

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Uruguay

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Energy and Climate Partnership for the Americas (ECPA)

Report Categories:

Export Accomplishments - Events

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Report Highlights:

Great success in ECPA's activity managed by FAS/Buenos Aires, FAS/OCBD and the Instituto Nacional de Investigacion Agropecuaria (INIA) from Uruguay. On late May 2012 the coordinators of the activity presented the results of the life-cycle energy balance for grain sorghum, sweet sorghum, sweet potatoes and woody waste. This will help Uruguay to move forward in bio energy development, production and use.

Executive Summary:

On May 31, 2012, FAS/Buenos Aires and FAS/OCBD organized a two day meeting with Uruguay's National Agricultural Research Service (INIA) to review the results of the year-long biomass program under Energy and Climate Partnership for the Americas (ECPA). Under the ECPA program INIA and USDA's ARS conducted a life-cycle study that showed positive, but varied energy balance in the use of sweet sorghum, non-grain sorghum, sweet potato and lignocelluloses biofuels. This program was highly successful in moving Uruguay forward in biofuel development and use.

U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay Julissa Reynoso; Alvaro Roel, President of the Instituto de Investigacion Agropecuaria (INIA); and Ramon Mendez, Energy Technical Director of the Direccion Nacional de Energia, inaugurated the seminar "Evaluation of the Sustainability of AgroEnergy Chains". High level Uruguayan officials, including Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Tabare Aguerre, and Vice Minister, Enzo Benech attended. The results of the life cycle assessment and the sustainability of potential agro-industrial chains were presented by Dr. Sabrina Spatari, Drexel University; Dr. Paul Adler, ARS/USDA; and Daniel Vazquez, INIA. The success of this study will be the basis of future studies and is expected to be an important tool to continue designing Uruguay's bioenergy policy.

The Embassy's press release can be seen at: <http://spanish.uruguay.usembassy.gov/31052012.html>

General Information:

Uruguay/INIA's Proposal

Uruguay's National Agricultural Research Institute (INIA) worked with ARS and Drexel University in conducting the year-long life cycle study. Uruguay's energy policy is forward thinking and focuses on promoting energy independence and environmental sustainability. The ECPA study under INIA 's stewardship focused on the energy balance of converting biomass to energy in four strategic value chains, including ethanol produced from grain sorghum, sweet sorghum, and sweet potato, and lignocelluloses biofuels produced from forestry residues. The main goals of the \$55,000 demonstration project were to conduct a life cycle inventory, life cycle assessment and energy balance for these four feedstocks, which were specifically selected because of their suitability for energy conversion, their appropriateness to the Uruguayan resource base and agricultural sectors, and the co-benefits (including by-products) that they provide in addition to biofuel production.

Outcome

The outcomes of the study were as followed.

- Energy balance results for each chain. Sweet sorghum ranked as the most efficient, followed by woody residues, grain sorghum and lastly, sweet potatoes. All chains resulted to have a positive energy balance.
- Definition of a bioenergy concept model (using SimaPro), able to receive inputs from public and private sector, in order to improve results and evaluations.
- The data obtained will help to generate government policies to promote the most economic and environmentally friendly agro-industrial chains.
- The results will help to establish future national research priorities for INIA programs and grant calls, oriented to produce more sustainable biofuels.

FAS' ROLE: At the 2009 Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad, United States President Barack Obama invited countries of the Western Hemisphere to join the United States in an Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA). This Partnership was a voluntary and flexible framework for advancing regional economic growth and energy security while minimizing greenhouse gas emissions to combat global climate change. USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service coordinated the Department's project to improve production and use of agricultural biomass for energy in the Americas. During 2011 and the first part of 2012, USDA directly engaged and delivered integrated policy support and technical assistance to Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Uruguay.