

Sustainable Development in Central America and the Dominican Republic

Company: Coopeleche R.L.
Country: Costa Rica
Project: TMF Program: Poverty reduction and environmental improvement.
An integral sustainable development strategy.
Year: 2005

THE COOPERATIVE

The *Cooperativa Agropecuaria Regional de Productores de Leche* (COOPELECHE R.L.), was founded in 1976. It is an cooperative organization with social purposes which industrializes and commercializes milk and its byproducts.

It is constituted by approximately 100 milk producers from the following regions: San Ramon, La Balsa, Valle Azul, Guatuso, Zarcero, Tilaran, Miramar, Esparza, Alto Villegas and San Carlos. It has positioned itself as a high quality dairy products alternative in the region



PRODUCTS AND MARKETS



COOPELECHE's products portfolio include:

- Long lasting UHT milk (bag and tetrabrick presentation)
- our cream,
- yogurt,
- ice creams,
- eggnog ,
- chesses,
- orange juice

The cooperatives products are mostly sold regionally.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The methodology to implement the company's Sustainability Strategy started with the conceptualizing of the sustainable development system – at which stage an internal and external organizational analysis took place to determine its sustainability profile, as well as its options for improvement in the environmental, economic and social dimensions.



Later on, a strategic sustainability frame was developed which included the organization's strategy – which includes the mission, vision, , strategic objectives definition in the three mentioned components and the company's commitment to sustainable development.

Based on the strategic frame, the action plans in each of the components were defined and indicators and monitoring mechanisms were established to guarantee compliance with the strategic established objectives.

Later on, training and technical assistance were provided to support the company in implementing the action plans. This way, it was intended to fulfill the transfer of knowledge to the organization; also, the follow up oriented towards the achievement of the expected results was developed.

ACHIEVED RESULTS

Strategies, policies and plans

Support was provided in the analysis and redefinition of the cooperatives' strategic work frame:

Cooperative's Mission

We are a cooperative – committed to continuous improvement - dedicated to industrialize and commercialize dairy products applying high technology processes based on quality and environmental regulations to satisfy associates', collaborators', clients', consumers' and the community's needs.

Cooperative's Vision

Be a consolidated company that ensures its consumers' satisfaction through innocuous products, committed to the environment, technological innovation and collaborators' and producers' development.

Our Commitment to Sustainability



Initial Diagnosis

ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Productive Efficiency

- Support in the definition of a purchases process which includes suppliers controls (selection, assessment and reevaluation)
- Support in revising the internal Good Manufacturing Practices handbook.
- Support in the writing of the Maintenance Handbook.



ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION

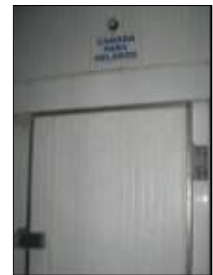
Efficient raw materials and supplies use, and prevention of solid waste production

- Search for options that result in a better use of frozen raw materials.
- Improvements in the maintenance and control pipes for receiving milk and for its consumption within the plant.
- Improvements in the storing of all used products in the plant.
- Reuse of some of the raw materials buckets to store pulp.
- Search for options to sell residual plastic containers to recycling companies.
- Search for options to adequately dispose of muds produced in the treatment plant – which the cooperative dries and packs in sacks.
- Improvements in the collection and selling of the cooperative's junk.
- Recommendation to do a revision of baskets and platforms' use and misuse – taking into account life span, use and makers' specifications.



Water efficient use and wastewater generation

- Standardization of the percentage of water valves' opening which regulate the flow to lubricate the homogenizer's pistons so that water use decreases.
- Recommendation to use water that works as heat transferring fluid in equipment like boilers and pasteurizers so that its temperature is used for other equipment or to wash floors and trucks.
- Implementation of an initial waterless cleaning process in the different process areas – mainly the refrigeration chambers.
- Revision and adjustment of the cleaning chemical concentrations to prevent excessive loads in waste waters.



Energy Efficiency

- Computer equipment was set-up to "Energy Saver – Power Schemes" mode so that each computer's electric expenditure lowered.
- Personnel have been made aware of the advantages of natural lighting, and electrical consumption.
- Recommendation to do a feasibility study to implement a condensed return system – taking into account that the system has a return potential of close to 30%.
- Recommendation to rectify both the homogenizer and the pasteurizer as efficiency improvements in these equipment are shown in the decrease of steam needs and therefore of bunker.
- Improvements to be made in the isolation system of the steam pipes to prevent leaks.
- Programming of the distribution routes based on sells planning statistics. This activity is in the process of being implemented, as well as training for drivers on eco-driving that would help reduce fuel consumption.



SOCIAL DIMENSION

Internal and External Social Projection

- Training is provided to the Management Committee through which an important sensitizing was achieved regarding the assessment elements of the organizational culture, its design and redesign, and the management of change processes.
- Jointly development with the Management Committee of a work plan in the process of organizational plan.



Entrepreneur's Comment

First of all, we thank your invitation and your letting us participate in the "Implementation of a Sustainable Development Strategy" project which has enable Coopeleche to identify improvement and integral development opportunities both in the social and the environmental fields. Opportunities and indicators that will be part of our program called "Quality Management System and Food Innocuousness" – as competitive and sustainable tool in the long term. Thanks for your contribution and commitment.

José L. Quirós
General Manager



Ministerie van
Buitenlandse Zaken

