

Summary

A Tropical Pastures Seed Project began in 1986 to support pasture research and predevelopment initiatives in the Amazon region of Peru. The institutional participants were the Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agrarias y Agroindustriales (INIAA) and (IVITA) in Peru and the Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT).

The major Project activities were seed production, purchasing, and distribution; training; applied research; and revision. Seed Project nuclei, to promote seed production and marketing with expanding participation, were established and consolidated at both Pucallpa and Tarapoto.

Seed multiplication was initiated at the research station. With a total lack of tradition of pasture seed production in both regions, the nuclei then involved small farmers as novice multipliers in sharefarming agreements. Progressively, more stringent selection criteria were applied to ensure increased participation by the multipliers and to best utilize the limited technical assistance from the nuclei and the limited resources of the small farmers. With the addition of a rotating fund for seed production, purchase, and sales, the nuclei then evolved to contract seed production with the experienced multipliers.

Over a five-year period, a composite total of 8.5 tons of seed were generated, with a similar net contribution from both nuclei, providing a significant impetus to pasture evaluation, especially on-farm research on grass-legume associations. A total of 19 novice multipliers were involved in generating a core of five with experience and interest in continuing.

An annual review was conducted to analyze activities, problems, needs, and future plans. In addition, problem-specific training activities were

carried out, including workshops and study tours, of both a national and international nature. Links were also established with the private sector, including the seed enterprise SEFO-SAM in Bolivia and FUNDEAGRO in Peru.

The Project has maintained and expanded a diverse range of field activities during a period of profound economic, institutional, and social difficulties. The dedication from members of the two nuclei was professional and admirable. These experiences and achievements provide a basis for future expansion and warrant continued financial support from both national and international sources. Overall, this multifaceted Project has demonstrated both significant achievements and evolution.