

Environmental Preferable Products

Experience of Costa Rica

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Costa Rica considers the “Environmental Preferable Products” (EPP’s) as providing new market niches for developing countries. Specifically in Costa Rica, there have been some experiments in this regard, especially in relation with the organic products.

In Costa Rica, the EPP’s have become very attractive to the producers because of the new market opportunities that they might bring. The tendency, as it was pointed before, has been focused specially to organic products. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica (MAG) has been developing this kind of programs, particularly with regard to “organic agriculture”. The organic agriculture is based on the basic principal of the conservation and adequate use of the environment. The products that are considered to be organic should maintain an equilibrium with the ecosystem and should not use chemicals during their production.

Some examples of organic products, which are actually being produced in Costa Rica are: organic coffee, organic bananas, organic vegetables, organic blackberries and some organic species as ginger and cinnamon; as well as medicine plants. In some cases these products, like organic bananas and organic coffee, have been exported for the last 10 years to countries in the European and the American continent, although in less quantity to the last destiny.

Organic agriculture is legislated in Costa Rica by the “Ley Orgánica del Ambiente” (General Environmental Law), which regulates the procedures of the national organic production. Also, the “Ley de Protección Fitosanitaria” (Fitosanitary Protection Law) regulates, within its article 11, that the certifying organizations of organic products are registered in accordance with the designated governmental entity and that those certifying organizations should respect and carry out the requirements of the certification.

There also exists the “Reglamento sobre Agricultura Orgánica” (Regulation on Organic Agriculture), which stipulates the adequate use of the lands and the incentives given to the Costa Rican producers involved in organic agriculture, in order to promote the protection of national biodiversity by the use of this kind of agriculture. This regulation also dictates rules for the adequate procedures of production in farms, as well as packing and other production details.