UNALA
Unión de Azucareros Latinoamericanos
União do Açúcar Latino-americano –UNALA–

SUSTAINABLE WATER & ENERGY SOLUTIONS NETWORK

END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

2 ZERO HUNGER

CASE STUDY:

Activities by members of the Association of Latin American Sugar Producers (UNALA) supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

UNALA: Association of Latin American Sugar Producers 2025

End Poverty in all its forms everywhere / UNALA

General Coordination: Juan Pablo Solís (UNALA)

Editing and writing: Iván Vera & Juan Pablo Solís

Text Review: Luis Fernando Salazar & Gustavo Paredes

Collaborators: ASAZGUA/GUATECAÑA, ASOCAÑA, AZUCALPA, Centro Azucarero Argentino, CAEI, CNIAA, DIZUCAR, Empresas Iansa, ESASA, Grupo Cassa, LAICA, PERUCAÑA, UNICA.

Design and Layout: Yohana Ramírez

Association of Latin American Sugar Producers (UNALA)
PBX: +(502) 2215-8000
Address: 5th avenue 5-55 zone 14
Europlaza Business Center tower 3 level 17 / 01014. Guatemala City, Guatemala
ISBN 978-9929-8379-5-9 digital version

SDG 2. END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Target 2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round

Target 2.2: By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

Target 2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

Target 2.4: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

Target 2.5: By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed

Target 2.a: Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries

Target 2.b: Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round

Target 2.c: Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility

Source: United Nations, 2015.

1 CAMARA NACIONAL DE LAS INDUSTRIAS AZUCARERA Y ALCOHOLERA

2 ASAZGUA Asociación de Azucareros de Guatemala

3 izucar

4 ESASA Empresa de Servicios Azucareros S. A.

5 LAICA

6 cael

7 SECTOR AGROINDUSTRIAL DE LA CAÑA asocaña

8 UNICA

9 CENTRO AZUCARERO ARGENTINO

10 empresas iansa

11 PERUCAÑA

12 AZUCALPA Asociación de Azucareros y Alcoholes de Panamá

13 FENAZÚCAR

14 ALUR

THE ASSOCIATION OF LATIN AMERICAN SUGAR PRODUCERS

The Association of Latin American Sugar Producers (UNALA) is a private non-profit organization that brings together the agro-industrial sector of sugarcane and sugar beet of Latin America. The idea of creating UNALA surged in 2017 and it was formally constituted in 2020. It includes representatives from this agroindustry from 14 countries in the region. Its members are strongly committed to the sustainable production of sugar, electricity, and ethanol, among other byproducts. Together, the members of UNALA represent the largest sugar producing and exporting region in the world. UNALA is more than sugar, it is sustainability, energy, and economic development.

UNALA works with all its members to promote:

- Balanced lifestyles and diets
- The efficient and responsible use of natural resources, including water and land
- The production and use of renewable energy
- The use of ethanol as part of diversified energy matrices

According to data published in the Sugar Yearbook 2024 and the Ethanol Yearbook 2024, the countries represented in UNALA produce approximately 30 % of sugar and 30 % of ethanol in the world. Besides generating more than 6.5 million jobs, some of UNALA members also cogenerate renewable electricity and heat from sugarcane biomass, which is key to promote the sustainable development of Latin America.

The members are:

1. National Chamber of the Sugar and Alcohol Industries (CNIAA) - Mexico
2. Association of Sugar Producers of Guatemala (Asazgua/Guatecaña) - Guatemala
3. Distribuidora de Azúcar y Derivados S.A. (DIZUCAR) - El Salvador
4. Empresa de Servicios Azucareros, S.A (ESASA) - Nicaragua
5. Sugarcane Industrial Agricultural League (LAICA) - Costa Rica
6. Sugar Consortium of Industrial Companies (CAEI) – Dominican Republic
7. Association of Colombian Sugar Cane Growers (ASOCAÑA) - Colombia
8. Brazilian Sugarcane Industry and Bioenergy Association (UNICA) – Brazil
9. Centro Azucarero Argentino (CAA) - Argentina
10. Empresas Iansa - Chile
11. Peruvian Association of Agro-Industrial Sugar and Derivatives (PERUCAÑA) - Peru
12. Cane Sugar Industrial Association of Panama (AZUCALPA) - Panama
13. Federación Nacional de Azucareros del Ecuador (FENAZÚCAR) – Ecuador
14. Alcoholes del Uruguay (ALUR) - Uruguay

Vision

UNALA's vision is to be a sugar agroindustry that works together as a region and that operates sustainably in a global context in which its interests are represented.

Mission

UNALA's mission is to be the platform that allows the Latin American sugar agroindustry to operate under fair international conditions, in a competitive market while remaining committed to sustainability.

UNALA works to stimulate the continuous improvement of sustainable practices and thus promote low-carbon energy solutions, as well as actions to improve the efficient use of land and water resources. Therefore, its members have renewed different processes of the production chain allowing an increase in efficiency, an improvement in environmental sustainability, a reduction in the use of water in irrigation and an increase in investment for the preservation of biodiversity.

Objectives

- Facilitate a space for dialogue to promote communication and the development of joint activities that support the sustainable development of member countries in Latin America.
- Represent the Latin American sugarcane and sugar beet sector in regional and multilateral organizations.
- Promote actions, programs and strategies aimed at the sustainable development of the Latin American sugarcane and sugar beet agroindustry.
- Promote the exchange of information and the development of research and technology for the benefit of the sector.

UNALA is committed to advance the objectives and targets of all the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as other global agendas including the Climate Change, Biodiversity and Human Rights agendas. Therefore, UNALA's sustainable development strategy focuses on integrated actions directed to address three key dimensions: people (social), prosperity (economic) and planet (environmental), as the basis for achieving sustainable development.

People

The sugarcane and sugar beet agroindustry of Latin America is committed to ensure the well-being of its collaborators and the communities that surround their operations. UNALA members generate decent employment, which translates into better quality of life and more opportunities for development. UNALA members generate a total of more than 6.5 million jobs.

Prosperity

The sugarcane and sugar beet agroindustry in Latin America, in total, represents the major producer and exporter of sugar in the world. Along its entire value chain, the sugar agroindustry represents economic development for countries. Sugar means opportunities for investments, innovation, and businesses.

The sugarcane agroindustry is also key for national economies due to its contribution to energy matrices including ethanol production for transport and electricity generation from sugarcane biomass.

Planet

In addition to working on all the issues related to the sustainable production and consumption of sugar, UNALA members work directly addressing many issues related to the efficient use of water and the reduction of contaminating waste-water discharges. Another major priority work area is the production of renewable energy that supports climate change objectives including the production of ethanol as an alternative fuel to fossil-fuels for use in the transportation sector and the cogeneration of electricity and heat using sugarcane residues, including bagasse, for self-consumption and to support national energy grids.

UNALA members also conduct programs and projects specifically designed to address other Sustainable Development Goals including: sustainable consumption and production, poverty eradication, decent jobs, ending hunger through improvements in agriculture productivity, sustainable production systems, inequality reduction, protection of biodiversity and aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, quality education, improvements in health services and industrial processes and promotion of advanced technologies and innovation.

UNALA promotes sustainable development and cooperation of the sugar agroindustry of the region through work in three priority areas:

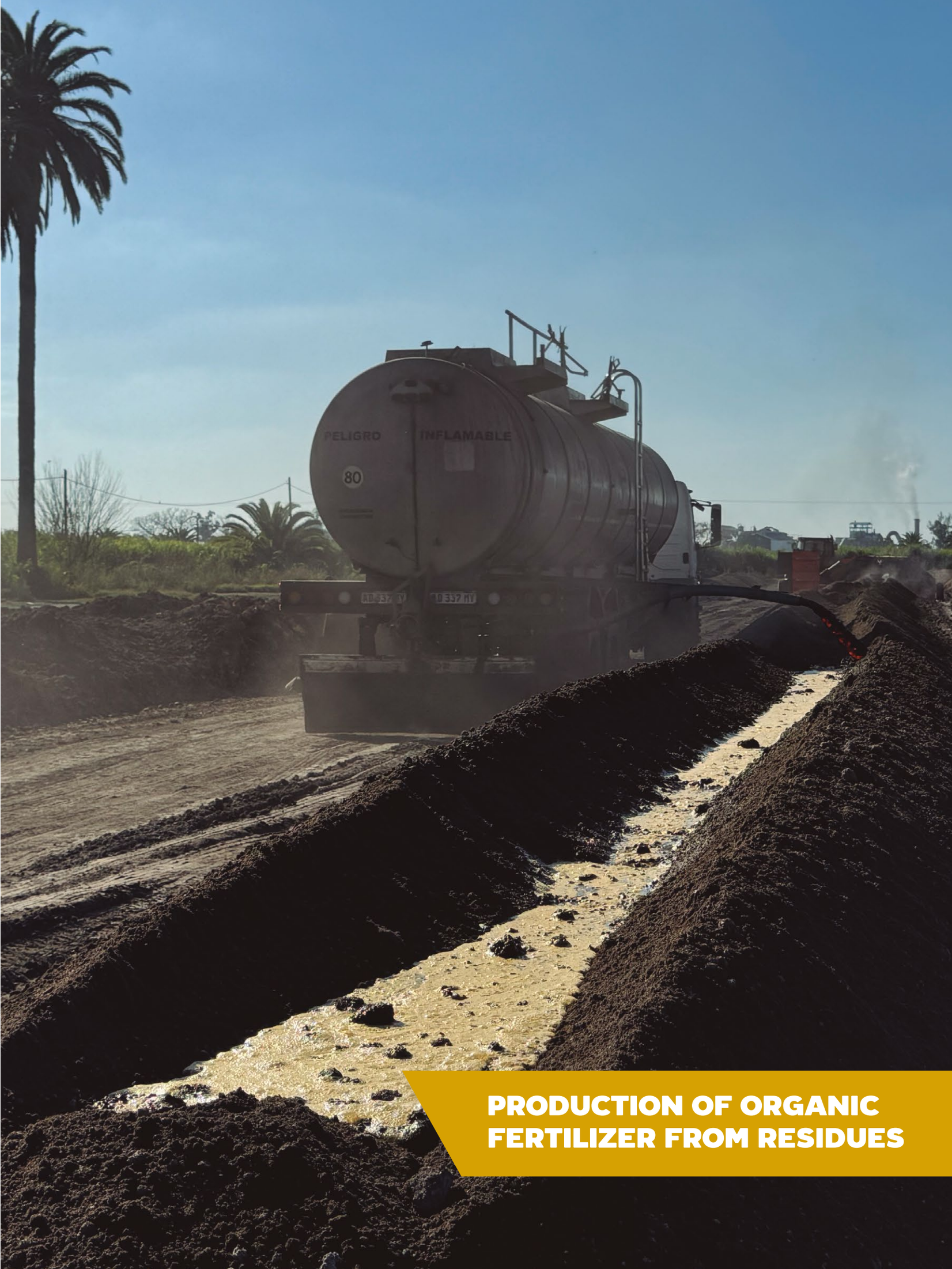
Sugar. Promoting balanced diets that recognize the importance of sugar with four objectives: (1) participate in regulatory processes related to sugar; (2) inform and educate about sugar and substitutes in the diet; (3) show the positive impact of the value chain of the sugar agroindustry; and (4) share knowledge and experiences about the consumption, education and regulation of sugar consumption.

Sustainability. Promoting the sustainability of the sugar agroindustry including: (1) sharing and promoting knowledge and experiences about sustainability practices in the social, economic and environmental dimensions; (2) closing the knowledge gaps in issues related to sustainability; (3) participating and creating partnerships with international organizations related to sustainable development; and (4) communicating information about the sustainability practices being implemented by the sugar agroindustry.

Renewable energy. Recognizing the importance of increasing the use of renewable energy through activities that: (1) promote the generation of renewable electricity using sugarcane residues; (2) promote the use of ethanol in Latin America; (3) exchange knowledge and experiences in the generation of renewable electricity and the production of ethanol; (4) develop new innovative opportunities for the use of sugarcane and beets; and (5) inform the public about the importance of the sugar agroindustry in the generation of renewable electricity for self-consumption and its contribution to the energy matrices of Latin American countries.

UNALA and the SDG 2

The members of UNALA have multiple initiatives in place that support the objectives of SDG 2 on ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture. Some examples of these important initiatives include: Production of Organic Fertilizer from Residues, Centro Azucarero Argentino (CAA), Leales Sugar Mill, Budeguer S.A., Argentina; Feeding the Future Program, Seaboard Renewable Energy and Food, Argentina; Sustainable Sugarcane Production, Asazgua/Guatecaña Guatemala; and Better Families Program, Asazgua/ Guatecaña Guatemala.



PRODUCTION OF ORGANIC FERTILIZER FROM RESIDUES

PRODUCTION OF ORGANIC FERTILIZER FROM RESIDUES
Centro Azucarero Argentino (CAA)
Leales Sugar Mill
Budeguer S.A.
Argentina

Objectives and Description

The main objective is to produce organic fertilizer, rich in organic matter and macro and micronutrients, to be utilized in productive soils to obtain major agriculture benefits. The use of organic fertilizer improves the physical, chemical, and microbiological properties of the soil while reducing the use of chemical fertilizers (diammonium phosphate, DAP).

In the composting process, organic matter is bio-transformed in aerobic conditions through oxidoreduction reactions catalyzed by microbial enzymes. Microorganisms use organic matter for their development producing the decomposition (mineralization) of the organic matter into simpler organic and inorganic molecules. This process produces heat, CO_2, water, and humus. The Leales Sugar Mill is currently working on the production of biofertilizer with high aggregated value using as raw material sugarcane cachaza (a sugarcane residue), a percentage of ash from scrubber filters and vinasse.

The compost from the Leales Sugar Mill is used for phosphoric fertilization and as organic matter feed for the soils. The dose used varies between 5 and 20 tons per hectare depending on the nutrient content and the soil condition. A field laboratory is used to perform all the necessary analysis during the process from the raw material to the compost or final product. Physical and chemical monitoring is performed during the whole composting process through measurements of temperature, Ph, humidity, organic matter, and electric conductivity. Additionally, observations are made about the presence of smells, insects, arachnids, and nematodes. At the beginning and at the end of the process other parameters are measured including: K, Na, Ca, Mg, total P, and total N as well as apparent density and weight loss.

Related Targets

This activity supports the objectives of SDG 2 related to the promotion of sustainable agriculture including Target 2.3 on increasing the agricultural productivity and Target 2.4 on implementing resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and that help to maintain ecosystems.

Challenges

One of the main challenges is related to the optimization of the process, in particular, the reduction of fuel consumption to make the process more efficient and profitable. Another challenge is about how to incorporate the scrubber ash in the process without impacting the cost of the product.

Lessons learned

A major lesson learned is that materials from the process should not be identified

as residues without previous analysis of its composition, handling, and production. The lack of research and development of materials and on their potential benefits force people to identify many materials as residues even though they could become by products that could generate aggregated value.

Results

Currently, the annual production of organic fertilizer is 26,000 tons. The goal is to increase the annual production by 15,000 additional tons by 2025. The production of organic fertilizer has generated new jobs and has allowed the reduction in the use of chemical fertilizers (diammonium phosphate, DAP) by 40%. The quality of the soil has been enhanced, making them more productive and the residues are being managed in a more sustainable manner. Additionally, a field laboratory was built that not only allows the analysis of raw materials and products but also of soils, water, and effluents.

Interlinkages with other SDGs

The Organic Fertilizer from Residues Program is interlinked with SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth; SDG 9 by fostering innovation; and SDG 12 by ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns.

References

https://grupobudeguer.com/medio-ambiente-2022/

FEEDING THE FUTURE PROGRAM
Centro Azucarero Argentino (CAA)
Seaboard Renewable Energy and Food
Argentina

Objectives and Description

Seaboard Renewable Energy and Food is the main private agro-industrial employer in the Salta region. In addition to guaranteeing decent and enhanced conditions for its workers, the company prioritizes other benefits that improve their lives and that of their families positively. For this purpose, in 2012, it created the Tabacal Foundation.

The Tabacal Foundation promotes human development in the department of Oran based on a comprehensive vision that provides social support to the members of the community during all stages of their lives. The social intervention framework includes:

- Early childhood (pregnant women and children from 0 to 5 years old)
- Children and adolescents (boys and girls) - 6 to 18 years old
- Adolescent and adult students
- Families and community

The Tabacal Foundation addresses the causes of child malnutrition, which include lack of access to nutritious food, poverty, and lack of nutrition education. Through the Tabacal Nutritional Prevention Center, in collaboration with the Child Nutrition Cooperator Center (CONIN), the Foundation implements the "Feeding the Future Program". The CONIN Center works with the methodology of Dr. Abel Albino, founder of the CONIN Centers in Argentina.

The objective of the Feeding the Future program is to eradicate child malnutrition in the Tabacal area, Salta, Argentina. It also provides assistance and care to pregnant women and children from 0 to 5 years of age through a complementary food assistance program and nutritional education activities.

The activities of Feeding the Future program include:

- Food Assistance to pregnant women and children from 0 to 5 years old, providing nutritious and sufficient food throughout the year.
- A Health Program conducted to monitor and improve the health of assisted children and pregnant women.
- Nutrition Education activities are conducted to increase public awareness of the importance of proper nutrition.
- Ongoing staff training is conducted to upgrade and ensure qualifications to provide effective medical and nutritional care.
- Collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development through an agreement to work together to maximize the impact of the project.

Related Targets

The Feeding the Future program aligns with SDG 2 on ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition. The program supports the objectives of Target 2.1 on ending hunger and ensuring access to people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food, as evidenced by the program targeting child malnutrition and promoting nutrition education; and Target 2.2 on ending all forms of malnutrition, stunting and wasting

in children under 5 years of age, and addressing the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, as evidenced by actions on providing complementary food assistance programs and nutritional activities, assistance and care to pregnant women and children from 0 to 5 years of age.

Challenges

Some important challenges encountered during the implementation of the project include:

- Public awareness. One of the most important challenges faced during the implementation of the program has been raising public awareness on proper nutrition.
- The program targets remote areas where assistance is much needed. Reaching most of these areas remains an ongoing challenge.
- Trained Personnel to provide medical and nutritional care has also represented an important and continuous challenge.

Lessons learned

During the implementation of the program significant lessons have been learned. Some include:

- Comprehensive awareness campaigns, lectures and workshops have been necessary for the program to succeed.
- All awareness actions must be in alignment with community interests. They must also target diverse groups in the community, including parents, educators, community leaders and government officials.
- Community engagement has been strategically essential to foster a sense of unity and shared purpose around the program.

- To allow the program to reach families living in the most remote areas, it has been essential to enter into partnerships with local organizations.
- It is critical that all personnel receive comprehensive training in both medical and nutritional care to ensure the success of the program.

Results

The Feeding the Future program has had significant results during its implementation including:

- The project has contributed to a significant reduction in the rate of child malnutrition in the area.
- An improvement in the health and well-being of children and pregnant women assisted by the project has been achieved.
- The program has helped increase public awareness about the importance of adequate nutrition for children.
- Through an agreement with the National Ministry of Social Development, 183 children and 21 pregnant women were assisted, and 19 children were discharged from CONIN Centers in 2018.

Interlinkages with other SDGs

The Feeding the Future program, embodied within the SDG 2, bears interlinkages with: SDG 3 on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages, as shown by the program's actions targeting the eradication of child malnutrition. It also provides assistance and care to pregnant women and children from 0 to 5 years of age; and, SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals, since the program includes partnerships with important organizations to strengthen the program´s objectives, broaden its presence and scope, and ensure its sustainability. Some of these partnerships include CONIN Center, National Ministry of Social Development, local communities, among others.

References

https://www.seaboard.com.ar/

SUSTAINABLE SUGARCANE PRODUCTION ASAZGUA/GUATECAÑA Guatemala

Objectives and Description

The Guatemalan Sugarcane Agroindustry (Guatecaña) conducts important activities designed to promote the sustainable production of sugarcane. Most of these activities are conducted by Guatemalan Sugarcane Research and Training Center (Cengicaña) through all its innovative research and development programs. Additional activities related to the sustainable use of terrestrial and water ecosystems and the conservation of biodiversity are being implemented by the Cambiar por Private Institute for Climate Change Research (ICC).

The Cengicaña was created by Asazgua in 1992 to support the technological advance of the sugarcane agroindustry, with the aim of improving the production and productivity of the sugarcane crop and its derivatives. It is funded by the Guatemalan sugar mills.

According to the Strategic Plan (2015-2025), the Vision of Cengicaña is "To be leaders in creating technology to increase the competitiveness of the Sugarcane Agroindustry worldwide." Its Mission is "To be the organization of the Guatemalan Sugarcane Agroindustry responsible for generating, adapting, and transferring quality technology for profitable and sustainable development."

Research activities are conducted through the following research programs: Varieties, Integrated Pest Management, Agronomy, Industrial Research, and Training and Technology Transfer. Also, Cengicaña conducts activities in its Agronomical Laboratory.

Cengicaña has created a research and technological development system for sugarcane. Thus, it has established policies, a regulatory framework, plans, quality management, and a technology management system. Also, it conducts applied research for the cultivation of sugarcane in diverse areas of the agronomic system to increase productivity. The research areas include: Plant Breeding, Plant Pathology, Biotechnology, Integrated Pest Management, Fertilization and Vegetal Nutrition, Irrigation, Agrometeorology, Geographic Information System and Sucrose Recovery. The research is performed jointly with the associated sugar mills.

The main programs by Cengicaña related to the sustainable production of sugarcane include the Program on Sugarcane Varieties and the Program on Agronomy. The Program on Sugarcane Varieties includes Plant Breeding, Plant Pathology and Biotechnology. The Program on Agronomy includes Fertilization and Crop Nutrition, Irrigation and Precision Farming.

The area of Plant Breeding is responsible for obtaining and developing new varieties of sugarcane with characteristics of economic importance: high sugar concentration, high sugarcane yield, good stunting ability, resistant to major pests and diseases and good adaptability to different climate conditions, soil, and management of the Guatemalan sugarcane area. The breeding strategy consists of the enrichment of the genetic base by introducing varieties obtained by the exchange with other programs in the world and by crossbreeding to give rise to new complex hybrids, the selection program and the release of new varieties and support to increase

adoption. The Phytopathology area conducts studies of resistance and effect on disease production in varieties and is responsible for import quarantine and export of varieties. In addition, the area offers analysis services for the detection of pathogens in seedlings.

Modern biotechnology has emerged, comprising three groups of techniques: tissue culture, molecular markers, and genetic engineering. Cengicaña uses modern biotechnology techniques as tools that contribute to the genetic improvement process of sugarcane, through DNA and RNA analysis for disease diagnosis, genetic diversity analysis, assisted selection with markers and varietal identification.

The objective of the Fertilization and Plant Nutrition area is to generate recommendations for the optimal use of fertilizers and soil modifiers for the different environments in which sugarcane is grown in the region. The objective of the activities on Irrigation is to generate, validate and transfer technology to optimize the use of water for irrigation purposes through the management of water resources at the basin level. The activities help to determine the optimum time and amount of irrigation as well as the best methods. Precision Farming aims to identify homogeneous climatic and edaphological zones within the great variability of environments that exist in the region. This is achieved in two stages. The first consists of the grouping of soils from the region, soil fertility, agroclimatic and crop management mapping, as well as identification of limiting factors at lot level. The second stage is related to general information, validation, and feedback, as well as implementation.

Related Targets

The activities related to the sustainable production of sugarcane supports the objectives of Target 2.4 on implementing resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and, that help maintain ecosystems, which strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality. It also supports the objectives of Target 2.5 on maintaining the genetic diversity of seeds and cultivated plants.

Challenges

One of the main challenges in the sustainable production of sugarcane is the continuous need to implement very innovative technologies and methodologies in different areas and processes following an integrated approach that allows the satisfaction of major objectives in the environmental, economic, and social dimensions of sustainable development.

Lessons Learned

A major lesson learned from the implementation of the complex and integrated process for the sustainable production of sugarcane is that there should be a continuous and dynamic planning of activities and actions. Research, testing and demonstration of innovative technologies and methods are key activities to continue improving the efficiency and sustainability of sugarcane production. These actions are particularly important for the strengthening of capacities for adaptation to climate change impacts.

Results

Guatecaña has been highly successful in the last decades achieving prominent levels of efficiency and increasing sugarcane productivity as a result of numerous initiatives and programs with multiple benefits. The statistics demonstrate the effectiveness of the programs on Plant Breeding, Plant Pathology and Biotechnology as well as on Fertilization and Crop Nutrition, Irrigation and Precision Farming.

Interlinkages with other SDGs

The Sustainable Sugarcane Production, in addition to supporting the objectives of SDG 2, has interlinkages with other SDGs including Health (SDG 3) as the Sugar Agroindustry supports nutritional programs that improve the health and wellbeing of the people in the communities of the area of influence of this agroindustry. Another important interlinkage is in relation to the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15) given the extensive number of activities being implemented on the sustainable production of sugarcane. These activities are also related to SDG 4 (Education), SDG 6 (Water) and SDG 17 (Partnerships).

References

Asazgua (2021), Memorias de Labores 2020. Asociación de Azucareros de Guatemala. 2021.

Cengicaña (Centro Guatemalteco de Investigación y Capacitación de la Caña de Azúcar). 2022. Website (2022). https://cengicana.org/

Cengicaña. (Centro Guatemalteco de Investigación y Capacitación de la Caña de Azúcar). 2017. Guía de Buenas Prácticas Agrícolas en Caña de Azúcar. 84p. www.cengicana.org

BETTER FAMILIES PROGRAM ASAZGUA/GUATECAÑA Guatemala

Objective and Description

The Better Families Program developed by Fundazucar, the social branch of the Guatemalan Sugarcane Agroindustry (Guatecaña), is an innovative model that promotes Food and Nutrition Security, self-confidence, self-management, and leadership in women, as agents of change for the development and well-being of their families and their communities. It is aimed at women of childbearing age and children under the age of 5.

The objective is to train women in practices for the adequate selection, preparation, and consumption of food, as well as educating mothers in preventive health with sustainable actions to improve mother-child, family and community conditions and supporting poverty eradication objectives. It also seeks to strengthen community organization to ensure processes of self-management and to make Food and Nutrition Security sustainable.

The program places women as the catalyst for development of their families and communities. It also fosters behavioral change and women empowerment. The Food and Nutrition Security part of the program is based on four pillars: (1) availability, (2) access, (3) consumption and (4) biological use of food.

The program has a monitoring and evaluation system with measurable and quantifiable indicators that allow evaluating behavioral change in a gradual manner. Due to its positive results, the program has been used by relevant government entities in Guatemala and Honduras. It has also been implemented by 18 social investors which include companies, foundations and international organizations. Social Investors are individuals or companies that wish to replicate the Fundazucar programs with their own resources in their geographical areas of interest. They are called “Investors” because they provide a social investment with a commitment to the development of human capital.

Better Families / SPOON BID Program

Fundazucar was selected by the Interamerican Development Bank (BID) for the implementation of the regional strategy on behavioral change program called Better Families / SPOON BID Program. The objective of this program was to develop capacities of women of childbearing age on behavioral changes for the improvement of infant nutritional practices. The strategy is based on social communication and interpersonal advice focusing on the first 24 months of the lives of children. The program included the distribution of nutritional supplements for children between 6 and 24 months old. The program started in 2019 in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health covering 80 communities in 8 municipalities in the department of Baja Verapaz. The program incorporated monitoring activities of the nutritional state of children. It also included capacity building activities for women on site and through household visits and counseling to participating families.

Related Targets

This initiative is related to the objectives of Target 2.1 on ending hunger in children and of Target 2.2 on ending all forms of malnutrition and addressing the nutritional needs of children.

Challenges

One major challenge of this initiative is related to the need to convince participants about the benefits that can be derived from a change of behavior in nutritional, health, and leadership practices. Also, participation of women in this program has been limited since women are sometimes not allowed to take part in meetings by themselves given gender restrictions due to cultural reasons.

Another main challenge is to ensure that the Law of Food and Nutritional Security of 2005 is implemented as the mechanism that allows the elimination of malnutrition in Guatemala. This law defines the responsibilities of the different institutions that promote food and nutritional security.

Lessons Learned

A major lesson learned is that positive changes can be achieved for the benefit of women and families when women are empowered with knowledge and skills in nutrition, health, education and leadership prioritizing their freedom, autonomy and self-management. The decades of experience have proved that women who have participated in this program are no longer passive receptors but have become active agents of change achieving major positive transformations of themselves, their families, and their communities.

Results

Since 1998, the Guatecaña has supported the implementation of the Better Families Program with measurable and verifiable results that confirm its contribution to the welfare and sustainable development of the population. Since its inception, the program has trained more than 532,000 women in Guatemala and Honduras. The program supports efforts for the reduction of poverty and is making a direct impact in the reduction of chronic child malnutrition by up to 7%.

Interlinkages with other SDGs

The Better Families Program, in addition to supporting the objectives of SDG 2, has interlinkages with other SDGs. One important interlinkage is Health (SDG 3) as the Sugarcane Agroindustry supports nutritional programs that improve the health and wellbeing of the people in the communities of the area of influence of this agroindustry. These activities are also related to SDG 1 (Ending Poverty), SDG 4 (Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 17 (Partnerships).

References

Asazgua (2021), Memorias de Labores 2020. Asociación de Azucareros de Guatemala. 2021.

Fundazucar (2018). Informe de Resultados. Fundación del Azúcar. 2018.

INCAP, USAID, (2012). Sistema de Vigilancia de la Salud en Guatemala: Fase I: Prototipo de evaluación en cinco departamentos del occidente de Guatemala.

UNALA
Unión de Azucareros Latinoamericanos
União do Açúcar Latino-americano –UNALA–

Printed in natural paper Ledesma NAT, produced 100% from sugar cane, 0% tree fiber, 0% bleaching chemicals, by Ledesma in Argentina.

Association of Latin American Sugar Producers (UNALA)
PBX: + (502) 2215-8000
Address: 5th avenue 5-55 zone 14
Europlaza Business Center tower 3 level 17 / 01014
Guatemala City, Guatemala