



Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program

SANREM CRSP
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Trip Report: Ecuador

30 May-14 June 2009

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Purpose of Trip: Supervise 5 undergraduate students from Virginia Tech (Andrew Sowell, Julia Gibson, Jessica Martin, Erin Zeiders, and Lindsey Hall) participating in a SANREM sponsored research internship in Chimbo river watershed in Bolivar province, Ecuador.

Sites Visited: Farms in the upper and lower portions of Chimbo watershed.

Description of Activities

A participatory appraisal was conducted with farmers, staff from non-governmental organizations, and government agency staff. The purpose was to learn more about barriers to adoption of soil and water conservation practices. Participatory appraisal instruments including a semi-structured interview were prepared by students with assistance from project advisors (Jeff Alwang, Darrell Bosch, and George Norton) and INIAP staff (Victor Barrera, Carlos Monar, Luis Escudero, and Moazir Celleri). INIAP staff assisted in developing participatory appraisal instruments, facilitated interviews with farmers and agencies, and provided transport.

The two weeks of my stay were mainly focused on finalizing the participatory appraisal instruments, conducting farmer interviews, and planning interviews with NGOs and government agencies. During my stay, sixty four interviews were conducted with farmers in the upper watershed and 8 were conducted in the lower watershed. Farmers were cooperative and willing to provide information on their use of conservation practices and barriers to their adoption.

Training Activities Conducted:

Program type (workshop, seminar, field day, short course, etc.)	Date	Audience	Number of Participants		Training Provider (US university, host country institution, etc.)	Training Objective
			Men	Women		
Internship	May- June 2009	Undergradua te students	1	4	Virginia Tech/INIAP	Participatory appraisal techniques

Suggestions and Recommendations

Progress is being made in the watershed in farmers' adoption of conservation practices including live barriers, contour farming, strip cropping, planting trees, installing drainage ditches, etc. This progress is due to efforts of other development projects as well as SANREM activities. Barriers to adoption listed by farmers included lack of time, lack of knowledge, and lack of capital.

Continued progress in adoption will depend on farmers being convinced that suggested conservation practices are profitable and will provide a reasonable return on their investment of labor. This will require continued demonstrations of practices in fields that are readily accessible to farmers and workshops to explain how practices should be carried out. Farmers expressed interest in participating in more workshops on various farm management topics as well as more training in handicrafts to provide off-farm income.