

Yucca CIAT

CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIONES

THE ROLE OF CIAT IN THE INTERNATIONAL IMPROVEMENT
OF CASSAVA: THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS INPUT^{1/}

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COLECCION HISTORICA



BIBLIOTECA

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Past economic analysis with respect to cassava is scarce. As a component of an international program on the improvement of cassava, research is needed on the economics of its production, marketing and consumption.

The suggested objectives of CIAT agricultural economics research activities on cassava are:

1. To help guide the allocation of research resources. Attempts will be made to estimate relative social pay-off from alternative research efforts.
2. To help improve the economic efficiency of cassava production and marketing.
3. To estimate the overall economic and social consequences of the adoption of improved technology in cassava production and marketing.
4. To help guide private and public investment and public policy with respect to cassava.

The specific areas of research needed include the following:

1. Research to identify the major bottlenecks in production, marketing and consumption of cassava; to estimate the relative economic importance of each one of these bottlenecks and to estimate the cost of reducing or eliminating them.
2. Research to estimate the cost of producing cassava under various management systems. This would include analyses on the relative cost of alternative means of disease, weed and insect control, optimum

^{1/} Discussion paper prepared for the International Cassava Program Review Conference, Cali, Colombia, January 10-12, 1972.

fertilizer use, plant spacing and other cost components. Furthermore, the relationship between cost of production and farm size should be analyzed.

3. Research to estimate economic losses during transportation and storage under various marketing systems. Furthermore, economic losses due to price fluctuations caused by seasonal variations in supply and demand or inefficient marketing systems should be analyzed.
4. Research to analyze present and future demand for cassava. Demands for fresh and processed cassava will be considered. The economic feasibility of utilizing increasing quantities of fresh cassava for animal feed and for industrial processing will be emphasized. This would include a study to determine the economic feasibility and the impact on consumer welfare of utilizing cassava to replace higher cost foods and feeds.
5. Research to analyze the implication of an expanded cassava production on employment, incomes, income distribution and foreign trade.

Given the research resources available to the Agricultural Economics Program of CIAT it is obvious that a considerable amount of outside collaboration will be needed to carry out the above mentioned research within a reasonable time span. Even with such collaboration it is doubtful whether all the projects involved could or should be carried out simultaneously, hence a time priority ranking must be established. It appears that research area number one, including closely related projects from the other four areas of research, is the most urgent.
