

# *Cuba puts knowledge at the service of the country's progress*

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By María Josefina Arce

National food production is a priority for the authorities and, moreover, an urgency in the face of rising international prices after more than two years of the COVID 19 pandemic and current armed conflicts.

This purpose requires the effort of all, since it is hindered by the persistence and reinforcement of the US blockade that hinders and makes it more expensive for Cuba to acquire inputs and machinery for agricultural activities.

It is necessary, therefore, to look for alternatives and exploit to the maximum the existing potentialities in each territory, an action to which universities and research institutions have been joining with greater

force in recent times, although there is still a long way to go.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel has repeatedly insisted that the alliance with higher education institutions is key to the country's economic and social progress. On that path, the Ministries of Agriculture and Higher Education and the Cuban office of FAO, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, are designing a new platform to promote science and technology in agri-food systems.

It is a tool designed to implement innovative technologies that allow the efficient use of natural resources, always in an environmentally friendly way.

Through this platform, answers will be found to questions on how to improve soil nutrition, pest control, genetic improvement of livestock and which crop species and varieties could be better adapted to the conditions of each locality.

Behind this useful tool is the Science and Technology Interface Society of the Central University "Marta Abreu" of Las Villas.

But it is not only this institution that has put knowledge in function of food production. The center of higher studies in the eastern province of Granma provides alternatives for obtaining animal feed, which translates into import substitution and higher livestock yields.

Also in eastern Cuba, the University of Guantánamo is at the forefront of research on the promotion of beekeeping and the use of honey derivatives.

What has been achieved so far, among that necessary involvement of the centers of higher studies with the development of the country, should only be the preamble of everything that can and should be done to meet the demands of the population and ensure the country's food sovereignty, with the necessary import substitution and saving of resources that can be invested in this sector and others for the benefit of the citizens.

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