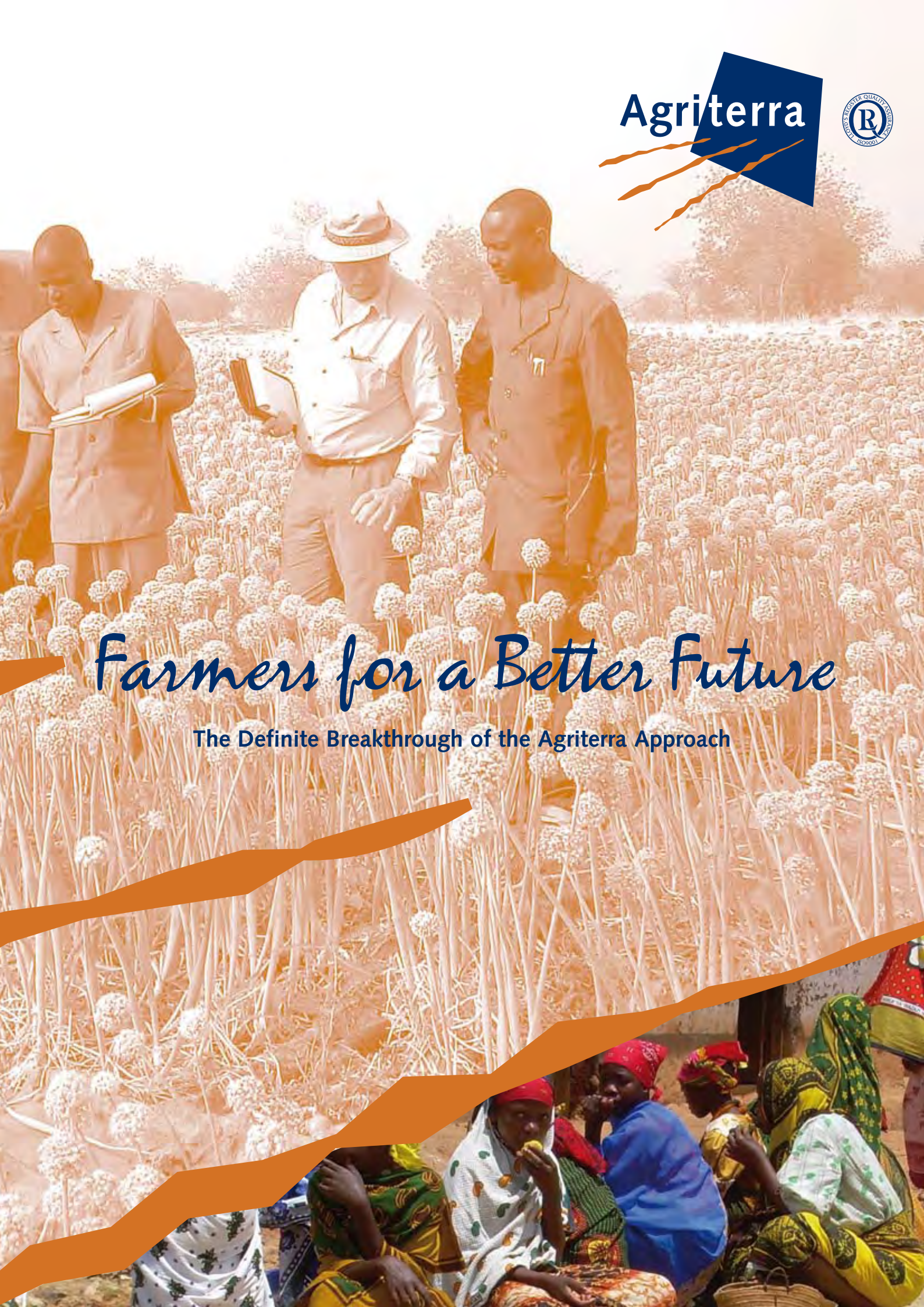


Agriterra



Farmers for a Better Future

The Definite Breakthrough of the Agriterra Approach



Contents

Preface by Bert Koenders: The farmer comes first	3
Mission Statement	4
Make the best of your opportunities	5
Agriterra 2004-2006 at a glance	6
Rural tourism, a new branch of sports	8
Rural tourism in Kenya. Your cup of tea?	10
Working together to create support	12
Agriterra in the field	12
Debating on genes	13
Embryos for Kyrgyzstan	14
Solidarity	15
The weakest link	16
Chain approach	16
India: Mango mania	17
Business Initiatives	18
Milk production and Dairy Processing in Tanzania	18
Nepal: Insurance for success	20
Niger: Patience is a virtue	21
Rwanda: Cattle improvement	22
From bargaining to negotiating	23
Agriterra in the Mekong region	24
Everything you ever wanted to know about exchanges	27
Cooperation with added value	28
How Haitians give the Congolese a lesson	29
The Experience of an AgriPooler. Henk de Lange and Moldavia	30
Agriterra and gender issues	32
The interests of rural women	32
About guarantees and biscuits in Costa Rica	34
Philippines: The voice of women must be heard	36
Mapping & Profiling	38
Burundi	38
Knowing why we do what we do	40
HIV/Aids Conference. KENFAP takes central role in fighting Aids in Kenya	41
Youth: You are a farmer, young and you want something	42
The importance of defending interests in Africa	45
North-South	46
Spuds in Congo	46
FinBase: From bills to book-keeping	49
Thailand: Combine marketing and entrepreneurship	51
FETRAF stands up for family farming in Brazil	52
Farmers Fighting Poverty: A resounding conference	53
Agriterra, powered by ICCO & Cordaid	54
From digital gap to digital opportunities	54
To devote yourself unselfishly is of inestimable value	56
Preview: Further towards the base	58
Good - Better - ISO	59
Thanks for the collaboration and colophon	59



Preface

The farmer comes first

"The world has never been richer, yet at the same time, the distribution of wealth has seldom been less equal. Almost one in five people currently subsists on less than one dollar a day.

Unfortunately, economic growth does not always mean that fewer people go hungry, that more boys and girls go to school, or that human development is enhanced. In many developing countries, in sub-Saharan Africa for example, agriculture makes a major contribution to economic growth. No less important, it is often the principal source of income and food for a country's poorest citizens. A high proportion of the poor can be found among the rural population, which in turn is largely dependent on agriculture for its income.

Some, however, believe that agriculture is blocking, more than promoting, growth in developing countries. We are constantly reminded of one-sided economies, which revolve around the export of a single agricultural product. Yet a well-developed agriculture sector has a central role to play in achieving the first of the Millennium Development Goals: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. These themes also have a prominent place on the international agenda. This can be seen in the World Development Report 2008, which is entirely devoted to agriculture and poverty reduction.

Governments in developing countries are increasingly working to stimulate rural employment, in agriculture as well as other sectors. Investing in knowledge, infrastructure and promoting the active development of knowledge and skills in small enterprises are among the methods being used to achieve this. Stimulating growth and reducing poverty are not only tasks for governments, however. The private sector is an important player when it comes to opportunities for production chains in commercial agriculture. Local investment in agriculture can be strengthened with expertise and financing from developed countries. Dutch non-governmental organisations, companies and farmers' organisations such as Agritererra can play a key role here.

Agritererra supports many experts from Dutch rural organisations who advise their counterparts in developing countries on a non-profit basis. This form of 'horizontal' international cooperation between members of the same profession strongly appeals to me. It is a straightforward transfer of knowledge between working men and women: Dutch rural organisations helping local



farmers work towards balanced social growth in which farmers, local people and community organisations can all make a contribution. They also contribute to the development of democratic, local organisations that are accountable to their members. In this respect, alliances such as AgriCord and AgriProFocus are also important. Agritererra, however, remains one of the only organisations that promote rural enterprise as a way to support private sector growth in developing countries. Agritererra focuses on agriculture and on developing supplementary services to create the right conditions for business improvement. Those services should be closely tied to the farming community and, ideally, should be driven by farmers themselves. Agritererra represents Dutch rural communities, and can count on the support of the agricultural sector. It receives funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' private-sector instruments.

This goes hand in hand with a growing demand for results and accountability. Development cooperation is about seizing opportunities, learning from past experience – whether good or bad – and working with others to increase the effectiveness of aid. Not only the Dutch taxpayer, but more particularly the one billion people living in poverty in developing countries have a right to expect results-oriented development cooperation. A thorough monitoring and evaluation system, such as that used by Agritererra, is therefore indispensable. Monitoring and evaluation show us whether targets are being achieved, whether rural organisations in developing countries are indeed getting stronger. Yet equally important is accountability on the ground, both to and from the local population. Measuring results should not lead to excessive levels of bureaucracy. The farmer must come first.

Alongside a conventional public accounting, this report mainly contains real-life accounts of work in practice over the last three years. Agritererra has chosen this format as the best way of placing its results in a practical, time-based context. I hope you will find what follows both informative and enjoyable."

Bert Koenders

Minister for Development Cooperation

Mission Statement

Agriterra is an Agri-agency, which means that it is an organisation for international cooperation that is supported by social organisations from the countryside and from the world of agricultural companies. Agriterra's supporting organisations are the Regional Agricultural and Horticultural Organisation and LTO Nederland, the Dutch rural women's organisations, the National Cooperative Council for Agriculture and Horticulture (NCR) and the Dutch Agricultural Youth Organisation (NAJK). Agriterra wants to stimulate, support and finance international cooperation between rural organisations in the Netherlands and in developing countries.

The inspiration

Strong and representative rural people's organisations are indispensable for the promotion of democracy, for better income distribution and for a country's economic development. Many people in developing countries live and work in the countryside, and they can make an important contribution to this development. Agriterra prefers to work with rural inhabitants who devote themselves to that objective, because we believe that they are capable of taking care of their own development. The best way to do so is to organise, because together you are stronger.

The objective

Agriterra wishes to promote the economic activities in developing countries. We want organisations that defend the interests of the rural population and help them to develop into strong and representative membership organisations, who focus on the provision of services to the rural population. We back these processes by stimulating cooperation and international exchange between rural membership organisations. We expect that thanks to strong and representative member organisations, the countryside in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Central and Eastern Europe will develop economically, socially and in an ecologically sustainable way, and that the rural population's standard of living will improve.

The method

Agriterra helps to establish and strengthen associations and cooperatives that are established by farmers and rural women in developing countries. Every organisation has experiences that might be useful to others, which is why Agriterra mobilises the know-how in rural organisations in the Netherlands for strength-

ening processes in developing countries. We mediate when forms of cooperation are set up between organisations in developing countries (mutually), or with partner organisations in the Netherlands. More specifically, we help to strengthen the ties that were formed by the organisations themselves.

"A bird is sitting on a branch and wants to drink, but it just cannot reach the water. If more birds come and sit on the branch, the branch will bend and then they can all drink water."

Proverb of the women in Tikonna Bénin, recorded by Aukje Ferwerda, NVvP

Agriterra encourages the rural membership organisations to define the partnership themselves. In order to do so, the organisations need to get to know each other, as well as the situation in each other's country and region. Then the partners decide which activities they want to share and execute them, with professional support.

The organisations make their own choices regarding the development policy for their organisation and their country. Agriterra helps them to implement that policy, and we strive to fulfil our duties in a creative manner.

If we want to respond to proposals from all the developing countries, we need to divide the tasks and coordinate between Agri-agencies in other Western countries. This can be done through AgriCord, the alliance of Agri-agencies who enable international cooperation between organised agriculture and the rural population. ■

Agricultural entrepreneurs, women and young people living in the countryside throughout the world live in different circumstances, but undertake many of the same activities and have similar interests. They support economically, socially and ecologically sound agriculture. They also try to build strong organisations which can exercise influence on the agricultural policies in their country or region.

Make the best of your opportunities

In the Netherlands, rural organisations have been arguing the case for the social and economic position of their members for years. The Dutch agricultural sector has a strong position in the world and organised agriculture has traditionally played an important role in that.

In developing countries the situation isn't yet anywhere so well

developed as that. There the agricultural organisations have often been set up relatively recently and are not yet fully developed: the government often does not consider them to be fully-fledged discussion partners. The history, know-how and experience of Dutch organisations can help fraternal organisations elsewhere in the world to become stronger, so that they can improve the position of farmers.

Due to the globalisation the marketing of products has become an important concept for farmers' organisations in the southern part of the world. The world is getting ever smaller and the opportunities for exporting and importing are continually on the increase.

For farmers in the developing countries it is a case of taking advantage of opportunities. But many (small) farmers produce, for the most part, for their own consumption and sell any possible surplus on the regional market. The most important challenge is to deliver products of high quality, increase production and subsequently to obtain a fair price for their products. The experience of farmers and their organisations in the Netherlands (the second exporter of agricultural and horticultural products in the world) is valuable for their colleagues in the South. Agriterra links Dutch expertise to farmers' organisations in developing countries. The goal is a make a substantial contribution to reaching Millennium Development Goal Number One: to halve the proportion of people that suffer from extreme hunger and poverty in the world by 2015.

*Albert Jan Maat
Chairman of LTO Nederland and Agriterra* ■



Agriterra 2004-2006



Until 2006, our three-year programmes were given names that referred mainly to the own development of Agriderra. The "Consolidation of the Agriderra Approach" indicated the period after 2001, after a rocky start, during which we tried to take the necessary time to consolidate all the insights and working methods in procedures and systems. That exercise later earned us the ISO certificate. After that, we focused on the "Breakthrough of the Agriderra Approach", hoping that it would achieve a wide acceptance within the development cooperation community.

Agriderra has several policy lines. The determining main policy line is strengthening the economic role of farmers' organisations and cooperatives in developing countries. At the same time, our flanking policy aims to mobilise further support for farmers' organisations and cooperatives, through acceptance of our approach, its inclusion in the Dutch development cooperation, and the reorientation of international institutions.

New partnerships, such as AgriCord (2004) and Agri-ProFocus (2005), indicate the success of that flanking policy, since they would not have existed without our efforts. We are thus successful outside the Netherlands and we also provide a new approach for the Dutch development cooperation.

We send people from the field to go and provide advice to their counterparts abroad, whether it is an onion farmer, an insurance

expert, or a female farmer who can teach you how to incorporate lodging facilities for tourists on your farm. Our AgriPool currently unites over 200 experts from the member organisations, and an increasing number of colleagues from developing countries are willing and able to share their knowledge with their own colleagues.

The way in which we allocate the means at our disposal ensures that we are reaching ever more people directly. Not only do we want to assist the leaders of the organisations in their activities, we are also (and increasingly) providing direct support to branches of farmers' organisations at grassroots level.

In order to find out where support is needed, we meet the organisations' plea for substantial service to their members. In the meantime, we continue to push and pull to make their

At a glance

organisations financially stable, democratic and professional, and moreover, more serviceable to their members. Over the past few years, we have developed specific solutions that have been immediately used and that have lately been beneficial to dozens of organisations.

Finally, we enable farmers and their organisations to highlight their own interests. The African Fertilizer Summit in the summer of 2006 was a fine example of successful lobbying. The farmers' organisations were very persuasive in their claim that they themselves are able to establish the cooperative structures for the distribution of the necessary artificial fertilizers.

In 2003, our efforts were noticed by the then Minister for Development Cooperation, Agnes van Ardenne. We signed a Covenant with her, because together we could counter the Dutch business sector's hesitance to assume its responsibility at

before the submission of our application, the ministry decided that it would fit better in the private enterprise paragraph, which confirmed that we are indeed different from regular NGOs.

The decision of the then minister Van Ardenne to provide substantial support for this type of development cooperation in the years to come was taken at the IFAP World Farmers Congress in Seoul, Korea, in May 2006. Two weeks later, she attempted to persuade other donors and international institutions to follow her lead during a special conference organized about that objective. During that conference we presented our programme for the years to come and we said farewell to the man who had guided Agriderra through the crucial initial stages, Gerard Doornbos.

'Boeren tegen Armoede' ('Farmers against Poverty') is the title of that programme. It no longer refers to Agriderra's develop-



the international level. In this respect, the agricultural business sector that shapes its development cooperation through Agriderra is miles ahead of small, and medium-sized and large companies. The Covenant did not contain a financial clause, because our resources for development cooperation were allocated through ICCO and Cordaid at the time.

The introduction of the co-financing system (MFS in Dutch) enabled Agriderra to entail direct relations with the ministry, which seemed the obvious thing to do. Negotiations with ICCO, regarding our inclusion in a broad coalition, could not guarantee that we would be able to continue our approach at a certain scale. In view of the lobbying procedure that we had initiated in 1993 to obtain agricultural co-financing, the time seemed right to access the MFS independently. But eventually, immediately

ment, but highlights the role that farmers want to play in their final sprint to 2015, the year in which the UN's Millennium Development Goals will have to be met. We focus on the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, because we feel that farmers are willing to assume their responsibilities. In the framework of IFAP the farmers issued their recommendations on how that could take place. The AgriCord members have integrated them in their programme, which is known as 'Farmers Fighting Poverty'. We are convinced that organised agriculture, which already encompasses 19% of the 1.2 billion farmers worldwide, will play a decisive role in attaining the goals.

Kees Blokland
managing director

Rural tourism, a new

Tanzania

- Position UN development list: 162
- Population in millions: 39.4
- Life expectancy: 45.9
- Percentage Literacy: 69.4
- Active in agriculture: 80%

The countryside has plenty to offer to tourists. Rural tourism is a booming business - not only in the Netherlands, but also in developing countries. Agriterra supports farmers' organisations in developing countries in launching economic initiatives, in or outside a cooperative. Since a few years, rural tourism has been one of the development opportunities. Besides providing an extra income source for farmers, rural tourism creates more rural employment, contributes to a higher appreciation for the local farmers' culture, increases the sense of togetherness and leads to the protection of nature and landscape. As soon as those involved realise why the tourists are there, they will try to maintain it.

This type of tourism products offers people the opportunity to get acquainted with the rural population, their daily lives and their traditions. Agriterra thus meets tourists' increasing demands for more contacts with the local population. Ever more tourists are seeking meaningful and personal experiences, which enable them to be a part of the daily life of a country's indigenous population. In that respect, farmers possess an interesting asset: natural and very authentic surroundings that the tourist will not find elsewhere.

Agriterra helps farmers to capitalise on that asset. Since the development of tourism requires specific knowledge and skills,

as well as substantial investments in the start-up phase, that support is often vital.

Agriterra's rural tourism programme comprises four elements:

- Partners are strong, reliable, advocacy and/or cooperative rural organisations;
- Local population can participate in a structural way in the development, planning and set-up of the tourist activities;
- Approach is business-like and commercial, in accordance with social objectives.
- Cooperation with local and international travel organisations for the elaboration of the tourist programme.

Experience farmers' life

In the elaboration of the product, personal contacts with the local population are stressed. This can be expressed in many ways, e.g. tourists can participate in agricultural activities, such

branch of sports

as planting rice or picking tea. The tea tour for example – in collaboration with the farmers' organisation of Kenfap in Kenya – focuses on the entire production process, from tea seed to tea bag. Visitors also experience the daily life of a Kenyan farmer. Since they stay and eat with their host families, tourists get a look into the farmers' kitchen. It is a unique opportunity to get to know life in the small villages, instead of just driving past; which is what often happens nowadays. The lodging and sanitary facilities are modest and are made to fit the construction style of the village.

The products that Agriterra develops together with farmers' organisations give people access to another reality. Evaluations

develops its ideas. During the entire development process – from the initial assessment to the first tourist's visit – Agriterra attempts to work on the business aspect. Farmers that start a tourist activity should also become tourist entrepreneurs.

Through trainings, exchange initiatives and the business approach, that entrepreneurship is enhanced.

The market plays a crucial role in the set-up of initiatives. The choice for certain countries, locations and types of products is often influenced by requests and ideas from tour operators.

They are experts in consumer trends and know where initiatives have potential. Agriterra believes it is important that the market is actively involved in the tourist programme. The tourist initiative in Madagascar was developed in collaboration with tour operator Baobab, and a visit to the farmer has been integrated in their Madagascar itinerary. Nevertheless, our main concern is that the farmers' organisations involved should also be willing to actively engage in tourism.



of existing tourist initiatives have revealed that tourists often rate the visit to the farmer as one of the highlights of their trip. Agriterra has already worked out initiatives with farmers' organisations in Kenya, Ecuador, Madagascar, Vietnam and Bolivia. Tanzania, Rwanda, Benin and Peru are still on the list.

Tourism is business

Those initiatives often face tough competition and uncertain circumstances, which is why Agriterra prefers the business approach for its tourist programme. Tourism is business. If it is clear that a certain region has potential, the farmers' organisation can submit a business plan, in which it further

In 2007, Agriterra will study the possibilities for the marketing of agro-tourist products in other European countries. Our purpose is to also involve German, French, Spanish and English travel organisations in this programme.

Farmer seeks tourist

Besides providing financing and advice, Agriterra also acts as a matchmaker between the farmers and the tourist industry. Farmers in developing countries find it difficult to build an international commercial network. For them, tourism is a new branch of sports. Moreover, tour operators are often unaware that farmers' organisations also engage in tourism, and they do >>



Kenya

- Position UN development list: 152
- Population in millions: 36.9
- Life expectancy: 55.3
- Percentage Literacy: 73.6
- Active in agriculture: 75%

>> not know which agro-tourist products exist. In order to link supply and demand, Agriterra facilitated a visit of farmers' tourism initiatives to the Dutch Holiday Fair. On that occasion they can present themselves to the Dutch market and establish contacts with tour operators. We are currently investigating the possibility to participate in other holiday fairs in Europe.

Challenges

In the years to come, Agriterra aims to further expand the tourist programme. We continue the elaboration of an innovative portfolio of cooperative rural tourism companies in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Another objective is that farmers' organisations will have the necessary knowledge and skills to found rural tourism companies in their own countries. Farmers' organisations will thus become the national references when it comes to rural tourism. Agriterra wants to attain that objective through the creation of a network of knowledge centres and travel organisations that will enable the use of the market's expertise, research capacity and visions in order to enhance rural tourism initiatives in the South. We are currently drawing up a tourism action plan for the next four years, which contains the steps that Agriterra should take to reach its tourism goals. That action plan is based on a survey among farmers' organisations and important tourism players in the field, meant to identify opportunities. We will also investigate how farmers in developing countries can benefit from the Dutch farmers' expertise in rural tourism. ■

The Netherlands

- Position UN development list: 10
- Population in millions: 16.3
- Life expectancy: 78.5
- Percentage Literacy: 98.4
- Active in agriculture: 5%

Rogier Huijmans got involved in Agriterra's work as a volunteer. Through the contacts that he established he started working for KENFAP, Kenya's largest farmers' organisation, in 2006. One of his tasks is to set up the Kilimo Talii project; a rural tourism project that Agriterra developed together with KENFAP.

African cabins have been built in two regions, Meru and Kisumu. The project in Meru will be open for business by mid-2007. Construction in Kisumu will start in early 2008. Some 3,000 farmers in the Kisumu area will benefit from the Kilimo Talii project.

Kilimo Talii

Most tourists who travel to Kenya visit the famous wildlife parks and tropical sandy beaches. They hardly ever get acquainted with the country's hospitable inhabitants. Tourism constitutes



Rural tourism in Kenya. Your cup of tea?

one of Kenya's main sources of income, but the population hardly ever receives those resources.

KENFAP, together with Agriterra, wants to change that, and has therefore adhered to a trend: sustainable tourism that allows the visitor to meet the local population.

What makes the Kilimo Talii project so unique is that the local population is the owner, organises and guides the excursions, keeps your traditional African lodge clean and provides food and beverages, thus creating employment for the local population.

Part of the revenue is spent on community projects. You will have a wonderful and unique experience in Kenya, and at the same time contribute to a better life for this community!

Tea picking: an impression

One Friday afternoon, late December 2006. Tea farmer Kituchi Mutegi welcomes us. Karibu nyumbani, or: welcome to the farm. Any Kenyan welcome is accompanied by a cup of tea, which is served on his farm. Then tea baskets are hoisted on to our backs and we take off towards the tea plantation. We watch the hills and see tea plantations everywhere. The snowy summit of Mount Kenya is clearly visible. The local population is already at work. All baskets have to be filled, including ours. We are given detailed explanations, not all leaves are suitable for picking.

The six unknown tea pickers are quickly discovered by fellow tea pickers, to general amusement. Half an hour later, the six of us have managed to fill one basket. It is time to take it to the nearest collection point. Several tea pickers are there, delivering their baskets. Farmer Kituchi compliments us on the quality of the tea leaves. "Karibu tena", he says, welcome again. After that, the group of tea pickers from the Netherlands takes off to visit the wildlife parks and the tropical sandy beaches. But after spending two weeks in Kenya, we all agree on one thing: tea picking was definitely the highlight of a very special tour of Kenya. ■

Working together to create support

We regularly conduct surveys into the attitude of the Dutch population, and specifically of the members of rural organisations, towards our work. We have now conducted that survey twice, in 2003 and 2006. This matters to Agriterra, because most of our work depends on cooperation agreements between organisations here and counterparts in developing countries. Our virtual 'temp agency' AgriPool is manned by experts from the Dutch rural organisations. It is obvious that the success of our approach depends entirely on the local willingness to cooperate with colleagues in other parts of the world.



And support there is! Although it is often said that the support for development cooperation in the Netherlands is diminishing, the public's attitude turns out to be positive. Almost half of the respondents agree with the fact that the annual expenditure for development cooperation amounts to 4.4 billion. Moreover, compared to 2003, the number of people who find that amount too low had increased in both groups, farmers and 'the rest of the Netherlands'. These results show a positive attitude towards development cooperation. The majority find it an important subject and are willing to make some sacrifice.

The Dutch population's attitude towards development cooperation is promising. However, in both groups we have noticed less willingness to take action since 2003. It is even slightly worse among farmers. The most cited reasons for failing to take action are a lack of information or knowledge on the subject.

Of course this has prompted Agriterra to try and improve the situation. Support reinforcement is an important part of the new programme 'Farmers Fighting Poverty'. We do not have to deal with this alone, but we can count upon the help of the active co-workers and members of the Dutch rural organisations. In the framework of AgriCord, we can also learn from the methods applied by other agri-agencies, e.g. in Canada, Sweden or France. Agriterra will be more active than ever in providing information about its work to the rural population, so as to

make them even more enthusiastic about dedicating their valuable knowledge to the fight against poverty. ■

Agriterra in the field

On the 30th of June and the 1st of July 2006, over 11,000 cattle farmers, cattle lovers and other interested parties visited the NRM. Among the visitors, the presence of Queen Beatrix stood out. She attended this memorable 10th edition of NRM to present the awards for the dapple red and dapple black champions.

Agriterra participates in agricultural trade fairs on average twice a year in order to obtain a broader base for our work. One of the events that we attended was the National Cattle Event (NRM in Dutch). The 10th edition of this fair took place in the Cattle Market Halls (Veemarkthallen) in Utrecht. Apart from the individual examination of dapple black and red Holsteins and the presentation of some 25 bulls by daughter groups, there was also a two-day trade fair for the (dairy) cattle farming sector, where Agriterra was present with a stand.

Immediately after the award ceremony, the Queen was summoned back to The Hague due to the political turmoil caused by the demission of the government, and therefore, she could not visit Agriterra's stand. Fortunately, the other visitors did not follow her lead, and during those two days, many of them got acquainted with Agriterra, our method, mission and

objectives. Numerous people signed up for our electronic newsletter (E-zine) and indicated that they wanted to be involved in Agriterra's activities. During the National Cattle Event our work was definitely noted by the visitors.

The same applied for the Agricultural Trade Fair, which was held in Zwolle from 11 to 13 October 2006. The first edition of this fair, in the IJsselhallen, welcomed about 13,000 visitors. The organisers had come up with a new concept: instead of hosting two Agricultural Trade Fairs, in Leeuwarden and in Hengelo, they presented one fair in Zwolle, where agricultural entrepreneurs and their potential suppliers could meet. The participants included cattle, pig and poultry farmers and arable farmers, but also organisations such as NAJK (Agricultural Youth Association) and Rabobank.

These two successful events enabled us to present our organisation and objectives to numerous visitors and to ignite their enthusiasm for what we do. Agriterra will definitely be present at future editions of both fairs. ■

Debating on genes

At Agriterra, we regularly organise national and international gatherings, to strengthen the basis for our work or to improve knowledge on a specific subject.

Apart from the workshops, conferences or exchanges that we organise ourselves, we also participate in activities hosted by

others or we co-host an event with another organisation. The latter applies to the International Conference on Agricultural Development (ICAD), formerly known as tropical agriculture day. ICAD brings together scientists, policy makers, development professionals and farmers from North and South. This annual conference is jointly organised by the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), the Alumni Associations of Wageningen University (KLV) and the Van Hall Larenstein School (VVA), Agromisa and Agriterra. ICAD has developed into an important meeting place for national and international stakeholders in the field of agriculture and development.

'From Green to Gene revolution' was the theme in 2006, and the key question was whether gen tech is the solution for global food shortage and rural poverty. Opinions on the subject varied widely. Those in favour pointed out the possibilities, such as crop varieties and species that are more resistant to diseases and that grow better in parched soil, which will yield more food. But those against warn against the socio-economic, environmental and health consequences. Furthermore, it is uncertain whether small farmers will benefit and whether it will actually help to solve poverty in rural areas. One of Agriterra's experts in this field, Anil Epur from India, delivered an introduction on the question what gen tech means for small farmers. ICAD 2006 outlined the state of affairs on the "gene revolution's" contribution to sustainable development and explored the possibilities to broaden the debate, especially including the farmers themselves. ■



Kyrgyzstan

- Position UN development list: 110
- Population in millions: 5.15
- Life expectancy: 68.2
- Percentage Literacy: 98.7
- Active in agriculture: 52.5%

The Netherlands

- Position UN development list: 10
- Population in millions: 16.3
- Life expectancy: 78.5
- Percentage Literacy: 98.4
- Active in agriculture: 5%

Solidarity

“Farmers all over the world understand each other immediately, even though they do not understand each other’s language. Farmers have to cope with the whims of nature and are daily working with living creatures. That is what farmers unites, all over the world.

In every society a healthy agricultural system provides a sound basis for fair social development; it is a condition to respect everybody’s right to a decent existence. LLTB provides support to the development of healthy agricultural systems in places where this is not yet evident. The most important instruments for this task are transfer of knowledge and moral support. We do this from a deeply rooted feeling of solidarity with colleagues all over the world and Agriterra successfully translates this solidarity into concrete forms of support”

Noud Janssen, President Limburgse Land- en Tuinbouwbond (LLTB)

Embryos for Kyrgyzstan

In 2005, we received some unexpected help to raise additional funds and to make publicity for our work.

Alex Arkink is a cow photographer. Together with Han Hopman, also a photographer, and co-founder of the breeding magazine Holstein International, he bought a beautiful yearling, called Angeln Genetics Lauralyn. This yearling is a descendant of the Comestar Laurie Sheik family, which is mainly bred for exterior and has produced numerous excellent bulls. Alex and Han used the yearling for Agriterra, or rather, for ALGA, since all the revenue from this yearling will be donated to the breeding programme of this young organisation for rural women in the Ata region in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan is in Central Asia and is bordered by Kazakhstan, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It is a poor country that is mainly dependent on agriculture. Over 50% of the active population are in the rural sector. In Kyrgyzstan, women are responsible for the care of the cattle. However, meat and milk production are low, due to the poor quality of the feed and the livestock, and the frequent occurrence of diseases and natural abortions, among others.

The Netherlands have a high rating when it comes to cattle breeding, be it for milk or meat production, or for exterior. Knowledge and equipment from the Netherlands are therefore important for the Kyrgyzstani cattle farming sector. Agriterra

works with ALGA. The project features among other things a network of stations for artificial insemination (AI), which will hopefully enhance the dairy cattle’s productivity, and thus the income for farmers.

Alex and Han feel that they should not only dedicate their knowledge, resources and network to their own benefit, but also to that of the rural population in other parts of the world.

And that is why Lauralyn was chosen for an embryo transplant (ET) and inseminated with semen from the bull Picston Shottle. CR Delta then provided a ‘wash’, which means that someone from the ET team collects, selects and freezes the embryos. After that, they can be sent to the buyer, who is usually already known at that stage. Our first embryos had already been sold to a breeder in Drente. The proceeds were then transferred to Agriterra, and the entire procedure was repeated. Embryos from a decent breed will easily earn you between 400 and 500 Euros. In the course of one year, Alex and Han collected 5,000 Euros for the ALGA project.

In November 2005, Lauralyn was auctioned during the Tulip Holstein Sale in Zwolle. The objective was to use the proceeds to buy a new, even better yearling. Unfortunately, she was sold for far too little money, which meant the end of this fine project. However, our collaboration with Alex and Han continues. They have both ensured us that they are thinking of new ways to support Agriterra. ■





The weakest link

At the end of the 19th century, the Netherlands saw the rise of rural cooperatives, as a response to the farmers' weak position towards intermediaries and the food industry. And although Dutch farmers nowadays are still not the main beneficiaries of the sale of agricultural products, their situation is much better than that of their counterparts in developing countries, since their voice is heard through the cooperatives. In many developing countries small family businesses deal directly with intermediate traders, which is why the farmers' organised participation in the product chains is vital, since it is their ticket to the market. Agriterra aims to strengthen the farmers' negotiation position in those chains. In that respect, a well-organised and well-informed agricultural sector is an absolute requirement, and that is what Agriterra wants to achieve with farmers' organisations all over the world.

Chain approach

Together we are stronger

All local, national and international chains should be well-structured in order to allow for the improvement of the farmers' position in those chains. Farmers can benefit from the chain approach by adopting a market (demand)-oriented approach and by adjusting their product strategy – not vice versa. This will lead to increased variety in products, quality and availability. One of the organisations we are supporting in this context is SPAR, an organisation for alpaca breeders in Peru. On his own an alpaca farmer is in a weaker position to negotiate with a wool seller than within an organisation. SPAR negotiates on behalf of the farmers, takes up contact with purchasers and develops services.

Dangers looming ahead

The chain approach is a hot issue, but the hype could turn into a threat if it is approached from a trade perspective. If the only goal is to bring five tons of snap beans to the supermarket, without paying any attention to their origin, then the farmers' interests are at risk.

Agriterra focuses on the farmers' interests, trying to ensure that

farmers can benefit from their products' added value. It is therefore essential that they forge alliances with other forces in the market.

Looking to the future

Commercial activities from the chain approach have already yielded higher prices for farmers. We also see a change in attitude in numerous farmers' organisations, from a producer's perspective to an entrepreneur's perspective.

In the future, Agriterra mainly wants to support economic initiatives from local farmers' groups. In the 'Farmers Fighting Poverty' programme, project proposals with activities in that field will earn our support. ■



India

- Position UN development list: 126
- Population in millions: 1,129
- Life expectancy: 68.6
- Percentage Literacy: 61
- Active in agriculture: 60%

The harvest time for mangoes is May/June. It takes a mango tree 5 years to begin to yield fruit. The tree can live to be 70 years. Indian mango farmers harvest using nets instead of machines.

Mango mania

India is the world's third largest fruit producer, and the largest producer when it comes to mangoes. The export opportunities should be immense, but unfortunately, due to harvest and storage difficulties, only 4% of the fruit is processed. In comparison: Malaysia processes 83% of its fruit. Over 60% of India's more than one billion inhabitants depend on agriculture for their livelihood, while the agricultural sector's contribution to the GDP is less than 25%.

Since 2001, Agriterra has worked with FFA-AP, the Federation of Farmers' Organisations in Andhra Pradesh. This umbrella organisation of farmers' groups and cooperatives was founded in 1998 and supports the creation of new farmers' groups at village and district level. Through its member organisations it represents over 4 million farmers in Andhra Pradesh. The organisation seeks to improve the socio-economic circumstances of the rural population.



With Agriterra's help, FFA-AP has established a number of mango farmers' cooperatives in southeast India. In the past, the mango farmers had very poor storage facilities, which forced them to sell the entire harvest at once. The intermediate traders charged a 5 to 10% commission fee, sold the harvest, and only then paid the farmers. Due to the large supply, the price was often very low, as was the revenue for the mango farmer.

The creation of mango cooperatives changed all that. The cooperative represents the farmers for price negotiations with the buyers. Moreover, the cooperatives defend their members' interests and improve storage facilities, networks and marketing opportunities.

Thanks to their joint and well-informed actions, the mango farmers in Andhra Pradesh have managed to close some lucrative deals in the national market. Their efforts were crowned with success when they signed a cooperation contract with Coca-Cola at the end of 2006. "Frooti", a mango-flavoured drink from the Indian company Parle Agro, has been the market leader in fruit drinks since 1991, and was purchased by Coca-Cola. Since it now owns the largest mango-flavoured drink company, Coca-Cola will need large quantities of mango pulp, which is the basic ingredient for "Frooti". Thanks to the lobbying efforts of the FFA-AP and the mango cooperatives the mango farmers can now supply their mango pulp directly to the Frooti factories. Coca-Cola thus has fast and easy access to mango pulp, and the farmers do not have to appeal to intermediate traders and have higher revenue. ■

Business Initiatives



Tanzania

- Position UN development list: 162
- Population in millions: 39.4
- Life expectancy: 45.9
- Percentage Literacy: 69.4
- Active in agriculture: 80%

Milk production and Dairy Processing in Tanzania

Tanzania is a country of livestock. There are some 18 million cattle, 13 million goats, 3.5 million sheep, 1 million pigs and 50 million poultry. Its livestock population is larger than that of most African countries, but its milk production and processing is less developed than in the neighbouring countries. Tanzanian economy has grown steadily over the past few years. Urban areas have seen an increasing demand for meat, milk and eggs. However, large distances have to be covered, and Tanzania's market was liberalised over the past decades. Imports from neighbouring countries and the world market are a threat to domestic production. The main challenge for Tanzanian cattle farmers is to ensure that their products find their way to the cities, fresh and of sound quality. Meeting this challenge requires courage, knowledge, cooperation and a business approach.

Involvement

The Tanzania Working Group at ZLTO was founded in 1999. From the very start, the working group has tried to offer sustainable and practical support through intensive contacts with their colleagues in a Third World country. The working group also aims to broaden its network in the Netherlands, in order to be able to respond as effectively as possible to questions from the Tanzanian cattle farmers. The working group also has regular contacts with Farm Friends Nederland, an organisation from Friesland that issues credits to help the members of the Dairy Cooperative Union (TDCU) in Tanzania.

The ZLTO Tanzania Working Group cooperates with cattle farmers in Tanzania in order to develop local dairy farming. In 7 years' time, that cooperation has slowly developed into a network of dairy farmers, farmers' organisations and cooperatives. We currently work with three farmers' organisations:

- **Mviwambo**
The first organisation to establish contacts with the Tanzania Working Group. Mviwambo is a dairy farmers' network in the Mbeya region, in southern Tanzania. It consists of 17 groups of dairy farmers from surrounding villages and has some 700 members. The working group was introduced to Mviwambo through COS Tilburg. Originally, the initiative

was aimed at exchanging experiences and knowledge, but later evolved into a joint project to build their own dairy factory.

- **Mviwata**
Mviwata is the national organisation of small farmers in Tanzania. It represents 60,000 farmers and has almost nationwide coverage. Its objective is to exchange information between its members and to defend the interests of the small (male as well as female) farmers of Tanzania. Together with Mviwata, the Tanzania Working Group is developing a network of dairy farmers in Tanzania.
- **Tanga Dairy Cooperative Union**
Together with Mviwata we started to cooperate with the Tanga Dairy Cooperative Union (TDCU) in 2005. In barely 15 years' time, this dairy cooperative union in the northern region of Tanga has established an impressive structure of cooled milk storage and transport. At the same time, TDCU built a milk factory, Tanga Fresh Ltd, with the financial participation of, among others, a group of Frisian dairy farmers.

Dairy factory

In 2006, we joined the farmers' organisation Mviwata in hosting a study trip for Tanzanian dairy farmers (cows and goats) in their own country. Together we travelled to the Tanga region, where we saw with our own eyes that the dairy farmers have built a magnificent dairy company (Tanga Fresh Ltd). It was a very inspiring and lively study trip for everyone involved!

The dairy farmers in Mbeya (Mviwambo) are currently planning the construction of a small-scale dairy factory in southwest Tanzania. In the years to come, we will see if and how it will eventually work out.

Other Tanzanian participants in the trip are also keeping busy. We have been writing to the pig farmers in Hamdeni to discuss the technical aspects of housing and we have joined the national farmers' organisation Mviwata in helping other Tanzanian dairy farmers to further elaborate their plans for mutual cooperation.

In other words, we have got our work cut out for us! ■



Insurance for success!

MIAN (Micro Insurance Association Netherlands) is an organisation of enthusiastic volunteers that wants to contribute to the improvement of living circumstances in rural areas in developing countries. This is done by making the risks manageable and by offering tools that enable people in those areas to insure or finance the risks. MIAN's mission and ambitions are reflected in its appeal to the knowledge and experience of professionals, both local and from the Netherlands. The mutual insurance model is vital in this respect.

In Nepal, the cooperation between Agriterra and MIAN has led to their support to the Nepal Federation of Savings and Credit Cooperative Unions (NEFSCUN). NEFSCUN, founded in 1988, promotes community-based saving systems and credit cooperatives, to improve the inhabitants' socio-economic situation and thus contribute to the fight against poverty. Since a few years, attention has also been paid to insurance. Meanwhile some 150,000 people have affiliated to Nefscun. Jeroen de Haas is one of the members of the Nepal project team.

In 2006 he visited NEFSCUN: "Of late, Nepal's poorer citizens are able to obtain essential insurance coverage. Up until now, insurance was not self-evident for the less wealthy Nepalese. A few commercial insurance companies, from countries such as India and the United States, are active in Nepal. However, they only cater for the upper segment of the market".

MIAN's support is mainly aimed at developing suitable products for the local population, such as death risk insurance. De Haas: "The insurance product is related to the financial situation. Debt remission in the event of death is a striking example. This product protects the deceased's next of kin from 'winding up stuck with debts'. The product is presented and offered to the rural population in various ways."

De Haas expects the demand for insurance products to rise sharply over the next few years. He hopes that in time products such as incapacity insurance and health insurance will also become more common insurance products. ■



Nepal

- Position UN development list: 138
- Population in millions: 28.9
- Life expectancy: 62.1
- Percentage Literacy: 48.6
- Active in agriculture: 76%



Niger

- Position UN development list: 177
- Population in millions: 12.9
- Life expectancy: 44.6
- Percentage Literacy: 28.7
- Active in agriculture: 80%

Patience is a virtue

De Groot en Slot Allium BV is an internationally active company that specialises in the development, production and delivery of Allium seeds (onions, shallots and garlic). It is a good example of the experiences in the Netherlands' agricultural business life. In 2005, De Groot en Slot celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Henk de Groot, director of De Groot & Slot, explains: "On that occasion, the employees and management wanted to do more than just throw a nice party. We wanted to use our company's experiences to help people in developing countries who wish to take their future in their own hands. Concrete action was the first matter of importance. We presented our plan to Agriterra. A mutual introduction culminated in a request by FCMN-NIYA, the federation of horticultural cooperatives in Niger, to produce onion seed for its members. We found that idea particularly appealing since FCMN-NIYA has concrete objectives and aims for quality."

With its 94 cooperatives, FCMN represents over 22,000 households in Niger that focus on horticulture. Many of those horticulturalists cultivate onions that are successful in Niger. The demand for the 'Violet de Galmi' species is especially large. Onions are among the few export products for which Niger, the poorest country in the World, holds a competitive position in the regional market.

"In January 2006, I went on my first mission to Niger with Agriterra. That was rather exciting for someone who is mainly

active in Europe", says Hans van Leeuwen, manager for onion seed production at De Groot & Slot. "However, the ice melted quickly, and I've been there two more times since then. What I find particularly interesting are the personal contacts with onion seed farmers in the field. Three experienced farmers are already obtaining good results and will gradually expand their sown area. For next season, FCMN will identify an additional number of farmers who want to specialise in onion seed production".

De Groot en Slot is used to long-term processes. Henk de Groot: "The development from the initial stages of an onion species to its full-scale use takes at least a decade. Therefore, we understand their gradual approach and are willing to support FCMN in the longer term. It is vital that the farmers and their organisation handle and guide things properly. We are very pleased with that". Van Leeuwen explains: "Last year, we tested several planting methods, including the planting of whole onion bulbs, which led to extremely good results and was copied by the farmers. Furthermore, FCMN intensifies its cooperation with local research institutes and works with members of the Niger Working Group at ZLTO to find possible improvements in the field of cultivating techniques, harvesting methods, storage and processing.

The outlook is that by 2015, at the 60th anniversary of De Groot en Slot, FCMN will have reached its goal and will provide its members with first-class onion seed in a professional manner". ■

Cattle improvement

A light-hearted project, called "Tropical Bulls in the Low Countries" marked the start of our cooperation with CR Delta in 2003. CR Delta has an extensive breeding programme, and the young bulls have to be given names that can be used internationally. Agriterra provided well-sounding names for these young bulls - most of them names from farmers' organisations in developing countries - and in return CR Delta paid us a fee. However, we were more interested in the project's PR potential. If one of those bulls grows up to be the second 'Sunny Boy' and achieves world fame, it will be fantastic to explain the origin of its name time and time again!

The stables of Holland Genetics, a subsidiary of CR Delta, currently house 25 'tropical bulls'. And these are exciting times for the three oldest bulls. In the summer of 2007, their daughters calved for the first time since the trial stage. These daughters' achievements will determine whether or not their fathers will become breeding bulls. The breeding fitness of Roppa, Pakisama and Fenocin, three sons of the internationally renowned prize bull Sinatra, will be measured for the first time in January 2008. Then we will know whether one of these tropical bulls has developed into a winner and may become an internationally renowned name in the breeding of Holstein dairy cows.

The cooperation with CR Delta has now evolved into a more substantial cooperation, first of all in Rwanda. Rwanda has a 'one cow per family' policy. The authorities want cattle farming

to be combined with arable farming, and cows are to be kept in sheds. There is not enough space for pasturing, except in some parts of the Eastern Province. The authorities also aim to replace local cattle species with better yielding species. In order to provide advice on this subject to Rwandan farmers' organisations, CR Delta did an orientation mission in June 2007. The evolutions in this project can be monitored on the website agro-info.net.

Jos Buiting, manager of Communications and Association Affairs, explains why CR Delta cooperates with Rwandan cattle farmers through Agriterra. "As a cooperative enterprise we wish to make our involvement in Agriterra's work more solid. We can offer extensive expertise in the field of cattle improvement, animal diseases, breeding methods, AI, milk production, registration, etc. Our colleagues in developing countries find that knowhow very useful. And we also get something in return. Apart from the extraordinary experience that this represents, as an international enterprise we also find it interesting to create a network in countries where we are not yet active."

Agriterra applauds this mode of operation. José van Gelder, head of the communications unit, points out that commercial relations generate at least as much development as traditional development cooperation. According to José, "it is of course a positive evolution if the side effect is that more companies are willing to support our work". ■



Rwanda

- Position UN development list: 158
- Population in millions: 28.9
- Life expectancy: 44.2
- Percentage Literacy: 64.9
- Active in agriculture: 90%

From bargaining to negotiating

Strong farmers' organisations help to raise the standard of living. If they want to get a fair price for products in rural areas, such membership-based organisations will have to achieve a better negotiation position with strong buyers. Cooperation between agri-agencies in the developed countries and farmers' organisations in the developing countries is essential in providing organised support to these farmers.

The IFAP DCC programme for producers' organisations and AgriCord's 'Trade Capacity Building programme' are of vital importance. Between 2003 and 2006, the IFAP members submitted project proposals and some 50 projects were financed. Projects can focus on any aspect of trade, as long as they strengthen the producers' organisation and defend the interests of small farmers.

The Trade Capacity Building programme features both pilot projects and full-fledged trade projects by the participating farmers' organisations.

Knowledge is power

Access to up-to-the-minute market information on specific products is an important tool for farmers, and it is indispensable if they want to obtain a sound negotiation position. The business world's creed is 'first come, first served'. Producers' organisations in developing countries can join forces, even with their colleagues in the industrialised world, to monitor market information on both agricultural products and agricultural input (seeds, fertilisers, agrochemical products).

Market development

The aim is to improve the capacity of producers' organisations on markets and to open new markets. The latter comprises all aspects of commercial transactions (logistics, financial aspects, negotiations with traders, etc.).

Among farmers' organisations in developing countries we have noticed an increased interest in economic activities. Their objective is often to obtain higher prices for their members and to improve market conditions for farmers, but also to be stronger and more (financially) independent as an organisation. Our strategy is to improve management skills and to coach the staff so that they can lead agribusiness activities. >>

Uganda

Uganda is an important producer of coffee. Nevertheless, coffee farmers lack the knowledge of subjects such as food security, quality and international coffee standards. Nearly all the coffee is exported to Europe, where demands are becoming ever stricter. For that reason, the Ugandan cooperative Nucafe wants to elaborate a specific coffee standard for its farmers, so as to obtain the production of larger quantities of quality coffee. They use existing markets as a reference. Training and information sessions have raised the farmers' awareness that the market does not judge their product by the flowers or the colour of the coffee berries, but by the origin and the sound, permanent quality of the coffee bean. The result:

- a 165% increase in turnover,
- direct export channels to England, USA and Italy,
- training of farmers, groups and associations, for whom seeds and seedlings for replanting programmes are produced.
- improvement of the relations between Nucafe and the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Coffee Research Institute (CORI), and the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA).

Market Information System

In Ivory Coast, a Market Information System (MIS) has been introduced. For lack of accessible internet connections product prices are communicated on the radio. Farmers are thus aware of prices before they sell their products. Agricultural broadcasts and debates on the radio are interesting for both producers and cooperatives. Farmers are now able to make better business decisions, and there are better trade negotiations throughout the chain from producer to consumer. Finally, the debates bring about a transfer of knowledge to the farmers. During a follow-up project, the French agri-agency AFDI and Anopaci, the national rural umbrella organisation, will monitor the effects of the MIS on the farmers' income improvement.

>> **Reinforce the weakest link and strengthen the entire chain**

Both international trade institutions, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and donors make efforts to improve the developing countries' trade capacities. However, the involvement of producers' organisations over there should be further reinforced, and the interests of farmers in chains should be better protected.

Especially small farmers are the weakest link in the chain, and the reinforcement of their negotiation position with regard to the other links in the chain is of key importance.

Trade and Development Letter

The international farmers' organisation IFAP issues a "Trade and Development Letter" for farmers' organisations in developing countries. This informative bulletin aims to inform the farmers on subjects, such as negotiations concerning agriculture at an international and regional level, and other relevant subjects that may influence the farmers' livelihood. The knowledge that is thus transferred to the farmers' organisations in developing countries should enable them to participate as a full-fledged interlocutor in trade issues at national and international level.

Evaluations of the Trade Letter have shown that the IFAP members appreciate the document and that it should focus even more on subjects such as the analysis of poor countries' agricultural policy; exchange of experiences, such as case studies on the involvement of farmers' organisations in agricultural policy decisions at a national, regional and international level; and they would also like to have more illustrations such as tables, graphs and statistics.

In Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam the existence of independent and autonomous farmers' organisations is still not common. Agriterra is trying to bring about change here. On the one hand we facilitate the formulation of supportive legislation and policies at national level and on the other hand we support farmers' cooperatives and organisations in the field in order to show that a healthy agricultural sector cannot exist without farmers getting organised themselves.

Agriterra in the Mekong region

A history of war and poverty

The Mekong region, in colonial times known as Indo-China, consists of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The region has had a very turbulent history of foreign occupation, wars and totalitarian regimes. The American war in Vietnam (and Laos) and the Khmer Rouge period in Cambodia were the absolute all-time low points.

Laos and Vietnam still have strict one-party systems with the socialist party firmly in control. Cambodia is experimenting painfully with a democratic political model. The aftermath of the wars is still visible in all these countries, although it is certainly the case that in Vietnam economic growth has been unprece-



ented in the last ten years. On the basis of agricultural development Vietnam has become one of the greatest exporters of food in Asia, whereas twenty years ago it still had food shortages. Vietnam is now well on the way to becoming an industrial superpower. Developments in Laos and Cambodia are still far behind.

In all three countries independent membership-based organisations that were not set up and controlled by the state were forbidden by law until a few years ago. Laos has no tradition of organised groups or cooperative structures in the countryside. In Cambodia and Vietnam these were an extension of the state apparatus and sometimes this is still the case. Certainly Laos and Cambodia still figure at the bottom of world poverty statistical tables. But poverty is still common in the Vietnamese countryside too.

Lack of policy framework

For Agriterra the region is a challenge. First of all there is certainly a lack of legislation in Laos and Cambodia that makes possible accompanying policy for setting up independent membership-based organisations. Vietnam is in a transitional period. There is certainly a legal framework that regulates the setting up and operation of farmers' organisations and cooperatives, but the implementation still leaves much to be desired. In the three countries the authorities are at present cautiously positive about the function of independent agricultural organisations, especially in relation to stimulating economic development in the agricultural sector.

Agriterra has supported the authorities in Laos and Cambodia since 2004 in formulating the legal framework that will make possible the development of cooperatives. Agriterra does that

via the following umbrella organisations in Asia – the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and the Association of Asian Confederations of Credit Unions (ACCU). Both organisations support national cooperative federations and unions in working out the accompanying policy and in their negotiations with the authorities. In Cambodia this has led to the adoption of a provisional law (Royal Decree) that supports and regulates the operations of credit cooperatives. In Laos a similar law is being prepared. Via ICA the responsible ministries are preparing legislation for the legalisation of associations and cooperatives. In Vietnam the introduction of the new cooperative law is taking shape at provincial level by the setting up of model professional cooperatives.

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating"

In addition to supporting policy development, Agriterra also supports membership-based organisations and cooperatives in the countries themselves. Showing in practice what potential organised agriculture actually has in development and the fight against poverty is the most persuasive argument, also for the authorities.

Since 2004 Agriterra has supported the Vietnam Farmers' Union (VNFU), the biggest farmers' organisation in the world with at least 9 million registered members. The organisation is centrally directed as the influence of the authorities continues to be great. Via economic projects, started by provincial departments, Agriterra tries to stimulate the transition from a political organisation to a service organisation. A change of mind-set and the development of the abilities of farmers' leaders on various levels are indispensable here.

Via the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance, cooperatives are guided so as to cultivate a professional approach.



Madagascar

- Position UN development list: 143
- Population in millions: 19.25
- Life expectancy: 56.5
- Percentage Literacy: 70.7
- Active in agriculture: 72.5%

Senegal

- Position UN development list: 156
- Population in millions: 12.5
- Life expectancy: 56.7
- Percentage Literacy: 39.3
- Active in agriculture: 77%

Brazil

- Position UN development list: 69
- Population in millions: 190
- Life expectancy: 70.8
- Percentage Literacy: 88.6
- Active in agriculture: 20%

>> In this context particular attention should be paid to operating in a market-oriented and member-driven way. In Cambodia, Agriterra works together with two agricultural organisations, the Farmers' Nature Net (FNN) and CAMFAD. FNN is a new national farmers' organisation. Setting up local cooperatives, improving production and access to markets are the main activities of FNN. CAMFAD is active at regional level by setting up associations and cooperatives in the villages, giving agricultural advice and creating new market opportunities. In Laos, where there is not yet any access to financial services in the countryside, saving and credit cooperatives have been set up with the guidance of ACCU. These are the only membership-based organisations in Laos at present. A small revolution, that, it is hoped, will have huge results.

A successful approach

Agriterra's method of working by, on the one hand, supporting and stimulating policy development, and at the same time showing in a practical way that organised farming communities can actually set in motion their own development, leads to results. At national level, but certainly at local level too where farmers actually raise their standard of living by access to services such as credit, improved production techniques and supplying new markets. The success has not gone unnoticed: in the future, the Dutch Development Organisation SNV, will give additional support to our partners in the region with advisory services. A welcome supplement that we expect will further extend the reach and effect of the Agriterra approach. ■

Everything you ever wanted to know about exchanges, (but never dared to ask...)

Agriterra uses exchange for putting farmers and farmers' organisations in touch with each other so that they can exchange know-how and experience (as the word indicates). During an exchange you get to know one another, visit companies and discuss the work that farming people do. When it is a first getting-to-know-each-other, the programme is often put together in a wide-ranging and general way. But there are also examples of focused study programmes on a specific theme.

An interesting phenomenon that is developing at the moment is the mutual exchange between farmers' organisations from developing countries. A good example is the visit from Fekritama (Madagascar) to the CNCR (Senegal). Fekritama looks after the interests of some 20,000 farmers and has been a partner of Agriterra since 2000. Looking after farmers' interests alone does not seem enough anymore, because ever more members are knocking at the organisation's door with requests for concrete services such as agricultural advice and setting up sales cooperatives. Fekritama was not really very sure how to deal with this and at Agriterra's suggestion there was an exchange with CNCR, a farmers' organisation in Senegal in 2006. The Madagascans feasted their eyes on everything and learned a great deal from their colleagues. Thanks to their visit to Senegal, services to members have now found a place in the organisation. Once again it appears that organisations can learn a lot from each other.

North exchanges it appears that it is often difficult to get beyond the immediate impressions. So the foreign visitors are rapidly overwhelmed by admiration for the level of mechanisation of agriculture and the Dutch delegations abroad sometimes have difficulty to let go of their preconceptions and prejudiced attitudes. It is a pity that a visitor does not ask, for instance, what management choices a farmer in the Netherlands must make and what steps s/he must take to get a cow to produce 10,000 instead of 9,000 litres of milk in a lactation period. That is all the more a pity because it is just these choices and considerations that are universal and about which it turns out there is so much to exchange and learn.

It has been shown that things can be done differently by 'Limburg Agrarisch Jongeren Kontakt' (LAJK - a young farmers' organisation from the Dutch Province of Limburg). In 2004 they organised a very interesting study programme on agro-tourism for its partner Fetraf-Sul from Brazil. With help from LAJK and the 'Nationale Hogeschool voor Toerisme en Verkeer' (NHTV - Netherlands Institute of Tourism and Transport Studies), the Brazilians received the task of investigating the agro-tourism

Experiences with exchanges are not really always positive. Sometimes there is a lack of precision in the formulating of objectives and expected results. From North-South or South-

Cambodia

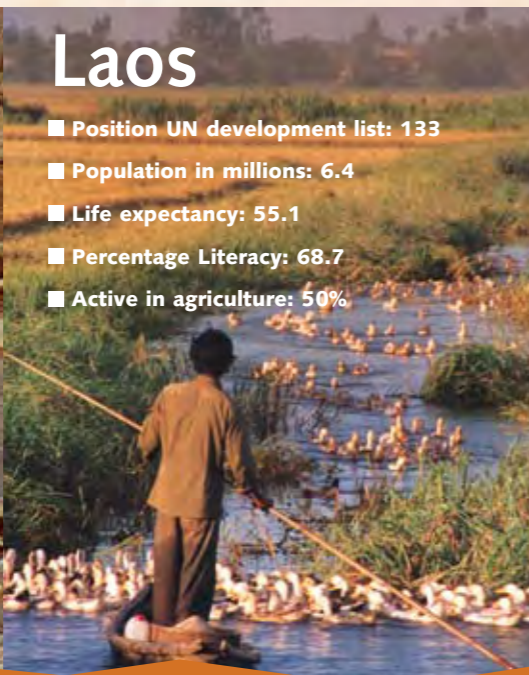
- Position UN development list: 129
- Population in millions: 13.8
- Life expectancy: 56.5
- Percentage Literacy: 73.6
- Active in agriculture: 39%

Laos

- Position UN development list: 133
- Population in millions: 6.4
- Life expectancy: 55.1
- Percentage Literacy: 68.7
- Active in agriculture: 50%

Vietnam

- Position UN development list: 109
- Population in millions: 84.4
- Life expectancy: 70.8
- Percentage Literacy: 90.3
- Active in agriculture: 56.8%





>> sector in Limburg in the period of a week. After a full week of visits to and discussions with farmers who run camping sites, local shops, farmers' restaurants and farm camping organisations, a trenchant strengths-weaknesses analysis of the agro-tourism sector in Limburg was presented and the Brazilians knew how they could map the sector in their own region. A wonderful example of how Agriterra likes to see things: knowledge in the Netherlands is applicable in Brazil, a learning-by-doing approach, prime roll of LAJK and solid support from NHTV.

Whether it concerns North-South or South-South exchanges, it is and remains a powerful instrument for sharing knowledge and experience between farmers' organisations. It is really important that the goals and expected results are clearly formulated in advance and also that a lot attention is given to 'universal' choices and assessments that a farmer must make, in the approach and setting up of an exchange programme. Only then can we speak of an effective transfer of know-how 'from farmer to farmer'. ■

"Between farmers you do not need to talk that much" was the motto of the fifth anniversary of Agriterra in 2003. It could not be more apposite because cooperation and sharing knowledge between fellow farmers, both male and female, is what Agriterra is all about and often few words are needed for this! That is even more true for mutual cooperation between organisations from developing countries. A special example of this is the interchange that took place between the farmers' organisations MPP from Haiti and Sydip from the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2006.

but all the rest of the work was done by the organisations themselves. The result? A scintillating programme, an open atmosphere and a lot of discussion between farmers.

The MPP delegation wrote an exceptional report about their visit to Congo. An exceptional report because it enables you, the reader, to see Congo with Haitian eyes. The MPP delegation describes the situation of women in Congo in a very forthright manner as 'dramatic'. 'Women do most of the work and themselves carry their products to the market, while in Haiti that is mainly done by donkeys and horses', the Haitians allege. The MPP delegation concludes that this situation must change and that until a better solution is available, 'men must do the



Cooperation

DR Congo

- Position UN development list: 167
- Population in millions: 65.7
- Life expectancy: 57.2
- Percentage Literacy: 65.5
- Active in agriculture: 55%

Haiti

- Position UN development list: 154
- Population in millions: 8.7
- Life expectancy: 57
- Percentage Literacy: 52.9
- Active in agriculture: 66%

with added value

How Haitians give the Congolese a lesson.

Haiti and Congo are poverty-stricken countries and are characterised as failed states in which government barely functions. Cees van Rij, liaison officer at Agriterra, went to Haiti in 2006 and came back very troubled after seeing so much poverty. In this difficult context farmers' organisations are often the only anchor point in the lives of country people. So they often have a wider area of responsibility, for example in the area of education and health care. The challenges for farmers' organisations in both countries are vast and mostly focused on rural development in the widest sense of the word.

The similarities and recognition of the problems made the interchange between MPP, representing 53,000 farmers, and Sydip, with a rank and file of 85,000 farmers, a success. It was an advantage that both countries are French-speaking so that discussions were able to take place without language barriers. A great deal of attention was given to how the organisations are structured and how they see their role in the construction of public services. The administrators of MPP were very enthusiastic about Sydip's work by means of study groups and have a mind to set up the same in their organisation. This is really a splendid example of the Agriterra way of working: we put the organisations in touch with each other and made the interchange possible from the financial point of view,

carrying work'. Period! A wonderfully refreshing and clear point of view when you compare it with the often abstract, difficult to understand opinions about gender that many development organisations in Europe bandy about.

There are also certainly footnotes to add to such an interchange. To begin with, the logistical preparations were very complex and as a result the costs of the whole operation were relatively high. So it took the delegation no less than two days with five (!!!) transfers to travel from Haiti to Congo. But anyway, it is an exceptional situation; two organisations in two countries that have so much in common and are so far from each other.

The efforts made by male and female farmers from the Netherlands for colleagues in developing countries is still necessary, but Cees expects that the South-South approach to interchange and exchange of know-how will grow in importance, especially due to the greater similarities of the local context and culture within which farmers and their organisations work. The challenge for Agriterra is now to make the know-how and experience that is locked up in agricultural organisations in developing countries more accessible to fellow organisations in the South. ■

The Experience of an AgriPooler

Henk de Lange

Moldova

- Position UN development list: 114
- Population in millions: 4.3
- Life expectancy: 70.2
- Percentage Literacy: 99.1
- Active in agriculture: 40.7%



Henk de Lange is a dairy cattle and pig breeder in the area around Raalte. Going abroad as an expert in order to share your know-how really seems a positive experience to Henk. It enriches you as a person. You make yourself available, unpaid, and can see that the information and advice that you bring with you have an effect on the farmers there and that gives you a good feeling.

A patient and persevering attitude comes in useful. Working in a goal-oriented way, without rushing ahead to force results, that saves you quite a few frustrations. According to Henk, the average AgriPooler is characterised by considerable motivation and commitment. Rather a lot is asked of you. When Henk is on mission things have to keep working at home. To be able to function well on mission, you must not feel that you have simply dropped everything before leaving. Henk's son and his assistant take over while Henk is abroad. A happy knock-on effect is that they also learn something because they face situations alone for a time.

Henk de Lange came across Agriterra and AgriPool quite by chance. As a result of his executive position in LTO Noord, he spoke with a group of farmers from Moldova who were in the Netherlands at the invitation of Agriterra. From this came the request to give support in Moldova himself. Now, they are very busy with the setting up (literally and figuratively) of a practical training centre. They are also investigating the possibility of exporting goat's cheese as a half finished product.

So far Henk de Lange has only one country on his AgriPool mission list, but it would not surprise him if he were asked to advise farmers (and their cooperatives) in other countries too. As an AgriPooler you must be rather flexible. You make yourself open to others and their culture. By putting yourself in their situation, you can give advice in a more goal-oriented manner. In Moldova corruption is a widespread phenomenon. Henk does not make any value judgements here. By doing that you could

put yourself 'out of the game' and the farmers who, after all, it's all about aren't helped by that. According to Henk the art of being an AgriPooler is two-fold: let others see and experience that ultimately they can do it themselves and so increase their self-reliance and confidence; be flexible in order to be able to better anticipate situations that come about.

When Henk talks about his experiences as an AgriPooler (and this happens regularly), he gets different reactions. Some people think that he is crazy, and cannot understand why he devotes his time to this. Others think that it's just a case of pleasant trips abroad. But most people are genuinely curious and want to know more. In Henk's opinion, more publicity should be given to the AgriPool concept, especially in agricultural and horticultural organisations. In that way you can make other farmers aware of the possibility of sticking your neck out for fellow farmers in countries where life is harder than here. And that is and remains a "good thing" nevertheless. ■

"Sharing knowledge, exchanging experiences, getting to appreciate cultures and learning from each other - these may seem just empty slogans. But once you start to practice them, they will not let you go."

Twenty years ago I became a member of the working group for international cooperation of the then ABTB and KPO, now LTO Noord and ZijActief. I hope that I will have the opportunity to continue this work for a long time. I have contributed to several projects and currently we are devoting ourselves to support male and female farmers in Moldova who badly need our help."

*Marianne Koebrugge-Mulder
Working Group International Cooperation LTO Noord*

Characteristic of the working method of Agriterra is interchange between farmers.

Interested members of the Dutch rural organisations can put themselves forward as experts to AgriPool. Agriterra operates as a sort of broker and looks for the best experts for a particular question from its partners and facilitates the missions that result from this.

Read about the experiences of one of them.

Agriterra and gender issues

The interests of rural women

For several decades women in the Netherlands have fought hard to get the same opportunities and rights as men. In developing countries the opportunities for men and women are often still miles apart. Agriterra wants to bring about change in this area by means of the 'Gender and Women in Development' programme.



Women produce more than 50% of all the foodstuffs in the world but own less than 2% of all agricultural land.

registration of the extent to which specific gender and women's activities were involved, and how much money was destined for these.

To give a new impulse to the gender programme, Agriterra has drawn up a gender policy document 2007-2010. One of the most concrete outcomes from this document is that project applications will be systematically screened as to the participation of women and there must be a specific indication of what percentage of the project budget will be dedicated to women or promotion of gender awareness.

Gender and women in development in the future

Agriterra is endeavouring to attain at least an average of 30% female participation in all projects taken as a whole, as is stated in the document 'Farmers Fighting Poverty 2007-2010'. Within this programme support for specific gender projects and advisory missions can get financed under the theme: Gender and Women in Development. The objective is that in 2010 at least 30% of active participants in projects will be women and that at least 30% of the budget will be allocated to gender-related activities and women in development. ■

Women's organisations in Benin

"The movement NBvP, Vrouwen van Nu (Women of Today) has been in contact with women's organisations in Benin for more than ten years. As a result of such a long-term relationship you learn more about the circumstances and you know what is and what is not achievable. We believe in a small scale approach. Agriterra's expertise, the efforts of our members who have meanwhile become experts members and of course the strength of women in Benin, make sure that the international cooperation becomes concrete and we see what the effect is."

*Conny Voordendag
Director NBvP, Vrouwen van Nu*

Gender stands for rules, traditions and social relationships in societies and cultures that define communally what should be seen as female and male behaviour. These rules are not the same everywhere, and are not fixed either. Through the programme, Agriterra wants to help to adjust these rules in a positive manner in order to promote equal relationships between men and women.

Within the theme Gender, Agriterra discusses: Gender and women in development. By improving their position, women can develop themselves and reduce their disadvantage in relation to men.

In 2004 Agriterra launched the AgriFem programme during the 'Female Farmers' Tour'. The AgriFem programme assesses whether projects contribute to improve the status of women. For example, whether the participation or decision making power of rural women in (mixed) rural membership organisations is a topic in the projects. We think that women need to get special attention for a number of reasons, but above all women must be focused on for the simple reason that

women form the majority of the poor in the world. In addition, on average 40% of the farmers in the countries where we work are women, while their interests are not taken care of proportionately. The biggest applications (in financial terms) for cooperation with Agriterra come from mixed organisations in which men play a leading role. These men usually pay far too little attention to looking after the specific interests of women. In many countries where Agriterra is working, rural women are economically and socially disadvantaged in relation to men. Agriterra is working to reduce this inequality, because we are of the opinion that gender equality strengthens the processes of democratisation and leads to good management within organisations.

What have we achieved so far?

In 2005 the IFAP Women's Committee and AgriCord/Agriterra agreed to develop a special women's programme. The objective was to strengthen the position of women leaders in order to better defend the interests of women within agricultural organisations and thus to improve the position of women in

general. The next step was a special workshop in Lima in 2005, which was attended by 26 representatives of organisations from Latin America. The result was an action plan directed towards strengthening the leadership capacities of women. In addition attention was given to good functioning structures for women in rural organisations. During the IFAP meeting in Montevideo in November 2006 the plan was approved and the programme was started. Similar workshops will also be held in Asia and Africa.

In the 2001-2003 programme 11% of our total project budget was specifically destined for women and about 300 000 women were reached. With the intention of pushing this percentage higher, Agriterra started the previously mentioned AgriFem programme in 2004. But the funds allocated to AgriFem projects for the period 2004-2006 have remained around this percentage.

These were mainly projects with women's organisations and a number of gender-related projects within mixed organisations. Of the other project applications there was no systematic

Passage

"Passage", a social Christian women's movement has been working with rural women's organisation CMC (Coordinadora de Mujeres Campesinas) in Costa Rica since 1997. CMC wants to improve the general position of women within the family, organisations and associations as well as within society. The cooperation work mainly focuses on granting credit and organisational strengthening. Agriterra is closely involved with this, and that is necessary because CMC has grown considerably in recent years. The number of members has increased just as has the number of associated women's groups.

"Passage" has a tradition of more than 20 years where consciousness-raising and fund raising for international cooperation is concerned. With information about projects in Burkina Faso, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Irian Jaya delegates went to the branches to tell 'the story'. We now focus on women in rural organisations in Sierra Leone and Costa Rica. In 2006 I was able to go to Costa Rica on an exchange visit. This was an inspiring mission that compelled admiration for the women there. As project manager for "Maatschappij-International" in Zeeland it is my task to encourage the members of the board to include in the annual programme a theme such as 'Equal opportunities worldwide: the millennium development goals'. There is still a lot to do where the social and economic position of women worldwide is concerned!"

Ina van Gelder

On behalf of "Passage" member of the national project group Maatschappij Internationaal 4VO

About guarantees and biscuits in Costa Rica

One of the biggest obstacles for women entrepreneurs in Costa Rica is the limited access to sources of finance. Local banks ask for high guarantees, and as a result women are obliged to go to unofficial contacts where extortionate interests are demanded. That is a pity because small loans can often bring about big improvements in the quality and presentation of products.

In the autumn of 2005 two women from Coordinadora de Mujeres Campesinas (CMC) travelled to the Netherlands in order to draw attention to the importance of a credit project for women in Costa Rica. On this occasion they exchanged experience and information about micro-credit with experts at Dutch financial institutions. Armed with this know-how and with the help of "Passage", CMC was able to begin a credit project in 2006.

Members of "Passage" collected 50,000 Euros for a guarantee fund that gave the members of CMC more access to credit. The fund was made available via the "Banco Popular y de Desarrollo Comunal". This bank has branches throughout the country and is therefore easily accessible to members of CMC. Local promoters who work for CMC guide the women's groups in setting up simple and accessible credit systems.

In July 2006, two representatives from "Passage" visited Costa Rica in order to familiarise themselves with the reality within which the (productive) groups operate. During the meetings



with the groups there was exhaustive discussion on the possibilities of calling on the guarantee fund. In various regions CMC has organised training courses about everything that is involved in running a small business. Many women in rural areas talked about their plans, such as the setting up of a butterfly farm, the purchase of a piece of land for the cultivation of medicinal herbs for the production of shampoo or the establishment of a small roadside shop for the sale of arts and crafts products. All of these are projects that the guarantee fund can be used for.

A special project that has been made possible through the guarantee fund is a bakery for bean biscuits. Women have got the opportunity to earn extra income in two ways. On the one hand, by growing beans and rice for the production of the biscuits, and on the other by selling the biscuits. Besides, the biscuits are very healthy because the protein content is high and they help against anaemia. For this bean biscuit project there was close cooperation with Agriterra and the University of Costa Rica.

The guarantee fund has opened doors that were earlier firmly closed, but a lot more is needed in order to improve the position of rural women in Costa Rica. For that reason "Passage" will continue to support CMC. ■

Sustainable relations

"As a Dutch women's organisation we feel that it is important to look beyond the frontiers. There is a long tradition of enthusiasm for international cooperation work within "Passage". Via Agriterra we work to build up long-lasting relations with women's organisations that do their work under totally different and sometimes abnormally difficult circumstances. The results are visible and occasionally astonishing, as well as instructive. It keeps us on our toes and makes us think about our behaviour as producer or consumer."

Ineke Ludikhuizen
Director Passage



Costa Rica

- Position UN development list: 48
- Population in millions: 4.1
- Life expectancy: 77.2
- Percentage Literacy: 96
- Active in agriculture: 20%



The voice of women must be heard

Women in rural areas need each other. They help each other by sharing experience. These experiences are not only valuable in their home countries but also at international level. For this reason, "ZijActief" branches in Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland, two Dutch provinces, dedicate themselves to a stronger position for rural women in developing countries.

Women's Organisation for Progress and Development

In the 1990s "ZijActief" Noord- and Zuid-Holland were already supporting small scale projects in the Philippines such as kindergartens and income-generating activities for women in rural areas. They collected the money for these projects among their own members. Meanwhile the contact developed into a robust cooperation with the federation Women's Organisation for Progress and Development (WOPD) on the island Bohol. Since 2004 there has also been support from Agriterra.

The organisational strengthening of the women's association is one of the spearheads of the collaboration. Until recently WOPD was organised by BOCAP, an NGO that is committed to rural renewal. Because Agriterra only supports membership-based organisations, it was important for WOPD to become independent. "ZijActief" Noord- and Zuid-Holland seem to be successful in passing on their own experiences in managing women's organisations. WOPD has grown into a federation with strong management. A number of sections wish to join this federation and wish to get support in their projects. Both the population and the local administration have growing confidence in the federation.

Water is no problem in the Philippines, but the ability to store it certainly is. The partnership Water for Women and Women for Water helps WOPD to construct water tanks and set up water commissions. WOPD hopes that the work of installing water tanks can begin soon.

Exchange of know-how and information

"For me development cooperation means exchange of know-how and information with women who have a difficult or disadvantaged life. We also wish to support their projects with a financial contribution", says Marjon Verkleij, member of the Development Committee. She has herself been on mission to

the Philippines three times. "For the future I hope that WOPD will grow into an independent women's organisation that is self-supporting and has created sufficient strength among its own members. It is a regional interest organisation that has connections at national level, because rural women must also be heard in parliament!" ■

Philippines

"The caring tasks of women in the Philippines are not so different from those in our society, only the circumstances are different. Through our cooperation we can make a small contribution to better circumstances and that give us satisfaction in doing this work. You have to learn how to get started. Through the project of WOPD with Agriterra and "ZijActief" Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland, women get tools with which to start and to develop their small companies in a positive manner. The meagre profits are for them rays of hope that permit them to continue, difficult as it sometimes is. Despite the problems, there is always time to laugh and sing. In the Philippines, karaoke forms almost part of daily life.

The visit of a mission is the high point of the cooperation: to see each other, talk about the results, look at photos and make recommendations in order to go further. And above all, to experience daily life so that we can pass this on to our supporters.

I find it very pleasant to give lectures on the project; using photos and film I talk about women's organisations in the villages, and I also put a little of the history of the country into the story too. In this way I try to make our members enthusiastic about supporting the project and the work!

Writing a mission report is a difficult task, but because we know that our partners use the report as a workbook, the energy that we put into the work is also useful.

Cooperation broadens your outlook on the world and you learn to look critically at your partner's organisation but also at your own. Nothing is self-evident anymore: why do you do that, and what do you want to achieve? 'First thinking and then doing' became our motto during the last mission."

Marjon Verkleij

*Development Cooperation Committee
ZijActief Noord- and Zuid-Holland*

Philippines

- Position UN development list: 84
- Population in millions: 87.8
- Life expectancy: 70.7
- Percentage Literacy: 92.6
- Active in agriculture: 36%



ZijActief Nederland

The Dutch Federation for Catholic Rural Women was founded over 50 years ago. It supported the regional organisations that devoted themselves to the development of rural women by means of education, encounter and information. Meanwhile the name of the federation has changed into ZijActief Nederland, catholic women's network. The federation is working on behalf of and through women who live and work in (urbanised) rural areas. ZijActief consists of six member organisations, which in total have over 6,000 members in about one hundred divisions. ZijActief defends the interests of its members by improving the position of women in society and the quality of life in rural areas. ZijActief is both active at the (inter)national level as well as at the level of provinces or communities and it works together with three other national women's organisations within 4VO. ZijActief Noord- and Zuid-Holland is one of the member organisations. It comprises a Development Committee that has been active for eighteen years.

Joining Forces

"For me international cooperation means joining forces in order to move towards a really sustainable environment. It means that ZijActief and WOPD, a local Philippine women's organisation, associate with each other as partners. I apply my know-how and experience relating to women's organisations and water management to think about annual/future plans.

Women are the basis of a family or community. That is the same worldwide. That makes the association with each other so memorable and enjoyable. In addition, I learn from them by daily practice, and due to this I ask for real attention for water management in developing countries in my work for Women for Water partners at international level Forums and Symposia"

*Thérèse van Gijn-Bruggink
ZijActief Nederland*

Mapping & profiling



In 2004 we supported 71 organisations in 30 countries to carry out their projects. Two years later, in 2006, the figure was 78 organisations in 37 countries. But why work with these organisations and not with the many others that exist? And why in one country but not in another?

First of all, the organisations that look after the interests of farmers, rural women and youth and which submit a project application, must satisfy the following requirements:

- They can count a substantial part of the rural population in the country in question among their supporters.
- They are searching for their own role in development inspired by the ideas of their members.
- They stand for a society in which the rural population fully participates at the political and economic levels.
- They look for a constructive form of dialogue with other social sectors and the authorities concerned (This does not exclude the possibility that the organisation can strongly oppose or criticise the authorities).
- The organisations should be open to exchange and dialogue with like-minded organisations from the Netherlands (or other countries in the North) or from developing countries.

Moreover the organisations must be independent from government and political parties, democratically led, have a membership with certain obligations and be open to cooperation and change. The basic principle of the organisation must be mutual assistance, combined with professional leadership and the pursuit of economic surplus. Ownership, authority, control of management and policy and the power of decision on allocation of profits must be the preserve of the members. If organisations submit a project application to us, they must satisfy these points before we can consider their request. Moreover they must be able to show that they want to strengthen themselves.

In 2006, therefore, we supported 78 organisations, but there are many more rural organisations throughout the world that could do with our support. There may be various reasons why

they have not submitted a project application to us, such as that the organisation is not aware that Agriterra exists. In order to be able to support these organisations anyway, we must know which organisations are active in which countries and in which areas. So as to be able to analyse rapidly but thoroughly, we have developed the 'organisational mapping' method. According to an established pattern we try to bring into vision the country indicators (economic development, the importance of agriculture, etc). As a second step we then draw up a survey of the most important membership organisations in rural areas, which should allow us to make a fair comparison between them. The third step consists in assessment and recommendations: considering all this information, what would be the best strategies and choices for collaboration for Agriterra?

Organisational mapping is a new instrument in Agriterra. A number of country analyses were carried out in 2006 as preparation; for example, in Vietnam, Rwanda and Burundi. Burundi is one of the countries that is not yet affiliated to EAFF, the East African Farmers' Federation. Agricultural organisations from Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania are already affiliated to EAFF. EAFF is still in the construction phase and, supported by Agriterra, has the intention of representing agricultural organisations from all the countries of East Africa. For that reason, Agriterra and EAFF jointly carried out this research at the end of 2006.



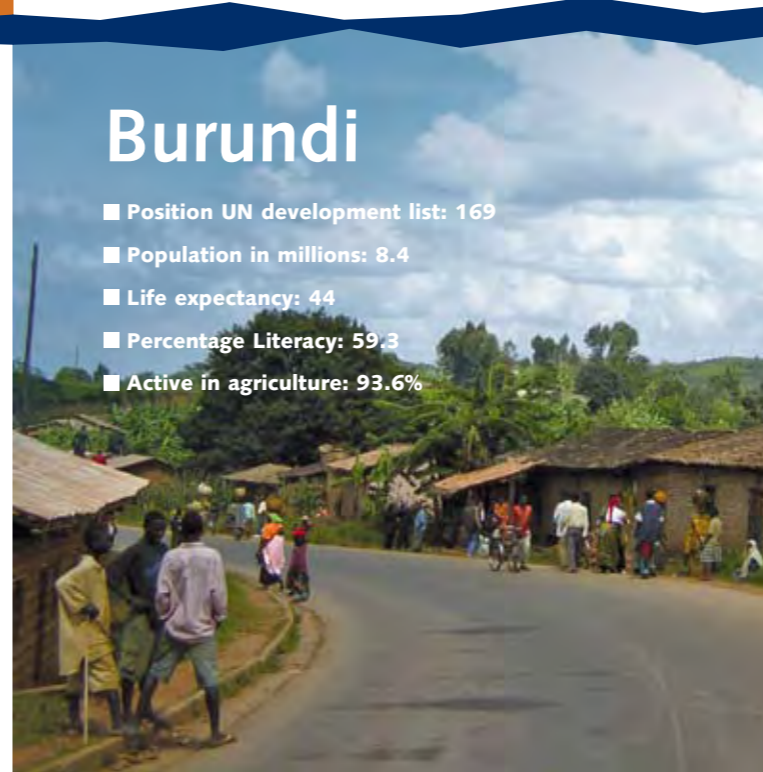
Burundi on the map

Burundi has just emerged from a civil war that lasted ten years and was fought on ethnic and social grounds. Just as in neighbouring Rwanda, there was serious conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi populations. It is estimated that 1.1 million Burundians fled from the violence and that 300,000 people were killed between 1993 and 2003. Before this civil war the population of Burundi was already very poor, and this worsened as a result of the war. Since the end of the war, the World Bank and the IMF, along others, have been helping to improve the economic situation in Burundi. More than 90% of the population lives and works in the countryside. Improvement of the agricultural sector would thus be beneficial to many Burundians.

Four local consultants thoroughly analysed the agricultural sector and the existing organisations within the scope of the 'organisational mapping', partly by desk research and partly by field-work. In Burundi there exist many small associations for farmers, but also a number of organisations that are active at regional, provincial or even national level. Many are really poorly organised, but certainly have the potential to grow into strong, representative organisations. It is important to better structure and if possible group these farmers' organisations. The EAFF, with the help of Agriterra, will help the Burundian farmers' movement to do this. In the future, it will, among other things, organise exchanges between various Burundian farmers' organisations, help set up organisations and invite the national organisations that are already well-structured to become members of EAFF.

Burundi

- Position UN development list: 169
- Population in millions: 8.4
- Life expectancy: 44
- Percentage Literacy: 59.3
- Active in agriculture: 93.6%



Just like any organisation with a mission we want to know if we have been successful. Are we doing the job well, are we doing what we should do? And how do we know? Our Monitoring and Evaluation System (M&E) has to answer these questions. Agriterra's M&E system is constructed around the profiling of agricultural organisations. This profiling is a tool with which we measure how strong an agricultural organisation is in terms of specific core dimensions such as participation, professionalism and financial accountability. For each of these dimensions the organisation can obtain a score from 0 to 100%.

Knowing why we do what we do

In the example you can see the strength of the Cambodian Credit Savings Federation, the national organisation for savings banks and micro-financing in Cambodia. Typical of credit and savings unions like CCSF are the high scores for accountability and professional capacity. For participation and strategic potential CCSF scored rather lower, but in relation to 2003 there has already been some improvement.

By measuring regularly (in principle every three years) we can see whether an organisation is becoming stronger or weaker – and that is precisely what we want to know and must know in terms of our mission, which after all consists in strengthening agricultural organisations. In other terms: what we have to know in any case in order to be able to say if we are successful, is whether the organisations we are working with have become stronger during the period of our collaboration.

And they certainly have! In the period 2004-2006 the organisa-



Netherlands

- Population in millions: 16.3
- Life expectancy: 78.5
- Persons infected with HIV/Aids: 20,000
- HIV/Aids-related deaths in 2003: < 100

Kenya

- Population in millions: 36.9
- Life expectancy: 55.3
- Persons infected with HIV/Aids: 1,200,000
- HIV/Aids-related deaths in 2003: 150,000

tions became on average 14% stronger. Besides, their membership numbers have risen and they have shown to be capable of generating more income of their own. The details behind these figures can be found along with much other information in our activity report for 2004-2006 (available from Agriterra at request). But we also communicate the results of this profiling in another, more permanent manner: through www.agro-info.net everyone can see which organisations were 'profiled' at what time and what score they achieved. We think indeed that there must be a direct and transparent link between our core activities and reporting and accounting about them, and the Internet provides this possibility. If you link implementation, monitoring and evaluation and communication, everybody can learn from that. To make it clear that we reach many people with our method of working through membership-based organisations, we have recorded numbers of members and supporters of our partner organisations for the profiling that we carried out in 2004-2006. From this it appears that our projects are not restricted to isolated groups of farmers but are embedded in organisations which often have (ten) thousands of members, organisations that are really representative of the rural population in developing countries.

There is often a great difference between the number of officially registered members and the supporters (= all farmers who feel represented). This then is also one of the challenges for the organisations: to attempt to expand representativeness by improving the system of registering members and making the invisible members visible!

HIV/Aids Conference

KENFAP takes a central role in fighting Aids in the Kenyan countryside

The HIV/Aids epidemic is a serious threat to agricultural development and the countryside and contributes to hunger and poverty.

In East Africa agricultural organisations play an ever more important role in prevention and fighting HIV/Aids in the countryside.

The HIV virus infects mainly the most productive section of the population; that is people between 15 and 50 years old. The loss of labour leads to less land being cultivated and to farmers being forced to sell land and livestock in order to be able to pay for medical and funeral costs. Because of Aids children inherit the debts their parents have run up and do not have the opportunity to learn from their parents how to farm. Because of hunger and poverty people move to the towns and for that reason until recently the fight against Aids was mainly directed towards urban areas. In recent years there is really a growing awareness that the fight against Aids in the countryside is of vital importance.

That's why KENFAP (the national farmers' organisation in Kenya, with 40,000 registered members) took the initiative of organising a two-day conference in 2006. The aim of the meeting was to discuss with the government and concerned development organisation how the issue of HIV/Aids should be dealt with in the countryside. A master plan was the result.

KENFAP thinks that farmers' organisations should be more actively involved in preventing and combating the consequences of HIV/Aids. They know the Kenyan rural population better than anyone else and so know where and how their members can best be reached. Medical organisations, for their part, dispose of the necessary knowledge and the means of prevention, information and medicines. Cooperation between the various organisations is thus necessary, each with its own professionalism and expertise.

Agriterra fully endorses the importance of the central role that KENFAP has taken in the common approach to the HIV/Aids issue, but certainly realises that it is a long, tough process. That is why it is a real concern that international donors are aware of the necessity of working together with farmers' organisations and that they adapt their policy accordingly. Agriterra sees her role on the one hand as that of bringing about discussion of the issue within farmers' organisations and on the other hand as that of pointing out to medical organisations the importance of cooperating with the farmers' organisations.

With the conference, KENFAP has taken the first step to get a view of the HIV/Aids issue in the Kenyan countryside. The Master Plan is ready. Now it is up to the Kenyan government and the international donors, together with KENFAP, to get started and prevent and combat HIV/Aids in the countryside.

CCSF (organisational strength)



Youth

You are a farmer, young and you want something

The Dutch Agricultural Youth Contact (NAJK) and Development Cooperation

Many NAJK members are interested in the way farmers are working on the other side of the world. By travelling to different parts of the world NAJK members have gained a picture of different agricultural systems. During these journeys the request came more and more often from both members and young people abroad for contacts to be strengthened so that they could be of help to each other. The idea of joining forces as young people was born. Projects were started with Agriterra and cooperation came into being.

Exchange missions

At present Working Groups 'International' are active in almost every Dutch province. Each of these working groups has a cooperative relationship with young people from an agricultural organisation in a developing country. These are young farmers who want to create opportunities in rural areas in their own country. In the Netherlands it is totally normal that young people organise themselves, stand up for their own rights and look after their own interests, but this is not at all so self-evident in many countries. These subjects have become the basis of cooperative relationships.

Phases

The first phase of cooperation is a sort of familiarisation phase. Both groups visit each other and get to know each other's country, culture, companies and agricultural systems. The next phase goes deeper. Common subjects are chosen, in consultation, on which further work can be done, such as milk processing or agro tourism. Although the chosen subjects may be different, youth development in the partner country and creating opportunities for them is always central. Every six weeks the PWI members discuss progress, activities and results. They later make this widely known in their province so that more NAJK members would become enthusiastic about international cooperation.



Young Farmers' Tour

Young people want to have a future in rural areas. Access to land, access to credit, impact on operational management, access to proper (agricultural) education and access to power are some of the many topics and issues that are particularly important for rural youth. You can often hear people say that "young people are the future", but it is remarkable that only few organisations have specific policies or particular attention for the interests and needs of young farmers.

In 2005 Agriterra and the NAJK, the Dutch Agrarian Youth Organisation, set up a 'Young Farmers' Tour'. A caravan of young farmers from partner organisations in Kenya, Argentina, Peru and Nicaragua moved through the Netherlands in October 2005. The diversified programme provided room for discussion, exchanges and farm visits. The Tour was concluded with a 'WTO Shadow Summit' on the theme of "WTO and agriculture – What's in it for young farmers?" The conclusions and proposals from that meeting were summarized in a final declaration that in the different countries all over the world was handed over to the government delegations that would participate in the WTO Round in Hong Kong in December of that year. It is high time that the voice of the farmers of the future can be heard! ■

"Young Dutch farmers and market gardeners find it interesting and worthwhile to develop and keep up contacts with fellow farmers worldwide. The aim is to exchange know-how and broaden horizons. Taking over a business, position improvement of young farmers and market gardeners; globalisation, production/product improvement and marketing systems, are common themes that are relevant everywhere. Agriterra provides the network and know-how needed to bring about exchanges and cooperation. Exchanging know-how and working together with our colleagues worldwide often involves 'made-to-measure' work. NAJK finds the collaboration with Agriterra very agreeable in any case, because Agriterra knows what is going on among young farmers and market gardeners throughout the world."

Joris Baecke, Executive manager for arable farming and international affairs and also vice chairperson of NAJK.

Out of the field

At present there are 5 cooperation relationships between provincial AJKs and organisations in developing countries. AJK Limburg has worked with Fetraf Sul in Brazil since 1999. Initially, the cooperation concentrated on organisational strengthening of Fetraf Sul. In recent years the focus has been more on the problem of depopulation of Brazilian rural areas. Many young people are obliged to migrate to the towns in order to earn money. At present two projects are running that are intended to counter this exodus: one in the field of milk processing and one for agro tourism. Within this framework there have been repeated visits. Two members of Fetraf Sul made a visit to a dairy cattle farm in Limburg at the end of 2005. Here they learned about the practice of milk processing into various dairy products. They also received tips about marketing, public relations and the establishment of cooperatives. With a trunk full of useful information and know-how they travelled back to Brazil.

The AJK Flevoland (FAJK) has been in contact with the youth wing of the Peruvian farmers' organisation CNA since 1998. CNA takes care in particular of the interests of small farmers in

that country. FAJK chose Peru in fact, because Flevoland is a potato province par excellence. "The origin of the potato is in Peru, so for this reason it seems to us that it is appropriate to have contacts with farmers in that country", stated Ria Wilzing of FAJK. Thanks to this alliance members of both organisations have the opportunity of learning from each other. By visiting each other on their own territory both groups get to know each other, each other's agriculture and activities. Many small farmers in Peru live in poverty. According to young FAJK members, in addition to poverty, many small farmers in Peru suffer from an inferiority complex. Many of them are of native Indian origin and so are discriminated against by Peruvians of European descent. But some progress can be observed. Young Peruvian farmers are becoming more mature, ask critical questions and do not simply accept their situation. Of their own accord they produce very good ideas. Thus they have written a project proposal themselves, which is giving a great deal of attention to broadening the 'farmer-to-farmer programme'. This was set up to help small farmers in Peru learn from each other's experiences. They pass on know-how to each other in a sort of chain letter idea. >>



Interesting cross-fertilization

"International cooperation results in a wonderful cross-pollination as far as BAJK is concerned. On the one hand you see that you, as a Dutch entrepreneur, can really help farmers in developing countries by sharing your know-how with them. On the other hand, it is good for the personal development of our members; through the exchange they gain a wider vision of entrepreneurship and themes such as globalisation and WTO become much more concrete."

Peter de Regt

BAJK International Workgroup and NAJK Secretary

"Young agricultural entrepreneurs worldwide run their businesses in different ways. In the Netherlands there is kale in the fields while in the South cassava is an important crop. Despite these differences the problems that young farmers throughout the world struggle with are usually identical. The NAJK thinks that it is important that members are themselves aware of international agriculture and issues relating to it. Discussing credits and land rights with colleagues from Kenya, for example, has a lot of added value. NAJK stimulates its members through cooperation relationships, theme evenings, discussions and campaigns to look further afield than their own farmyard, the horizon lies a little further away."

Kitty Hovenkamp, Manager NAJK International



>> The "Brabants Agrarisch Jongeren Kontakt" (BAJK – the young farmers' association in the Province of Brabant) has been involved in the Philippines where it is cooperating with "Pasaka", a regional federation of coconut farmers on the island of Mindanao. At first, the cooperation between BAJK and Pasaka was mainly focused on improving the position of young people in rural areas of the Philippines. Other topics are development of entrepreneurship, logistics, marketing and business planning. Over the years, not only BAJK members have travelled to the Philippines to give advice and share know-how, but young Philippine farmers have on the other hand also become acquainted with the Dutch dairy cattle industry and market gardening. In the autumn of 2006 three Philippine farmers did a

traineeship on a dairy farm in Brabant and at a sweet pepper grower's. In the Philippines there are only limited possibilities for training young farmers. Through the traineeship in Brabant these farmers had the opportunity of acquiring more professional know-how. During this period, the trainees learned a lot about the ins and outs of both businesses. They helped enthusiastically with the work, from milking the cows and picking sweet peppers to driving a tractor and preparing sweet peppers for sale. So they practised everything that crops up in the running of an agricultural business and learned about the role of mechanisation and time management. Furthermore, they saw the importance of good hygiene and quality of products for the market. On their return home the three trainees passed on their newly-gained know-how to other young members of "Pasaka". ■

Helping to make Africa more fertile

Nowadays, more than 204 million people in Africa are starving or undernourished. Over three quarters of those who live under the poverty line are to be found in African rural areas. The soils that they cultivate are the basis of their existence, literally and figuratively speaking. However, those soils are often parched after years of overcropping. Resources such as fertilisers and herbicides are extremely limited, and the farmers are barely able to feed their own families, let alone the fast-growing population.



The importance of defending interests

In order to change that and to fight hunger and poverty yields have to improve. An indispensable condition is that farmers should get access to vital resources, especially fertilisers. In order to stress the importance of fertilisers for the development of African agriculture the African Union and the fertiliser industry co-hosted a Fertiliser Summit in Nigeria in June 2006. Thanks to Agriterra's support, the African farm leaders were able to make their voices heard.

The summit

Farmers are those who feed and care for the soil and who produce food for the ever-growing population. Therefore it is striking that they, the key players in rural development, had initially not been invited to the Fertiliser Summit. It looked about to be like all other policy talks about farmers, instead of with farmers. Thanks to Agriterra's lobbying efforts a number of farmers' leaders did manage to participate. They represent the vast majority of the African population (950 million people) and during the Summit they stressed the need for investments in the agricultural sector and they were able to influence the resolutions.

Searching for solutions

Despite the fact that the soils are extremely parched, farmers in Africa hardly ever use fertilisers. However, in the few African

regions where farmers do use fertilisers we have noticed a strong increase in productivity. In order to extend that increase to the rest of Africa and thus contribute to the first Millennium Development Goal (reduce by half the proportion of people living with hunger and in extreme poverty), one of the resolutions of the Summit was that the access to fertilisers should be improved and that taxes should be abolished. Nevertheless, the farmers' leaders pointed out that fertilisers are not the only solution and that there is also a need for natural manuring, erosion reduction, better seeds, etc., to improve yields. They also composed a "green book", with positive experiences from farmers' organisations that are building their future.

The future

Drafting resolutions and recommendations is a good start, but it does not end there. The resolutions of the Summit have to be brought and kept under the attention of policy makers. They have to be shaped and converted into actions. We have to avoid that those who elaborate policy plans in Africa's capital cities do so without considering the farmers' interests. Agriterra helps rural organisations to become stronger and more dynamic, so that farmers can speak with one voice, which cannot be ignored by policy makers. And the farmers, through their cooperatives, want to actively participate in the distribution of fertilisers. ■

"Enrich the soils, feed the continent"



North-South Spuds in Congo

Frans van Hoof was head of the Agriterra advisory department from 2004 to 2006. Before he worked as liaison officer and in that function he could see how collaboration developed between a group of enthusiastic farmers from the Dutch Wieringermeer-area and the Congolese farmers' organisation SYDIP. He tells his story:

"What struck me most when I first met people from SYDIP was that farmers cultivated various crops that you do not find just everywhere in Africa: quinine trees, papayas, not for fruit but for the papain, but also potatoes. In fact, just like most other crops, the potato did not do so well at the time: there were low yields and plant diseases."

Then I thought: if the Netherlands is good at anything it's potatoes! After all, we send spuds out to the furthest corners of the world and, as it happens, in great quantities. So Agriterra has undertaken various campaigns to raise the level of potato cultivation in the Democratic Republic Congo since 1999. First of all by making it possible for two agricultural experts from SYDIP to do a course on potatoes at the WUR in Wageningen. And by getting AGRICO, one of the large potato cooperatives in the Netherlands, to send 100 kg of seed to SYDIP.

"By taking careful note of what the local customs are and also by informing yourself in the time between different missions about what concerns people, you can build up mutual respect. In this way working together becomes easier, but you can also turn a blind eye to certain things if necessary."

In order to support all these activities there was a search within the then WLTO for potato producers who were interested in visiting fellow producers in Congo. From 2000 farmers from the Wieringermeer in the Netherlands have travelled regularly to Butembo to give advice to their Congolese colleagues on the spot among the potato plants, about possible improvements relating to soil fertility, protection against diseases, increasing yields, cultivating quality potatoes, searching for better markets. Ferdie van Campen, Otto Smit, Anton Vollebregt, Gerard Vossen and Sander Giesen, are all just as enthusiastic about their contacts with Congolese farmers. But also Piet de Graaf, board member of LTO Noord and a potato grower himself, has been to Butembo and has shared his management experience with fellow managers in SYDIP during their annual congress: how do you organise a study group, how do you finance a farmers' organisation from members' contributions? In 2005 2 members of the SYDIP potato study group did a traineeship of two months at the farms belonging to Gerard Vossen and Sander Giesen. This has very clearly had an influence on the improvement of potato production in Congo. By seeing how Gerard and Sander went about working on their own farms, as well as by visits to all sorts of demonstrations about potato cultivation in the Netherlands, Kaghoma and Muhindo understood much better what lay behind certain advice that the farmers from the province of >>

SYDIP

SYDIP (Syndicat de Défense des Intérêts Paysans) – Union for the protection of Peasants Interests – is the farmers union set up in the province of North-Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1993. SYDIP's objective is to improve the socio-economic situation of the farming population by means of strengthening their negotiating capacity and improving agricultural activity. The specific aims are:

- To provide legal services to members on all aspects of running an agricultural business
- To provide technical services in the areas of agriculture, cattle raising, fisheries and industry
- To search for markets for agricultural products
- To set up a supervisory office that will monitor serious conflicts over property rights
- To function as a sounding board for questions about farmers' interests

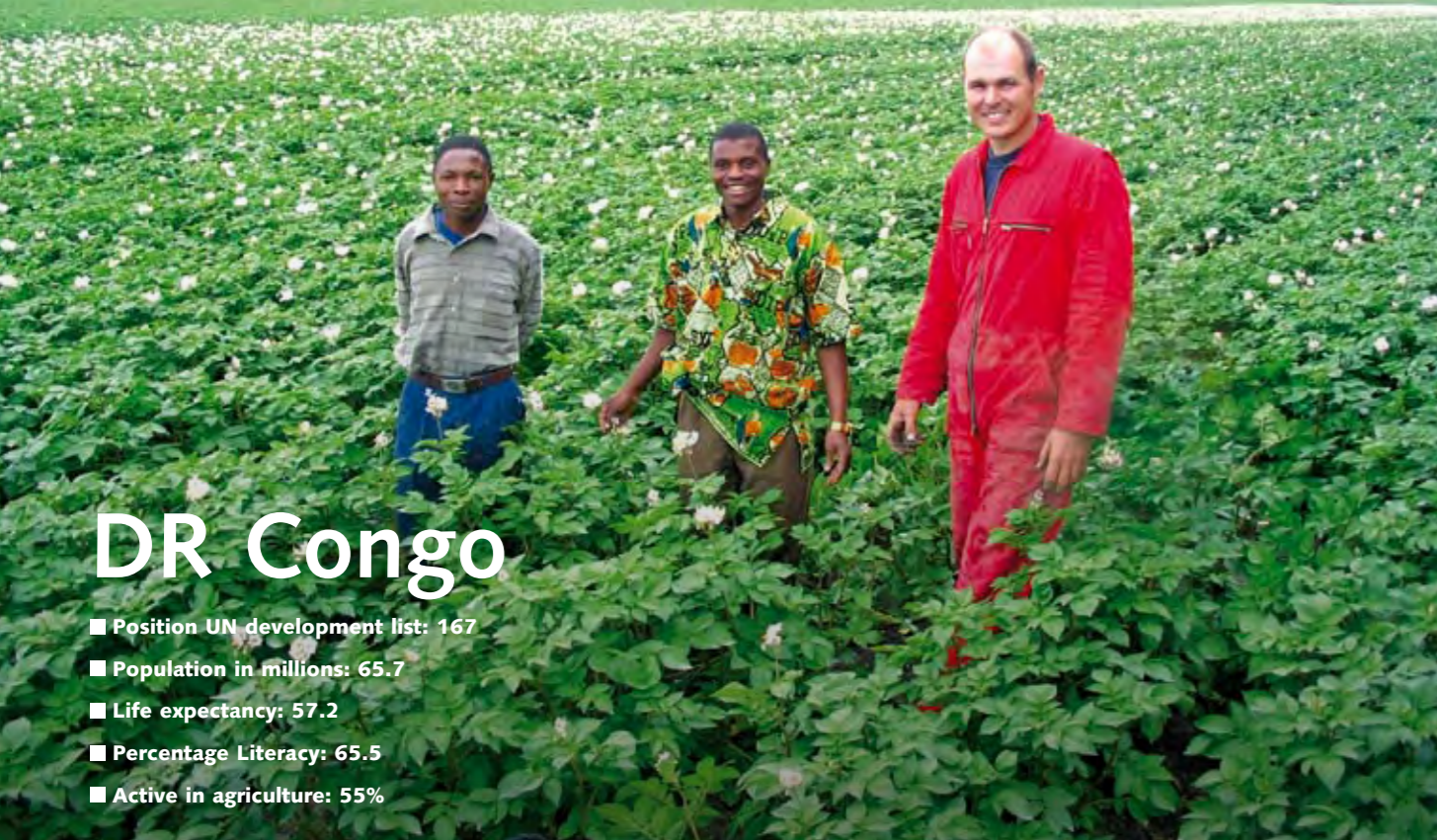
SYDIP is organised in 12 federations that are each concerned with one specialisation: potatoes and wheat, robusta and arabica coffee, oil palm, rice and oilnuts, papaya, quinine, foodstuffs, fisheries, cattle raising, fruit and vegetables, bananas and manioc/cassava. Next to that, SYDIP has a separate women's section that has the objective of looking after the interests of women and stimulating the socio-economic development of women farmers. At the end of 2005 SYDIP had 14,116 members.

Congo and LTO Noord

"I work with the greatest pleasure in the shared culture of consultation also within SYDIP. I draw motivation for continuing to work with these people from the warm-heartedness and the bond that I experienced when I celebrated my birthday there in great style. To organise such a party is the best training you can imagine to let SYDIP and LTO Noord work together successfully."

Gerard Vossen
Congo Working Group LTO Noord





DR Congo

- Position UN development list: 167
- Population in millions: 65.7
- Life expectancy: 57.2
- Percentage Literacy: 65.5
- Active in agriculture: 55%

>> Noord-Holland gave them during their visit to Congo. They now were able to see the background on which these farmers based their thinking. It is also important for Dutch farmers that they are fairly well informed about the way of life of their Congolese colleagues' farmers. During a first visit you often get irritated about

things that people there do differently from what you are used to. The art of a good adviser is not immediately to shout out that that is bad or stupid, but attempt to understand why they do certain things in a certain way. Most probably they have very logical reasons for so doing. Meanwhile the farmers in Butembo get a better price for their quality potatoes, the yield has increased to 5 tonnes per hectare and we expect a further increase as a result of using artificial fertilisers. This is all mainly thanks to good cooperation between the SYDIP potato study group and a small group of enthusiastic farmers from the Wieringermeer." ■

"As a working group you keep each other informed and you help each other to overcome difficult times - because obviously some things may go different than you had hoped."

Train the trainers

Transfer of knowledge is an important element of exchange, but it is also a trade in itself. How do you cloak your message that people will take notice and remember? Gerard Wieffer from LTO Noord provided several trainings for Congolese trainers, who themselves are involved in the training of administrators of SYDIP and COOCENKI. Together with these local trainers Gerard developed an important training programme for local administrators. The results of this programme can clearly be perceived. Board and branch meetings and conferences have become much more animated now. People ask (critical) questions and clearly express their opinions. Meetings are no longer one-way communication as they used to be. At the moment three former employees from LTO Noord are trying to set up a kind of adult education centre in Butembo. They do this through the Foundation 'Maendeleo' and they work together with administrators from several Congolese farmers' organisations. The education centre will not only provide training to male and female farmers' leaders, but also to representatives from other sections of civil society who want to play a role in the construction of a new, democratically and properly governed country.

FinBase

Good financial policy and management is of great importance for membership-based organisations. After all, they can only effectively look after the interests of their members if the finances are in good order. But for many agricultural organisations in developing countries this is not self-evident. For that reason, Agriterra has developed the FinBase programme. FinBase is a programme that is intended to strengthen the financial basis of farmers' organisations. The objectives of the programme are a sound financial management and the strengthening of the autonomy and financial position of the organisation.



From bills to book-keeping

In the framework of the FinBase programme, Agriterra began running workshops. In 2002 there was for example a FinBase workshop in Congo in which many of our clients took part. Various subjects were dealt with such as Agriterra's project cycle and financial statements. But also the way in which an organisation can reduce its financial dependence. Furthermore, the Somplan programme was introduced. Somplan is a method for planning and budgeting using tariff rates. Finally, at the end of the workshop each organisation was asked to draw up an action plan.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a country in the heart of Africa that is at least 55 times as big as the Netherlands. In this country, rich in mineral resources, most people make their living from agriculture. Eastern Congo is also a truly agricultural area. The potatoes and vegetables on the tables of the inhabitants of the capital Kinshasa, about 1000 kilometres further down-river, used to come from the Eastern Congo. But that was before the war when the infrastructure was still good.

Between 1997 and 2003 the country was at war. Millions of Congolese died or had to flee. In 2003 a peace agreement was concluded and in 2006 elections were held for the first time in 40 years. Joseph Kabila was elected as president. The war has had great consequences for the country and the population.

In recent years, Agriterra has worked intensively with nine agricultural organisations in the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu in Eastern Congo. In order to give new energy to battered structures Agriterra supports these agricultural organisations with considerable donations. With this money we work together to achieve a strong organisation that can look after its members' interests and open up economic initiatives for its members.

As a continuation of the workshop in 2002, a mission to Congo was organised once again, to examine and discuss the situation of each organisation. Wolbert van Bruggen, project officer at Agriterra, and Mr Christophe Nzalamingi, a Congolese financial expert, travelled through Eastern Congo together in order to screen the financial management of seven partner organisations and make recommendations for improvement.

With the help of a list of questions and three groups of stakeholders (members of staff, members of the control commissions and members of the boards) the two identified the strong and weak points of each organisation in a relatively short time. Their findings were very diverse. "There were organisations that had things in fairly good order and had all the receipts, for example, neatly filed", said Wolbert. "But we

>> certainly also saw the contrary". Some organisations did their administration carefully according to Congolese legal requirements; others did not know that there were such rules.



After one or two days at an organisation Nzalamingi and Van Bruggen had a fairly good picture of the way in which the financial administration was conducted. They talked through their findings and recommendations on the spot.

"We both found it striking how much the organisations wanted to improve. We make recommendations and it is then up to them to draw up an action plan and implement it." For example the purchase of accounting software in order to be able to automate the administration (for bigger organisations), or specific training for members of the control commissions.

All partners subsequently submitted a financing proposal to Agriterra, which accepted these action plans. For example: board members of all seven organisations attended for example a training course on the financial management of farmers' organisations. The members of the seven control commissions took a course on the conduct of an internal audit of farmers' organisations. Furthermore, all seven organisations bought accounting software and had a training course in the use of this

software in 2006. This has led to the improvement of the financial management and the internal control of the organisations. All the organisations have a balance sheet and profit-and-loss account in conformity to national guidelines. Due to this it is easier to assess the financial position of the organisation. The quality of the financial statements to the donors has also improved. Some audit reports of the organisations also explicitly state that the financial management of

the organisations has improved in recent times.

These are promising results. But we still have not finished. One organisation does not have a procedure manual yet. And the control commission of another organisation consists of new members who have not yet had any training and do not really know how to carry out their duties. In addition, most organisations still have no good membership records. So a lot still has to be done, but we are on the right way. When the organisations finally get their financial management completely in order, they can look after the interests of their members even more effectively and efficiently. And perhaps in the future the population of Kinshasa will once again be able to eat potatoes and vegetables of the farmers from Eastern Congo. ■



Thailand

- Position UN development list: 74
- Population in millions: 65
- Life expectancy: 72.5
- Percentage Literacy: 92.6
- Active in agriculture: 49%

Combine marketing and entrepreneurship and the world market is within your reach!

The 'Zuidelijke Land- en Tuinbouworganisatie' (ZLTO) has been very intensively involved in improving the position of Thai farmers since 1999. The setting up of Sorkorpor (SKP), an umbrella organisation for rural member organisations, signalled the start. As a member of the working group for International Cooperation Peter Brouwers visited this organisation in 2006. He saw a lot of improvements and also observed that the organisation is not afraid to take up new challenges...

"During the first years of our collaboration we worked together with Agriterra on the foundations of the organisation. It must not be a one-issue movement but an organisation that gains its right to exist (and its vigour) from the ranks of its supporters who want to help build up SKP. We have been very successful with that, certainly if you compare it with the point of departure. You establish your right to exist by working in accordance with a vision and then carrying that out in a way that is totally self-aware and confident. You see SKP grow in this role. I also recognise here our own functioning as ZLTO. The best cooperation that you can offer a country in my opinion, is to help develop and build up the farmers' market position. For this reason, one of our last visits to SKP had the theme of strengthening the market position. There are many differences between the Netherlands and Thailand. Just look at the size of the country and population, the climate, its Buddhist culture, the veneration of King Bhumibol etc. These are all things that must be borne in mind when you

are there for a visit. Yet there are also many similarities. One of these is that the market approach is ultimately no different in Thailand than it is in Europe. The better you are able to meet the needs of the consumer, the further you can move away from selling your products on the street corner. That must be developed further in a conscious way. So you have to know what the market requires. For this you need know-how and you have to organise this. In this area, SKP has a huge challenge that it is also taking up, as appeared during the workshop that we organised. For example, if you want to supply Tesco, one of the world's biggest supermarket chains, you have to fulfil 4 basic conditions: food safety, quality, freshness, and traceability. Tesco will not wait for the farmers. If they want to do business with Tesco, then they will have to deal with this themselves. There are opportunities in several Thai regions. Cooperation is a necessity and that is not as easy as it seems. Not in the Netherlands either. By an increasingly higher level of certification you can move from selling on the street corner to selling in the supermarket and subsequently on the export market. A huge challenge for SKP - to improve income levels through entrepreneurship." ■



FETRAF stands up for family farming in Brazil

Brazil is a country with two farming models: on the one hand there is the large-scale extensive export-oriented agriculture for foreign currencies and on the other hand the small-scale, labour-intensive family farming, which mainly provides food for domestic consumption. These are two completely different worlds and the cold figures are telling: 57 percent of the land is owned by 2 percent of the landowners, whereas half of the landowners (in family farming) own hardly 2 percent of the area.

Fetraf Brasil is the national federation for family farming in Brazil. This organisation was founded in November 2005 and meanwhile comprises about 500,000 members. It has the objective to promote the interests of family farmers. Agriterra did not only play a supporting role in the foundation of Fetraf, but also remained actively involved in the construction of this young organisation with major ambitions in the period after its first congress. Financial support by Agriterra enabled Fetraf Brasil to draft proposals that ask the Brazilian government to devote more attention and more investments to family farming. And Fetraf has already achieved its first results. The government has made concrete promises to support the PRONAF credit programme and to provide financial resources for the highly necessary land reform, which should enable 400,000 families of landless farmers to set up a farm by 2010. Farmers in Brazil are clearly better off with Fetraf Brasil! ■



Agricultural agencies have come into being as a result of our vision of development cooperation, which is that ordinary people will have to take care of developing countries of development. Agriculture is a very important sector in this context. The development of agriculture and agricultural services will to a large extent determine the whole of development in these countries. The 1.2 billion people working in agriculture, with their families, form more than 40% of global population. Because their activities and initiatives will shape the economy and society, we must address them directly and support them. And that is easiest if they present themselves in an organised manner.

Direct support to the associations in rural areas and in the agricultural sector still does not gain the attention that it should. Agriterra is working hard to change this. One of the ways of attracting this attention was during the conference 'Farmers Fighting Poverty' that Agriterra organised at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 31 May and 1 June 2006. The Mayor of Arnhem, Pauline Krikke, made her town hall especially available for this purpose. The conference 'Farmers Fighting Poverty' and a seminar of the same name were intended to find supporters for our method of making a contribution to Millennium

Farmers Fighting Poverty

A resounding conference

Development Goal Number 1: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. We hoped that the representatives from the participating international organisations, agricultural organisations, governments and, when present, agricultural agencies from western countries, would be convinced by this way of working and would promise more direct support to farmers' organisations.

We therefore showed our guests what we have done so far, what we have achieved

together and the relationships in which we do this – such as the cooperation within AgriCord, with the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), with cooperatives (ICA) and with rural women's associations (ACWW). We let them see how we build bridges between farmers in the North and in the South and attempt to find structures in which they can really work together. How we in the Netherlands managed to form an alliance of organisations, companies and institutions within AgriProFocus for the support of agricultural producer organisations.

Meanwhile, we notice that multilateral institutions are more

interested in producer organisations. A number of concrete working relations have started with FAO, IFAD, and IFDC. The Finnish government has promised to make a contribution to our programme and to work with the local farmers' organisations to set up an agri-agency. The Canadian and Swedish governments also kept their end up. Both the conference and the efforts of

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs certainly contributed to this. AgriCord and the agri-agencies are now recognised

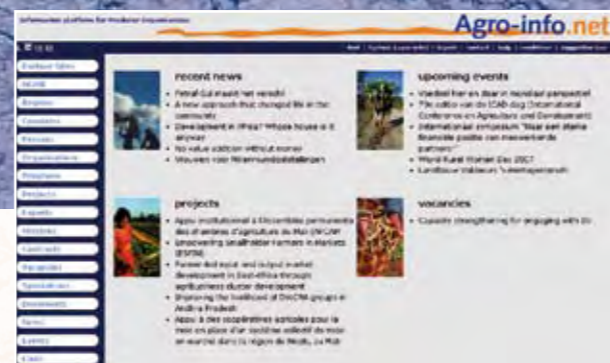
forces in this field of organisations that make great efforts on behalf of producer organisations and will continue to do so.

Former Minister Agnes van Ardenne put it like this in her speech in Arnhem: "There is still a missing link: feedback from the farmers themselves. No need for desktop studies or theoretical discussion on this missing link: we have a Producer Organisations Programme ready to go. I advise anyone interested in contributing to home-grown development to get on board, because it's about to start. Let's give farmers a voice, so that they can have a say in their own future." ■

"Let's give farmers a voice, so that they can have a say in their own future."

Agriterra, powered by ICCO & Cordaid

With the Breakthrough programme we conclude a period of 10 years during which we have built up Agriterra with support from ICCO and Cordaid. We are infinitely indebted to those two large co-financing organisations. Without them we would never have been able to show what we can achieve with our development cooperation. We are now supporting 78 organisations. Our assessment system shows that the vast majority (82%) of the organisations we are collaborating with has become stronger by 14% on average over the last three years. During those years we have often deployed colleague farmers to provide advice in developing countries. We have enabled large numbers of male and female farmers' leaders to go and get information abroad. In the various countries the organisations provide services for crop improvement and help developing new services, like insurances, agro-tourism, agricultural training or processing or trade. They also try to better defend their members' interests by basing themselves on the questions of their members. Together with our colleagues within AgriCord we are able now to provide financing and advice in 50 countries to over 100 rural organisations and their members. We had hoped that ICCO and Cordaid would take co-ownership of our results, as they do with the hundreds of NGO's in third world countries that they are providing with resources. We had even hoped that they would adopt more elements of the Agriterra working method and approach in their other projects. Meanwhile some procedures have indeed become more widely accepted, like the use of expertise from the business community, which Agriterra has been implementing from the very start. But direct support to agricultural organisations still is a tricky topic, even today. At the end of 2006 this ten year period of strategic alliance came to an end. ■



Information and communication technology (ICT) have been making considerable advances in our daily lives for several decades. In the West almost every household has access to the Internet, just about everyone has a mobile phone and it would seem that we could hardly do our work anymore without computers. Did you know, for example, that worldwide there are no less than 3 billion mobile phones?

Unfortunately, it is above all the countries of the West that can enjoy the advantage of these developments, and this leads to the so-called 'digital gap', being the difference in access to information between developed and developing countries.

Agriterra has made it a priority to make ICT available to farmers' organisations as well and to help them to take advantage of all the benefits and opportunities that these bring with them.

Particularly in an area in which there is so much knowledge, as is the case among farmers and their organisations, it is important for them to share this knowledge. ICT is an outstanding means for doing this.

One of the ICT applications that we are using for this is an on-line database on which all projects that Agriterra is implementing can be followed in detail from beginning to end. Both by the people in the offices as well as by interested visitors or a farmers' organisation. Agriterra developed the first version of this database, called PeasantsWorldWide (PWW) in response to a conference of the World Bank and IFAP in 1999. On that occasion Agriterra offered to start an internet project to give farmers' organisations the opportunity to mutually exchange information about their activities. In mid-2006 we moved from Peasantsworldwide.net to Agro-info.net.

The basic function has stayed the same; projects and budgets can be entered, you can find information about countries and

From digital gap to digital opportunities

organisations with which we work and much more. However there are now many more opportunities for further development than before. That is the reason why we moved on to a new website.

After having worked for years with PWW, the system no longer seemed adequate. It had reached its limits as far as possibilities were concerned, while at Agriterra we still very much wanted to expand. So in 2004 a survey was carried out to find out what the system ought to provide. This gave rise to a specification of three objectives for this new system:

- A project follow-up system
- Exchange of information among farmers' organisations
- Information for the public

In collaboration with 'Stichting Viafrica', a foundation that supports organisations in Africa in using and managing ICT, we started to construct the new agro-info.net website. It turned out to be a long and complicated process, but finally Agro-info.net (AIN) was launched in May 2006.

Currently the system is functioning as a project follow-up system for Agriterra and the other agri-agencies within AgriCord (the alliance of agri-agencies). As such, Agro-info.net is in keeping with Agriterra's aspiration to be fully transparent about what we are doing, how we are doing this and what the results are. This information is all to be found on Agro-info.net. We also produce the report about our activities for our donors from Agro-info.net. The fact that we have all the information about our projects in one system also offers the advantage that we can monitor closely what we do and that we are able to make adjustments in time.

The challenge is now to further improve Agro-info.net and to make it into a full-fledged platform on which farmers' organisations and others who are interested can find all the information about projects in one place, from planning to results. In order to achieve that we shall substantially further develop

Agro-info.net. For example, we want to make available a platform for other people's experience alongside our own. By reading about the experiences of others communication barriers are reduced. Someone who reads that a farmers' organisation in Niger has been very successful in improving its method of storing onions, may be interested in contacting this organisation. Agriterra wants to facilitate such exchanges and with the help of Internet it will be somewhat easier to put people in touch with others who share the same interests or who have complementary know-how.

Another development that Agriterra wants to support is that more and more farmers' organisations in developing countries have their own websites. A number of organisations already had and have a place of their own on the Internet within the former PWW and the present day AIN. But because of our focus on project management within Agro-info.net in recent years, the development of new websites has fallen behind. In the coming years we are going to take this up again and try to make access to the Internet available for yet more organisations. This serves many purposes.

If an organisation has its own website, it can make itself, what it does, and, for example, what it has to sell, known worldwide. In addition, the organisation can make sure that important information can be found on the website: up-to-date market prices, the weather report or information about crop diseases that are going around, for example – all this provides a service to its members. An organisation can also pass on information that it finds on the Internet to its members, so that the inhabitants of rural areas who are generally cut off from information, can have the advantage of knowing what is important for them. If they know what the going price is for a kilo of maize, for example, they can negotiate for a better price. Or if the organisation circulates the results of research, the farmers can reap the benefit in their fields. So on the basis of new knowledge and information they can improve their standard of living. And that is what it is all about at the end of the day! ■

To devote yourself unselfishly is of inestimable value



Robert Kockelkoren

Since 2002 I have worked as a volunteer at Agriterra. I studied rural development in Deventer and during my studies I became familiar with the various aspects of international cooperation and development in the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Albania among other places. After graduation I worked via the international development organisation VSO, for a district council in the Philippines for more than two years. I worked in the area of sustainable land use and natural resources management. At present I am working at the Dienst Landelijk Gebied (Rural Area Service) of the Ministry of Agriculture and deal with land use and rural development in the rural areas of the Dutch province Noord-Brabant. At Agriterra I worked at

Sandra van Winden

After finishing my studies in general economics, I was lucky enough to obtain a job at the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Food Quality. Currently I am working there as financial policy assistant in the area of food quality and animal health. In this position I can indulge my interest in food production. However, I sometimes miss the international context and the link with development cooperation in which I specialised during my studies.

That is why I became a volunteer at Agriterra. What Agriterra does, working with the energy and inspiration of the farmers themselves, I consider to be essential for building a stable future.

Volunteers are awfully important for Agriterra. Their enthusiasm, knowledge and skills are an important stimulus for our work. Working with volunteers helps Agriterra to achieve its objectives of building up support for development cooperation in the Netherlands. But the blade cuts both ways; volunteers can use their talents at Agriterra and gain work experience. They interview experts returning from mission, write articles for the website, guide guests from abroad or help with odd jobs in the office in Arnhem. A great number of volunteers have also made a contribution to this publication. But who are our volunteers, what is their motive and how do they experience the volunteer work at Agriterra? Three volunteers answer these questions.



Karin Kraaijvanger

In August 2005 I walked into Agriterra for the first time and became immediately enthusiastic about the organisation. I remember clearly that during the introductory conversation I was asked what I knew about farming. I answered with a laugh: 'my grandfather is a farmer!' Meanwhile I have gained a great deal more knowledge about agriculture through Agriterra and I learn a lot more about Agriterra's worldwide activities at each interview. As I live in Breda, I normally do the interviews by telephone and then write an article on the website. I get good tips from the interviewees and with help of splendid photos the articles are always different.

In addition to the knowledge that I gain through my work as a volunteer, I can develop my journalistic skills by doing this. Writing is my passion, you see, and in this way I keep my hand in in an active and enjoyable fashion.

By going along to Agriterra from time to time for an exchange day or a staff outing I have got to know the people behind the organisation. As a volunteer you are also a real part of the team and that always gives a warm feeling.

Volunteer work is for me an interesting hobby and a permanent challenge!

setting up the countries' website. At present I am mainly writing interviews for the news site, and this fits my interest in journalism and rural development.

Agriterra attracts me very much as an organisation because they focus on the basis: farmers' organisations. Farmers and their organisations are pre-eminently in a position to undertake the sustainable economic development of the countryside. By strengthening these organisations Agriterra contributes in a unique way to a great number of people's ability to run their own lives. Agriterra does not set up any projects for farmers, but puts farmers in a position to set up their own projects.

Although the political situation in a country is also important there must be room for development for farmers' organisations and that room should preferably be guaranteed. I have interviewed a considerable number of people about their experience during overseas missions over the last few years. It is wonderful to hear how specialists and experts put so much enthusiasm and effort into their work on behalf of Agriterra in order to move towards a more stable future for others. I hope that I can add my small contribution too. Keep up the good work!

Preview

Further towards the base



Agriterra is an initiative of the agricultural and horticultural organisations, the cooperative business community, rural women and youth who take up their responsibility to contribute to the struggle against poverty and hunger. That struggle is now reaching a decisive phase. The building up of all kinds of structures, the strengthening of more than a hundred rural agricultural organisations and cooperatives in developing countries, should finally lead to less poverty and hunger. Is that imaginable? With the commitment of organisations of farmers and market gardeners, we believe it is possible.

Economic development and social organisations are not things that you can bring about from outside by development cooperation. The aid is more playing the role of a sponsor of a sports club. It gives the association just that prestige that makes it attractive to volunteers to work even harder and attractive to members to belong to it. The organisations that Agriterra is focusing on, would have existed and would still exist without Agriterra's support too. But with our financial resources and the advice of colleagues they are able to be just that crucial bit more meaningful for their members.

We are convinced that such member organisations are the key to democratisation and economic development.

Recently completed doctoral research by Christian Gouët confirms us in this opinion. This research sees the explanation

for this key position in the fact that such organisations provide a natural framework for a rapid transfer of technological and social renovations. To achieve this the organisations should become stronger with regard to the involvement of members – above all of farming women – in the decisions of the associations, accountability of members, financial power and the capacity to disseminate the views of members to the outside and to translate them into meaningful services to members, even if not in the form of new business activities. Agriterra is willing to assist for all these aspects.

In the coming years we shall give our special attention to the way in which rural structures reach their members and provide them with services. Moreover we want to try and get women agricultural entrepreneurs participating fully in projects with Agriterra. ■



Good - Better - ISO

Agriterra has been officially certified for ISO 9001:2000 since 7 December 2005. At that time we were the smallest of the eleven Dutch development organisations that were certified.

In order to comply with the required ISO norms, Agriterra set down its internal procedures and working methods in a quality handbook. The handbook describes arrangements for complaint procedures, the working method relating to Agriterra's primary products (financing and advising), duties, employees' responsibilities and competences and assessment of product quality, of effectiveness or risks of processes (operations). Because ultimately everything comes back to the question: how can we do better!

During the first official external audit, Lloyd's Register found that the quality system was satisfactory and consequently Agriterra was awarded ISO 9001:2000 certification!

Achieving this certification was a mile post in the process of improving quality in Agriterra. From its foundation in 1997 the quality and effectiveness of its work is of the greatest importance. The ISO certificate is awarded for three years and is the reward for years of effort making processes uniform and of optimal quality.

Marly Boonman, quality coordinator at Agriterra, was correct in stating that "It is certainly not the end of the process, because it is always possible to do better."

Since gaining the certificate, an external audit, carried out by Lloyd's Register, takes place each year and the quality coordinator also organises internal audits, as well as other quality measures. ■

Thanks for the collaboration

This report would never have been possible without the assistance of many people who made time to extend their help. We particularly would like to thank the team of volunteers and other stakeholders: Inge Kuiphuis, Ina Knaap, Stefanie Bos, Félice van Hooff, Robert Kockelkoren, Karin Kraaijvanger, Sandra van Winden, Peter Brouwers, Christine Wipfler and Frans van Hoof. We are indebted to Henk Smeenge and Melanie Hulshorst (BDO) for their contributions. People from Agriterra also made special contributions to this publication: Kees Blokland, Albert Jan Maat, Cees van Rij, Anne Kluivers, José van Gelder, Marjolijn Hondebrink, Rik Delnoye, Marly Boonman, Bertken de Leede, Jur Schuurman, Ted Schrader, Michiel Bourgondien and Wolbert van Bruggen. We also thank the Minister for Development Cooperation, M. Bert Koenders, for having written the preface. Furthermore we are grateful to all the people who have helped us now and in the previous years, in many different ways. We should not forget to mention the numerous project and working groups within the Dutch rural membership organisations. Without their support and efforts Agriterra would not be able to work.

The editorial team

Colophon

Editing	Communications Unit
Final editing	Ingrid Koedijk
Texts	volunteers, stakeholders and staff members of Agriterra (see above)
Photographs	Agriterra, CR Delta, LTO Nederland Ministry for Development Cooperation Cor Verdouw Fotografie
Sources	CIA World Fact Book Ministry for Foreign Affairs UNDP Human Development Report
Layout	Storm Creative Agency
World map	Ter Haar Kaartproducties
Printing	Drukkerij Roelofs, Enschede

Orders

Copies of this report can be obtained through our website or at the communications unit of Agriterra, tel.: 026-3542001, mail: communicatie@agriterra.org

Arnhem, December 2007



AGRICORD



Agriterra

Willemsplein 43-II

6811 KD Arnhem

P.O. Box 158

6800 AD Arnhem

The Netherlands

Tel.: +31 (0)26-4455445

Fax: +31 (0)26-4455978

Website: www.agriterra.org

E-mail: agriterra@agriterra.org