The INTERREG-DEVAG project: a regional network for the development of agroecological cropping systems for horticultural crops in the Caribbean.

Paula Fernandes(1), Ulrich Oberli(2), Elida Cristina Padron Casaspana(3), Carlos Magana Gallegos(4), Emmanuel Preghelein(5), Stefania De Luca(6,7), Christian Larigai(2), Marie Eunice Alphonse(8), Jorge Rolando Cueto Rodriguez(9), Amy Pernemont Despi(10), Dayam Fontes Marrero(11), Eric Chauvet(12), Gemma Amarsi(13), Elizabeth Pena Turrubiates(14), Mirthe Borges(15), Wahnaka Lascano Mejia(16), Denis Filisious(17), Nicolas Carol(18), Mayte Pinon Gomez(19), Gladys del Vallen Boege(20), Ludovic Temple(21), Hervé Duchaufour(22), Mercedes Cruz Bolmio(23), Beatrice Rhin(24), Christian Langlais(25), Pennera Debbe(26), Sire Delphine(27), Richard Dick(28), Alain Retnaldas(29), Magalie Jarnoyer(30), Eric Malaise(31).

Context of horticultural crops in the Caribbean:
- Need to increase local production and reduce the negative impacts of agriculture
- Main target of the social demand to get access to safe, healthy and environmentally friendly products
- An important source of income for small farmers
- Still requiring highly intensive chemical inputs due to strong biotic (bacteria, viruses, insects, weeds...) and abiotic constraints (heat, humidity).

Necessity to consider a radical change in production methods by valorizing biological resources already present in these fragile but rich ecosystems.

The objectives of the DEVAG project:
- To develop scientific databases to accelerate the development of agro-ecological and organic horticultural productions
- To create a regional network dedicated to the development of agroecology for fruits and vegetables in the Caribbean.

To do so, research activities are mainly focused on finding agroecological methods to manage pests, diseases and weeds which represent the main cause of loss of productivity and of pesticides use. These researches are conducted in permanent connection with farmers and agricultural development agents who will benefit directly by participating in field experiments and technical schools.

Figure 1: Context, genesis and study cases running in the DEVAG project (oct 2009 - oct 2013)

Context and general causes
- Lack of recommended agroecological practices adapted to local conditions and constraints
- Weakness of links between research, extension and production to stimulate the emergence of adoptable innovation
- Insufficient knowledge on institutional, organizational and socio-economic environment

Constraints and diagnosis
- Main production brakes of targeted crops: tomato, yam, orchards
- Management of targets by introduction of: service plants, biological products, animals
- Selection of genotypes for: resistance to targets
- Adaptation to low input systems and organic fertilization
- Substitution of chemical fertilizers by organic local resources

ACRONYM
Martinique, Cuba
Cuba, Haiti
Martinique, Cuba
Haiti
Cuba

Expected impacts at mid and long term
- Improvement of plant health
- Improvement of soil health
- Better technical support at farmers level
- Conversion of conventional farmers to AE systems

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