

Sustainable Agriculture and Food Production in a Changing Cuba



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Features of Cuban agricultural history



*Unprecedented change
in intensity 1990*



III. Low Input - Sustainable agriculture model

Rational use of local resources

Input substitution alternatives

Extensive farming techniques

Traditional varieties and breeds

Urban farming

Soil conservation alternatives

Animal draught

Farmer to farmer participatory approaches

Biological control

Knowledge intensive



Cuban agriculture trends after 1990

MONOCULTURE



DIVERSIFICATION

- Increasing diversity and heterogeneity of agriculture

CENTRALIZATION



DECENTRALIZATION

- Changes in the land tenancy structure (Coops and usufruct)
- State owned land declined from 80% (1990) to 20% in 2008
- Considerable reduction in farm size

FOOD IMPORTS






FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY

- Local food production instead of importing

Land tenure (% per sector)

SECTOR	1989-92	1993	2008
State	88	57	23
New Cooperatives UBPC (Basic Units of Coop. Production)	-	26	40
Private and usufruct CPA (Agric. Production Coop.) CCS (Credits and Services Coop.) Individual farmers	12	17	37

Decentralization

Activity	Average size (ha)		Reduction (times)
	State enterprises 1989	New Coops 1994	
Cash crops	4k	0.4k	- 10
Citrus and fruit	17k 	0.1k	- 20
Tobacco	3k 	0.2k	- 13
Rice	27k	5.0k	- 5
Cattle	28k 	1.6k	- 17

The background of the slide shows a rural landscape with green trees and a car. A semi-transparent brown box covers the top half of the image, containing the title. Another semi-transparent brown box covers the bottom half of the image, containing a list of bullet points.

Foreign investment and SA: Threats and opportunities

- External investment to improve production, processing and commercialization is needed
- Creation of well paid jobs in the countryside is crucial
- The scale factor is very sensitive
- Monocultures lead to replicate the heavy dependence on external inputs



Foreign investment and SA: Threats and opportunities

- Strategic investments could promote better use of local and renewable resources
- Diversification of production and multifunctionality open a wide range of possibilities for SA
- Regulations are needed to avoid environmental damage and to protect local farmers.

Food crisis in Cuba?

- Universal countrywide food distribution system. Ration card with basic basket
- Diverse channels of distribution of local foods not considered in statistics
- Widely spread network of non regulated basic foods at slightly higher prices
- Network of high price shops
- Imported food for distribution through different channels

Are other countries implementing sustainable farming practices from Cuba?

- The transition towards SA in Cuba has been an inspiration for many people around the globe
- Thousands of people participated in SA congresses in Cuba during the last 25 years.
- There are many reports on the advances of the movement in terms of practices and organization structures
- Some countries are: Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina,

Role of cooperatives in Cuba

- Organization of farmers for production purposes
- Arrange with state enterprises the provision of inputs for the farmers
- Fulfill the contracts and commitments of production / commercialize products
- Follow local and national strategies towards food provisioning to the population





Motivations for Finca Marta Project

- A better life for our family
- Putting into practice the agroecological concepts
- Help improving peoples lives in rural areas by creating well remunerated jobs
- Demonstrate the economic feasibility of agroecology
- Searching for integrated solutions for the development of agricultural systems

Legal structure Finca Marta project

- Private ownership of farmhouse
- Special power for administrating the farm operation
- License for whole sale distribution and for direct selling
- Sanitary certificate for vegetables commercialization and consumption
- License for occasional rural work for 14 workers
- Payment of taxes for all the activities, plus a 10 percentage of overall incomes
- Veterinary license for honey production and official contract for selling products and buying supplies.
- Sanitary license and permission to develop culinary activities at the farm.
- Veterinary license and cattle tenancy permission.

The background of the slide shows a group of people, mostly seen from the back, working in a field. They appear to be engaged in agricultural or conservation activities, possibly planting or tending to crops. The scene is outdoors with green foliage and trees in the background.

Results so far (Five years)

- Job creation / gender equity
- Increasing incomes
- Greater impact on local economy
- Increasing production and productivity
- Nature conservation practices applied
- Renewables resources use
- Beginning of a territorial approach



U.S. Senator Mark Warner U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar