

INTERVIEW
Hugo Flores Hidalgo
Deputy Minister of Agriculture
El Salvador

FAMILY FARMING
OBSERVATORY
Family Farming in Brazil

GOOD PRACTICES
Recovering wheat crops
in Chimborazo, Ecuador

DID YOU KNOW?
UN declared 2013 the
International Year of Quinoa

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ISSN 2312-1564

FAMILY FARMING NEWSLETTER

for Latin America and the Caribbean, July-September 2012





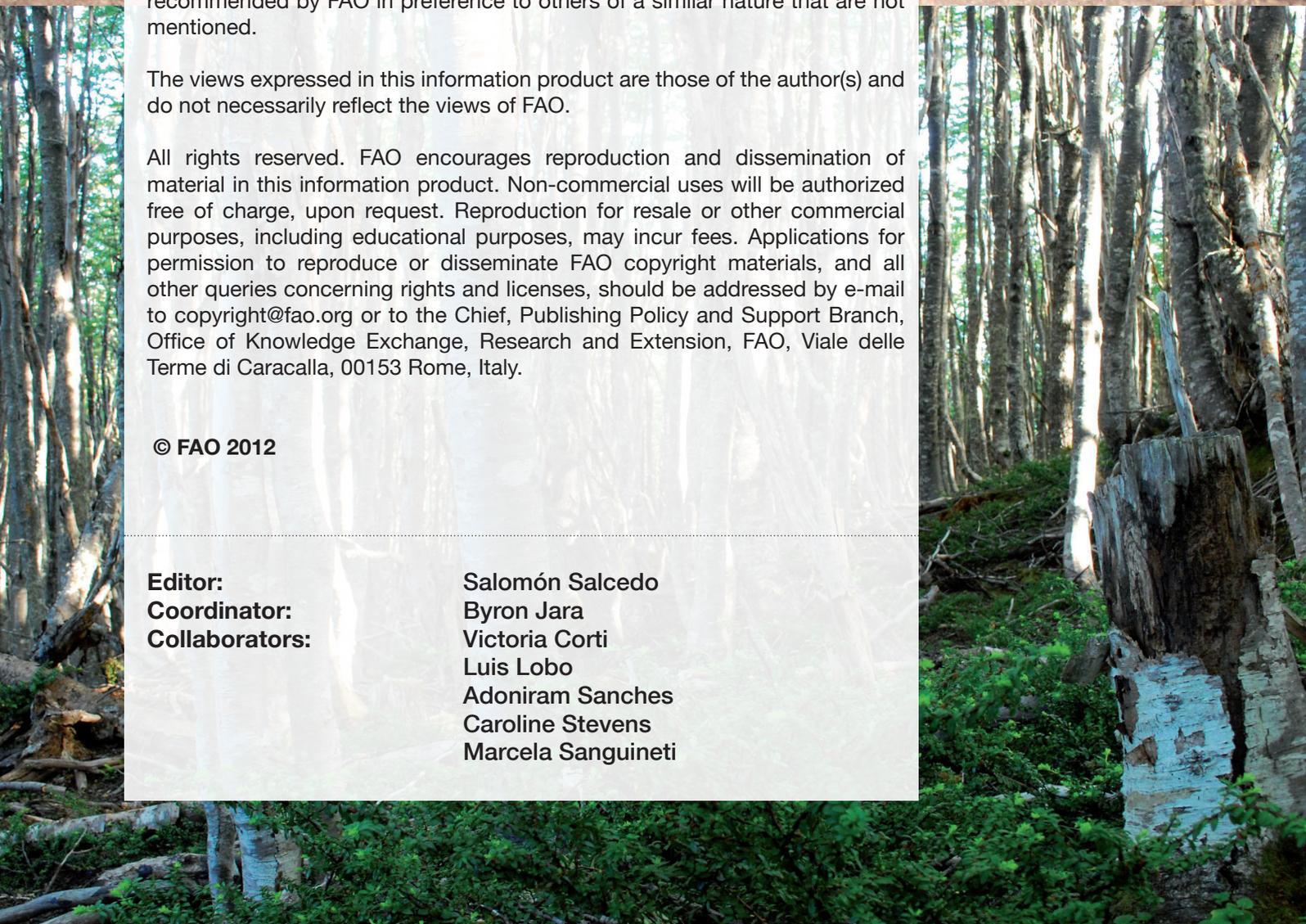
The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of FAO.

All rights reserved. FAO encourages reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product. Non-commercial uses will be authorized free of charge, upon request. Reproduction for resale or other commercial purposes, including educational purposes, may incur fees. Applications for permission to reproduce or disseminate FAO copyright materials, and all other queries concerning rights and licenses, should be addressed by e-mail to copyright@fao.org or to the Chief, Publishing Policy and Support Branch, Office of Knowledge Exchange, Research and Extension, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy.

© FAO 2012

Editor:	Salomón Salcedo
Coordinator:	Byron Jara
Collaborators:	Victoria Corti
	Luis Lobo
	Adoniram Sanches
	Caroline Stevens
	Marcela Sanguinetti





Editorial

By promoting family farming we can combat the scourge of hunger.

Family farming in some Latin American and Caribbean countries represents more than 80% of all farm activities, more than 60% of food production and overall farmlands, and more than 70% of farm jobs.

Not only does family farming provide food for cities, create jobs and generate income for the poor, it also contributes to the balanced development of rural territories and communities.

Recognizing its importance to national economies, the countries in the region have established family farming as one of four priorities for technical assistance provided by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) at its most recent Regional Conference, held in March 2012 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Globally, family farming and its relevance in the current and complex context of highly volatile food prices has been recognized, and this has prompted the United Nations to declare 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming.

The FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has, therefore, adopted the mandate to ensure family farming occupies the place it deserves. Together with Member Nations, we have developed an FAO Strategic Framework for Cooperation in family farming in the region. One of the many actions involved is sharing experiences among these countries.

This first edition of the Family Farming Newsletter seeks to do precisely that: disseminate information about family farming in Latin America and the Caribbean through interviews, and document good practices and other information regarding the status of family farming in the region.

Here at FAO, there is no doubt in our minds that by supporting family farming we can foster the economic development of the region and tackle hunger and poverty head on.

Raúl Benítez
FAO Regional Representative
for Latin America and the Caribbean

Interview

The following is an excerpt of an interview with Mr. Hugo Flores Hidalgo, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, El Salvador where the government has instituted an innovative programme to support family farming.

Hugo Flores Hidalgo
Deputy Minister of Agriculture, El Salvador

Why has family farming become a priority for the government of El Salvador?

The first thing that needs to be emphasized is that after 20 years of neo-liberalism, a model that neglected subsistence farmers - which total some 325,000 in the country, - and left them in a situation of extreme poverty-, a targeted approach had to be put into action given the lack of technical assistance for these sectors, their limited access to funding from commercial or development banks, and the limited number of studies that have been done on the subject.

What are the main components of the Family Farming Plan (Programa de Agricultura Familiar, PAF)?

There are four key pillars that are the cornerstone of the programs: 1) food and nutrition security; 2) productive linkages; 3) agricultural and livestock innovation, and 4) links with industry and trade.

The food security program of the PAF is aimed at small-scale subsistence family farmers. What do you consider are the greatest needs or challenges these families are currently facing?

First and foremost, we have to get these families out of this situation of extreme poverty and get them to start producing their own food, generating income and thus achieve food and nutrition security, which is what the program is all about. This initiative has made it possible for these families to generate surplus and income, thus contributing to the food security of families throughout the country.



In your opinion, what are the main achievements of the PAF-food security program?

One of our main achievements was that we were able to clearly identify the beneficiaries of this program and create a register of 325,000 families. What is even more important is that we were able to focus the strategies on these families and apply a much more comprehensive approach to development. And this is specifically where FAO has provided assistance implementing farm management plans in which the entire family is actively involved, thus diversifying production. This year we have so far provided assistance to some 10,000 families in El Salvador with the collaboration of FAO and the implementation of farm management strategies aimed at diversifying production and generating surplus and income for families while ensuring that this model of production is in harmony with the environment.

What lessons have been learned from this first experience in the PAF?

What has been most important is that three years after the PAF was put into action, families are being empowered. They get actively involved. Secondly, an important lesson learned is the need to coordinate efforts among



“This year we have so far provided assistance to some 10,000 families in El Salvador with the collaboration of FAO and the implementation of farm management strategies.”

government institutions and international cooperation agencies to facilitate the exchange of technologies and knowledge. But what's most important, in my opinion, is how motivated thousands of families are in El Salvador, families who once again believe in farming and see it as a viable alternative for development.

Who are the main partners in the PAF-food security program? What has been done in terms of legislation?

At a national level, the Ministry of Economy, the national development bank of El Salvador, Banco de Desarrollo; the state-owned bank for agricultural development, Banco de Fomento Agropecuario, and BANDEFAM, the country's newest development bank. At the level of international coordination agencies, FAO has played a very important and strategic role, and so has the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). FAO has been supporting us in the food and nutrition security program and

IICA in the productive linkages program. This has been fundamental for the success of the PAF. We are working towards institutionalizing the PAF to ensure that no matter what government is in power, it will always be a public policy that benefits, as it is now, thousands of poor families in El Salvador.

What, in your opinion, has been FAO's contribution to this important initiative?

In short, I would say its methodology, which is helping us reach subsistence farmers. But it has been more than that. It has been FAO's overall assistance, which has yielded tangible results in thousands of families in the country. We have been able to visit the territories and can safely say that this methodology has allowed us, for example, to achieve gender equality and get both men and women actively involved. Youth are also being incorporated as a way to promote food security among the families of El Salvador, for they are the producers, the builders of their own development.

FAMILY FARMING OBSERVATORY

Family Farming in Brazil

Brazil is one of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean that has invested most in family farming with the creation of a series of government programs. For the Brazilian government, this sector plays a strategic role. According to the 2006 Agricultural Census, there are 4,367,902 establishments in Brazil that carry out family farming activities. Family farms produce between 16% and 87% of food consumed in Brazil (graph 1).

In Brazil, family farmers and rural family entrepreneurs are defined as individuals who carry out activities in rural areas and meet the following basic criteria: a) own a single property not larger than four fiscal modules in size (measuring anywhere from 0.5 ha in southern Brazil to 100 ha in the Amazon region); b) mainly use labor provided by the landowner's own family; and c) family income is mainly derived from economic activities associated with their own establishment.

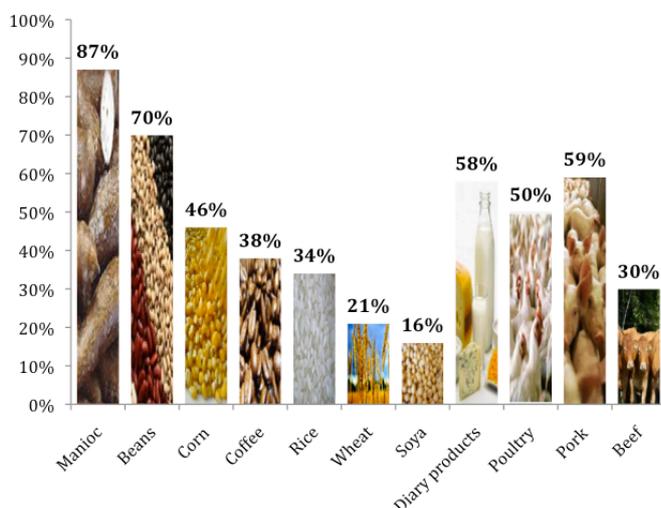
Family farm establishments represent 84% of the country's farms and occupy 80 million hectares of land, or 24% of total farmland in the country. This sector also contributes 38% of the gross value of agricultural production (BR\$ 54 billion in 2006).

Family farms primarily use labor provided by the landowner's family, however, it is also common to employ temporary labor. Family farms employ 74% of available farm labor, a figure that illustrates how important this sector is for creating jobs. Family farm establishments use an average of 15.3 persons per 100 hectares, whereas non-family farms only employ 1.7 per 100 hectares.

Family farming in Brazil (as is the case in other countries in the region) combines crop production with livestock production, aquaculture and community forestry. In 2006, family farming in Brazil was supplemented by pig rearing (59% of farms), dairy farming (58%), poultry production (50%) and beef livestock production (30%).

Brazil has also become a benchmark in institutional terms. The Ministry of Agricultural Development (MDA) was created in 1999 to assist small-scale producers. Among its attributes are the promotion of sustainable family farming and rural communities. Within the Ministry there is also a department for family farming affairs that focuses on three main lines of action: funding and protection of agricultural production, generation of income and added value, and technical assistance through rural

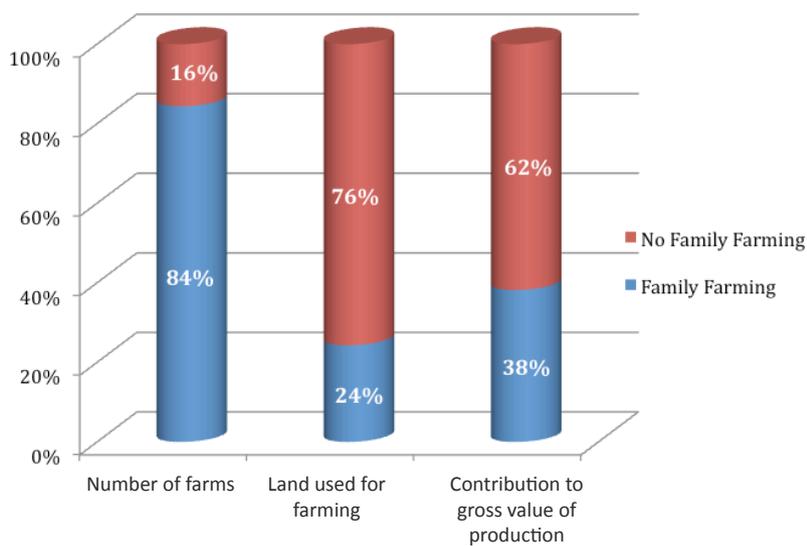
Food consumed in Brazil produced by family farms



Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, 2006.



Family farming versus non-family farming in Brazil



Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, 2006.

For more information:

Agricultural Census 2006:
<http://www.ibge.gov.br/espanhol/estatistica/eco-nomia/agropecuaria/censoagro/default.shtm>

Agricultural Development Ministry programs to support family farming:
<http://portal.mda.gov.br/portal/saf/programas/>

Good Practices

Recovering wheat crops in Ecuador

Wheat plays an extremely important role in family nutrition in Ecuador, however, current levels of production in the country are insufficient to satisfy internal demand. About 98% of the wheat consumed in the country is imported from Canada, the United States of America and Argentina at a cost of approximately US\$ 145 million.

To address this situation, the Ecuadorian government implemented the *Emprendimiento Estratégico del Trigo* (Strategic Wheat Ventures) program to improve wheat production in family farms in the town of Alausí in the province of Chimborazo. A total of 220 family farmers participated directly in the initiative and another 1,000 small-scale farmers were involved indirectly.

The intervention consisted of supplying improved seeds to increase crop yields as well as permanent technical assistance. Farmers and relevant institutions in the region were invited to take part in a capacity-building process that involved training in sustainable land management during post-harvest, associative marketing and product quality control. Training programs were later held in other provinces as a way to disseminate the experience.

Benefits for Participants:

- *Greater crop yield*
- *Higher sale prices*
- *Improved negotiating capacity of stakeholders*
- *Capacity-building and organizational development*
- *Higher income and increased food security*
- *Recovery of a traditional cultural activity in the wheat producing region*
- *Promotion of the crop with an agro-productive chain approach*

FAO provided assistance in the design and implementation of this initiative promoting a method of participatory intervention, which fostered the coordinated efforts of all those involved. This facilitated the full use of human, financial and technical resources thus generating economies of scale and assisting producers in the region in their activities.

Tangible Results

A specific strategy of intervention was developed as a result of this experience that has made it possible to recover the production of a priority crop in Chimborazo, raising confidence - with regard to public policies - in the development potential of family farming.

“The experience developed in Ecuador is an example of how family farming can become a key component of food security and development through the competitive substitution of imports within a context of rising international food prices,” explained Salomón Salcedo, Senior Policy Officer and Coordinator of the Family Farming Priority Group at FAO.

For more information visit:

<http://www.rlc.fao.org/es/programespanafao/sistematizacion-de-experiencias/reactivacion-cultivo-trigo-agricultura-familiar/>

Lessons Learned

Family farming has great potential for recovering grain production.

Low productivity and returns on investments in this sector can be reversed if the State gets actively involved at a local level and ensures that producers participate in the process.

The role of the State in negotiations involving family farming is crucial given that it facilitates access to markets that are more transparent and fair.

Technical assistance is fundamental. Training, particularly in subjects such as post-harvest management, quality and added value, is of vital importance for achieving results.

The traditional knowledge of beneficiaries must be taken into consideration. Their active involvement empowers them and allows them to fully understand the project and its relevance participate in its implementation and reap maximum benefits.

The transfer of technologies that are simple, proven and adapted to these systems of production and territories (improved seed varieties, post harvest, etc.) represents a qualitative improvement in production systems that is highly valued by farmers.

Resources can be better and more efficiently used and results obtained more rapidly when multidisciplinary teams (private, public and international cooperation) are involved.





Calendar of Events

AUGUST 2012

9-10 Second Conference on Family Farming,
Faculty of Veterinary Sciences, Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP),
Buenos Aires, Argentina.

21 Sixth International Meeting of FORAGRO, Lima, Peru.

28-29 Workshop on Family Farming Policies in Central America,
San Salvador, El Salvador.

SEPTEMBER 2012

10-12 Technical consultation on: "Family Farming for Food Security, Agriculture
and Sustainable Rural Development," Rome, Italy.

OCTOBER 2012

10-12 Third meeting of the Latin American Network for Rural Extension Services
(RELASER), Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

14-20 Workshop on Small-Scale Farming Policies in the Caribbean,
Antigua and Barbuda.

15 Rural Women's Day Campaign, Santiago, Chile.

15-16 Indigenous Peoples and FAO, Building a Common Agenda, Santiago, Chile.

24-26 Conference on Research in Agrarian Structure and Intervention in Rural
Development, Rural Development Institute of the Faculty of Natural Sciences,
Universidad Nacional de Salta, Salta, Argentina.

DID YOU KNOW?



The United Nations has declared 2013 the “International Year of Quinoa” (IYQ) recognizing that Andean indigenous peoples, through their traditional knowledge and practices of living well, in harmony with Mother Earth and nature, have maintained, controlled, protected and preserved quinoa as food for present and future generations.

The International Year of Quinoa, approved by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2011, was proposed by the government of Bolivia with the backing of Argentina, Azerbaijan, Ecuador, Georgia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, together with FAO. The Conference took note of the exceptional nutritional properties

of quinoa, its agro-ecological versatility and its potential to contribute to the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

On June 11, 2012, in Rome, Bolivian President Evo Morales Ayma was named Special Ambassador to FAO for the International Year of Quinoa. “Quinoa is an ancestral legacy that has been cultivated for more than 7,000 years and is presented as a worthy alternative amid the current food crisis. It can achieve good yields and is very resistant to frost,” Morales said, recalling his early days as a small-scale producer of quinoa in Orinoca, his birthplace.

Contact us:

RLC-Agricultura-Familiar@fao.org

www.rlc.fao.org