by the National Youth Secretariat (SNJ), various regional governments, civil society organizations and the local IICA Office. This meeting marked the first step towards the establishment of the National Young Leaders Network in that Andean nation.



How do the forums go about promoting leadership



- ✓ Discussions on leadership
- ✓ Dialogues on strategic global issues
- ✓ Round tables on megatrends
- ✓ Debates on agricultural issues in the countries
- ✓ Sharing of experiences
- ✓ Value-based agricultural undertakings
- ✓ Training of networks and exchange of information
- ✓ Facilitation of communication tools and empathic listening
- ✓ Project preparation
- ✓ Negotiation dynamics
- ✓ Knowledge management
- ✓ Analysis of methodologies
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Field trips
- ✓ Coaching



Participants in the Second Forum for Young Leaders in Agriculture. IICA Headquarters, in Costa Rica.

LEADERSHIP *in* Agriculture



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