

# BEGINERS FARMERS, RANCHERS AND FISHERMEN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



Corporación Juvenil para el Desarrollo de Comunidades Sostenibles



Cultivamos ideas para un futuro sostenible.  
Caguas, Puerto Rico



United States Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture



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Evaluation:

Evaluation instruments will be design to assess progress of participants. At the end of each cycle described in the approach we will measure the confidence of participants in three scenarios: those who feel ready to start farming, those who have the land, but are not sure they want to start farming or do not feel confident to start and those who feel they have the tools to improve their farming success. Results will be used to reinforce, redesign activities or expand the range of topics to assure an efficient achievement of expected results.

Annual reports will be prepared with written evaluations by participants in the cycles we proposed to deliver the information to target audience. Workshops, on-site training results and a digital record of the experiences will be added to web-based platforms; this strategy, in addition to the info graphics, will document each experience outcome to complete specific objectives of C- Entrepreneurship and business training, E-Natural resource management and planning and H-Mentoring, apprenticeships and internships. The access to these materials will be an open source tool and will be use as a self-learning alternative for new farmers/ranchers and fishermen. That way, the project will impact in a broadest sense the community and will expand the scope of the project.



Summary:

The primary goal is to increase the number of beginning farmers, ranchers and fishermen and enhance their success and sustainability by providing them with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to make informed decisions. According to the 2012 Agricultural census, there are 13,159 farmers in Puerto Rico of which only 8.3 % are women, 35% have less than 9 years in business, the average age is 59, and only 14.2% are 35 years old or less. Over 85% of all the food consumed in the Island is imported and in terms of fish and seafood consumers depends on small, local restaurants and very few fisheries. We will increase the number of farmers, ranchers and fishermen through a strong recruitment program that will include socially disadvantage farmers/ranchers/fishermen, Veterans, self-sustained and economically viable agricultural product introduction, training and technical assistance for business formalization, start-up and expansion. The key to success is to be able to educate participants about the structure of the industry, also, conduct Entrepreneurship and business training and technical assistance for business plan development, Natural resource management and planning, infrastructure systems improvement to grow their business and increase crops/catch, also, business incubation for value-added products using locally grown raw materials, and mentoring, apprenticeships and internships.



- OBJECTIVES:
- A. Design and implement a recruitment program of which 10% will be Military Veterans and 70% low-income, of which 60% will complete the program (72 participants) as designed for their specific business needs.
  - B. Develop knowledge and tools to begin and establish a farm or fishing business with a vision of the use and conservation of natural resources. If possible with renewable power and water sources, and introducing management recommendations for conservation of important freshwater and marine species and habitats.
  - C.To trigger and empower the next generation of Puerto Rico farmers, ranchers and fisherman by providing a meaningful exchange between experienced and beginning farmers, ranchers and fishers through the implementation of sustainable farming/ranching/fishing practices and business development. This will help strengthening the production infrastructure capabilities of each entrepreneur.
  - D.Incubate at least five (5) economically viable and self-sustaining value-added enterprises that use locally grown agriculture products.
  - E.Find farmers, ranchers and fishermen that will join us and share their knowledge in mentoring to inspire and empower the next generation of agro-entrepreneurs with advice from experienced enterprises by Providing mentoring and internships in specific subjects needed by the new farmers,



- Expected Outcome:
- A. Beginning and small farmers/ranchers/fishermen will develop added knowledge on sustainable agro-ecological crop production techniques, land and natural resources management, entrepreneurship, financial viability, value added crops/catch, marketing, branding, food safety, FDA and/or USDA compliance, nutrition, leadership and community organization and mobilization.
  - B. Local farmers/ranchers/fishermen (beginners, small and micro), home-based and community farmers (that could start selling their crops/catch, expand their production and develop value-added products), consumers that will be able to buy locally (saving time, money and gaining health), institutional clients such as Head Start, Municipal Departments, locally-owned restaurants, Agro-COOP members and, current business incubators users as well as new ones.
  - C.Local small farmers/ranchers/fishermen will produce viable economic crops/catch that produces new business opportunities and income in their communities. Low-income farmers/ranchers/fishermen will become connected to other sectors of the food system and will have viable markets for their products. Existing business incubators that serve for production, packaging, processing and marketing centers will have improved quality, technical assistance and training offerings (that can be replicated throughout the commonwealth of Puerto Rico), more and better equipment and improved accessibility of food crops/catch. Consumers, institutional buyers and food providers will have new and viable sources of nutritionally beneficial products to meet their food needs directly from the farmer/rancher/fishermen.

