

INTEGRATED CASSAVA PRODUCTION, PROCESSING
AND MARKETING PROJECTS

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SUMMARY

This paper examines the role that cassava can play in meeting the development goals of Latin American and Caribbean countries, and outlines a strategy for implementing effective cassava development programs through the execution of pilot projects that integrate production, processing and marketing activities. Integrated cassava pilot projects, which are carried out in a representative area of a cassava producing region, aim to determine the technical and economic feasibility of developing traditional or establishing new end uses for cassava. Specifically, these projects serve to apply existing cassava production and processing technology, determine critical aspects that require further research and to identify and promote suitable marketing channels. They also function as a learning process so that the project may be replicated effectively in the entire cassava producing region once a viable production, processing and marketing systems has been devised. With the objective of assisting national institutions in setting up integrated cassava pilot projects, CIAT has formed a team of an agronomist, a processing specialist and an economist. Experiences to date in Colombia, Panama and Mexico indicate that this integrated approach to cassava development is leading to country wide benefits in terms of import substitution and the creation of employment in rural areas.

RESUME

Cette communication examine le rôle que peut jouer le manioc pour répondre aux objectifs de développement des pays de l'Amérique Latine et de la Caraïbe. Elle dégage une stratégie pour l'exécution effective de programmes de développement du manioc à travers la

réalisation de projets pilotes qui intègrent les activités de production, de traitement et de commercialisation. Les projets pilotes de production intégrés de manioc qui sont entrepris dans un secteur représentatif d'une région de production de manioc, visent à déterminer la faisabilité technique et économique de développement d'utilisations traditionnelles du manioc ou de l'établissement de nouvelles utilisations. Ces projets servent plus particulièrement à mettre en pratique les technologies actuelles de production et de traitement, à déterminer les aspects critiques qui nécessitent une recherche ultérieure et à déterminer et promouvoir des circuits de commercialisation convenables. Ce sont également des processus d'enseignement de sorte que le projet peut effectivement être repris dans toute la région productrice quand on a conçu un système viable de production, de traitement et de commercialisation. Dans le but d'aider les institutions nationales dans l'établissement de projets pilotes pour le manioc, le CIAT a formé une équipe comprenant un agronome, un spécialiste du traitement et un économiste. En Colombie, au Panama et au Mexique, cette approche aboutit déjà à des succès importants dans la réduction des importations et la création d'emplois à la campagne.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most interesting consequences of economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean is the concentration of the population in and around major cities. This population grouping has resulted in an unequal allocation of the countries' financial resources. The periphery, where the majority of farm activities are located, receive comparatively less attention and investment than the more densely populated and industrialized core. In spite of the comparatively large investment in the urban industrial sector, this has not been able to provide full employment for the increasing number of rural migrants principally because the development of the manufacturing sector has been based largely on capital intensive technology, with much of the capital loaned from abroad. The domestic markets have often been too small for these industries and the external markets restricted by irregular quality, lack of marketing infrastructure and noncompetitive pricing.

For many years the resources allocated to the agricultural sector of Latin American and Caribbean countries were mostly invested in export commodities produced by capital intensive systems. This tendency has resulted in the frequent need to import food, feeds and raw material to supply internal market demand. The recent foreign trade deficits that have characterized the economies of most of the less developed countries have brought about a change in agricultural policies in order to incentivate not only the export market but the production of foods and feeds for the internal market in an attempt to substitute imports and save foreign currency.