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“Global food security and food safety:
The role of universities”

The Academy Generates Solutions for Food and Nutrition Security in Colombia

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Abstract

Food security and nutrition is a complex challenge that requires a complex approach to face it. McGill University from Canada and the National University of Colombia, formed a multidisciplinary team that in a transdisciplinary work linked social sciences and natural sciences and developed a technological innovation, the most nutritious potatoes. These potatoes offer higher nutritional contents such as iron, zinc, dietary fiber, protein and polyphenol compounds that protect the health. These varieties were selected in participatory research with communities. These potatoes offer 18 % more income to small-scale potato farmers, because they are more resistant to the most devastating disease in this crop and the yield is the double compared to the most cultivated variety in the country. It is expected that, at the end of the second semester of 2018, these new varieties will reach 13 million consumers in Colombia in accumulative way. This project developed knowledge for the two participating universities and linked the postgraduate academic programs in gender studies, food and nutritional security, agricultural sciences and rural business development working collaboratively with McGill University. Undergraduate students, masters and doctoral students were trained and results were generated for policy makers on issues of nutrition, gender and social equity, and environmental protection. We developed a model to scaling-up a technological innovation based on social innovations and we generated the pillars to establish a system to produce good quality of seed potatoes for Colombia.

Keywords: Gender equity, linking agriculture and nutrition, scaling-up