



Tropentag, September 17-19, 2018, Ghent

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

The Domestic Cavies (*Cavia porcellus* L.) Experience: The Role of the MEJOCUY Program for the Enhancement of Nutrition of the Population in the Valleys of Cochabamba

EDUARDO LOPEZ ROSSE

Development Research Center (CIDES-UMSA), Development Strategies, Bolivia

Abstract

Universities play an important role for the dissemination of technical knowledge for public and private actors. In the food security context, universities have projects and programs with the participation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), public agencies and International agencies for the reduction of malnutrition of the population in rural and urban areas. For example, the Universidad Mayor de San Simon of Cochabamba has four outstanding projects: IPARAHIBA, Sacta, AGRUCO, and MEJOCUY. Iparahiba is a project that raises tilapia on artificial ponds for the enhancement of the diet of Valle del Sacta's population and the students from the university food program, Sacta is an agroforestry program at the tropical unit of Sacta that produces fruits and milk for the students of the University food program, AGRUCO is a program that rescues traditional food consumption and native agricultural practices from the Andean and Valley Regions of Bolivia. MEJOCUY is a program to raise domestic cavies (*Cavia porcellus* L.) for the enhancement of the nutrition of poor populations in the Valleys and higher lands of the country. The program has two strategic branches. The first one is oriented to the genetic enhancement of domestic cavies. The second one is for the dissemination of technical experiences for organized producers and individual producers that are willing to enhance their livelihoods by the direct consumption of cuy meat and the sell or bargain of the surplus of their production. In order to be more eloquent and explicit, two study cases were chosen. The first, the Viloma Domestic Cavies Producer Association which is the outstanding experience of the communal enterprises that started since 1994 raising 100 pairs of domestic cavies and nowadays they have 25 thousand pairs and made a product upgrading by selling the carcasses at supermarkets with vacuumed plastic bags benefiting 140 producers. The second experience is a sub-program that deals with the raise of domestic cavies at the peri-urban belt of the city of Cochabamba empowering poor families that migrated to the city from rural scenarios and provide them with a nutritious meat to combat malnutrition benefiting 100 families. The role of MEJOCUY is important for the population's food security but there are some drawbacks that need to be defeated such as the lack of coordination with the national malnutrition programs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia which could be more practical to reach more people and enhance their diets.

Keywords: Domestic cavies, food security, livelihoods, malnutrition, product upgrading, university programs

Contact Address: Eduardo Lopez Rosse, Development Research Center (CIDES-UMSA), Development Strategies, September 14 Avenue and Number 3 Street, 7170 La Paz, Bolivia, e-mail: joseeddy@yahoo.es