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## The Agricultural Extension as a Mechanism for Community Growth

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### Abstract

Strengthening the social capital of the dairy sector in Colombia is one of the most important challenges that must be solved in order to increase its profitability and thus improve the living conditions of rural inhabitants. The New Zealand model, as one of the world's leading dairy producers, has been based on learning by doing and, farmer-to-farmer learning techniques to achieve the results it has available to date. With the aim of validating and implementing New Zealand methodologies in Colombia, during the intervention of the Proyecto Cadena de Valor Láctea Colombia Nueva Zealand (Dairy Value Chain Project), ten milk-producing families were selected in the municipality of Cumbal, Nariño so that , during the period between 2016 and 2019, they will work with an agricultural extension scheme that was based on the principles of “the farm as a business” and “learning by doing”. During the evaluation period of the project, indicators were determined that would allow measuring the productive and social change. The results obtained allowed us to infer that the producers appropriated the technologies and methodologies validated by the project on their farms, generating business income four times higher and obtaining the family purposes that were reflected in the farm development plan for each year of intervention. The results show that the extension strategies made it possible to strengthen the farm management skills of the producers, favouring the wellbeing of each family and the association of which they were part. The improvements in the implemented practices allow to have greater agency capacity and make decisions based on data.

**Keywords:** Families, learning, pilot farms, profitability, technology