

Higher Education for Development
Knowledge, Partnerships, Results



United States-Mexico
Training, Internships, Exchanges, and Scholarships (TIES)

Brief Progress Report¹

Report Period

April 1, 2006 – June 30, 2006

Due: July 31, 2006



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Partnership Title: Decision Support of Ruminant Livestock Systems in the Gulf Region of Mexico

Development Area: Rural development: Economic growth and competitiveness through animal agriculture

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Partnership Web Site: <http://tiesmexico.cals.cornell.edu/>

¹ Revised June 30, 2006

PARTNERSHIP QUESTIONS

1. Describe in bullet form **major activities** during this report period (April 1, 2006 – June 30, 2006).
 - *Master of Science degree programs.* Two Mexican students, Victor Absalón and Luis Nabté, successfully completed the second semester of their MS programs. Among various training and scholarly activities, these students developed proposals for thesis research and for their summer 2006 research training with TIES partners in Veracruz and Yucatán. A third Mexican student, Omar Cristóbal, who will commence Cornell graduate studies in August, worked closely with V. Absalón on research activities in collaboration with Universidad Veracruzana and INIFAP scientists, Dr. Francisco Juárez, Dra. Bertha Rueda, Dr. Eduardo Canudas, and Dr. Gabriel Díaz.
 - *Teaching platform, 2006-07.* Planning commenced for delivering the TIES teaching platform for 2006-07, which also includes three courses with videoconferencing, and one field trip laboratory. As previously reported, the teaching platform now contains five courses instead of the four courses originally proposed with the addition of *Introduction to System Dynamics Modeling*.
 - *Web-platform updated.* Our TIES Web site (<http://tiesmexico.cals.cornell.edu>) and associated course sites were updated to reflect current training and research activities and for dissemination of the information residing there.
 - *Special UADY student training.* A special 2006 training program has been planned for four UADY graduate students who will each undertake a full semester of training at Cornell University from August 20 to December 9, 2006. All students have been long-term participants in many other TIES project trainings and research. Their participation in 2004-06 included five short courses taught at UADY and Universidad Veracruzana, videoconferences and a field course as part of the platform of joint courses, and a previous training program at Cornell. These students are: Valentín Cárdenas, Gabriela González, Miguel Huchín and Andrés Calderón. This major training activity substitutes for two of the eight scholarships in the originally proposed to support one MS student.
 - *External project evaluation.* Efforts were devoted to planning, coordinating and conducting in three phases the external evaluation of our TIES project by Dr. Lucía Vaccaro. Due to a family illness, the first phase at Cornell (postponed from May) was completed June 29 in a series of meetings with Drs. T. Tucker, C. Nicholson and R. Blake. Phases two and three are scheduled for July 1-4 (Yucatán) and July 5-9 (Veracruz), respectively.
 - *TIES student research.* Research activities of four TIES students continued. Kotaro Baba made significant headway towards completing his MS thesis on management of Yucatecan beef cattle systems, and has an expected completion date of 30 September 2006. David Parsons continued his collaborative dissertation research project with colleagues in Yucatán focusing on the sustainability of crop-livestock systems there, especially those with sheep. Victor Absalón finalized his MS thesis proposal, which contributes to a collaborative project with INIFAP-Veracruz (led by Dr. B. Rueda), and started his field research in Veracruz

working with Drs. F. Juárez, B. Rueda, E. Canudas, and G. Díaz. Valentín Cárdenas continues his dissertation study about the energetic efficiency of Yucatán beef cattle herds using software technology developed at Cornell University.

- *Future publications.* Data summary was continued towards the goal of eventual Spanish language publication of the results from our rapid appraisal of Yucatán sheep production systems. Work also continues with the aim of submitting in 2006 a journal article to *Agricultural Systems* on the dynamics of sheep production systems in the Gulf Region with analysis of policy options. This article would be a chapter in the dissertation of D. Parsons.

2. For each of the above activities, describe the **results/outcomes** for each activity.

Activity	Results/Outcomes
<i>Master of Science degree programs</i>	Students acquired the necessary skills and guidance to carry out their own research focused on Mexican problems and issues.
<i>Teaching platform, 2006-07.</i>	The expected outcome is to achieve broad impact on thinking by a larger number (than in 2005-06) of students at UADY and UV, especially, and at Cornell.
<i>Web-platform updated</i>	More information has been made available to students, faculty and scientists at partner institutions and others. This platform constitutes a <i>global learning forum</i> for TIES partners and other institutions.
<i>Special UADY student training</i>	More UADY students will have the opportunity to team with TIES colleagues and other students and faculty at Cornell while also sharing responsibility in “taking home” what they learn so it can be discussed with peers and faculty.
<i>External project evaluation</i>	Hopefully, evaluation recommendations will help assure greater achievements in 2006-07 and larger benefits and long term impacts for all partners.
<i>TIES student research</i>	This information should enrich teaching and research programs at all institutions and help to develop practical recommendations for farmers and their advisors.
<i>Future publications</i>	Publication will inform larger audiences in Mexico and abroad about agricultural challenges and problem-solving approaches in the Gulf region.

3. Outline your partnership's **planned activities** for the *next three months* as they relate to the overall objectives.

- Continue training of three Mexican MS students at Cornell University to enhance their contributions to TIES research and training platforms.
- Train four UADY graduate students at Cornell University, providing each of them with one full semester of course work and research-related assignments.
- Commence delivery of the platform of joint courses for the 2006-07 academic year. Continue planning of the "living laboratory" field course, IARD 602, which will be operated January 3-18, 2006 in Yucatán, Chiapas, Tabasco and Veracruz with student and faculty participants from UADY, UV, the Colegio de Posgraduados (Campus Cárdenas), and Cornell.
- Continue/finalize thesis research projects (and publications) of TIES students.
- Complete the external evaluation, distribute the evaluator's report to all partner institutions, and post it on our Web site.

4. Please list all partnership-related events (ceremonies, conferences, meetings, workshops) in the U.S. and Mexico that will take place during the *next three months* and include **dates and locations**. HED and USAID will use this information to schedule possible site visits.

- *August 20-December 9, 2006.* Full semester training of four UADY graduate students at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.
- *January 3-18, 2007.* IARD 602 "living laboratory" field course will be operated in Yucatán, Chiapas, Tabasco and Veracruz.

If the participation of US Ambassador Antonio O. Garza, Jr. could be arranged for one of the Veracruz activities between January 13 and 16 then Veracruz State Representative (Diputado) Silvio Lagos Martínez might be able to recruit the participation of Fidel Herrera Beltrán, Governor of the State of Veracruz, at the same event.