



Sustainable Cities

Enhancing Sustainable Dairy Production Capacity in Cuba

March 1, 2010

UPDATE:

The Sustainable Dairy Model at CPA 26 Julio is moving into its final year! In January 2009, Jim and Gladys Millson and I visited the CPA to identify what remains to be done. We held a planning session with CPA 26 Julio, ANAP and the Institute for Pasture and Forage Research. A two year strategic plan and timeline was adopted. This included bringing two CPA members to Canada for three weeks of calf and herd management training on the Millson's dairy farm, implementation of an on-farm ration program and lastly, if we can raise the funds, renovation of an historic (Jose Marti's doctor's) farmhouse to create a small training facility to share the knowledge with other Cuban farmers. CPA members Juanito Sanchez and Marta Ramirez spent 3 weeks this July training at the Millson dairy farm in Ontario. In early January 2010, Jim Millson and I spent one week working with the CPA to help fine-tune their feed ration and calf rearing programs.



BACKGROUND:

Enhancing Sustainable Dairy Production Capacity in Cuba is a farmer-led, volunteer, cooperative initiative begun Dec 2004 by farmers from Canada and Cuba to build a new, sustainable, small-footprint model for Cuban milk production based on solar-powered electric fences, rotational pastures, improved calf management practices, on-farm ration production and a Cuban system known as Los Pedestales - a unique, trellis-based, grass and legume rotational pasture system.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

This model has economic and environmental importance not only for Cuba but for farming communities in Central and Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and S.E. Asia. Currently, Cuba imports half her milk supplies (as skim milk powder) and most of her dairy feed protein (as corn gluten); both are heavy and therefore economically and environmentally costly to import. Once in Cuba, these costs only increase as they move by truck to distant cities and farms. How much more sustainable to develop a model capable of doubling and trebling milk production by creating small footprint, productive, self-sufficient dairy units that raise the incomes of Cuban farmers and support community economic development!

WHAT WE HAVE DONE:

Our farmer-led pilot project at the rural farm cooperative CPA 26 Julio in Havana Province has already tripled milk production. For more detailed information refer to attachments or go to www.farmertofarmer.ca/esdpcc.html.

AWARDS:

This project won the prestigious 2007 AMEC Sustainable Development of Natural Resources or Protection of the Environment Award at the 15th Annual Canadian Awards for International Cooperation sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters for:

PARTNERS:

Vancouver-based International Centre for Sustainable Cities (www.icsc.ca)
Havana-based ANAP (Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños)

PILOT FUNDING:

50,000 Cuban Pesos from ANAP - Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños
\$250,000 CAD PROJECT COST **\$202,037 CAD RAISED** **\$47,963 CAD REMAINING TO BE RAISED**
\$75,000 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).
\$57,000 Canadian Foundations
\$30,010 Canadian Farmers
\$16,969 Canadian Corporations
\$14,400 Embassy of Canada in Cuba
\$6,670 Canadians
\$1,988 In kind, University of British Columbia

NEXT STEP:

Our model will soon demonstrate what can be done in the countryside. How does this translate to the peri-urban zone, responsible for producing the bulk of milk for the cities? Our Peri-Urban Model will be built on the outskirts of the city of Bayamo. Because Bayamo is in a drought zone, the project will also manufacture its own nutrient-rich irrigation water by filtering residential sewage through a constructed wetland of aquatic plants. Again completely farmer led and this time also featuring peer exchanges within Cuba, the Sewage to Milk Bayamo model will engage the Cuban ministries of agriculture, sugar, health and the environment, Granma University, the provincial water ministry, the City of Bayamo, scientific research institutions and school children. See November/December 2007 Western Dairy Farmer article posted at theholmteam.ca

FUNDS NEEDED:

\$22,963 CAD COMPLETION PROJECT + **\$25,000 CAD** BUILD JOSE MARTI TRAINING CENTRE

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International Centre for Sustainable Cities