

MINUTES OF TIES PARTNERS MEETING

January 18, 2006

Veracruz, Veracruz

Present: Robert Blake, Guillermo Ríos, Juan Magaña, Terry Tucker, Bertha Rueda, Francisco Juárez

Review Agenda

1. Review TIES project criteria, achievements and future work plans
2. Discuss INIFAP project possibility
3. Discuss opportunities for future collaboration

Alternative to funding ANSC 400 field trip

1. Can't take place in March 2006. Might the Web site serve as a substitute resource?

Repeating IARD 602 in Mexico next year?

1. Provisionally, yes, depending on student feedback, execution of tasks still outstanding, and follow-through.

Reallocation of remaining project funds (includes unspent monies from ANSC 400 field trip funds)

1. Completed 602, short courses and other planned activities
2. Suggested that an international conference be organized
 - a. Mexican and international participants
 - b. Agriculture, land use, sustainability, systems dynamics themes
 - c. ILRI contacted about possible support and has expressed initial enthusiasm; World Bank, another possible source of support?
 - d. Possibly schedule for 2008 during a no-cost extension year (subsequently disallowed by ACE on 1-04-06).
 - e. We would have research contribution in at least 2 areas for such a conference: works led Chuck Nicholson and David Parsons.
 - f. Other participants? Speakers? Everyone's input is sought for this. (international visibility sought)
 - g. Need to receive approval from HED-TIES for reallocations; shouldn't be a problems if changes remain consistent with the spirit of TIES.
 - h. Must be held in Mexico and with participation by UADY and Veracruz partners (UV, INIFAP).
 - i. USAID would likely welcome participants of other institutions with relevant interests in agriculture and natural resources management
 - j. Broad, diverse international participation is desirable; CONACYT is also a logical invitee.
3. Purposes of the proposed international conference
 - a. Summarize research findings pertinent to animal agriculture and the rural sector.

- b. Focus on tropical Mexico, the region or similar agro-ecologies world wide? (to be determined by a planning committee)
- c. Bring visibility that would increase funding competitiveness: potential donors would be invited.
- d. Francisco Junez notes that this could be tied to an INIFAP conference on dual- purpose cattle systems planned for 2006-2007.
- e. Tie to National Agricultural Research Conference? Possibly, but typically too “INIFAP – centered.” Want to bring many institutions together.
- f. Would not be called a “TIES conference”, rather must have its own stand-alone identity and focus on issues that would attract wide participation.
- g. Guillermo Ríos suggested bringing government decision makers to the table. Juan Magaña suggested that the imminent change in federal administration provides an opportunity to advise new decision makers about animal agriculture and development.
- h. Think about bringing in Government rural development officials from Federal agencies and the relevant states to the conference.
- i. Advisors to politicians may be more logical participants than the politicians themselves.
- j. Need funds to get some key people to the conference.
- k. Need to post to the Web conference papers, Powerpoint and video presentations, panel discussions, etc.; can use such resources flexibly with students and various stakeholder groups.
- l. Conference location must be accessible, possibly Guadalajara or Mexico City? Puebla? Oaxaca?
- m. Will need professional simultaneous translations.

Two project reviews planned (in 2006 and 2007)

1. Lucia Vaccaro will come in early July 2006. Bob Blake will be present in Merida for part of this. Some of Lucia’s expenses will be covered as part of UADY’s cost-share commitment. Also, it is important that she come to Veracruz to also visit with INIFAP and UV partners. Cornell will look for resources to permit her travel to Ithaca as well. This would have value in terms of decisions about budget reallocation and a possible international conference. Think about how to inform Lucia about the project besides through printed reports and the project website. The opportunity remains to include a local evaluator in the process.

2. MS students

- a. So far there is only one applicant for the coming year though others have expressed interest. If less than two acceptable candidates emerge, ALO will be consulted. Candidates can come from any institution in Mexico.

- b. Feedback is requested on how the ANSC 400, IARD 602, or TIES seminar web content can be improved.

Bertha Rueda presented the new INIFAP project, “*New Opportunities for Sustainable Production of Dual Purpose Systems in its Mexican Tropics.*”

1. Develop new management approaches to:
 - a. Determine productivity potentials of animals and cattle herds.
 - b. Use of mathematical models to determine nutritional management strategies (CNCPS)
 - c. Estimate balance and effect on micro mineral and water balance
2. Validate models in controlled field trials
3. Determine areas with potential for better alternatives in different agroecological zones
4. Determine economic viability of new options
5. Already funded by CONACYT (in process of signing agreement; funds forthcoming soon)
6. Three research stations in Mexico
 - a. La Posta: sub-humid tropics (about 1500 mm rain fall per year)
 - b. Las Magaritas (border of Veracruz and Puebla): sub-tropical humid (3000 mm rain per year)
 - c. El Verdineño (Pacific Coast region): dry tropics with 1000 mm of poorly distributed annual rainfall
7. Project will start in 2006 in three stages:
 - a. Stage 1
 - i. Establish, analyze most widely used legumes
 - ii. Meet with INIFAP and UV and University of N (?) collaborators to develop concepts and methodologies for research: objective is to characterize composition of the most common grass and legume forages in the respective regions and their quality and yield variation through for the year (establish and collect monthly samples, analyze forage samples to establish a master forage data base). Sample collection will take place throughout 2007.

Eduardo Canudas expressed concerns about the difference in growing on station vs. on-farm; management is different. Possibly do some on-farm and on-station comparisons (harvest management differences could be significant).

Budget is limited, therefore it is important to carefully choose the species for replication. Can't do all (need two grasses in each of the three locations at a minimum). It may be possible for Eduardo to do a parallel study under various grazing management regimes.

Will also estimate water consumption and efficiency of grasses (will collect data on various environmental factors)

- b. Stage 2
 - i. Calculate CNCPS & nutrient balance information
 - ii. Follow consumption amount and quality of consumed forage
 - iii. Some discussion about which analytical technique to use
 - iv. Will determine mineral composition of milk and manure
- c. Stage 3
 - i. Run simulations with CNCPS to determine best options for the three regions. *Victor Absalón's MS thesis project would be an avenue for collaboration with this project, focusing on CNCPS simulation analysis of nutrition management options for dual-purpose cattle systems in Veracruz.*
 - ii. Project budget will include an assistantship.
 - iii. Once recommendation options are determined, will use GIS system to arrive at areas of best potential (based upon temperature, rainfall, soil characteristics, among other things.)
 - iv. Will try to determine areas that require more attention using SD analysis
 - v. Bertha invites research replications in beef, sheep, other geographic regions, etc.
- d. SD work
 - i. Possibly develop a system dynamic network to help one another?
 - ii. Preliminary work to define system structure and models
 - iii. Possibly look at ways to get people at Cornell, in addition to Chuck, who could help Bertha's or other related projects with the SD dimension of the research.
 - iv. Think of how to tie SD concepts with policy making, strategic government investments in education, etc.