

B. Types of Sustainable Agriculture Improvements

- Type 1: Better use of available renewable natural capital
 Type 2: Intensification of single sub -component of farm system
 Type 3: Diversify by adding new productive natural capital and regenerative components
 Type 4: Better use of non-renewable inputs and technologies
 Type 5: Social and participatory processes leading to group action for making better use of natural capital
 Type 6: Human capital building through training-learning programmes
 Type 7: Access to Finance
 Type 8: Add value by processing to reduce losses and increase returns
 Type 9: Add value by direct or organised marketing of produce to consumers

	Yes/No	Narrative
Type 1	x	Reintroduction of bean and amaranto to the corn agroecosystem.
Type 2		
Type 3	x	Introduction of vetch, faba bean and oats to be used with multiple purposes: forage, green manure and rotation with corn. Biofertilizer development with the farmers specially for fruit trees.
Type 4		
Type 5		
Type 6	x	Farmers experimentation within farmers groups of different communities. Participatory workshops (among group of farmers and technicians) to diagnose problems, planing and process/results evaluation Visits to farmers' plots.
Type 7		
Type 8		
Type 9		

C. Key Lessons: Success, Spread and Constraints

C1 - Key Lessons Learned

The process of technological development is more effective if farmers are involved from the beginning.

. When this process starts spontaneous adoption and adaptation of alternative technologies and/or practices can occur (such as some local varieties spreading among farmers)

. A fine characterization of the micro bio -physical conditions of the farmer's lands must be done before any new technology is promoted.

. The high economic and environmental resilience of the traditional agricultural systems based on maize.

C2 - Aspects of local/national context contributing to success

The drastic increased on prices of beans and chemical fertilizer.

Farmers are very interested on diversifying to recuperate the system's profitability.

There is a large demand for forage crops.

C3 – Limitations preventing spread

Drastic decreased of public funds for agriculture (extension, training, credits, etc).

Mexico's drastic aperture to a free market; sudden fall of corn prices and retirement of statal enterprises that used to buy the corn of rural communities.

High economical margination of the rural sector which provokes: high levels of emigration, abandonment of agricultural practices and land; rapid lost of traditional knowledge and traditional institutions.

C4 – Policy issues

Lack of public incentives (green taxes, etc..)

Terrible bureaucracy and six-year programs.

C5 – Scaling-up

More financial support to hire more professionals.

To work on an multi level and multi institutional strategy to:

(1) create liaisons with governmental and non governmental institutions to support the production-processing and marketing of products from "sustainable" agricultural systems and (2) create the basis to develop an alternative market and opportunities to increase the value of agricultural products.

D. Contact Point for Project/Initiative

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The objective of the project is to develop a model for a more sustainable agricultural production. We are a very small group and we are at the pilot level but not at the scaling up process yet. The experiences obtained will be disseminated at the regional level trough documents, farmer to farmer workshops, multi-institutional seminaries and radio programs.

No. of farmers/households adopting: 1996: 6 farmers; 1998: 11 farmers and 1999: 18 farmers adopting the association corn+bean+amaranto and 5 farmers adopting rotation green manure-corn.

No. of hectares under sustainable agriculture: 9 ha under corn fertilized with cattle manure and associated with beans.

The program is based on rotative seed funds. Once the harvest has been accomplished the farmer has to return the amount of given seed to other new participant.

