

**USDA AMS AGREEMENT NUMBER 12-25-B-1060
(2010-FB)**

**FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
PROJECTS TO ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF
PUERTO RICO SPECIALTY CROPS THROUGH A STATE
BUY-LOCAL PROMOTION PLAN AND VARIOUS
RECOMMENDED SUB-GRANTEE PROJECTS**

Submitted: 01/31/2014

Resubmitted: 04/22/2014

**Final Performance Report for SCBG Agreement
Number 12-25-B-1060 (2010-FB)**

Description of Approved Grant

This is the final report for Specialty Crops Block Grant under Agreement 12-25-B-1060. The grant amount was \$400,098. The grant period begun on October 1, 2010 and ended on September 30, 2013. This report covers activities and expenses during the last year from October 2012 to September 2013. As a part of the present agreement, the Puerto Rico State Plan included a Sub Grantee project component.

State Managed Project #2, Packing Materials Project, was completed and accordingly informed in the 2nd annual report submitted.

The main projects and the allotted budgets for each are included in the following table:

MAIN PROJECTS, AS APPROVED

Continuity to State Managed Projects
Packing Materials Project*
Pineapple Seed Project**
Sub Grantee Projects

*This project was completed, and same informed in 2nd annual report. Remaining funds were transferred through an amendment to execute a new project called *Casa Sombra*.

**Project was extended with additional funds transferred from not completed and/or not executed projects.

The Sub Grantee Projects, as per item 4 of Table 1, are listed in the following table 2 and same were approved during the first year of the grant

SUB GRANTEE PROJECTS APPROVED

Apiarios de Borinquen*
Hacienda Monte Alto, Inc.*
Apiarios Caraballo*
Sana Nature Products
Cooperativa Agronacional*
Agroindustria del Noroeste*
Finca San Lázaro*
Comité de Agricultores Orgánicos del Suroeste*

*Projects were completed and/or not executed.

The following are the reports of each state managed and sub grantees projects:

STATE MANAGED MAJOR PROJECT 1

Project: Buy Local Sub Branding Program: Events and Promotion

Partner: Organization FIDA

(Former) Responsible person: Agro. Miguel Santiago Córdova

PROJECT SUMMARY

This project facilitated a framework that provided the setting for collective, shared promotional activities and programs that being of assistance in the marketing aspect to specialty crop producers in general. The main objective was to provide opportunities that were enjoyed in a collective manner by local agricultural producers. This allowed local products to enhance their competitiveness simply by improving the capacity of consumers to recognize the local agricultural producers at the sales points.

PROJECT APPROACH

During the grant agreement period, many local and international trade shows were attended. A 2011 the campaign has been developed. Production of television, radio and newsprint advertising was produced in summer 2011. The campaign was launched in November 2011 and ran intensively at the end of 2011. The following were the activities (local and international trade shows, utilizing funds from this grant) attended during the present grant period from October 2012 to September 2013:

Local & International Trade Shows Attended

- ***MIDA 2013 (June 2013): A local event directed to the food industry. In this event the farmers begins negotiations which leads to finalized in businesses during the year.***

The following agricultural firms participated in this event, with their respective products: *Hidrocultivos Carolinenses (hydroponics); AF Produce (fresh products); Setas de PR (mushrooms); Apiarios Caraballo (honey); Café Cibales (coffee); Trópico (ornamentals); Atenas Pineapple (pineapple); Café Don Teto (coffee), and Café Gran Batey (coffee).*

- ***Fancy Food Show 2013 (July 2013): An international event, which is the main commercial world event of special and ethnic food; and represents an opportunity to promote in an international level our agricultural gourmet agricultural products***

The following local agricultural firms participated in this event, with their respective products: *Café Lucero* (coffee); *Loíza Dark Chocolate* (chocolate), and *Apiarios Caraballo* (honey).

- ***Agrifest 2013: the event was created by the St. Croix government to promote the agriculture from both their island and the other Caribbean islands, including PR. In the event we could sold our products as well as make business relationships between representatives of the Caribbean islands***

The following local agricultural firms participated in this event, with their respective products: *Atenas pineapple, Inc.* (pineapple); *AF Produce* (fruits/vegetables); *Cali Nurseries, Inc.* (horticulture)

- ***Centro Unido de Detallistas (August 2013): A local convention event from the small business owners***

Participated in this event with an exhibitor, along with the following agricultural firm: *Cooperativa Agrocomercial* (coffee).

- ***Saborea PR 2013: A local event from the Hotels and Tourism Association; has an international level because of the participation of international chefs, along with the local ones.***

The following agricultural firms participated in this event, with their respective products: *AF Produce* (fresh products)

- ***SCAA 2013 (April 2013): A local event directed to coffee producers, in order to promote and incentivize coffee sales in PR.***

The following agricultural firms participated in this event, all with coffee products: *Offecay, Golden Roseapple Farm; Gran Batey, Pomarrosa, Café Lucero, Hacienda San Pedro, Luis Roig and Aromas del Campo.*

- ***Coffee and Chocolate Expo 2013: This event was open to the public in general, especially sales were directed to those coffee and chocolate consumers***
- ***ASORE 2013: Local event, from the “Asociación de Restaurantes de PR”***
- ***Placita en Plaza: A local farmers market located at the major shopping mall in PR “Plaza Las Américas”.***

For the second consecutive year, this farmers market has been developed and almost 100 farmers and/or agricultural firms have participated. It took place two times per month. Since it is located in the biggest shopping mall in the metropolitan area, the farmers and their products had a lot of exposure. This event has benefitted them in developing at the max their businesses, increase their sales and as well achieve new markets.

Some of almost 100 farmers and/or agricultural firms that participated in this farmers market during the year were: *Gran Batey (coffee); Pomarrosa (coffee); Café Lucero (coffee); Hacienda San Pedro (coffee); A la Postre (desserts based on fruits); AF Produce (vegetables, fruits); Agroequino Rodriguez (vegetables, herbs); Antojitos de Mangó (mango desserts); Apiarios Borinquen (honey); Apiarios Caraballo (honey); Bosque Floriham (horticulture); AVIO (hydroponics); Café 1739 (coffee); Café Aromas del Campo (coffee); Café Casa Blanca 3 (coffee); Café Cialitos (coffee); Café Cibales (coffee);*

Café del Alba (coffee); Café Don Lorenzo (coffee); Café Don Ruiz (coffee); Café Gran Batey (coffee); Café Hacienda El Jibarito (coffee); Cali Nurseries (horticulture); Cítricos de la Montaña (citrus fruits); El Chinero (citrus juice); El Colmenal (honey); FFA (fruits, vegetables); Hacienda Román (fruits, vegetables); Hermanas Tacos (ornamental); Hidrocultivos Carolinenses (hydroponics); Hidropónicos (cilantro, lettuce); Hydrofarm Pagán (cilantro, lettuce); Productos Sana (organic vegetables, herbs); Rico Fresh Produce (fresh produce); Santa Barbara Orchids (horticulture); Tita's Homemade (condiments); Nias Bonsai (plants); Orquídeas La Hacienda (flowers); Mi Deleite (cilantro, mango and basil dips); Los Reyes Bananas (small bananas).

Since the farmer's markets and buy local and trade shows are typically not limited to specialty crops, we ensured that grant funds were used to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. By its nature, FIDA and the Department of Agriculture cannot exclude non specialty crop products from its marketing efforts. For example, cannot ensure that trade shows solely enhance d eligible products, but instead assured that grant project funds were applied only to pay the expenses or portion directly related and attributable to eligible specialty crops products.

Regarding promotional part of the project:

- We established an initial declaration of firms' eligibility as specialty crops producers. All firms of non specialty and specialty producers were in spate lists. The lists were used by reference to percentually split promotion expenses between grant eligible specialty crops producers and non eligible producers.
- The use of two different brands: *100% Cosecha* and *100% Crianza*; that in effect segregated between eligible and ineligible products. A two brand campaign was launched dividing the variety of agricultural products, according to botanical (*Cosecha*, meaning crop) and zoological (*Crianza*).

Expenses for collective trade show participation (exhibition space; booth arrangement; additional personnel costs; etc) was divided into equal parts between the number of participating firms. Grant and match funds were applied only to pay for the portions of exhibition costs specifically used by specialty crops producers. The portion regarding other ineligible products (meat and animal products, or any other not eligible as specialty crops) was covered by FIDA matching funds.

TV and print advertising: Grant and match funds were used only to pay for advertisements featuring eligible specialty crops. In case of brand advertising, *100% Cosecha* was used, thus excluding non specialty products.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

Through the participation in all local and international events, in which we participated, the following goals and outcomes were achieved:

- Three (3) agricultural firms participated, promoted and incentivized the exportation of agricultural local products to the whole world through the Fancy Food Show 2013, celebrated at New York: *Café Lucero* (coffee); *Apiarios Caraballo* (honey), and *Loíza Dark Chocolate* (chocolate). Since a lot of PR citizens and latins lived in NY, there is a need for local fresh products. With the projected demand in mind, these producers presented their products at this event. *Loíza Dark Chocolate* achieved immediate direct sales ascending to \$10,000; distributed among some gourmet stores in the United States. *Apiarios Caraballo* achieved \$2,400 in sales in “So Heavenly” store; \$18,000 in “Lola Granola” store, and \$500 in Burlington store. Meanwhile, during this event the Secretary from PR Department of Agriculture had the opportunity to also meet with representatives from NYC Technical Produce Market. The meeting was with the purpose of seeking support for local agricultural products, in order to be sold in the latin markets in United States. As a direct result, the President of S. KatzMan Produce, demonstrated a lot of interest in buying from our local producers, products like papaya, green beans, cilantrillo, okra, green peppers, mangoes, among other specialty crops products.
- Six (6) coffee firms promoted and incentivized the coffee sales of Puerto Rico, through their participation in the SCAA international event. During SCAA 2013 two (2) specialty coffee firms, *Hacienda San Pedro* and *Offecay*, represented local coffee industry in the european event. PR achieved the goal when positioning itself as a great specialty coffee producer, when exposing its coffee products with other countries like Brasil, Honduras, Colombia, Jamaica, Guatemala, Africa, El Salvador, among others. *Hacienda San Pedro* sold eighty (80) quintals of specialty coffee, with an approximate \$70,000 of value. Same positioned its product among other european countries like Greece, London, France, Italia and Spain. *Offecay* established business contacts and initiated business conversations with at least ten (10) buyers interested in their coffee, which were provided with coffee samples.
- It was estimated that at least five (5) of them will buy their coffee as soon as the first crop of the mature coffee arise. Their projection is of twenty five (25) quintals, for an approximate \$20,000 in sales. In addition, *Hacienda San Pedro* and *Offecay* established business contacts with an enterprise from Holland, in order to sale local coffee in the United States and in the European nation. Other positive results from the commercial mission was to achieved contact with Brasil, to offer seminaries about coffee preparations, and with China to assist in the creation of a ‘coffee city”, which could open doors to sold our local specialty coffe in this country.
- SCAA served as a tool to also promote not only our local coffee, but also to promote PR as a destiny for agro tourism.
- Presented agricultural products, which leded to achieved sales through local hotels, restaurants, wholesalers, distributors and supermarkets, through their participation in the local events Saborea PR and MIDA.
- Almost one hundred (100) farmers, which participated during the year in our major farmers market “La Placita en Plaza” developed at the max their businesses; increased sales and developed new market sales points.
- A lot of more farmers and agricultural firms participated in the events, with a more abroad variety of specialty crops products.

BENEFICIARIES

The following are **some** of the almost 150 beneficiaries (farmers/agricultural firms), which were impacted and were benefitted from local and international shows, as well as from the farmers market from this project: *Gran Batey (coffee); Pomarrosa (coffee); Café Lucero (coffee); Hacienda San Pedro (coffee); A la Postre (desserts based on fruits); AF Produce (vegetables, fruits); Agroequino Rodriguez (vegetables, herbs); Antojitos de Mangó (mango desserts); Apiarios Borinquen (honey); Apiarios Caraballo (honey); Bosque Floriham (horticulture); AVIO (hydroponics); Café 1739 (coffee);*

Café Aromas del Campo (coffee); Café Casa Blanca 3 (coffee); Café Cialitos (coffee); Café Cibales (coffee); Café del Alba (coffee); Café Don Lorenzo (coffee); Café Don Ruiz (coffee); Café Gran Batey (coffee); Café Hacienda El Jibarito (coffee); Cali Nurseries (horticulture); Cítricos de la Montaña (citrus fruits); El Chinero (citrus juice); El Colmenal (honey); FFA (fruits, vegetables); Hacienda Román (fruits, vegetables); Hermanas Tacos (ornamental); Hidrocultivos Carolinenses (hydroponics); Hidropónicos (cilantro, lettuce); Hydrofarm Pagán (cilantro, lettuce); Productos Sana (organic vegetables, herbs); Rico Fresh Produce (fresh produce); Santa Barbara Orquids (horticulture); Tita's Homemade (condiments); Nias Bonsai (plants); Orquídeas La Hacienda (flowers); Mi Deleite (cilantro, mango and basil dips); Los Reyes Bananas (small bananas).

LESSONS LEARNED

The major positive lesson learned from the implementation of this project is the great exposure that the farmers and/or agricultural firms gained, when providing them with opportunities that are enjoyed in a collective manner for these agricultural producers. The participation of the local farmers and/or agricultural firms in all those local and trade shows, facilitated the promotion of their products and the increase of their sales. Their participation also helped to promote and establish business relationships within the local and the international industry.

They also strengthened business relationships with other local and international farmers and agricultural enterprises, and finally market niches were identified in order for our farmers and agribusinesses could obtain business opportunities. For some special achievements that resulted from the participation of these farmers and agribusinesses in the local and international trade shows, please refer to the Goals and Outcomes Achieved section.

Regarding the local event “Placita en Plaza”, the farmers market located at the biggest shopping mall, was and still being a successful event. Especially because it is very cost effective, since the shopping mall administration does not charge for using the space.

As part of the recommendations made by the staff (as lessons learned from local events of the project), are the following: *Farmers Market*: should continue increasing the presence to three weeks per month, instead of twice as current (4 times a month is not recommended, because the sales could be diluted); sales carts (sales points) in the market place should be incremented, in order to give opportunity for other farmers to participate.

About the local event *MIDA*: this event should keep the same exposition space instead of reducing it, since reducing it doesn't mean that the cost will be reduced especially because the agreement for the space lasts 3 years. While finally, *Saborea PR* local event did not have much success as expected, since the space granted for us by the organization was very limited for farmers; reason why their participation was also limited. Nevertheless, this event should be continue developed, in order to increase the presence of agricultural products in such hotels and restaurants; due to the expectative of the tourists in consuming fresh local products.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION





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La Placita en PLAZA

EL MÁS IMPRESIONANTE MERCADO AGRÍCOLA

STATE MANAGED MAJOR PROJECT 2

Project Title: Cooperative Project for Labeling and Packing Material Design and Production

Partner: Organization FIDA

Responsible person: Agro. Miguel Santiago Córdova

Project Summary

This project is intended to provide an incentive and cost sharing arrangement to promote redesign and reorder of packing materials printed with the “*100% Cosecha de Puerto Rico*” brand. The local producers of eligible specialty crops will be incentivated in order to redesign their packages and integrate the “*100% Cosecha de Puerto Rico*” logo.

Branded products will reinforce each other in terms of their impact on recognition and awareness in a manner that is similar to the intensity of their presence at the sales points.

Project Approach

FIDA announced the availability of packing material cost-sharing project to potential users of ***Cosecha de Puerto Rico*** label. Instructions and bylaws were given. Brand users submitted their requests and same were evaluated. FIDA approved grant assignments for packing materials and reimbursements were authorized and issued based on evidence of purchase and payment

Company/producer	Requested amount	Amount granted by FIDA
Atenas Pineapple, Inc.*	\$ 5,400	\$ 1,800
Banamera Fabre	\$10,000	\$ 3,333
Hidrocultivos Carolinenses, Inc.	\$10,000	\$ 3,333
PCM, Inc.**	\$15,143.40	\$ 5,000
Hidropónicos del País, Inc.	\$17,229	\$ 5,000
Finca Don Pupa***	\$ 500	\$ 500
Prod. Mama Delia, Inc.	\$ 4,895.50	\$ 1,631.33

*From which \$1,141.70 has been paid

**pending of receive evidence of reimbursement/bill

***from which \$250.00 have been paid

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The “*100% Cosecha*” seal was purchased and the stickers assisted packagers in the initial stages of the conversion, to include the seal on printed packing materials. Outreach was made to integrate a greater number of producers and products to this campaign based on identification as local products and promotion of identified products. It was expected that 25 firms were adhering to the “*100% Cosecha de Puerto Rico*” label, and to be able to integrate 75 additional firms before the end of 2011. Nevertheless, the only seven firms that participated in the project were ***Atenas Pineapple Inc., Banamera Fabre, Hidrocultivos Carolinenses Inc., PCM, Inc., Hidroponicos del Pais, Inc., Finca Don Pupa and Prod. Mama Delia, Inc.***

Beneficiaries

It was calculated that approximately thirty producers and fifty products should benefit from this project; and incentivate persons who at the moment use no distinctive art to promote their product to begin using identified containers for packaging. Nevertheless, only seven specialty crop firms submitted request of funds in order to participate on the project. The only firms that finally participated in the project were: ***Atenas Pinneapple; Bananera Fabre; Hodrocultivos Carolinenses Inc.; PCM, Inc.; Hidropónicos del Pais, Inc.; Finca Don Pupa, and Prod. Mama Delia, Inc.*** From them, only ***Atenas Pineapple Inc and Finca Don Pupa*** have been paid fund, while PCM Inc was expected to submit evidence for reimbursement not submitted as of today.

Lessons Learned

Launch of the campaign was delayed during the first year, but finally was launched on November 2011. Reasons were fully explained during prior reports submitted. After several outreach efforts performed, in order to integrate a greater number of producers and products to this campaign, unfortunately a limited amount of producers requested to be part of the project. Having such a lot of farmers/producers and companies in PR, we expected a greater participation. The amount of final participants is certainly not as originally expected.

For this main reason FIDA will be submitting authorization and amendment, accordingly, to redirect the unexpended funds to other projects.

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STATE MANAGED MAJOR PROJECT 3

Project Title: Demonstration Project to Promote a Transition to Improved Seed and Improved Technology in Pineapple Production in the Lajas Valley of PR

Partner: Organization FIDA

(Former) Responsible person: Agro. Miguel Santiago Córdova

PROJECT SUMMARY

This project, in its first phase, intended to develop and import the propagative material to carry out a pilot experiment aimed at initialing cultivation of a superior variety of pineapples developed in Costa Rica. Each 17 farmer participant in the project should plant one acre plot of pineapple to be tended in the technically most advisable manner with the hope of promoting a transition to a higher yield pineapple production.

The seeds were provided free of charge to the seventeen farmers (16,000 per farm,) who made a commitment to provide an equal quantity of seeds later to another farmer to maintain the contribution recycling indefinitely. In the extended phase of the project (extension, with additional \$100,000 funds requested through an amendment to this grant), it was intended to buy and import from Costa Rica an additional 12,000,000 seeds of the MD2 variety pineapple, at .25 each; which is equivalent in seeds for 600 "cuerdas" (acres) (20,000 per "cuerda"/acre). Same would be sold to approximately 40 farmers.

Pineapple farmers (which already had 20 or less "cuerdas"/acres of pineapple crops; organized and in production) were incentivized with a max of 100,000 seeds (equivalent to 5 sowed "cuerdas") per farmer free of charge.

PROJECT APPROACH

Major purpose of the project was to create a fortified sector, through the creation of a model program for development of the MD2 variety pineapple sowing and crop. In PR it we had an annual harvest of approximate 150 "cuerdas" (acres) of this fruit. The main goal with the project was to establish our source of local seed, eliminating at the same time the introduction of imported seeds; and further, to reach high levels of production so that our offer could be enough to cover the demand of the local market. At the end, with the project, it was intended to reach in a two year term the goal of 600 sowed "cuerdas" (acres) of this MD2 variety.

This project had also the purpose of providing a visible pilot demonstration of two aspects: 1) an improved genetic variety and 2) cultivation under recommended technique. The results should induce a transition to the new variety and to improved management technology for this eligible specialty crop. This would represent, for the moment, increased acreage. Farmers would continue to cultivate other pineapples like the "cabazonas". The proposed variety, MD2, increases the intensity in the utilization of the acreage dedicated because the rate of plants is more than double that used for the "cabazonas".

The percentage of the plants that produce pineapple is also higher. MD2 produces a greater number of smaller pineapples, and has no troublesome thorns for the farmers and field personnel to deal with. The initial investment of grant and FIDA funding in seeds for each of these 17 farmers, will be refunded by the beneficiary farmer in the form of a contribution of an equal quantity of seeds to another farmer after the first harvest; once the plantation becomes established. This second farmer also will agree to do the same, and so forth.

Project activities and funds utilization proceeded as agreed upon and funds utilization has been completed. The project proposed grant funds coverage for 50% of the initial seed purchase to promote a group of experimental demonstration production units for the new variety of pineapples. The other 50% of the seed was paid by FIDA as the local match. The corresponding seed was purchased and then distributed among the participating farmers, who made the commitment to provide an equal quantity of seeds later to another farmer, to maintain the contribution recycling indefinitely. Seeds were successfully planted, and the plants grew and developed as projected.

During the first phase of the project the number of farmers involved were fourteen (15), instead of seventeen (17), as projected. All farmers involved in this pineapple project received certifications after having completed the requirements of the agro entrepreneurial training, offered to them under the FIDA Capacity Training Program. The farmers also were trained in technical aspects related specifically to the production of pineapple, as part of this project.

Technical assistance was given through the following training sessions: *Pineapple Seed Selection and Planting; Foliar Fertilization of Pineapple; Identification and Control of Pineapple Pests and Diseases; Weed Control and Agrochemical Products for Pineapple; Foliage Analysis and Induction of Flowering in Pineapple, and Harvesting and Classification of Pineapples.*

Since the project was successful, a second phase was planned and the project was extended. Unexpended funds from other projects were transferred to this project through an amendment, accordingly. As per work plan, the objective of the extension of this project was to continue the establishment of new acreage of the variety MD2 pineapple. The acreage in the new variety should increase at the rate of, at a minimum, 20 new acres each year, based on the seed contribution arrangement. Seeds were available for sale for additional acres to be planted. The project was performed, like in the first phase, under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture.

There was also a Fruit Industry Coordinator, from the Auxiliary Secretary for Innovation and Commercialization (SAICA) of the Department. This Coordinator was in charge of making the planting plan. FIDA was in charge of importing the seeds. Each of the seventeen (17) farmers and with its own personnel planted the seeds, receiving at the same time technical support in agricultural practices from the Department's Agricultural Extension Service Fruit Specialist. This same office also is in charge of the data collection on production. At the end, each farmer that received a seed contribution through this project was expected to buy an equal amount of seeds; to be planted on additional acreage on same farm within the next year.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

It was intended with the first phase of the project, the following objectives: to increase the marketing and performance of the pineapple in the Lajas Valley, with the introduction of new varieties which could produce more seeds and fruits of better quality and increasing the production of marketable fruits; to improve the efficiency of farmers in the development of new crops, with better production technologies and major amount of propagative available material; to increase the knowledge of farmers in business area, in management of pineapple propagative material, in post crops and in cultivate practices; to provide technical assistance necessary to favor an increment in the pineapple propagative material, quality of the fruit and marketing; to actualize costs and incomes regarding the pineapple production, and finally to increase the sales of pineapples in local markets, improving the quality and availability of the fruit.

What was expected with the project was to: measure the increase in the production of fruits and the number of seeds per plant and per “cuerda”/acre; measure the average production of fruits per “cuerda”/ acre; estimate the impact of the initiative regarding quality, appearance, of the fruits, and marketing of the new variety vs. the “cabezona” pineapple; estimate the percentage of fruits produced of both varieties; to collect information regarding the increase in gained profit by the farmer, when producing fruits of better quality and appearance, and estimate the real costs and incomes to produce one “cuerda”/acre of pineapple in the Lajas Valley. The project initiated with the purchase of the first seeds imported from Costa Rica. Same were distributed among the Department of Agriculture Experimental Station and a group of fifteen (15) pineapple farmers and/or producers (16 participants total); instead of seventeen (17) as projected at the beginning of the project. Each participant received seeds to be sowed in one “cuerda”/acre; a total of 18,166 seeds.

All farmers and/or producers were successfully trained in areas such as pineapple seed selection and planting; foliar fertilization of pineapple; identification and control of pineapple pests and diseases; weed control and agrochemical products for pineapple; foliage analysis and induction of flowering in pineapple, and in harvesting and classification of pineapples. Training for the better understood of proper handling or propagative material was provided to the farmers and producers participating in the project. The training *Siembra y Manejo de Cultivo de Piña Variedad MD2* was offered on November 12, 2012 in the facilities of the *Servicio de Extensión Agrícola de San Sebastián*. The attendance to training session was compulsory to all participants, in order to authorize the importation of the pineapple seed.

A second phase was planned, extending the project; unexpended funds from other projects were transferred to this project through an amendment. Under the extended phase of the project, seventeen (17) pineapple farmers and/or producers, including the Experimental Station, benefitted from the project (most of them the same as in the first part; there are only 16 pineapple producers in the Lajas Valley). During the 1st phase, all fifteen (15) participants received seeds equivalent to one (1) “cuerda”/acre. Meanwhile, in the 2nd phase from the seventeen (17) participants, fourteen (14) received seeds equivalent to one (1) “cuerda”/acre, while the other four (4) received seeds equivalent for half a “cuerda”/ acre. As of February 2013, the crops from the 1st phase were all in the seed production state, while it was corroborate that from the second phase the crops were in good condition.

The preliminary impact on imports of pineapple demonstrated that we could be able to substitute local pineapple for pineapples imported from other places like, for example, Costa Rica. Preliminary data (1st phase) shows that, for example:

- In March through December 2010: 2,049,135 seeds were imported
- In March 2011: 225,834 seeds were imported
- In January through December 2012: 1,871,730 seeds were imported
- The data from the 2nd phase (January 2013 to present) demonstrates that only 930,000 seeds has been imported.

BENEFICIARIES

Through both of the phases, many pineapple farmers and/or producers from the Lajas Valley were impacted and benefited from this project. The following are some pineapple farmers and/or producers that participated in this project: *Agro Productos Esperanza (Gilberto Lozada); Amílcar Rodríguez-Medina; El Soberano, Inc.; Francisco Vélez-Cruz; José U. Martínez-Vázquez; Finca Don Pupa (Luis Almodóvar); Marcos Martínez-Ruiz; Miguel Santiago-Collado; Nelson Santiago-Rodríguez; Santa Rita Packing House; Víctor Martínez-Martínez; José V. Fabre-Laboy; Albert Avilés-Cancel; Aurelio Martínez-Remedios; Edwin Morales-Filiberti; Naia Seda-Martínez; Ramón Rodríguez-Martínez, Heriberto Rivera-Vargas; Ricardo Martí-Rivera.*

LESSONS LEARNED

In general, project was considered to be successful. Most of the pineapple farmers and/or producers participated in the project. It was noticed during a visit to Experimental Station that 1st and 2nd phases were productive, producing the expected seeds successfully. All farmers and/or producers were successfully trained in areas such as pineapple seed selection and planting; foliar fertilization of pineapple; identification and control of pineapple pests and diseases; weed control and agrochemical products for pineapple; foliage analysis and induction of flowering in pineapple, and in harvesting and classification of pineapples

One of the problems confronted during the initiation of this project, was that same was delayed due to the fact that the formation of the farmer's group was delayed. Also there was a delay in the availability of the seeds that were imported from Costa Rica. Another problem confronted was the amount of containers received at the same time. This resulted in too much pineapple crops at the same time. It was recommended to control the entrance of such containers for couple of months, to avoid an excess of pineapple crops at the same time.

Also suggested was to paralyze the import of seeds though the months of June to September, to avoid the seed could be contaminated, and avoiding at the same time the excess of humidity and the early natural induce between December and March.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

STATE MANAGED MAJOR PROJECT 4

Project Title: Casa Sombra

Partner: Organization FIDA

(Former) Responsible person: Agro. Luis Rivero Cubano

PROJECT SUMMARY

This project was directed to establish structures known as House Shades, same to achieve commercial outputs. This kind of structures, used in other countries like Mexico, are very effective in avoid plagues that could affect the crops. Also helps crops so could be sowed during rain seasons. Through the assembly/installation of this kind of structures, we could validate the use of the structures through empirical data and research. The results of the investigation will be disseminated in benefit of other specialty crop farmers. These structures, once proved to be effective, could be also used by those other specialty crop farmers to cultivate other crops.

The structures could also help in produce high quality fruits, as well as to avoid the damage that causes the “alevilla del dorso de diamante” (*Plutella xylostella*).

PROJECT APPROACH

The project should provide the opportunity to stop the incidence of plagues, like the diamondback moth (*Plutella xylostella*) that will cause that the farmers do not seed the cabbage crop and to develop other vegetable crops. The need that the Department of Agriculture (and the Agricultural Experimental Station) had in evaluate alternatives of high investment and development, in a short time of period and in different agricultural areas; and to establish the agricultural practices for the success of the investment, leded to this project.

This project was intended to establish two pilot projects through the allocation of bottoms for a handling removable structure of a shade-house in 2.70 acres total (1.35 acre per unit), to make high priority works of investigation for vegetable crops like the cabbage, the watermelon, and the cooking and moron pepper (out of rain season).

One of the purposes was to promote a change in the technology used by the farmers of cabbage, to improve the efficiencies in production obtained by the cabbage farmers (to increase the presence of the crop of cabbage in our market during its season); to evaluate other crops that could be use these structures, like watermelon and papaya; to be able to make investigation in another season with the papaya and the control of the virus and diseases; to obtain and produce fruits of high quality that can be exported; to establish the costs of the use of pesticides and other agricultural practices; to evaluate the efficiency, utility, quality and yield of the investigated crop, and to investigate and evaluate its efficiency and its adequacy to seed local and new crops in PR.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

This project was performed with unused funds obtained from this same grant through an amendment. The project was expected to be completed in September 2013 (acquisition, installation of the shade house structure), with the sowing phase and investigation/evaluation to be completed before December. Nevertheless, project has been delayed due to the fact that the structures were ordered in Spain, but same were received early in December.

Some mitigating circumstances have affected the project. As informed in the amendment submitted, the project was supposed to start with the sowing phase once the structures were installed and assembled. Nevertheless, as I stated before, the delayed in receiving the structures affected the work plan established. The structures were received in December, but also, there were a lot of rainy days that affected their assembly. In addition, the "Autoridad de Tierras" (our governmental agency within the Department of Agriculture) announced an administrative Christmas recess until January. Because of this reason, no workers were available to install and assemble them. This was also a reason why the assembly was delayed.

The installation and assembly started in late January. Once completed, it is expected to start the sowing phase; and to evaluate the incidences of diseases in the established crop. Will be determining and evaluating the suitable agronomical practices for the development of the crop. Finally, the results of the project are expected to be published through the Journal of Agriculture of Puerto Rico, and through the 'Extensión Agrícola' Program within the "Estación Experimental Agrícola".

BENEFICIARIES

Initially, the project will benefit mostly the cabbage farmers and other specialty crops that are participating on the "Programa de Hortalizas" from the Department of Agriculture. The idea with the project is to increase the presence of the crop of cabbage in our market during its season, as well as other crops like watermelon, papaya, and cooking and moron peppers. The results of the investigation will be disseminated in benefit of other specialty crop farmers. These structures, once proved to be effective, could be also used by those other specialty crop farmers to cultivate other crops.

Some of these specialty crops farmers/producers who are expected to be benefited from this project are: Alvin González; Andrés Alvaradejo; Eliezer Cruz; Ezequiel Arocho, Hiram Rojas; Ivelisse (Productos Mama Delia); Rolando Caudales; Willie González; Zenaida Agosto; Dominick Rivera (Royalis, Inc.), among others.

LESSONS LEARNED

This project was performed with unused funds obtained from this same grant through an amendment. As established in the work plan, the purchase and establishment and assembly of the structures should take place during July. Nevertheless, the structures were ordered to a company located in Spain (its price was more convenient) since last September; and there was a delay with the supplier, resulting that the structures were received late. The sowing phase should start once installed.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SUB GRANTEE'S PROJECTS

State Agency FIDA included, as part of proposed work plan, the approval and subsequent administration of sub grants developed by partner entities solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops produced in PR. A work plan for collective aspects was implemented, and sub grantee projects were allotted funds that were expected to be used during the grant period.

SUB GRANTEE PROJECT 1

Project Title: Proposal to Offer Two Training Courses for Beekeepers and to Promote an Existing Collective Marketing Entity

Partner Organization: SUB GRANTEE: Apiarios de Borinquen

Project Summary

The immediate goal through this project was to develop beekeepers and to create new, strong beehives that may continue to produce Puerto Rican honey. This included providing the necessary tools and knowledge to carry out beekeeping in a productive and sustainable manner, offer experience and knowledge in basic management of hives, development of additional hives, behavior and recognition of anomalies in the hives, stimulate the practice among new beekeepers. The specific problem addressed was the need to promote additional beekeepers and to assure that they are properly trained. Their initial beehive box to begin their activities immediately will stimulate these additional trained beekeepers.

Project Approach

Provided training for two groups: one of fifteen (15) persons and the other of fourteen (14) persons, interested in becoming beekeepers. Each of those 29 participants in both trainings were impacted and the honey industry impacted as well, through the enhancement of production practices and the potential for addition of new producers as a result of the proposed activities.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The training was offered to 29 persons, divided in two groups. The training session was promoted through printed materials and radio advertisements, in order to announce the training courses, advertise the firm, its products and finally to promote honey consumption. Upon carrying out the announcements of the courses, they managed to compile on the whole 43 requests, from which they chose 30 farmers that did not have the knowledge in beekeeping. In the first meeting was indicated what the course consisted, time of duration, etc. Even the farmers had the knowledge of how serious the dynamics and the time required for the course, several of them could not continue the course. Finally they had to replace them with another farmer.

During first course offered 14 persons were benefited. This course was carried out during 8 Saturdays for 6 hours, for a total of 48 hours. In the second one 15 persons were benefited, during the same days and amount of hours offered. In both groups they gave one ready complete hive for the production of honey, with its 10 frames and a book of beekeeping. In their plans to carry out were to give monitoring to the hives of the farmers that took the courses, and also to help them in whatever they needed.

At the end, the training to this expected beginning bee farmers resulted in the establishment of 29 additional bee farms, in which a hive was placed, for a total of 29 new hives. This resulted in an increase of honey production. It was extracted approximately between 10-15 gallons of honey from those bee hives, which led to an increase of the honey consumption.

Beneficiaries

The training benefited 29 new beginning bee farmers, and this resulted in the establishment of 29 additional bee farms and also in the addition of honey production. This benefited also existing farms that at present are operating in the production of other products.

Lessons Learned

In the first meeting was indicated what the course consisted, time of duration, etc. Even the farmers had the knowledge of how serious the dynamics and the time required for the course, several of them could not continue the course. Finally they had to replace them with another farmer. Nevertheless, at the end, 29 out of 30 proposed beneficiaries were impacted with the courses and the project.

Contact person: Ingrid Pérez
apiariosdb@gmail.com

Additional information

Pictures from the training sessions and implementation of projects will be scanned and send by email.

SUB GRANTEE PROJECT 3

Project Title: Project to Purchase and Install a Special Purpose Equipment Capable of Increasing the Capacity of the Proponent Firm for Roasting High Quality Coffee Produced By Multiple Small Farmers

Partner Organization: SUB GRANTEE: Hacienda Monte Alto, Inc.

Project Summary

Proposes the purchase and installation of a coffee roasting machinery. The installation of this machinery will allowed the processor to channel more coffee into the high end niches and thus he will be able to accept more superior quality freshly picked coffee from other individual farmers, who delivered their harvest to his facility.

Project Approach

Once the installation of the machinery was completed, more coffee was channeled through the machinery. As informed by the proponent, around 294 coffee producers took their coffee harvest to Hacienda Monte Alto, in order to be processed.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Their main goal of increasing the sales volume of high quality roasted and ground product was achieved. An approximate 4,000 QQ (volume of coffee) was processed. The projected increase was to rise from 40,000 pounds to 150,000 pounds. Instead as proponent informed, the increase in sales volume thanks to the machinery and to the amount of coffee producers who took their product harvested to Hacienda Monte Alto, almost 250,000 pounds of coffee were processed. Certainly there was an increase in the volume of processed coffee; nevertheless, the price of coffee remained the same before and after the project. This is mainly because coffee price in PR is regulated by the Department of Agriculture and by the Department of Consumers Affairs (DACO). Finally but not less important, the processed coffee was present into local market, and there was an increase in sales points.

Currently, the coffee is present in almost 300 point sales, including main local supermarket channels, small markets, and also in many restaurants, hotels, and coffee shops that sell our coffee by the cup, increasing also their earnings by displaying and selling the coffee by the bag near the cashier or registration desk.

Beneficiaries

The potential impact of this project were small coffee producers, from which the proponent bought freshly picked coffee delivered by them, to be processed and produced. Around 294 coffee producers took their coffee to be processed at Hacienda Monte Alto, through the machinery. Those coffee producers were directly benefited from this project.

Lessons Learned

Once the funds were been approved, proponent ordered the equipment; nevertheless, they confronted some problems that delayed the project. The new should be installed by May 2011, but the equipment required more time to be received at the facilities. In addition, they needed to balance the machinery; acquired equipment, tools and others for its maximum and full operation that should begin to be used by July 2011.

Finally, they required training for their personnel. By December 2011 this sub grantee informed that the machinery was at the manufacturer's facility, due to necessary repairs. For all these reasons, the project was delayed. Nevertheless, once the machinery was finally installed back, same was very useful. This facilitated achieving the goals of the project, increasing the volume of processed coffee bought from all the coffee producers which were directly benefited from the project.

Contact person: Eng. Gilberto Román
gilbert.roman1@gmail.com

SUB GRANTEE PROJECT 3

Project Title: Project to Execute a Promotional Campaign in Favor of Honey Consumption and in Favor of the Beekeeping Industry

Partner Organization: SUB GRANTEE: Apiarios Caraballo

Contact person: Reinaldo Caraballo

Address: HC 05 Box 7276, Yauco, PR 00698

Project Summary

The project addresses the need for education among consumers to increase nutritional and health conscience through the benefits of honey consumption. The project is intended to design and produce communication materials or brochures to promote beekeeping industry, honey consumption and awareness of availability of product in supermarket or other points of purchase materials. Also, the proponent will carry out a series of promotional activities where honey is available. At least 33 persons will benefit, including the proponent. From the other persons the proponent purchases honey for bottling and sales.

Project Approach

As proposed, *Apiarios Caraballo* informed achievement regarding their project's objectives and goals. The proponent carried out a series of promotional activities where honey was available. In such way, proponent was benefitting other honey producers. In addition, they purchased honey from other local honey producers. As proposed, they are benefitting more than one organization: through promotion of honey consumption and promotion they are promoting the beekeeping industry itself.

During this grant period *Apiarios Caraballo* worked toward increasing the participation in agricultural fairs, festivals, farmers market and commercial missions, through Puerto Rico and with clients from the exterior. They made presence in new supermarkets, pharmacies, natural centers and also kept private brands.

As part of the program they achieved to give promotion of the locally produced Puerto Rican honey (through participation in fairs, special events in and outside of Puerto Rico, The advertising through the media (radio, TV, newspapers) reached both local and international consumers. In addition to impact supermarkets and natural products centers with new displays, they also impacted hotel restaurants and other markets. They participated in the following local and international events:

- ***“Mercado Urbano”***
- ***“Placita en Plaza”***
- ***Other agricultural fairs through PR***
- ***AgriFest in St. Croix***
- ***Fancy Food Show***

Promotional material was prepared and delivered through the different activities in which they participated. Brochures were delivered both in Spanish and English, in order to reach more consumers. Information provided was regarding the local produced honey and its properties and benefits; another brochure informs about the bees and how local honey producers work to elaborate the honey. Through the advertising campaign they reached all island.

They also received the visit of the Secretary of St. Croix Department of Agriculture, who visited some of the honey production facilities and see the operational system; and at the same time were oriented on how they could establish a nucleus of apicultures in their island.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Through the implementation of this project, *Apiarios Caraballo* achieved the following objectives and goals:

- Promoted the local honey produced by local producers and consumed within Puerto Rico and outside
- Educated in the importance of the polinization and its role regarding the human survival
- Placed displays in supermarkets and natural products centers
- Exposition in fairs and other events
- Advertising in media (radio, TV, newspapers)
- Representation in the exterior in special events

Objectives and goals were achieved mainly through the promotional activities, in which the local produced honey consumption was promoted. As a result of the increase of honey consumption, the production of honey increased in a 3%. An increase resulted in bee hives to 500 hives. The estimated increase in yearly sales is \$495,000; which represents an increase of \$95,000 from what it is their regular volume.

Beneficiaries

Some of the local honey producers, whom benefited from this project and from which *Apiarios Caraballo* purchased their honey, were: Samuel Rivera, Rafael Ríos, Daniel Pérez, Jessy Troche and Sergio Rodriguez

Lessons learned

No problems or delays were reported by the proponent. The success of the project, led *Apiarios Caraballo* to consider invest more in promotion and marketing strategies to promote the properties and benefits of consuming local produced honey. In addition, promotional material facilitated to disseminate the information to 500-2,000 persons per promotional activity assisted. Disseminating the information to more people resulted in higher consumption of the locally produced honey; which also resulted in an increase in its production and therefore in sales, which benefited the local honey producers. They also will be working on an agricultural project to increase the production of materials, equipment and bees. Finally they have interest in increasing the amount of bee hives, in order to increase the production and elaboration of honey.

Contact Information: Reinaldo Caraballo
apiarioscaraballo@gmail.com

Additional Information

Brochure regarding properties and benefits of honey is included

SUB GRANTEE PROJECT 5

Project Title: Marketing Plan Development and Implementation for Locally Produced Manioc (Cassava) and other Farinaceous Products

Partner Organization: SUB GRANTEE: Agroindustria del Noroeste

Address: Zona Industrial Carr. 112 K. 2.4 Ave. Agustin Ramos Calero, Isabela PR

Email Address: agonzalez@ainopr.com

Project Summary

This project addresses the need for promotion to increase the consumption of eligible product cassava. Proponent intends to develop improved seeds varieties to promote greater yields and efficiencies on the farms. Also it is intended to do research about concerning the ways in which cassava can be peeled mechanically to develop a machinery to peel the product efficiently. The project aims to develop a marketing plan and to insert the product produced in PR into the market channels, establish the brand preparing the channels for other products.

Project Approach

Activities leading to promote the cassava products were performed. A promotional video was developed and shared to potential clients. Printed Promotional material was used to market the products and to participate in local promotional trade shows (*MIDA & Productos de Puerto Rico*). Market research studies to develop price list and market share were also developed. A marketing plan was established, and the products were presented in local supermarkets, such as Ponce Cash and Carry, Mr. Special and local farmers market. Packing material such as printed plastic bags for Cassava Sticks, Cassava Chunks and Cassava Puree were developed, and volume production material was purchased. Brand name “*Vianderos*” was developed and registered.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

As per reported by the sub grantee, during the grant period they were able to purchase from local crop producers above 200,000 pounds of fresh cassava. The raw material was used to process the following products:

- 1) Fresh Waxed Cassava
- 2) Frozen Cassava Chunks
- 3) Grated Cassava (Cassava Puree)
- 4) Frozen Cassava sticks

By late 2010 and during 2011 the products were present in local supermarkets such as Ponce Cash and Carry, Mr. Special and local farmers market. A promotional video was developed and shared to potential clients. Printed Promotional material was used to market the products and to participate in local promotional trade shows (*MIDA & Productos de Puerto Rico*).

Packing material such as printed plastic bags for Cassava Sticks, Cassava Chunks and Cassava Puree were developed, and volume production material was purchased. Brand name “*Vianderos*” was developed and registered. Two orders of frozen cassava were processed for local schools and were distributed as frozen cassava chunks. Market research studies to develop price list and market share were developed. The operation was established with 20 employees.

Thirty three (33) farms were selling the product to the plant. Unfortunately, operations were ceased but directors were looking for different opportunities developing value added products for state institutions such as schools, hotels and hospitals.

Beneficiaries

Local cassava producers benefited from the project while it was performed. Proponent *Agroindustria del Noroeste* was able to purchase from them above 200,000 pounds of fresh cassava.

Lessons Learned

Operations were ceased due to involuntary reasons. Local cassava producers ceased to distribute their raw material cassava to the proponent, since another governmental project was established and producers decided to sell their product at a better price than the one the proponent was paying. This led to cease their operations.

Contact person: Luis A. González
agonzalez@ainopr.com

Additional information

Attached Certificate of Registered “Vianderos” Brand

SUB GRANTEE PROJECT 6

Project Title: Project for Purchasing and Installing a Machinery for Onion Classification and Packaging on a Specialty Crops Farm

Partner Organization: SUB GRANTEE: Finca San Lázaro

Address: PO Box 1321 Lares, PR 00669-1321

Project Summary

The project has the purpose of enhance competitiveness of onions produced on their farm and by other neighboring farms by installing machinery that could classify, weigh and bag onions to be sold in small consumer size packages to retailers.

This increases the efficiency of marketing and distribution and makes the products more appealing when packaged in net bags. This will facilitate more producers to provide the packing service and more onions will be placed into the market at a reasonable price, making onion production a more attractive proposition for vegetable farmers.

Project Approach

The machine that classifies, weighs and pack in bags not only onions, but other local crops, was installed. During grant period more producers from eligible onion product and other eligible products depended also on the sub grantee to provide the packing service. This facilitated and benefited those other local producers to pack their products, and placing them into the market at a more reasonable price.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The following activities were performed by the sub grantee, through the installation of the packing machine that benefited other local crops producers:

1. Four thousand seven hundred and eighty (4,780) sacks of onions (50 pounds each sack), for a total of 239,000 pounds
 - Twenty five (25) net bags per sack
 - Market value of \$86, 040
2. Eight thousand (8,000) boxes of “Valencia” oranges were bagged (40 pounds each box), for a total of 320,000 pounds
 - Eight (8) net bags per boxes of five (5) pounds each
 - A market value of \$120,000
3. Three thousand five hundred (3,500) boxes of native (“criolla”) oranges were bagged (40 pounds each box), for a total of 140,000 pounds
 - Eight (8) net bags per boxes of five (5) pounds each

A market value of \$49,000

4. Six hundred (600) of Tayti limes were bagged (40 pounds each box), for a total of 24,000 pounds
 - Thirteen (13) net bags per boxes of three pounds each
 - A market value of \$13,200
5. One thousand two hundred and fifty (1,250) boxes of cubanelle peppers (20 pounds each box), for a total of 25,000 pounds
 - Six (6) net bags
 - Market value of \$31,250
6. Sixty (60) boxes of sweet peppers (30 pounds per box), for a total of 1,800 pounds
 - Thirty (30) net bags
 - Market value of \$6,000

Native (criolla), valencia and mandarin oranges were packed up: 8,200 boxes 40 lbs, with a gain of \$15,600.00 dollars for the service of packaging. The gained money was used for the improvements of the crops in the irrigation area. Oranges and other products came from twelve (12) farmers/producers of the area. Eight hundred (800) boxes of cubanelle peppers were purchased from another farmer. Same were packed for the customers. This represented a gain of \$2,400.00 of value added by packing. The gain was used for purchase of fertilizers for the sowing.

Beneficiaries

Local producers benefited from this project. Not only eligible onion producers, but other eligible crop producers processed and packed their products, through the implementation of this project. Other local crop producers that benefited from the project were producers of valencia and criolla oranges, tayti limes and cubanelle and sweet peppers. A total of 510,800 pounds of their products were bagged and placed into the market. Among the beneficiaries, the following local citrus and vegetable producers benefited from this project: *Finca San Lázaro, Andrés*

Rodriguez, Hacienda la Baleal, José Torres, Jaime Ballester, Abdías González, Sucesión Juan Marrero, José Fabre, Angel Rivot & Sergio Colón.

Lessons learned

Proponent understands that the project was successful, in terms that other local producers could be benefited. By the other hand, he thinks that more other producers could be benefited, but there were problems that affected a greater volume of products could be processed and packed.

The following problems were addressed by the sub grantee during the development of the project:

- Labelling
- The need of additional equipment to improve the appearance of the produce bag
- Weather conditions that affected the crops
- Insect plagues control
- Price competition with imported produce crops
- Lack of client identification with local produced crops
- Lack of local crop production (consistency in market)
- Addition in work capital

Contact person: Juan Marrero Cruz
787- 923-0476

Additional Information

Pictures of the classification and packaging machine are included

SUB GRANTEE PROJECT 7

Project Title: Promotion to Increase the Consumption of Vegetables, Culinary and Medicinal Herbs and Spices

Partner Organization: Sana Nature Products

Contact person: Sonia Carlo and Javier Blondet

Email Address: productossana@gmail.com

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project was intended to address the need for educational campaigns among children and adults to increase nutrition conscience and to promote the increase of consumption of eligible products. The proponent promoted their products among the clients of various sales points and to general public. Promotional activities were executed in a manner that benefitted vegetable

producers in general. The project served locally as a promotion of organic products, fresh unprocessed vegetables, which is one of the USDA programs objectives.

PROJECT APPROACH

This firm was committed to healthy lifestyles including the organic production. The work plan was based on educational activities for the consumer public in stores, addressing the benefits of increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, and also educating the public regarding the organic farming modality. This activity would increase consumption of eligible products among consumers (for this and for other firms), and also provided too much needed orientation about the organic aspect.

The project benefitted other specialty crops farmers and/or producers, when promoting increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in general, and organic produce specifically among the public; creating confidence in the type of product (organic) offered. Around 60 farmers and producers were benefitted; some of them introducing organic practices in their crops.

The public in general was also benefitted from knowledge transferred, and the support for local fresh fruits and vegetables increased, benefitting other farmers and/or producers as well. The firm promoted the products among clients of various sales points and to the public in general. This was done through educational activities, point of purchase materials and a limited promotion. One of the strategies used was to promote the concept of delivering to clients, in a weekly basis, variety of freshly picked organic vegetables from their own farm and also from other farmers and/or producers. This strategy worked to ensure fair prices in benefit for all the farmers. The project, therefore, served as promotion for locally organic products.

More than 12 seminars and activities were conducted by this proponent, both directed to other farmers and producers, as well as to consumers. This was a vital part of the project, since the best proof of growing organic are growing the products grown from local famers. Educational seminars and/or workshops were the chance for the people to be informed of the project, and a chance to answer to any question they had. Also, consultation was available and provided to farmers and other interested in growing organic. The following were some of the events, in which snacks and organic vegetarian lunch; planting and growing materials, and educational materials were included:

- Workshop: *Siembra Orgánica (Organic Growing)*: this workshop focused on how to grow short season plants, to optimize space and maintain a sustainable garden
- Workshop: *Plantas Medicinales Tropicales (Tropical Medicinal Plants)*: Discovering our topical trasures (medicinal plants) and how to prepare your own natural remedies

- Workshop: *Teses Tropicales (Tropical Teas)*: Unique experience in our organic tropical tea field and learn about the selection of teas
- Workshop: *Coina Demostrativa (Raw Living)*: Experts taught on how to prepare a great meal from seasonal crops, and preparing an exquisite meal fresh from the organic farm
- Tour through the farm, including an organic dinner: participants had the chance to visit the organic farm, learn on the organic seeding and crops; and finished with a dinner fixed with local fresh organic produce
- Participation and promotion during local events: organic product sampling had been offered in every farmers market hold in the local Aguadilla area to the consumers; in the *Mercado Urban* in San Juan (*Urban Market*); in the *Old San Juan Farmers Market*; in both *Placita en Plaza* (farmers market at Plaza Las Américas Shopping Mall in San Juan and Plaza del Caribe Shopping Mall in Ponce)
- Sampling offerings in local supermarkets and health food centers for the consumers
- Consultation to small farmers to go organic, leading for them to obtain USDA certifications. Some of the consultations were offered to: *Hacienda El Jibarito* (interested in growing herbs, vegetables, and organic produce for the use in the *Hacienda El Jibarito's* restaurant); *Metzeimaizer, Inc.* (interested in growing organic cassava and pumpkin for canning); *Mrs. Clara García* (farmer interested in producing organic coconut), and *Mr. José R. Cruz* (interested in producing organic lettuce and vegetables for alternative markets).

GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

During the first years of our project we had encountered some delays but managed to complete the majority of our goals and we are satisfied with the results. Our Project was not limited to a certain amount of years if not this grant was a stepping stone to impulse our project to another level. SANA has been a role model for many farmers within the organic farming movement. The project served as promotion for locally organic products.

They assisted other farmers in organize their operations, and managed a series of seminars and other educational activities, that involved organic farming.

We helped other organic farmers to redo all art work, with eco-friendly packaging and attractive designs, with logos and slogan “fresh, local, and organic”, also to add bigger size economical products. This has enabled us and other organic farmers to obtain local distributors interested in our products, which made available our products to local supermarkets and other businesses. This gave the organic farmers the opportunity to present locally grown, organic certified, high quality products to different consumers around the island. Our appearance in these markets will be an indication for other organic farmers to keep motivated and reach their goals. Please view **appendix A** for full list of businesses, where organic products are sold.

As a result of the project, we all the organic farmers have maintained regular sale of products through the distributors; this helped for example, to open a new chapter for SANA in elaborating new organic plant based value added products.

Appendix A

Cabo Rojo		Supermax (16 stores)
Kiosquito Dulces Tipicos	Ponce	
Superlife	Farmacia Lorraine	Rio Grande
Farmacia Irizarry	Hacienda Buena Vista	Caribbean trading Comp.
Mayaguez	Caguas	
Natural Food Center	Freshmart	Arecibo
Natucentro (2 stores)		Farmacia del Atlantico
Plaza Sale	Hato Rey	
Red massages	Freshmart	Aguadilla
Rincon	Carolina	Freshmart
Tres Puertas	Freshmart	
Lazy Parrot	San Juan	
	Ristreto Coffe Shop Isla Verde	
Red Door	Fiedicomiso (2 stores)	
Econo	Wafflera	
San German	Isand Soaps	
Econo	Café Tres Picachos (Condado)	
Sabana Grande	La Chiwinha	
Bananera Fabre	El Boticario Health Foods	
Yauco	La Carreta	
Apiterapia de PR	Bayamon	Puesto en la Plaza del Mercado

Puerto Rico's Organic/ Fresh Market

In the majority of chain supermarkets and some retail stores, there has been an increasing interest in organic certified products. Some supermarkets (exp. Supermax) have dedicated a section for only organic products. There has also been an increase in organic/ fresh markets that has emerged around the island.

In 2009 there have been reported only 4 markets; currently there has been an increase of more than 11 markets operating simultaneously in different municipalities. SANA, as well as other organic farmers, persistently participates in many of these markets, and we have observed a growing number of organic farmers (new and older) looking for an alternative niche market.

Our presence has influenced large commercial markets to exhibit organic produce in their activities such as “Mercado Urbano”, “Plaiecta en Plaza”, “Puerto Rico Farmers Market” and “Mercado Agrícola”. Every year SANA, as well as other organic farmers, participates in over 16 cultural and agricultural fairs and exhibitions. This exposes our project to a larger more diverse group of people. In every exhibition we offer product sampling and information. Also in this past year SANA has been promoting a concept were we delivering weekly to our client’s variety of freshly picked organic vegetables from our farm and from other organic farmer.

This ensures fair prices for farmers and in return clients receive high quality local organic produce. Helping reduce the carbon foot print and promoting a healthier community. In our case CSA has over 25 steady consumers depending on the season. SANA also has created an updated webpage and face book page to reach more costumers and ensure costumers that SANA is a legitimate family operation.

We still need to work harder to reach more people and other farmers. Our first step was to set an image so that the public and other farmers can relate to a healthy lifestyle by helping to consume local fresh produce and create and bond between farmer and consumer. The next step was to carry out a more aggressive campaign in our local supermarkets and fresh markets. SANA has accomplished to be the voice of the organic movement in Puerto Rico; we now feel the need to help more farmers to grow fresh food for their communities. This will be done by consulting and educating not only small farmers but also bigger farmers searching to “go organic” and diversify their operations.

This year we had the opportunity to associate our company with diverse identities interested in organic operations. We have built a professional relationship with these identities and they trust our expert advice in relations with organic procedures.

Please view appendix **B** for client list. Our knowledge in the organic industry has influenced large conventional farms to take interest and invest in organic production. We have managed to assist well known farming operations to produce over 20 acres of Organic Banana and Plantains, 200 acres of Organic Pineapple, 50 acres of Organic Coffee and 3 Organic Vegetable green houses.

Many small farmers have inclined their practices from our suggestions and recommendations, as a results Rincon Organic Farmers Market has increased to a weekly event; each time with more produce variety.

Appendix **B** Clients list

1. Bioflora , Global Organic Caribbean
2. Bananera Fabre
3. Gargulio
4. Food Industry Forum (FIF)
5. Quality Certificacion Services (QCS)
6. Universidad de Puerto Rico Utuado
7. Cooperativa de Trabajo Asociado y Café Especial

8. Mercado Agroecológico de Rincón
9. Organización Boricua

We feel that we have accomplished the majority of our goals for the time being, however this year we plan to continue with the vigorous campaign. We will focus on promoting organic farm operations thru a series of educational workshops and implementing an organic farming program at the University of Puerto Rico in Utuado. This program will serve as a stepping stone for farmers, students and agronomist towards a more sustainable and healthier future. The final point in our campaign is to position our finish products and concept in specialized markets and retail around the island. With this study we will have information for future business plans including the possibility of exportation at a larger scale.

There is also an increase in more demanding consumers searching to obtain variety and fresh, local, organic produce. This trend creates a relationship between customer and farmer looking for a more secure and healthier lifestyle. Our project reached the main goal through the promotion of organic products, addressing the benefits of increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and also educating the public regarding the organic farming modality. This activity will increase consumption of eligible products among the consumers for this and for other firms and serve will provide much needed orientation about the organic aspect.

Sales for Tropical Teas and Vegetables (as comparison to the expected measurable outcomes proposed): the history of sales was approximately \$60,000. The expected sales (once implemented the project) were approximately \$96,000. Sales during 2010 were approximately \$12,600; in 2011 \$19,800, and in 2012 \$6,200. This was only data from the *Placita en Plaza* events.

BENEFICIARIES

Some of the beneficiaries, who were impacted though the project, were:

- Bioflora , Global Organic Caribbean
- Bananera Fabre
- Gargulio
- Food Industry Forum (FIF)
- Quality Certificacion Services (QCS)
- Universidad de Puerto Rico Utuado
- Cooperativa de Trabajo Asociado y Café Especial
- Mercado Agroecológico de Rincón
- Organización Boricuá

LESSONS LEARNED

The project was considered successful, since it benefitted other specialty crops farmers and/or producers. It helped to increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in general, and of organic produce specifically among the public. It also created confidence in the type of product (organic) offered. The public in general was also benefitted from knowledge transferred, and the

support for local fresh fruits and vegetables increased, benefitting other farmers and/or producers as well.

SANA has accomplished to be the voice of the organic movement in Puerto Rico; we now feel the need to help more farmers to grow fresh food for their communities. Therefore, the next step is to carry out a more aggressive campaign in our local supermarkets and fresh markets.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Photos 1.2 Organic/ Fresh Markets



Photos 1.3 Top four Organic Farmers on the island

