

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

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**Abstract**  
 In our Caribbean islands, increasing local food production and reducing the negative impact of agriculture is of great concern, especially regarding the most recent food crisis and the rising costs of imported food products and agricultural inputs. In this context, horticultural crops are the main target of the social demand to get access to safe, healthy and environmentally friendly products. Furthermore, horticultural products are an important source of income for small farmers. But currently these crops are still requiring highly intensive chemical inputs (fertilizers, pesticides) due to strong biotic (bacteria, viruses, insects, weeds...) and abiotic constraints (heat, humidity). It has become necessary to consider a radical change in production methods to move towards environmentally friendly systems and offering healthy products to local people, while valorizing biological resources already present in these fragile ecosystems but rich because of their high biodiversity. The objectives of the DEVAG project are (i) to develop scientific databases to accelerate the development of agro-ecological and organic horticultural productions and (ii) to create a regional network dedicated to the development of agroecology for fruits and vegetables in the Caribbean. To do so, research activities are focused on finding agroecological methods to manage pests, diseases and weeds which represent the main cause of loss of productivity and of pesticides use. Nevertheless, in order to built integrated cropping systems adoptable in our environments, it also includes researches on (i) substitution of chemical fertilizers by local organic resources, (ii) genetic plant material adapted to low-input systems, (iii) association with animals and (iv) a socio-economical approach. 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.

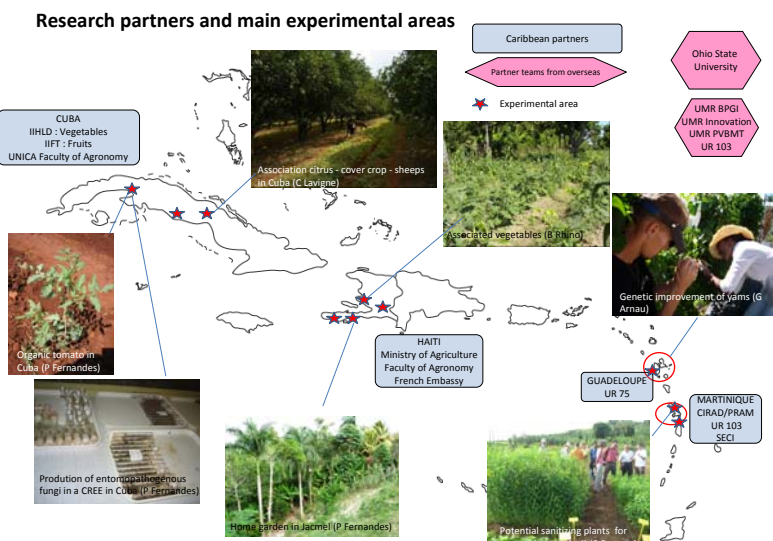


Figure 1 : Context, genesis and study cases running in the DEVAG project (oct 2009 - oct 2013)

