

Sustainable Agriculture Internships
Tropical Agronomy
with CRACYP
for Progreso Verde ("Green Progress")



2013

Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with the Internship Information Pack available at www.progresoverde.org/internship.html

CRACYP has helped to develop the community business CADO, an organic sugarcane farmers' cooperative, since 2000. CADO farmers produce organic, Fair Trade aguardiente (cane alcohol) for export to companies such as The Body Shop and Dr. Bronner's Soaps. CADO's farmers in their cultivation and production processes and CADO in its buying and export practices both differ markedly from their non-organic, free trade counterparts in the region. While non-organic farmers can use artificial fertilizers to boost production, CADO farmers rely on natural soil amendments and management practices for the plants' nutrient requirements. For 2013, CADO has around 300 farms in 26 communities.

Objectives

We need interns with experience in tropical agronomy to assist farmers in improving management and increasing sugarcane yields via organic methods. These farmers have extremely limited resources, so these will likely be small, practical solutions such as: improving manure/compost use, intercropping, improving plant spacing requirements, etc. It could also include strategic use of rock phosphate and/or organically improved potash.

Keep in mind that farmers here, like anywhere, have a very practical attitude towards new practices: if it makes work easier and increases yield, they might accept it, if not, they certainly won't. So, as with any project of this type, there will be an emphasis on farmer-to-farmer learning and the establishment of on-farm test plots to show the practical value of any new practice.

Location

You will be based in the picturesque little village of Jilimbí in Bolívar Province, close to the border with Cotopaxi Province. The nearest town you might find on a map is Moraspungo, about an hour's journey up into the mountains from the main road between Quevedo and Ventanas. You will work in various communities near the border between the Bolívar and Cotopaxi provinces.

Requirements

Interns will need to either be fairly independent or else have access to advice by email from their university or other sources (e.g. former employer, conservation organizations, etc.), if needed. Classwork or work experience in tropical agriculture is required. Interns will need to do background research on tropical agronomy and specifically organic management of sugarcane before arriving. Interns should also have experience working outdoors in a somewhat physically demanding environment. Spanish language skills would be useful; however, CRACYP's Intern Coordinator can help with translation.



How to Apply

Read the Internship Information Pack for details of how to apply.