

# The Local Agricultural Research Committee

# 02



ISBN 958-9183-28-X



*Fundación Carvajal*



**The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)** is dedicated to the alleviation of hunger and poverty in tropical developing countries, through the application of science to increase agricultural production while conserving natural resources. CIAT is one of 18 international centers of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). The CGIAR is a group of 40 countries and international agencies that support agricultural research for development in the tropical countries of the world.

**Participatory Research in Agriculture (IPRA)** is a CIAT special project created in 1987 with the objective of developing methodology for involving small-scale farmers in the design and evaluation of appropriate agricultural technology. IPRA is sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

**The Carvajal Foundation**, located in Cali, Colombia, is a non-profit organization created in 1961 with the objective of promoting the social, economic and ecological development of low-income communities. The Foundation supports programs related to microenterprise, low-income housing, community radio, health, education, community recycling, crafts, and agricultural development. It contributes to the development of similar foundations nationally and internationally through sharing field experience.

**The publication of these handbooks was made possible by the generosity of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.**

CIAT Publication No. 215  
IPRA Project

Edition  
José Ignacio Roa V.  
Jacqueline Ashby

Graphic Design & Illustrations  
Oscar Vargas López

Cover  
Dibujo de Hugo Hernán Agredo.  
Vereda Cinco Días, Cauca.

Agronomic Consultant  
Dr. Edwin Bronson Knapp-CIMMYT

Translation  
Ann Braun, Paideia Resources,  
Nelson, New Zealand.

Handbooks for CIAT

# The Local Agricultural Research Committee

HANDBOOK No. 02



*Fundación Carrvajal*



## Presentation

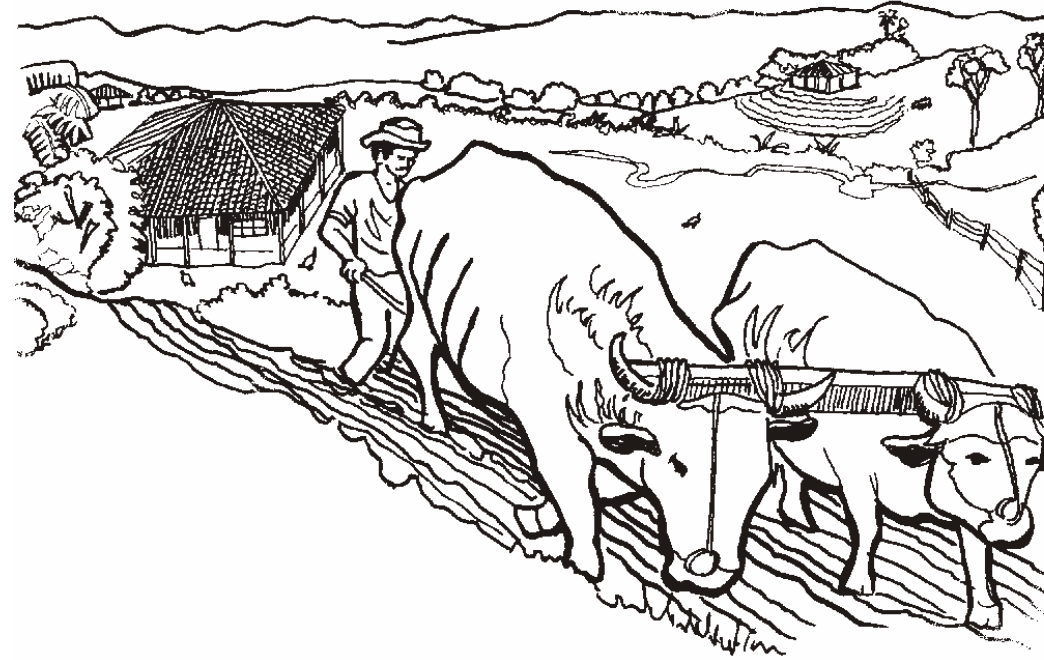
This handbook is the result of participatory research carried out by several institutions and rural communities. The handbooks were designed by farmers. The examples are based on real cases and form part of the experience of the Local Agricultural Research Committees (CIALs) that participated in the project from the beginning. The following CIALs collaborated in the preparation of this handbook: Cinco Días, El Diviso, Pescador, San Bosco, Sotará and Portachuelo in the state of Cauca, Colombia.

CIAT Publication No. 215  
ISBN 958-9183-28-X  
Press run: 150 copies  
Printed in Colombia  
January, 1993  
2nd edition: February 1999

IPRA Project (Participatory Research in Agriculture). 1993. CIAL Handbooks; Local Agricultural Research Committees (CIALs). Handbook No. 13. The Local Agricultural Research Committee. Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT), Cali, Colombia. 35p.

- IPRA Project  
Jacqueline A. Ashby  
Jorge Alonso Beltrán  
Teresa Gracia  
Ma. del Pilar Guerrero
- Carlos Quirós  
Jose Ignacio Roa  
Carlos Arturo Trujillo  
Freddy Escobar
- The Carvajal Foundation - Agricultural and Livestock Program

In rural areas we have very good things: pure air,  
nature,  
space...



our family and our friends....  
the community groups we are part of....  
and the farms that supports us.

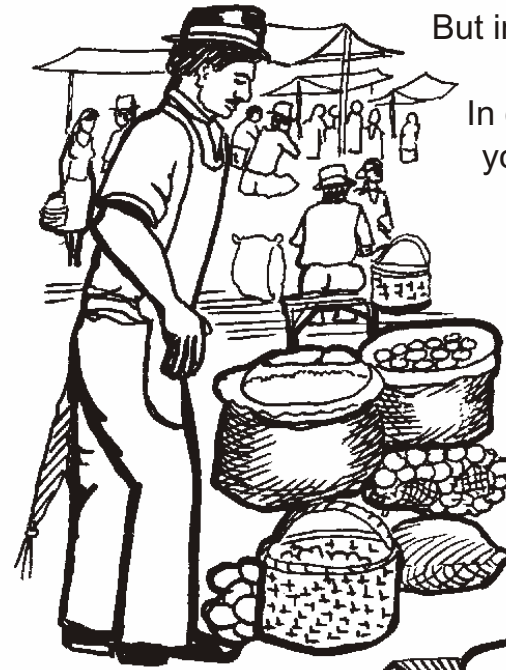
We all dream about improving our farm  
We want to have well-organized crops....  
Good harvests...



Sell our produce at a good price.....  
Repair our homes.....

In other words, we all think about improvements.

But improving depends on having  
better incomes.  
In order to have better incomes  
you must produce good things  
and sell them properly.



And how can we improve  
what we produce?



This question is very important.

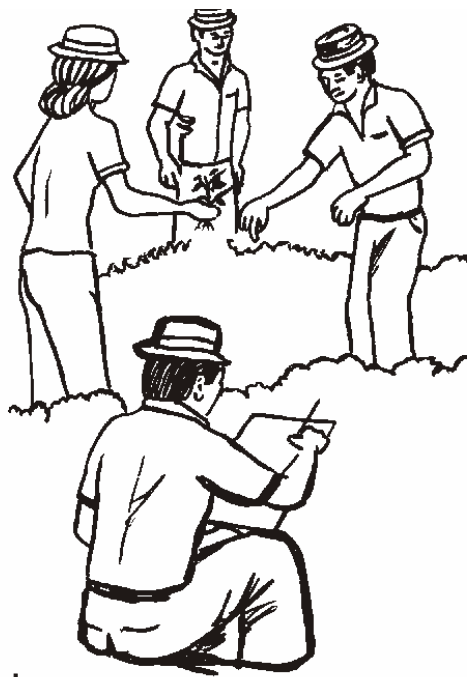
We can improve what we produce by:

**Learning** new things about crops that we already grow.

**Finding out** about crops and practices that we do not know.

**Testing** new things little by little.

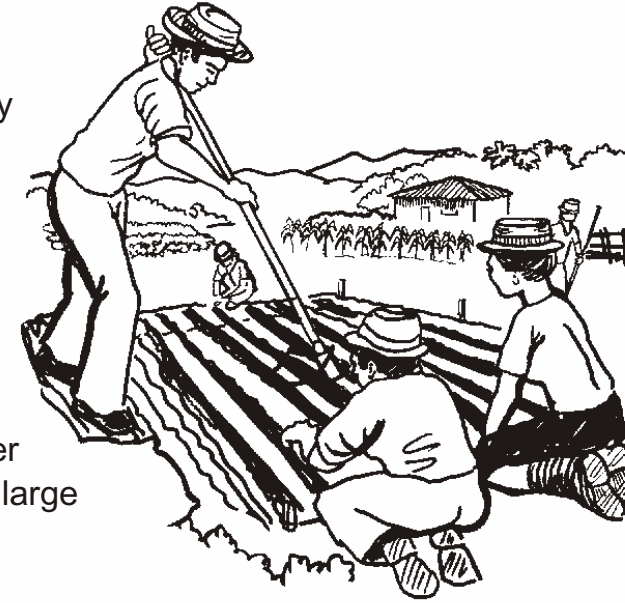
**In other words, doing research** in order to find new things that work before risking time and money on something that we do not know.



When we do research, we test something new to see how it works. A neighbour proposed planting a new crop in a large field.

Before accepting the new idea, we will try growing it on a small plot to see if it will do well.

If the new crop grows poorly, the experiment shows us that it is better not to risk planting it in large areas.



If the new crop does well, we can be more confident about planting large areas.

**By doing research we learn to make better decisions.**



Sometimes we have questions or problems. Solving them alone can be difficult.

Our neighbours may have the same problems.



Maybe they have to solve the same problem as I do.



Working together, we can find better answers to our questions about how to improve our agriculture.

If several farmers in the village who would like to do research together,



we can form a Local Agricultural Research Committee.

In one community farmers had questions about bean varieties.

The **Local Agricultural Research Committee** is testing new varieties and comparing them with the varieties that they already know.

They want to find out which varieties do best in the village.



In another village there were questions about the varieties of carrots that could be planted and the amount of chicken manure that should be applied.



The **Local Agricultural Research Committee** is testing new seeds and different amounts of fertilizer. They are keeping track of expenses to find out which variety is more profitable.

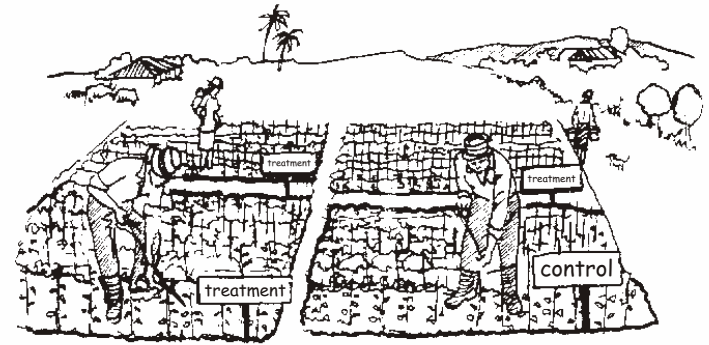


Who can join a Local Agricultural Research Committee?

The **Committee** is elected by a group of farmers or by the whole community.



Our **Committee** consists of four persons. When we do research, we work with other farmers.



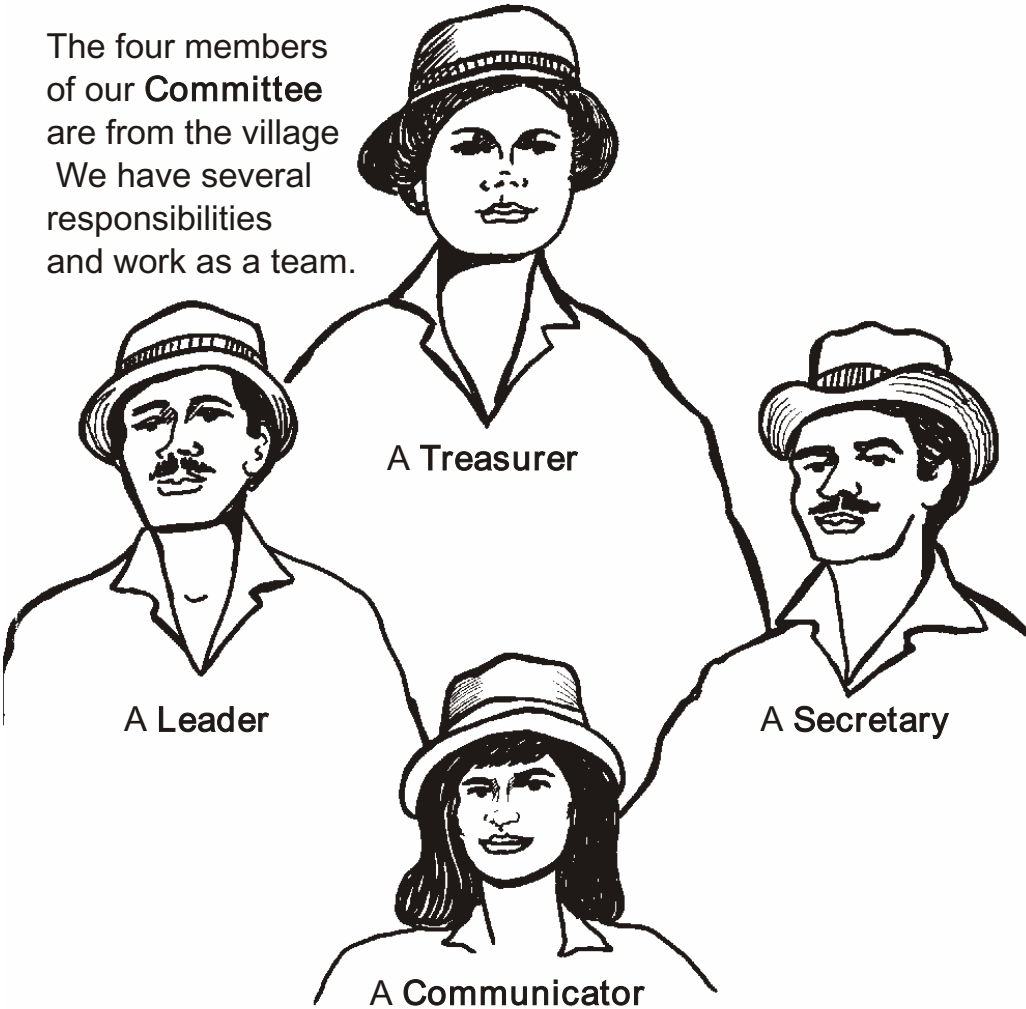
The four of us try to answer the questions that interest our community.



Our **Committee** works with all the farmers who want to do research.

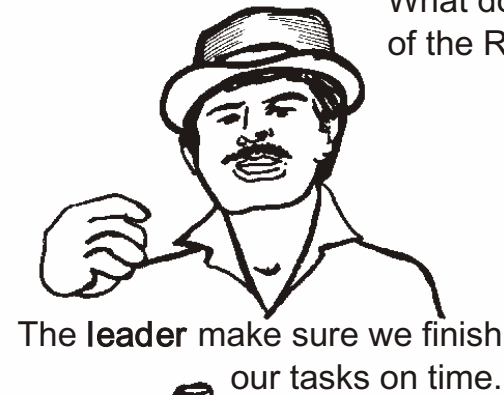
# How are Local Agricultural Research Committees organized?

The four members of our **Committee** are from the village. We have several responsibilities and work as a team.



Together we do research and test ways to improve agriculture in our community.

# What does each member of the Research Committee do?

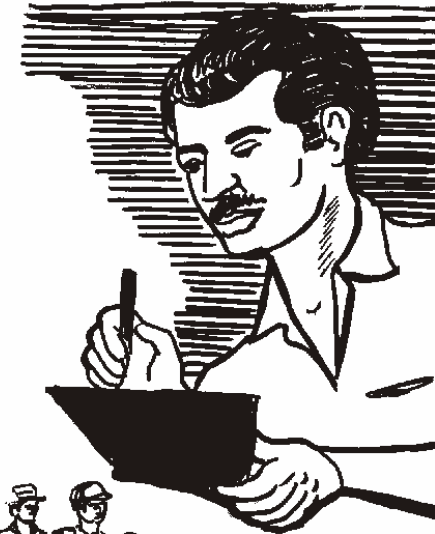


The **leader** make sure we finish our tasks on time.

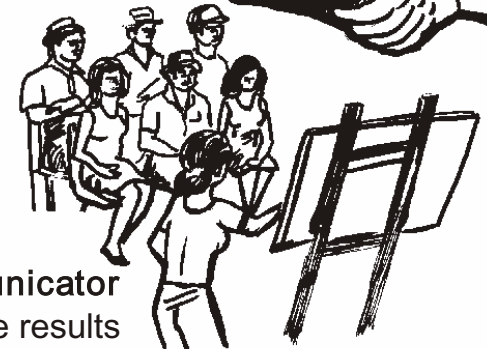


The **treasurer** manages the Committee's fund.

The **secretary** manages the information from the experiments.



The **communicator** tells everyone about the results of our research.

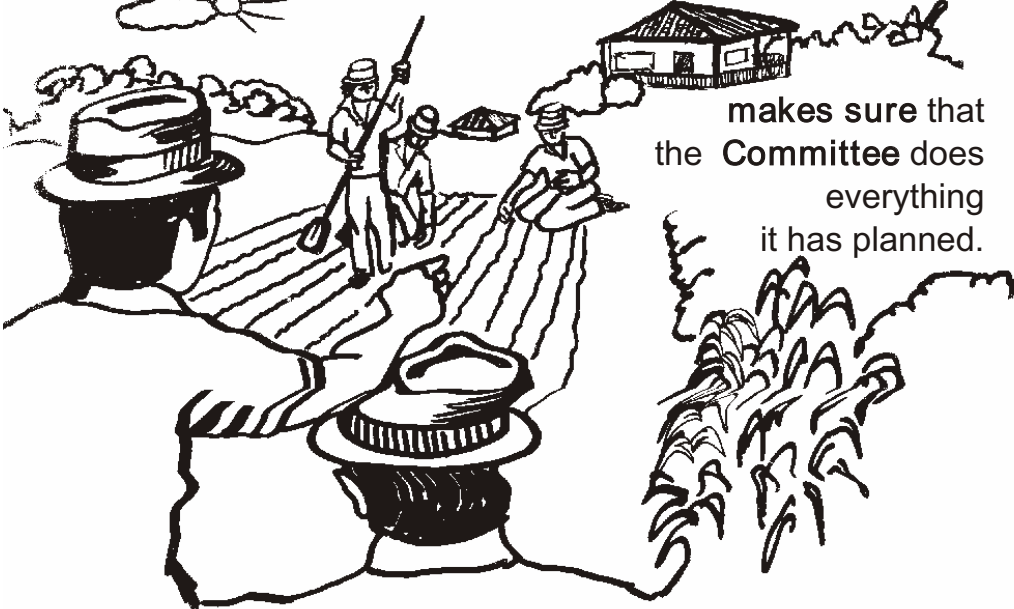


## The Leader



makes sure we talk with professionals from the agricultural services about our research,

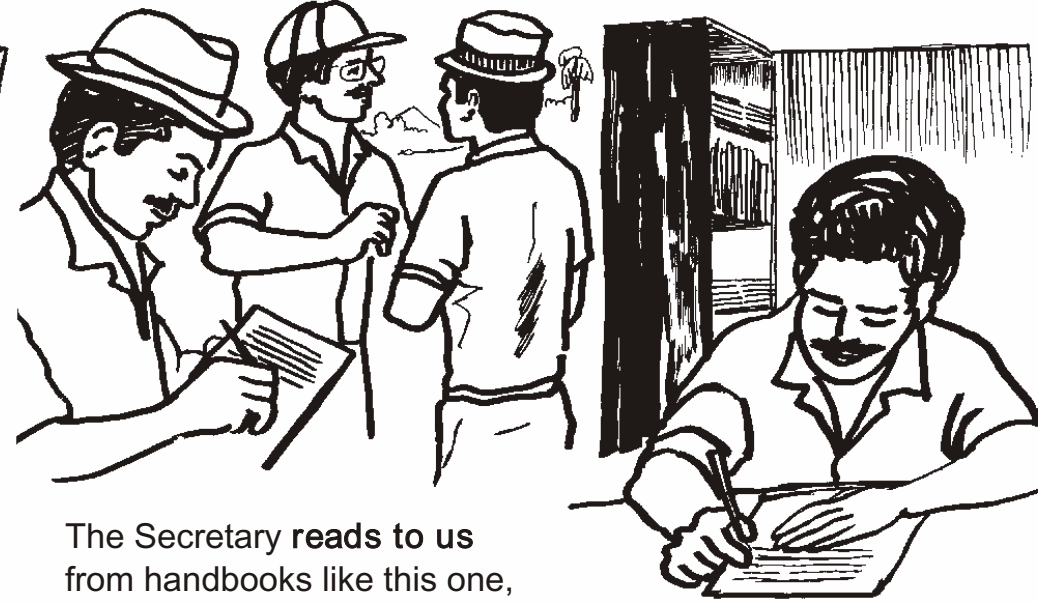
organizes meetings and



makes sure that the Committee does everything it has planned.

The leader should be very active, responsible and cooperative.

## The Secretary



The Secretary reads to us from handbooks like this one,



organizes our notes in a place where the community can use them.

The Secretary should be careful and well-organized.

The secretary likes to take notes.

The Treasurer takes care  
of our money,  
our tools  
and other things  
we use for our research,

He or she keeps track  
of our funds,

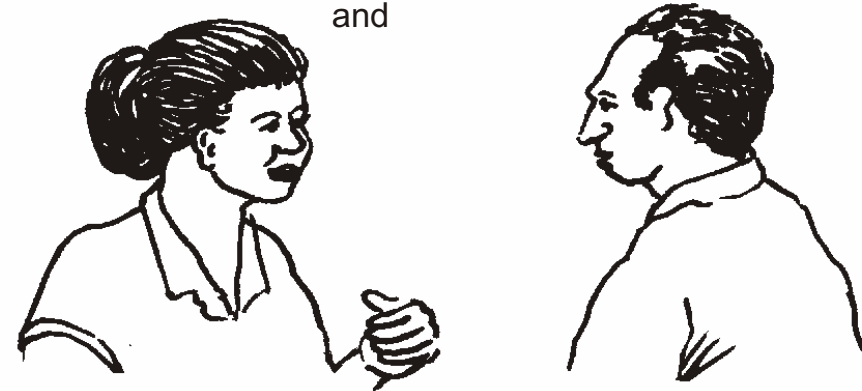
and buys the things we need  
for our experiments.

The Treasurer should be  
very honest and responsible.

The Communicator

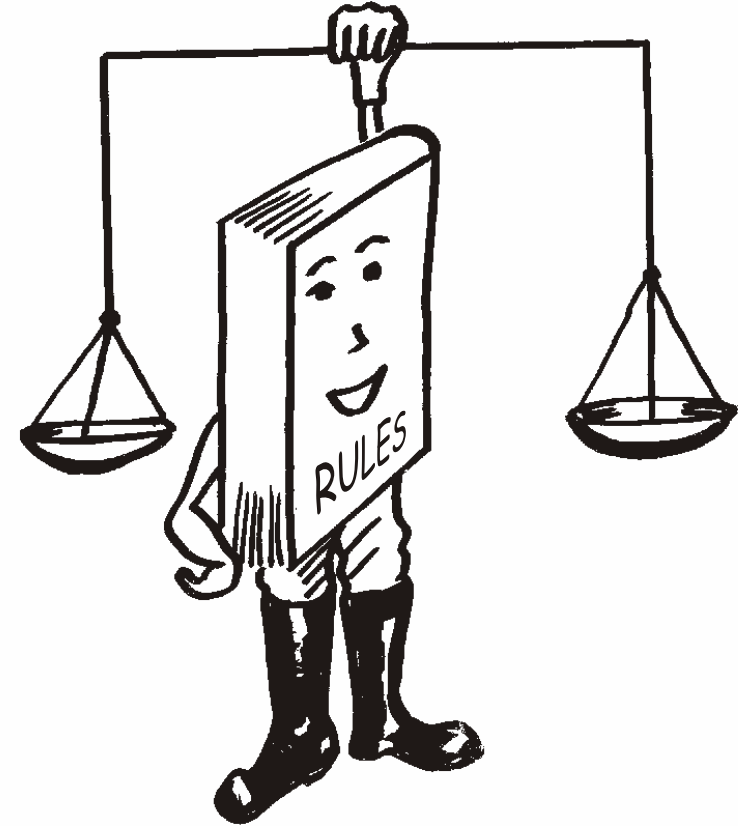


talks with the community to identify agricultural problems  
and opportunities and ideas for the experiments;  
and

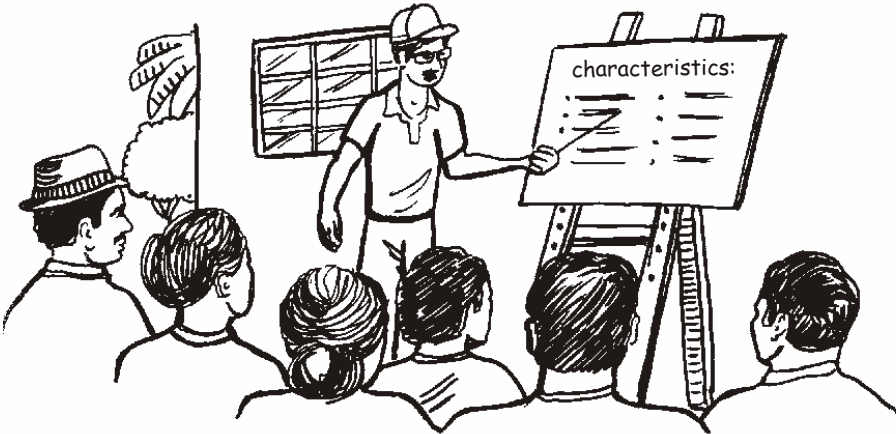


looks for experienced farmers  
to get ideas for the experiments.

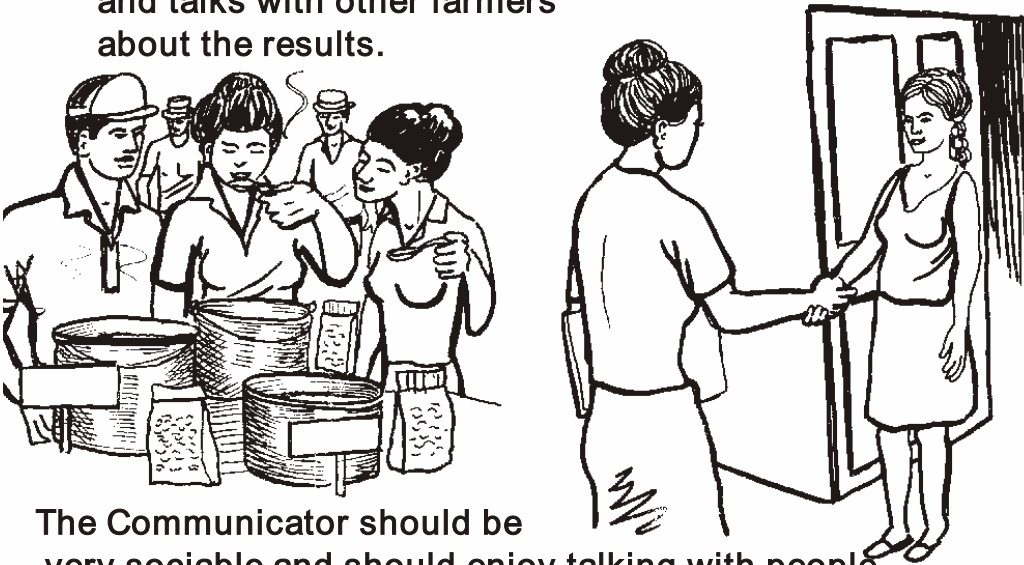
How do the members of the Local Agricultural Research Committee organize their work?



They have **rules** that help to organize the work.

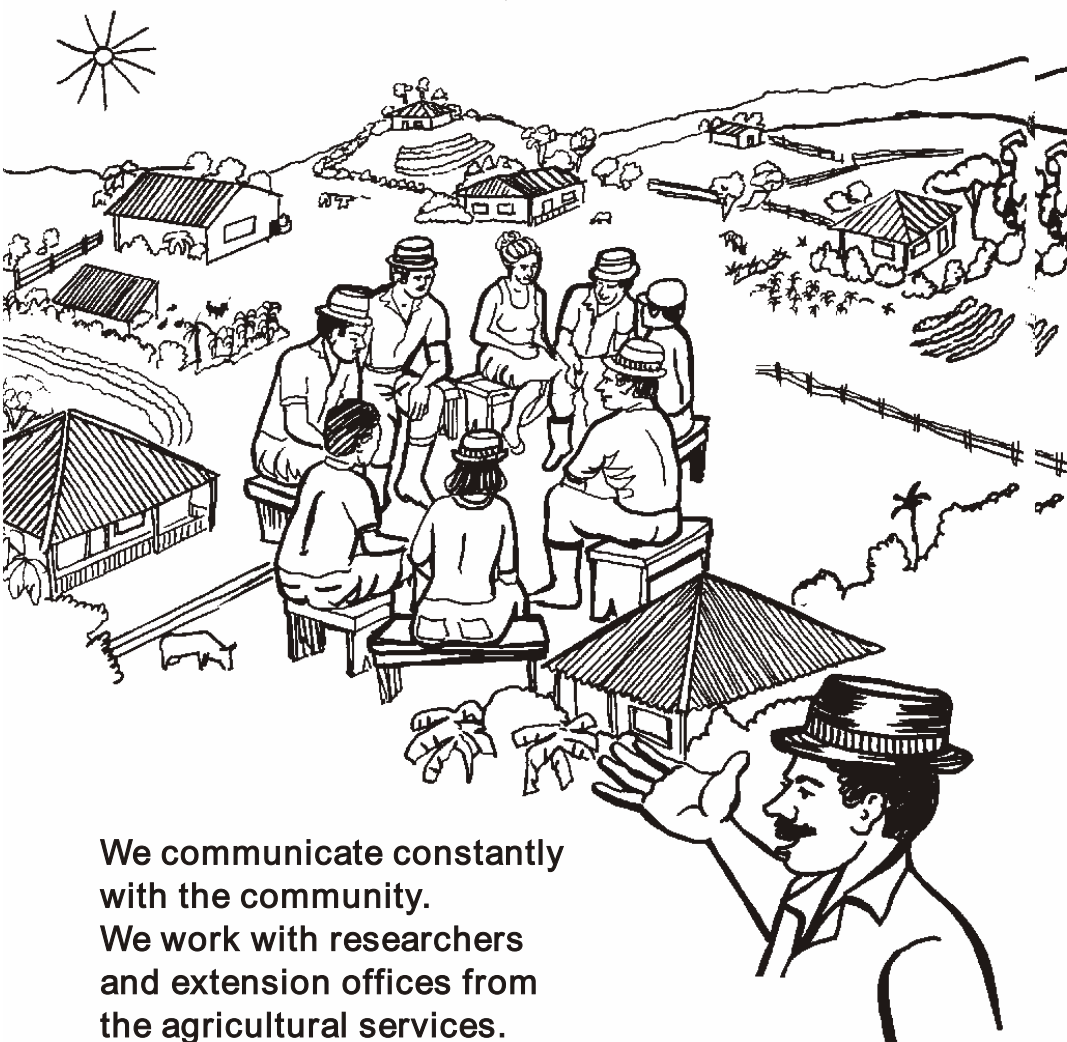


The **Communicator** identifies the training that the Committee needs to organize the experiments, and talks with other farmers about the results.



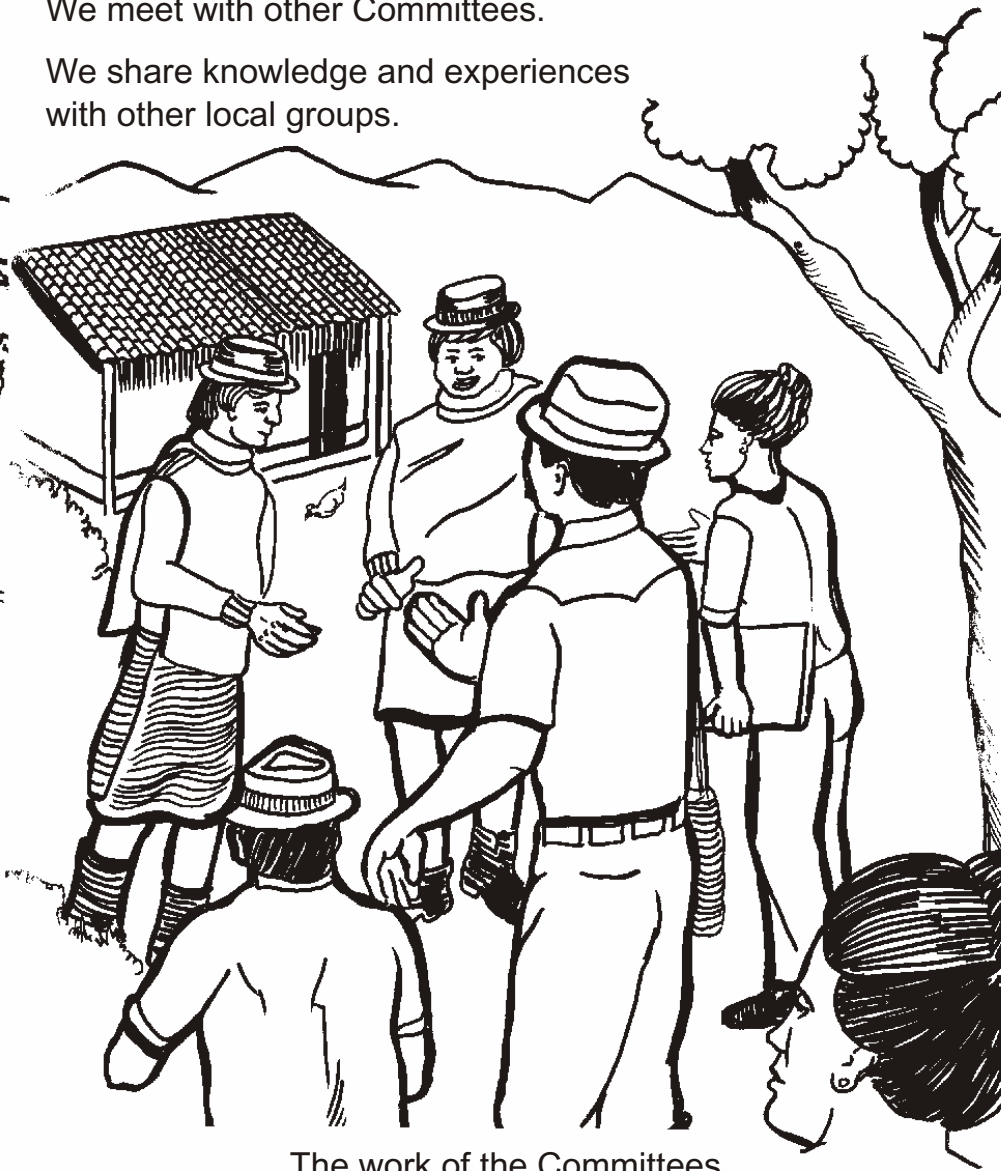
The **Communicator** should be very sociable and should enjoy talking with people.

With whom does the Local Agricultural Research Committee work?



We communicate constantly with the community.  
We work with researchers and extension offices from the agricultural services.

We meet with other Committees.  
We share knowledge and experiences with other local groups.

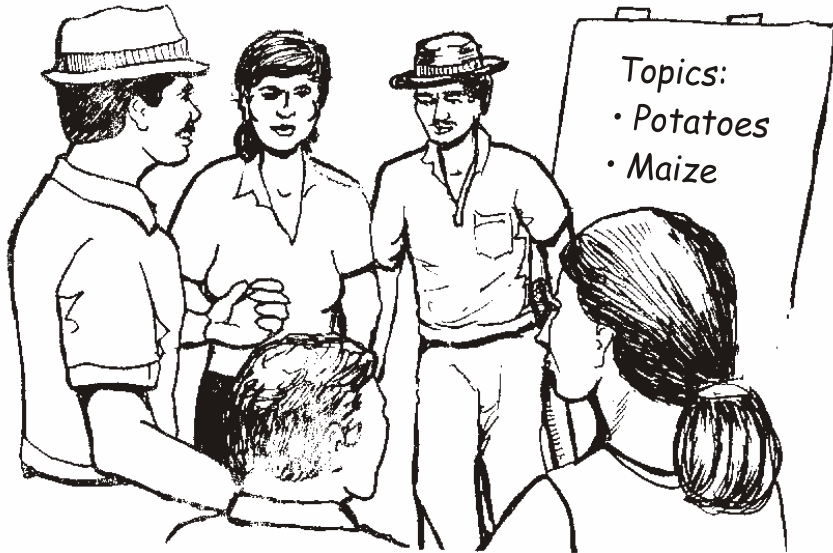


The work of the Committees is for the benefit of everyone.

How does a Committee work with a Community?

We meet with the community to decide what new ideas or questions to investigate.

We plan our experiments with farmers who have experience with the crop or the practices we are going to test.

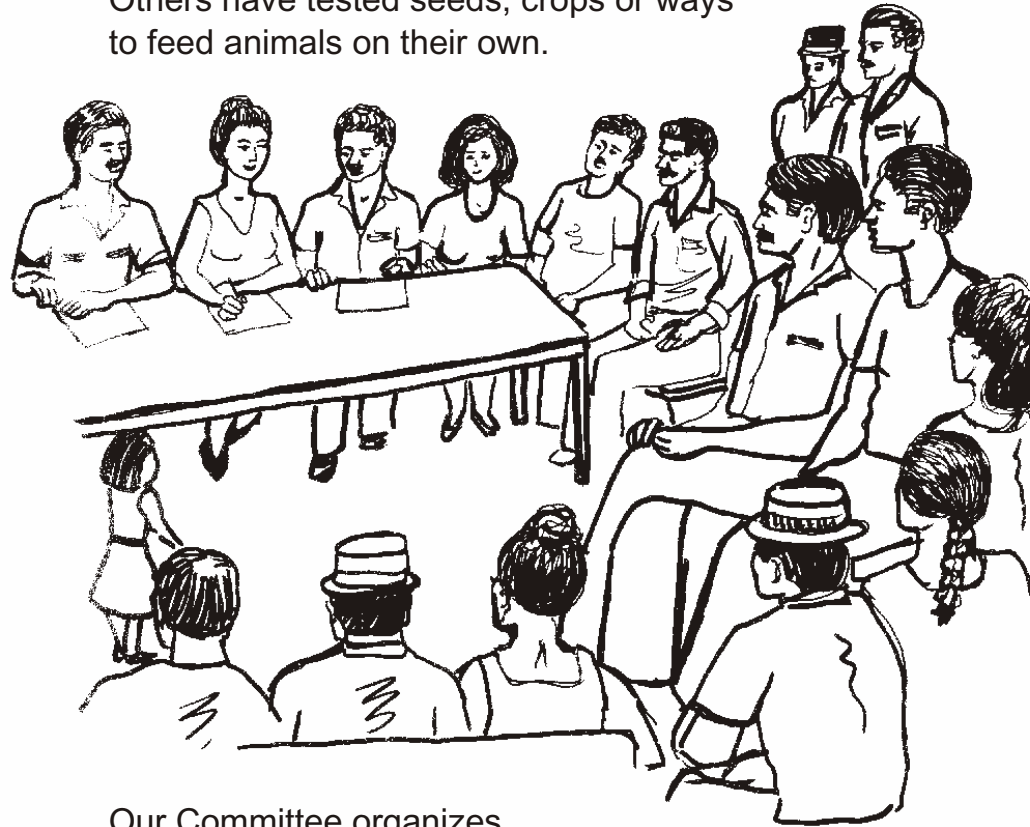


Several farmers are trying out new ideas in our village.

**They know a lot about our agriculture.**

They have ideas about new ways to improve our farms. Some know a lot about soils.

Others have tested seeds, crops or ways to feed animals on their own.



Our Committee organizes meetings with these farmers.

We work with them to share their knowledge.

After each experiment we meet with the community to discuss the results.

We organize meetings with people from the agricultural services when the farmers request them.



We share the results of our research with the community because we all need to improve our agriculture.

How does the Local Agricultural Research Committee work with agricultural research and extension services?



We tell them which are the important topics in our community.

We ask them for information, suggestions or ideas to improve agriculture.



We analyze what they propose to see whether it is worth testing.

We test the most interesting new ideas that they offer.



And how do we work with other Agricultural Research Committees?

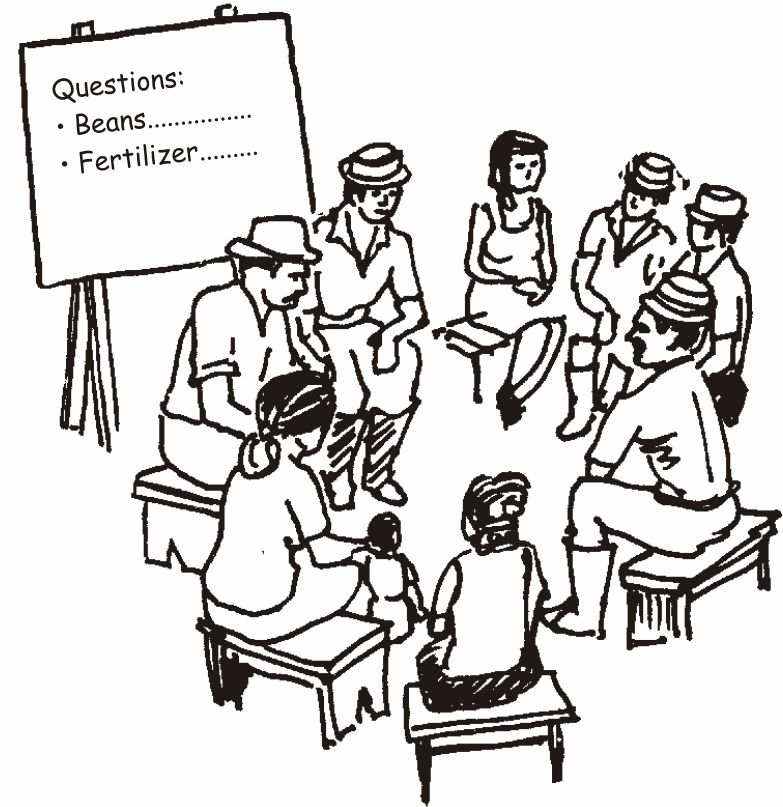
The Committee communicates with other Committees.

**In our region there are already several Committees.**

As we all are all trying to improve agriculture, the committees organize a way to get together,



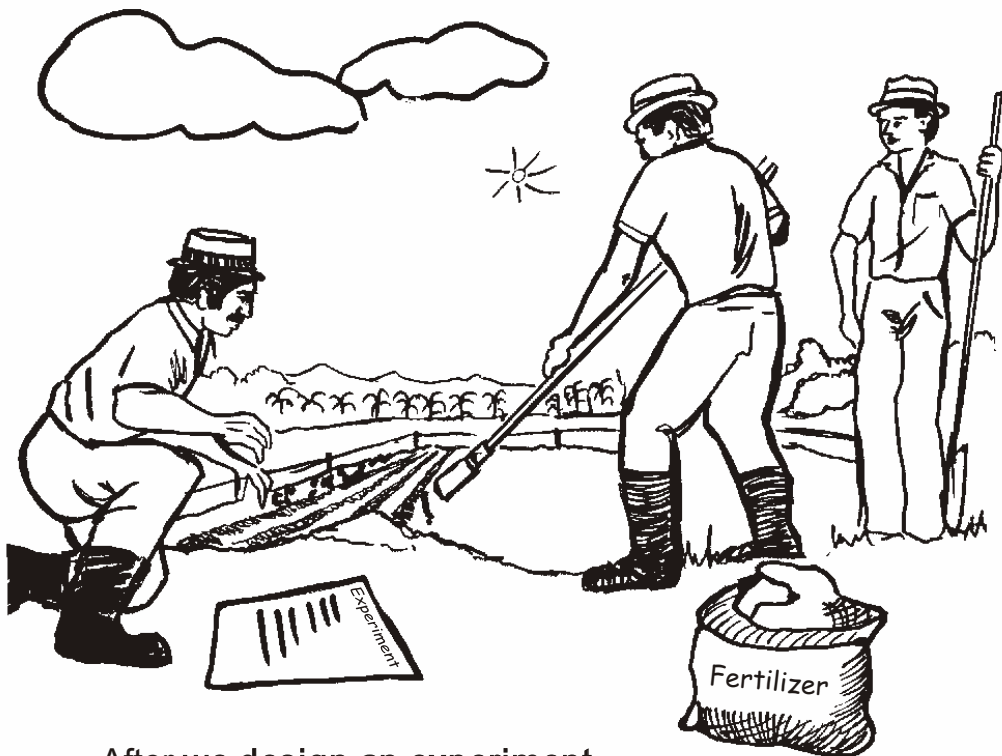
to share our experiences and compare our **experiments**. In that way we can share the good results and avoid repeating mistakes.



**Local Agricultural Research Committees follow a series of steps.**

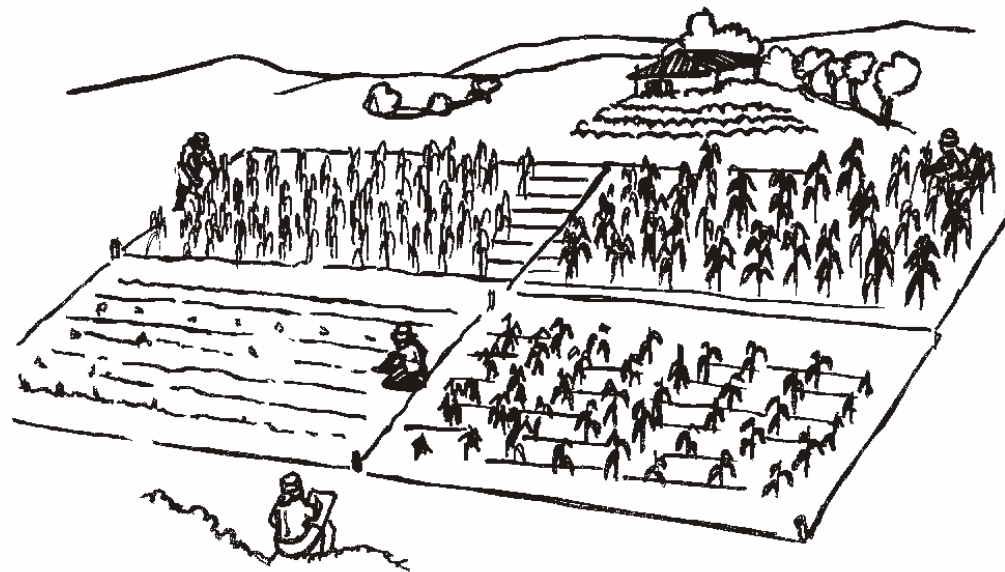


In the third step  
we reach an agreement  
on the things that we are going to do  
for our research.



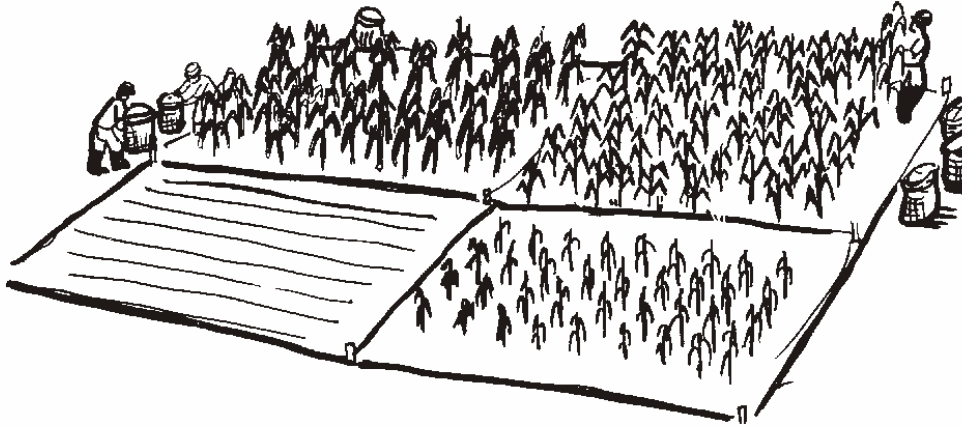
After we design an experiment,  
we follow the plan carefully.

In the fourth step, called **evaluation**,  
we monitor or follow the progress  
of the experiment.



We observe and evaluate the experiments  
during the growing period until the harvest  
in order to learn from the results.

Our work is progressing nicely.  
We reach the fifth step. We analyze the results.



Once the products have been harvested,  
we can reach conclusions about yield, costs,  
labour needs and many other things that interest us.



The conclusions reached by the Local Agricultural  
Research Committees become recommendations  
that we make to our communities.



We finish an experiment, we share the results  
with the community  
to improve agriculture for everyone.

We have gone through several steps:

- Diagnosis
- Planning
- Experimenting
- Evaluation
- Analysis of results
- Recommendations to community



There are still some questions that need to be resolved and new things to be tested....

**We can start over again!**