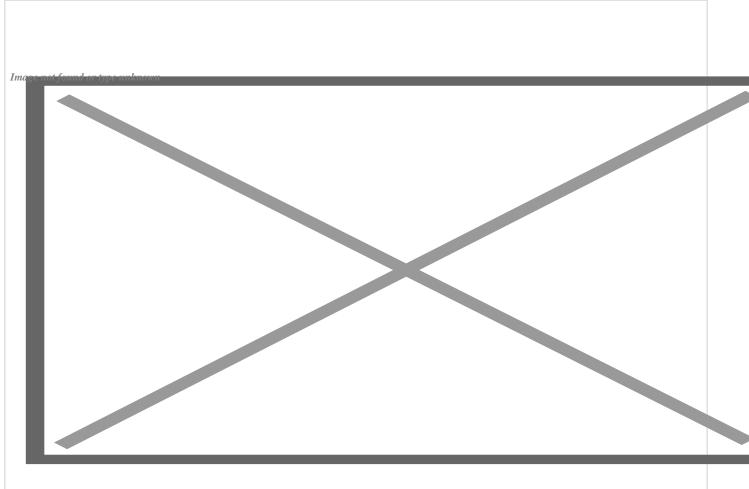# *Agroecology and sustainability at the center of a new project in Cuba*

Agroecology and sustainability at the center of a new project in Cuba

Havana, June 20 (RHC)-- A new project for food production in Cuba proposes this Monday to establish new models of knowledge management and technology transfer in agroecology, said its national coordinator, Niurka Puig.

In an interview with the media, the specialist of the Institute for Fundamental Research in Tropical Agriculture "Alejandro de Humboldt" said that the initiative is the result of an alliance between the Ministry of Agriculture (Minagri) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

"Sustainable Agroecological Models" (MAS) is financed by the European Union to develop and strengthen an integrated knowledge management system in the agricultural sector that includes innovative and

agroecological aspects to increase food production in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Its results will contribute to priority strategic axes in Cuba's 2030 Development Plan and the Territorial Development Policy, based on the application of the results of science, technology and innovation, achieving resilient and sustainable food systems with local scope.

The chosen localities are San Antonio del Sur (Guantánamo), Santiago de Cuba (Santiago de Cuba), Venezuela (Ciego de Avila), Abreus (Cienfuegos), Martí (Matanzas), Güines (Mayabeque), Güira de Melena (Artemisa) and the Special Municipality Isla de la Juventud), "which due to its character of island demands a great effort to declare it sustainable," Puig added.

Modules for For those regions will be imported -- agro-ecological production, poultry, food, silage, freshwater fish, dry and liquid feed, milk and goat cheese, biofertilizers and biopesticides, seeds, among other products.

In the case of seeds, she stressed, they are fundamental to achieve sustainability in the territories: "Their production will be established by the institutes in charge of this, but modules will also be set up in each of the territories, to guarantee seed farms that are capable of meeting the territorial demand".

Regarding the application of circular economy principles and local development, the Sustainable Agroecological Models national coordinator commented that "all the modules were conceived so that from the residues of one process, the inputs of others can be obtained."

For example, the production of silage and dry feed will guarantee the availability of animal feed for longer periods for the livestock involved in milk production, which in turn will provide the raw material necessary for the creation of cheese, she said.

The Inifat researcher said that the main beneficiaries of the project will be the producers involved in each of the selected municipalities, in addition to professionals, decision-makers and officials of the Ministry of Agriculture who will acquire knowledge about innovative practices.

The initiative has a three-year design that includes three stages: diagnosis to identify opportunities, implementation with the enabling of each of the modules, and systematization to evaluate the impact on each of the production areas.

Along the way, "the successful units derived from the actions of other projects will be gathered and practices implemented in them will be identified in order to prepare communication materials to be published on the project platform and serve as a reference," she said.

According to Puig, although the project will seek to deliver resources to specific farms, this practice will allow successful pilot models to be replicated in other provinces and regions.

Among the main results are the strengthening of institutional knowledge, resilience to climate change with a gender perspective, the articulation of productive chains with the interaction of science and the development of a sustainable rural model, he concluded.

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