

ADVOCACY AND INNOVATION TEAM

giving farmers a voice



The advocacy and innovation team has two mainstays. It supports farmers' federations and it promotes sustainable entrepreneurship.

The farmers' federations work both nationally and regionally. They have proved that they defend the individual farmer and, in doing so, have already produced robust results. When the farmers unite in cooperatives and federations, they have a clear voice. This prevents others from making decisions about them without them being involved. The advocacy and innovation team



provides knowledge about lobbying and other forms of advocacy. Lobbying can address amendments to legislation, like the tax regime for cooperatives. Advocacy can be relevant in areas like long-term

agricultural leases or ground rights where Agriterra could help the farmers by enabling them to invest in their own plot of ground. In these ways, we help remove roadblocks to farmers' economic progress.

Innovation is a new area for Agriterra, one in which farmers' organisations work on entrepreneurship according to the three p's: people, planet, profit. Maintaining the countryside in a liveable form for future generations is one of the main aims. The youth has an important role here. Agriterra wants to stay as close to the ground as possible while making a concrete contribution. One way for it to do this is to encourage enterprising farmers' groups that want to produce and sell food in sustainable ways. Agriterra has a special innovation fund to stimulate enterprising and innovative organisations of young and female farmers.

NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND NEGOTIATION STRUCTURES FOR THE CONGO

In May 2011, the Democratic Republic of Congo set its agricultural policy down in law. General points of departure for the agricultural sector now appear in a special law. This development was sorely needed in a country where seventy percent of the population lives from the agricultural sector, which still contributes more than any other to the national economy. The country had neglected its agricultural sector severely for a long time, because legislation like this did not exist. The Code Agricole is now bringing change in this area. Thanks to lobbying by Congolese farmers, it is now recognised that family agriculture is the cornerstone of Congolese economies and that this is a sector with a future of decisive importance for the country.

FOPAC, the farmers' organisation in the province of North Kivu, played an important role in realising the

agricultural legislation. North Kivu is one of the provinces where farmers are best organised. Strengthened by the success of their lobbying for this legislation, this regional organisation dedicated itself, with Agriterra's support, to setting up a national umbrella organisation of farmers: the Confédération Nationale des Producteurs Agricoles du Congo (CONAPAC).

Until recently, farmers in the Democratic Republic of Congo were not organised, partially because their immense country was involved in a long-drawn-out conflict and the infrastructure was rudimentary.

Now at last, a framework exists within which the Congo can begin to work on agricultural development, and therefore also on food security: food on the plate. The temporary help Agriterra offers contributes to laying a lasting foundation for agricultural progress.

