

SEED AGRICULTURAL DIVISION STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

By Arsene Smilien

I- RATIONAL

For seventeen (17) years, the Ag. Division at SEED focused mainly on small scale agriculture mainly for educational purpose and little income. This approach works perfectly on a small scale basis; but doesn't really make a difference in the life of involved communities and students. The division needs to expand its activities on a larger scale in order to support local production. To do so, we will need first: to increase our own production through cultivation of more land, improved irrigation system, sufficient inputs, applied research and mechanization. Mechanization is particularly important to overcome the lack of manpower leading to less harvests per year and lower yield per harvest due to bad soil preparation. Another way to encourage local production is to establish processing plants (vegetable and dairy products...) to manage so called excess products. (*about 30% percent of our tomatoes even on small scale production used to be lost every year due to lack of adequate storage*). In addition to our own products, our division will need to encourage students and local farmers to produce. Once farmers/students know they have a sure market through SEED, they will produce more and the overall production will increase consequently.

All of the above requires important amount of money for infrastructure and equipments. Consequently, SEED will need to submit specific projects (*food processing, Ag. Equipments, construction*) to appropriate financial Institutions in the US or elsewhere.

These investments, for sure, will provide additional funds to reinvest and help improve life at SEED and in the communities. These changes will also require a change in the Institute curriculum to better equip our students for a developing and changing market. The curriculum will need to focus more on processing and entrepreneurship along with production, animal husbandry and veterinary. The practicum will also need to be revised to provide the students with specific knowledge in a more systematic approach.

II- PRODUCTION

Land and mechanization

- Additional land (Long term loan and/or purchase)
- Mechanization (tractors with accessories for all kind of work beside land preparation, planting and weeding). Drainage for example, is very important and cannot be done properly by hand.

Irrigation

Drip or sprinklers needs to be established where irrigation canals are not possible. A larger and taller water tower to run sprinklers and drip irrigation on the farm and other works needs to be built.

Infrastructure/ storage

- Storage facilities (Silo, Depot) need to be built on a larger scale to accommodate extra yields.
- Shelter for Ag. equipments with office for farm crew, storage for parts and tools needs to be built.
- Chicken coop, goat and cow pen need to be removed from campus and rebuilt in a different location. (Animal production needs to be done on a larger scale in order to cover the expenses)

Most structures must be established on the farm to facilitate work of the farm crew and a better management. (Need to secure a section of the farm for that purpose).

Demonstration / Alternative gardening

An alternative gardening section will be established on the farm in order to demonstrate alternative types of farming. This section will include: different types of irrigation, land preparation, fertilization, rooftop gardening, plastic and residue mulching, container gardening, suspended garden, various crops that are generally not produced on the farm, fish farming, chicken production...This section will serve as demonstration for our students, visitors and students from other universities and schools. This section aims at opening the mind and imagination of our students and visitors on different alternatives for agricultural production based on their location and availabilities.

A new landscape will need to be built to accommodate these structures, and systems.

Continuing education

It is important that the farm managers and crew receive appropriate training on a regular basis in order to be up to date with new Ag. technologies. Training may include: seminars, workshops, field trips, internships and especially visits to other agricultural institutions/ farms/processing plants that are successful either in Haiti or elsewhere.

Special training on maintenance and repair for tractors and other equipments operators needs also to be done on a regular basis.

III- PROCESSING

Crop and vegetable products (e.g. hot pepper, tomatoes...)

Perishable products such as hot peppers and tomatoes, even when produced on small scale, are often lost at more than 30% due to lack of storage and processing facilities.

It is very important that SEED is being equipped with adequate storage facilities such as a cooler to keep these products for a longer period. However, if we go into large scale production, a vegetable processing plant would be required to convert tomato into tomato sauce and pepper into salsa, or vinegar... In this case we will have to use not only our

products but also products from or students and other farmers; which will consequently encourage local production.

Appropriate training is required before establishment of these plants.

Dairy product (e.g. milk, meat...)

There is a great demand for fresh milk and meat. A dairy unit at SEED to pasteurize and conserve fresh milk and meat, to begin, would be a very important service to the community. This service will not only provide fresh and clean products to the community but also and more importantly encourage animal production in the region as well as an important source of income for the SEED. Further steps such as, cheese, yogurt etc. will come gradually

IV- RESEARCH

SEED should get involved in applied research based on local needs and real problems to be solved. It is important to establish contact with other institutions doing research and get advantage of their previous work. It is particularly important to search for improved species / seeds that have already been developed and make them available to the local farmers.

Results of our research as well as other important information such as rainfall records...need to be documented and made available to our students and other institutions or schools.

V- MARKETING

There is a need to develop a marketing strategy both for local and national market

- Improve storage and packing
- Establish demonstration posts (refrigerated fresh sample) at the Institute and local supermarkets
- Use local and national supermarket for processed products
- Advertisements

Establish a qualified and independent marketing crew that will be responsible to market all our products. This crew will be responsible not just for delivery, but also and more importantly to develop the market.

VI- PROJECTS / PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Many of the above projects (especially the food and dairy processing plants) require important amount of cash; the easiest way to get this money would be through submission of proposals to appropriate Institutions either in the US or elsewhere.

VII- CONCLUSION

The above plan is just a summary of the main orientation of the Agricultural division. I strongly believe that we need to have sufficient resources to fully implement this plan. There is a lot of need everywhere; unfortunately we are not able to help make a concrete difference in the life of these people we work with because of scarcity of resources. Even with good will, if we don't have appropriate resources, we will never be able to have a long term impact on these communities. I hope God will provide us with the necessary means to really make a difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters in need at least in some of these communities where SEED has been working either in extension or evangelization for more than a decade.

SEED FARM PLAN (Rough draft)

