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MONTHLY REPORT - JANUARY 1985

CHAPARE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
EXPERIENCE, INCORPORATED

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PROJECT NUMBER: 511-0543

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Coordinator

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I. Activities

A. Administrative and Institutional

IBTA/Chapare - EI located an office in Cochabamba. The landlord signed a lease agreement on 29 January. USAID is expected to approve the lease in early February.

Dr. Merritt Taylor of EI, representatives of SDTB and IBTA/Chapare held a series of meetings in La Paz on narcotics and development strategy. In attendance were the Ministers of Planning and Defense, U.S. Ambassador Edwin Corr, officials of Lucha Contra el Narcotrafico, USAID, DIRECO, and the Drug Enforcement Agency. Briefing papers were prepared and discussed. A summary was prepared for submission to the President of the Republic.

Three ong-term EI consultants joined the project in January. Dr. Alfredo Alvarado and Dr. John Bieber arrived on 9 January and Dr. José Mondonado arrived on 12 January.

Ing. Franklin Lastra was employed by IBTA/Chapare as director of the Chipiriri experiment station, and Srta. Rosario Campuzano was employed as secretary. Employment or transfer of six additional employees for IBTA/Chapare is under discussion/negotiation as of end of January. Hiring of IBTA personnel is being slowed by low salary levels, and uncertainty about future salary adjustments.

Owens was on sick leave 14 - 18 January.

Owens traveled to La Paz 7 - 10 January and Dr. Taylor was in La Paz 13 - 19 January.

Taylor and Joe Lopez were in the Chapare 2 - 11 January and again 21 - 24 January. Alvarado, Bieber and Mondonado also made their first trip to the Chapare 21 - 24 January. Owens and John Fasullo of USAID were in the Chapare 31 January and 1 February.

EI has been informed that orders for household furniture and appliances have been place by USAID as of end of January. Requests for incidental household items, such as carpets, lamps and transformers were forwarded to the project manager.

Also, requests for furniture, appliances and other items for the Staff House in Villa Tunari were forwarded to USAID.

Dr. Taylor and Sr. Ulrico Beerel, president , Auto Club inventoried the Automobile Club premises in Villa Tunari.

B. Technical

Considerable technical activities were initiated in the Chapare during the month of January. This was possible for the first time due to the release of funds from USAID/Bolivia and to a period of relative calm which prevailed throughout the period.

The USAID project paper was studied and discussed at general meetings of IBTA/Chapare administrative and technical personnel. Additional study and discussion is planned, hopefully with direct input from USAID.

Work plans and schedules for IBTA/Chapare technical staff were completed in January. This effort will be expanded to an overall work plan for IBTA/Chapare.

Meetings were held with farmers from Jatun Pampa, Bubusama and the 23 de Agosto communities. Field trips were made to these communities to observe the farms, cropping patterns and farming practices.

Six para Technicians and 15 demonstration farms were chosen by IBTA/Chapare and the farming community.

Twenty farmers were selected to attend the first farmers training program to be held in March.

A demonstration of pasture establishment by asexual reproduction was conducted near Bubusama.

A field day was conducted for 10 Jatun Pampa farmers at Chipiriri and La Jota experiment stations.

Plans and teaching material were developed for a training course for IBTA/Chapare technicians in the first week of February. Training activities for 1985 were scheduled. This will include nine courses of three to five days duration for groups of technicians, para-technicians and farmers. The services of a short-term training consultant were requested through Experience, Incorporated.

Additional invitations have been received from farmers groups in the Chapare. As of the end of January, IBTA/Chapare has initiated activities in, or has been invited into, four of the nine micro-regions of the Chapare - 2,3,5 and 7.

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Work continued on rehabilitation and repair of experiment stations.

Plans were laid for systematic investigation of cropping systems in the Chapare and preliminary drafts of forms for recording information were drawn up.

Dr. Alvarado visited soils laboratories in the area with a view to establishing professional contacts and making arrangements for analysis of soil samples from the Chapare. He discussed prospects for cooperation in Masters level research in the Chapare between San Simon University and IBTA/Chapare.

II. Issues and Solutions

The IBTA/Chapare salary issue has become more serious recently. The salary and "bonos" are considered inadequate to attract qualified personnel, and perhaps also inadequate to retain current staff. The problem is now being discussed with USAID.

Although IBTA/Chapare has received funds from USAID, there is some difficulty in spending these funds, and a significant portion of the funds for 1984 were not delivered to IBTA. We expect USAID to clarify procedures for expenditure of funds in February. Hopefully, USAID can also transfer part of the peso budget, which has been eroded by a factor of more than ten by inflation, back to the direct dollar account.

Shortage of transportation and fuel has plagued the project in January. We are assured that four vehicles for IBTA/Chapare will arrive in February.

Although the Chapare was calm through January, there are strong rumors that MOPAR (Leopardos) and/or Rural Police will enter the project area in February. Experience, Incorporated should be informed officially of any such moves which affect the safety of development personnel.

III. Work Planned for Next Reporting Period

A week long training course for IBTA/Chapare technicians will be presented 4 - 8 February. A course for para-technicians to be held in early March will be prepared, as well as a farmer training session scheduled for the third week in March.

Field trips to various Chapare communities will be taken in February, and farmer meetings will be held according to the needs and invitations of communities.

IBTA/Chapare plans to assist Bubusama area farmers establish a nursery for cacao and rubber trees. We hope to have about five technical packages ready for dissemination by extension/research personnel.

IBTA/Chapare hopes to be able to select eighteen para-technicians and eighteen demonstration farm sites in February.