AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

*The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library*

**This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.**

**Help ensure our sustainability.**

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
http://ageconsearch.umn.edu
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

# JOINT PROCEEDINGS

TROPICAL REGION

## 21st Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Food Crops Society and 32nd Annual Meeting of the American Society for Horticultural Science — Tropical Region

# technology for agricultural development

**Hilton Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad**
**8 - 13 September 1985**

*Host Institutions*

— Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute

— Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Food Production, Trinidad & Tobago

— Faculty of Agriculture, University of the West Indies

*Published by the Caribbean Food Crops Society, Box 506, Isabela, Puerto Rico 00662*

# SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION

**R. Aristide**

Unité Régionale de Documentation
INRA Centre Antilles Guyane
97170 Petit Bourg
Guadeloupe

**ABSTRACT**

**This paper gives a presentation of the relationship between production activities and information at first in the general context of human activities, then in the particular relation between agricultural information and agricultural development through research and extension.**

**The attitudes of information users and producers when they are negative are the first constraints to the development of information and consequently production. Many efforts have been undertaken to improve or to share better the circulation information. Those of UNESCO, FAO and others are discussed.**

**A presentation of the characteristics of agricultural information, of its importance to agricultural research, extension and development precedes some international systems such as FAO's AGLINET, AGRIS and CARIS and the Interamerican agricultural information system AGRINTER.**

**The feeling of the need of regional agricultural information activities is recalled before the presentation of the contribution of the INRA Centre for French Antilles and Guiana.**

**RESUMÉ**

**Cette communication donne une présentation de la relation entre activités de production et l'information d'abord dans le contexte général des activités humaines puis dans la relation particulière entre l'information agricole et le développement agricole à travers la recherche et la vulgarisation.**

**Les attitudes des usagers et des producteurs d'information, quand elles sont négatives sont les premiers freins au développement de l'information et par conséquence à la production. Beaucoup d'efforts ont été entrepris pour améliorer ou pour mieux partager la circulation de l'information. Ceux de l'UNESCO, de la FAO et autres organismes sont évoqués.**

**Une rapide présentation des caractéristiques de l'information agricole, de son importance pour la recherche, la vulgarisation et le développement agricoles précède celle de quelques systèmes internationaux tels que AGLINET, AGRIS et CARIS de la FAO et le système interaméricain d'information agricole AGRINTER.**

**Le sentiment du besoin d'activités régionales d'information agricole est rappelé avant la présentation de la contribution de l'INRA Centre Antilles Guyane.**

**RESUMEN**

**Esta es una presentación, primeramente, de la relación entre las actividades de producción e información en el contenido general de las actividades humanas y, despues, de la relación particular entre la información de agricultura y el desarrollo agrícola a travez de la investigación y de la extensión.**

**Las atitudes de los usuarios y de los generadores de la información, cuando son negativas, son los primeros impedimentos hacia el desarrollo de la información y por lo tanto, hacia la producción de la información. Se han hecho muchos esfuerzos para mejorar o para compartir la información sobre la circulación. La UNESCO, la FAO y otros organismos son mencionados.**

**La presentación de las caracteristicas de la información agrícola, de su importancia para la investigación, la extensión y del desarrollo agrícola, precede aquellos sistemas internacionales de la FAO, como ser, AGLINET, AGRIS y CARIS y el Sistema Interamericano de Agricultura, AGRINTER.**

**Antes de presentar la contribuición hecha por la INRA Centro de las Antillas Francesas y de la Guyana, la necesidad de tener un centro regional de información agrícola, es primeramente mencionada.**

Every human activity, and, more particularly every production activity in relation with an economic purpose has a component of information. We need more and more information data to carry out anything we need to produce in our daily life.

Human activities have become more and more complex, there are more and more relationships, more and more interference between its various sectors, for instance between research, politics, production, international trade, etc. Planning, financing, preparation of projects request more and more information.

Because of this growing complexity of human activities, of production, of development, the access of information resources and their fast availability, the information mastery have become essential components of economics, of production mastery.

## Information: Producers and Users

What is information? Information is knowledge which can and does circulate in a more or less well organized way between people or institutions.

Information, more exactly in the context of scientific research and commodities production, scientific and technical information is a basic need, a basic resource for research, production, development, technology transfer.

We have to remember that a person or an institution can be at one and the same time a producer, a user or an owner of information. Unfortunately people and institutions are not aware enough of this multiple position. That is why very often information resources are badly used and managed.

## Attitudes and Policies Towards Information

The increasing importance of information resources may lead to various attitudes

- The producer or the user of information is unaware of its importance: he/she does not use properly and manage well the information he/she has, or has access to.

In fact, it is more and more difficult and expensive to own every bit of information. It is more important to have access to information even if we do not possess it. Because of that, the role and importance of information centres have been increasing.

A bad producer or user of information loses many possibilities of developing, of improving his activities.

- The information user is aware of the importance of documentation but has an egocentric behaviour and keeps it . In this situation, for instance in research activities, this information is not used by colleagues and is not useful for the scientific community.

- The last attitude we shall describe here is a quite positive one. The user or the owner is aware of the importance of the information owned or which he can have access to. Therefore he (or the institution) organizes information circulation and management to give the largest access or use.

## The Situations of Scientific and Technical Information

The type of information and users we describe further in the case of agricultural information are the same ones in the general case of scientific and technical information but the importance of information has been perceived earlier and more widely in other activities like industry, modern technics and sciences like chemistry, biological sciences, etc.

Developed countries which have the mastery of production, have also worked to have the mastery of information and particularly this one of scientific and technical information. In developing countries, the institutions very often do not have the awareness of the importance of information or have not sufficient economic resources and trained information technicians to organize and manage their scientific and technical information.

Many institutions, for instance at the international level, United Nations, UNESCO, are aware that the weakness of information and documentation is a constraint to development. So they have several programs like UNISIST, information activities and systems. The final objective of these information activities and systems is to given better access to scientific and technical information so as to develop production, to improve human welfare in the fields of education, industrial development, health, etc.

A particular aspect of these modern information activities and systems is the standardization of the methodologies of the documentary tools to permit computerized processing, exchange between data bases, online retrieval, automatized and fast publishing of bibliographic documents.

## The Faces of Agricultural Information

Agriculture is a more and more complex activity sector where information mastery is an important but not always well understood basic component.

What are the types of agricultural information? They are: bibliographic or documentary information, statistical information, technical information, current research information.

The types of users are: planners, public service personnel, policy makers, researchers, administrators, producers and extension workers.

The lack and weakness of agricultural information systems has been recognized as one of the causes of agricultural underdevelopment. Several international, regional or national agricultural organizations (FAO, IICA, etc.) have undertaken activities to improve agricultural information.

Presented below are some information systems established under the Food and Agriculture Orgainsation (FAO).

AGLINET: Worldwide network of agricultural libraries, AGRIS: International information system for the agricultural sciences and technology, CARIS: Current agricultural research information systems.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, several countries, regional and other international institutions are members of AGRINTER, the Interamerican system for agricultural sciences. AGRINTER has been supported by IICA, the Interamerican Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture. CIDIA (Interamerican centre for agricultural documentation, information and communication) located in the IICA headquarters, in San José (Costa Rica) is the coordinating centre for AGRINTER and an AGRIS input centre for Latin America and the Caribbean.

An original aspect of AGRINTER is the possibility of using AGRINTER coupons to pay for orders of documents. These coupons can be purchased in local currency in the national IICA offices and used to pay services requested from the information centres which are members of the AGRINTER Services Network.

An important characteristic of the information systems is that they work on a cooperative and voluntary basis. Many Caribbean countries are still not members of the AGRINTER system.

An important and urgent need of agricultural information which can be very profitable is the information on current agricultural research. Its interest should be obvious: it permits cooperation between researchers, it gives access to the current evolution or results of investigations, it may avoid duplicated studies.

During several technical meetings, like the CFCS meeting, the participants have felt and expressed the need to improve information exchange, the need of a current agricultural research information system for the Caribbean. Why these wishes could not become an objective which CFCS would support?

During the workshop on tuber crops held last July in Guadeloupe, the participants adopted the idea of information exchange through a future tuber crops research network. This proposition of information exchange was done by the Regional Unit of Documentation of the INRA Centre for French Antilles and Guiana.

## An Institutional Contribution to Agricultural Information in the Caribbean: The INRA Centre for French Antilles and Guiana

We still have much to do to organize the circulation of agricultural information through the Caribbean but for many years the INRA Regional Unit of Documentation has been doing its best to give information and access to the Caribbean agricultural documents it has been receiving.

This Documentation Unit has settled documentary cooperation with many agricultural institutions of Latin American, the Caribbean and elsewhere particularly in the tropical area.

Among our activities, we have been publishing a reference bulletin which is mailed to many institutions. In this reference bulletin, we draw attention particularly the publications received from Latin America and the Caribbean, on documents which may be interesting for the Caribbean agricultural research and development.

The INRA Regional Unit of Documentation is a member of the AGRINTER system for the French Antilles and Guiana. It is also a member of the AGRINTER Services Network.

### Biblography


ARBOLEDA-SEPULVEDA, O. (1982) Una accion compartida para agilizar el aceso a la informacion agricola. 13a Mesa Redondo AGRINTER, Cali (Colombia), 21–24 junio 1982. – Costa Rica: IICA-CIDIA, 14 pp.

ARISTIDE, R. (1977) AGRINTER: Systeme d'information agricole pour l'Amérique Latine et la Caraïbe. Proc. 14th Ann. Mtg. Carib. Food Crops Soc., Guadeloupe-Martinique, 27 juin–02 juillet 1977. Nouv. agron. Antilles–Guyane. 3 (3–4, pt. 1) 177 - 187.

ARISTIDE, R. (1982) Agricultural information in Latin America and the Caribbean: present situations and possibilities. Proc. 18th Ann. Mtg. Carib. Food Crops Soc. Barbados, 22–28 August 1982. 18. 86-97, (also in French).

PAEZ, G. (1979) Necesidad de un sistema de informacion agricola para el Caribe. Proc. 10th Ann. Mtg. Carib. Food Crops Soc. Dominican Republic, 5–11 Agosto 1979. 16, 433–444.


## ANNEX 1

### Members of SATIS (Socially Adapted Technologies Information Systems

APICA, Association pour la Promotion des Initiatives Communautaries Africaines, BP 5946, Douala Akwa, Cameroun.

ATDA, Appropriate Technology Development Association (Communications), PO Box 311, Gandhi Bhawan, Lucknow, 226001 UP, India.

ATOL, Aangepaste Technologie Ontwikkelinglanden, Blijde Inkomststraat 3000 Leuven, Belgium.

CAMERTEC, Centre for Agricultural Mechanization and Rural Technology, PO Box 764, Arusha, Tanzania.

CATER, Centro Andino de Technología Rural, Casilla 399, Loja, Ecuador.

CCTA, Comision Coordinación de Tecnología Andina, secretaría: c/o Centro Las Casas, Apartado 477, Cusco, Perú CCTA: hay que pedir sus publicaclones del Grupo Talpuy, Apartado 222, Huancayo, Perú.

CEMAT, Centro Mesoamericano de Estudios sobre Technología Apropiada, Apartado Postal 1160, Guatemala Ciudad, Guatemala.

CEPAS/INADES -Formation, Centre d'Etudes pour l'Action Sociale, BP 5717 Kinshasa Gombé, Zaire.

CESTA, Centro Salvadoreña de Technología Apropiada, Condominio Cuscatian, 306 - 25 AS y YCP, San Salvador, El Salvador.

CETAL, Centro de Estudios en Technología Apropiada para América Latina, Casilla 197 - V, Valparalso, Chile.

CORT, Consortium on Rural Technology, A - 89, Madhuvan, New Delhi 110092, India.

COTA, Collectif d'Echange pour la Technologie Appropriée, 18 rue de la Sablonnière, 1000 Bruxelles, Belgique.

CSV, Centre of Science for Villages, Mayan Sangramalaya, Wardha 442001, India.

Dian Desa, Jl Kallurang Km 7, PO Box 19, Bulaksumur, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

ENDA Tiers Monde, Environnement et Développement du Tiers Monde, BP 3370, Dakar Sénégal. (faire toutes commandes au siège de Dakar).
ENDA América Latina, c/o Naciones Unidas, Apartado Aéreo 091368, Bogota, Colombia. ENDA Bombay, c/o Tata Institute of Social Sciences, PO Box 8313 Deonar, Bombay 40088, India.

ENDA Caraibes, Apartado 21000 Huacal, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana.

GATE, German Appropriate Technology Exchange, GTZ-GmbH, Postfach 5180, D 6236 Eschborn I, West Germany. (Associate Partner)

GRET, Groupe de Recherches et d'Echanges Technologiques, 30 rue de Charonne, 75011 Paris, France. (à partir du 2 avril 1984)

INADES Documentation, Institut pour le Développement Economique et Social, 08,BP 8, Abidjan 08, Côte d'Ivoire.

PCATT, Philippine Center for Appropriate Training and Technology, Manila Suite, 1416 F Felipe Agoncillo St. Ermita, Metro Manila, Philippines 2801.

SEMTA, Servicios Multiples de Technología Appropiada, Casilla 20410, La Paz, Bolivia.

SKAT, Swiss Center for Appropriate Technology, Varnbuelstrasse 14, 9000 St Gallen, Switzerland.

TDAU, Technology Development and Advisory Unit, University of Zambia, PO Box 2379, Lusaka, Zambia.

TOOL, Technische Ontwikkeling Ontwikkelingslanden, Mauritskade 61a, 1092 AD Amsterdam, Netherlands.

VTU, Village Technology Unit, c/o Commissioner for Social Services, PO Box 30276, Nairobi, Kenya.

WCC-CCPD, World Council of Churches, Peoples' Technology Desk, 150 route de Ferney, BP 60, 1211 Genève 20, Suisse.