

# Colombia Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) Program

## Narrative

### 1. Summary of major impacts and accomplishments

The Purdue-Unillanos Farmer to Farmer Project in Meta, Colombia was slow to start up because contracts were delayed at the holiday period, and following this, there was a need to translate our proposal into Spanish. Nevertheless, the project is well underway now, fielding volunteers and with many volunteers lined up for next six months of the project. Please see the Volunteer Plan through September 2015, below, for a list of assignments and volunteers scheduled. Host organizations in Meta are small associations, and in most cases very weak organizationally. However, they are very eager for technical and market-linkage assistance.

### Volunteers

Tallal Hassan Khan, a citizen of Pakistan who is currently a Humphrey Fellow at Cornell University, filled our first assignment. Tallal worked as an agricultural engineer in Pakistan, specializing in water management and conservation. Gary Alex met with the group of Humphrey Fellows this year and recommended them as possible volunteers. Purdue sought and received from USAID and VEGA the exception that permitted us to field a non-US volunteer.

Water conservation is one of the most pressing issues of the Meta Region, where the rainy season lasts half the year but smallholders do not store water for the dry season which lasts the other half of the year. Moreover, smallholders do not build structures to help runoff water flow to crops instead of washing away soil. Tallal gave presentations at an organization hall and at a farm for a total of 41 participants from 7 different organizations. These comprised mainly Cacao-producers' organizations in Ari Ari and Smallholder farmers' associations in Altillanura. He also gave a presentation on the issues he addressed and his recommendations at Unillanos, addressing 52 people – 44 students and 8 faculty members.

### Promotion

- Internet Media
  - <https://ag.purdue.edu/ipia/Pages/USAID-Farmer-to-Farmer.aspx>
  - Colombia Farmer to Farmer Facebook Page
  - Farmer to Farmer Project in Colombia Blog\
  - <http://www.unillanos.edu.co/index.php/inicio/informativo/slide/3517-inician-dialogos-con-productores-para-establecer-tematicas-a-tratar-con-expertos-internacionales-de-purdue>
  - Tallal Hassan Khan posted photos from his assignment to Meta. Link pending
- Press
  - F2F in Unillanos: <http://www.unillanos.edu.co/index.php/inicio/informativo/3621-edicion-diecinueve;>
  - <http://noticierodellano.com/article/dos-norteamericanos-en-el-programa-de-productores-para-productores-de-unillanos#sthash.e4nhP59f.dpbs>
- Television: The Unillanos TV station interviewed Andrea Burniske about the F2F project
- Presentations: Andrea Burniske and Alvaro Ocampo exhibited a poster at the Indiana Small Farms Conference in March. This poster, along with their general participation, enabled them to promote the project and generate a lot of interest in Colombia assignments.



### Indiana Small Farms Conference (<https://ag.purdue.edu/Extension/smallfarms/Pages/default.aspx>)

Andrea Burniske and Colombia F2F Country Director Alvaro Ocampo participated in the Indiana Small Farms Conference 2015. This was a very good opportunity to show Alvaro exactly what has been meant by support for small farms and a regional food system, as well as how food hubs operate. The first day of the conference we took a tour of small farms and learned much about their operational challenges and evolving access to markets. We also met with the person involved in helping to design the software platform that enables customers to place orders directly with local farmers through Hoosier Harvest Market (<http://hoosierharvestmarket.com/>). We saw the aggregation center, where farmers drop off the orders and customers pick them up, and learned exactly how this works. All of this is important because it responds exactly to the needs of small producers in Meta. At the conference sessions we learned about many technical solutions and approaches to agricultural issues – such as soil improvement, access to markets, permaculture, etc. And we had an opportunity to exhibit our large poster on the project, and recruit volunteers for future assignments. Local farmers and extension educators are very interested to undertake F2F assignments, and at least one of the assignments will address the feasibility of adapting the Hoosier Harvest Market platform for cell or SmartPhone use in Meta.

### **2. Summary of major implementation problems**

There have been no implementation problems, only lags with contracts. This was because 1) there are two universities involved, and our processes are always slower – especially with needs to translate contracts and the proposal, and other documents; and 2) Holidays slowed things down considerably. I do not foresee additional issues. It has not been difficult to interest volunteers in assignments to Colombia. Especially because Purdue has broader activity there and so there is much interest in using assignments as a starting point for research and other academic and extension activities.

### **3. Planned activities for the next six months. (Demian and Andrea, please discuss your pesticide country assessment in this section.)**

- Purdue did not undertake a pesticide country assessment, and do not plan to undertake one, having learned from the Colombia USAID Mission that such an assessment was carried out by Chemonics in 2007, and updated in 2008, for activities of the MIDAS project. The original report (in Spanish) and the Addendum, in English, comprising more pesticides, were sent to VEGA in December of 2014. Purdue plans to follow guidelines related to PERSUAP for all assignments that discuss pest control of any kind.
- During the next six months Purdue and Unillanos will field two volunteers per month according to assignments identified in our plan See **Annex A**.
- In June, Andrea Burniske will travel to Meta to plan for **project year 2**. A Small Farms Conference will be held next year, and we will begin to develop plans for Small Farms certificate courses. The Small Farms Conference we have in mind will look much like the one in Indiana (see the link above). Smallholder Farmers who have more experience and have had success in markets and technical areas will submit proposals to have a session. Likewise, volunteers will be recruited for sessions as part of their assignments. This conference is to promote best practices in farming and in market linkages, as well as to promote the concept of a local food system.



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- A new initiative was launched between the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA), the Agricultural and Rural Development Ministry, and Mayor of Villavicencio, to promote certification in good agricultural practices. Through this partnership, the municipal government aims to promote far-reaching projects promoting rural development and entrepreneurship for small scale producers of fruit, plantain, cassava and tomato, training over three hundred producers in outlying towns. This initiative is an opportunity to the project to provide volunteers.



**Volunteer Plan through September 2015.**

Management of Waste water	This assignment will train farmer organizations in the management of wastewater, such as biodigesters, bioremediation, reuse in irrigation, seeking to reduce the impact of production processes on the resource and increase efficiency in their use	<b>Anne Dare,</b> April 2015
Agricultural producer organizational capacity and planning	With this assignment, applicant organizations must motivate new organizational and planning process from the perspective of local capacities and intergenerational inclusion to ensure that organizations develop basic planning schemes	<b>Carmen Derusha,</b> August, 2015
Improving horticulture for smallholders	Need to develop the detail for the scope of work	<b>Mathilde Durzo</b> June 2015
IPM and organic fertilizers	The assignment will work on perfecting techniques, standards and resources for the preparation of organic fertilizers and pest management through IPM. (Will need approval from USAID for PERSUAP)	July 2015
Farm finance management	This assignment will help participating organizations and producers to develop projections of income and expenditures; to keep good records; and to manage on-farm cash flow. (This should be basic, such as the information for Annie's Project)	July 2015
Integrated Agricultural Production Systems	For this topic, volunteers will train beneficiaries on the various techniques of integrated agricultural production systems such as intercropping, forestry, agroforestry, integrated production systems and farm animals	<b>Dave Roberts,</b> April 2015
Harvesting, storage, and efficiency of water use	The assignment will focus on training in rainwater harvesting systems, water storage, distribution and efficient use in production systems.	<b>Tallal Hassan,</b> March 2015
Soils and the Nutrient Cycle	This assignment will focus on cycles of decay and transformation of soil nutrients, biomass production and its use for different purposes within the farm	<b>Anna Morrow,</b> May 2015
Youth Agriculture Clubs and Opportunities	This assignment will develop local youth leadership potential for agriculture and food production.	<b>Cris Derusha,</b> June 2015



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Healthy Agro-Ecosystems	This assignment will help participating organizations and producers understand and monitor biomarkers of productive systems (populations of insects, beneficial insects, allelopathy, etc.) allowing identification of imbalances in their production systems	<b>Steve Hallet,</b> Sept. 2015
Marketing	This assignment will show successful experiences from marketing possibilities for agricultural products, helping producers and their organizations to develop ideas or market planning, with a special focus on local markets and examples of success from these.	<b>Linda Chapman</b> July 2015 2015
Seed Storage and Seed Banks	Need to develop the detail for the scope of work	<b>Maud Powell,</b> Sept. 2015
Use of ICT for Marketing	Based on the results of the previous assignment of marketing, this assignment should show the possibilities of integration of ICT into marketing and production processes. Participants should be able to think of ideas and alternatives to the use of ICTs, elements that will be translated into a second assignment related to the topic	<b>Michael Morrow,</b> May 2015
Food Hub and Food Systems Development	Along with the support of institutions previously contacted, this assignment will work in showing successful experiences and market mechanisms for regional food and agricultural products	<b>Tamara Benjamin,</b> August 2015