

15th Triennial Symposium of the International Society for Tropical Root Crops

Summary of Roundtable

“Role of the Private Sector in the Industrialization of Tropical Root and Tuber Crops”

Wednesday 4 November 2009

The roundtable was organized in the framework of the ISTRC symposium field day by the CIP-Incopa project and moderated by **Alice Thomann** from the Papa Andina Partnership Program.

The roundtable provided the ISTRC audience with the opportunity to listen to the perspective of the private sector. It was comprised of five leading, innovative companies and private initiatives that have played a key role in opening and consolidating new markets for root and tuber crops in Latin America linking small-scale farmers to dynamic value chains. They were represented by:

- **Mr. Abel Labarthe**, Manager for the vegetable business at the Wong Corporation. A leading supermarket chain in Peru, Wong has played a critical role in developing the fresh market for native potatoes.
- **Mr. Pedro Martinto**, Executive Director of the Villa Andina company in Peru. Villa Andina is about to export an innovative mashed potato product made from yellow native potatoes.
- **Mr. Julio Eyzaguirre**, Field Engineer, and Ms. Peggy Amoros, R&D Manager at Pepsico Foods. Pepsico launched the Lay's Andinas naturally-colored native potato chips brand in 2008 in Peru.
- **Mr. Bernardo Ospina**, Executive Director of Clayuca, the Latin-American and Caribbean Consortium to support cassava R&D, that acts as a technological clearing house.
- **Mr. Nikolay Stakeef**, Chef and Director of the Gastrotur culinary institute in Peru, who has actively supported the diffusion of native potatoes in Peru.

The panel gave the audience insights on their business based on root and tuber crops. They each shared their development plans, explained the challenges they face and submitted their demands and suggestions to the research community.

Conclusions can be made around three issues:

1. Market-oriented demand is very relevant for a research agenda that seeks to generate useful products. Based on their knowledge of consumers' needs, the speakers pointed out several issues that impede market development for root and tuber products, such as the high seasonality of native potatoes, the difficulty in achieving sufficient production volumes, the lack of industrial quality (reducing sugars for the chips industry) and of shelf-life (sprouting), but also the lack of knowledge needed to enhance consumption and its impact on consumers' health. These demands call for research to improve yields and productivity (quality seeds and mechanization as well as ICM techniques accessible to small farmers, and postharvest management). They also call for increased knowledge about the nutritional and cooking properties of a whole diversity of products. New technologies put into use by companies can improve the quality of the final

- product and increase the competitiveness and the scale of the value chain as a whole, generating benefits and development for all value chain actors involved
2. The private actors (industrial companies and culinary institutes) are key partners to give visibility and value to crops that apparently have little commercial perspective, as is the example with native potatoes. Setting up competitive value chains for these crops makes it possible for small-scale farmers to link to new markets and eventually find a way out of poverty.
 3. Public-private platforms, like the Clayuca Consortium or the multi-stakeholders platforms for potato in the Andes, are interesting mechanisms to link research with users' demand. They can provide CG Centers with an operative arm to enhance the impact of research on market development. They also play interesting functions for value chain governance, balancing the interests of different market chain actors.