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8-1-2008

High Wheat Prices: The Case for Sorghum Flour in the El Salvador Baking Industry

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INTSORMIL IMPACTS

High Wheat Prices: The Case for Sorghum Flour in the El Salvador Baking Industry

The INTSORMIL supported CENTA Food Technology program has been developing sorghum based bakery recipes and testing them at small and medium sized bakeries in El Salvador for several years. Now, with imported wheat prices at US$ 57 per 100 lb., El Salvador bakers are showing increased interest in using sorghum, at US$ 32 per 100 lb., as a partial replacement for wheat flour in their bakery products. CENTA food technologists have recently been promoting sorghum flour via TV and newspapers and, as a result, bakers and food processors have requested training (large photo below) in the milling of sorghum and the use of sorghum flour in baking. As a result of the training, some large bakeries are testing the use of sorghum flour and more small and medium bakeries, in rural areas, are now using sorghum flour as a partial substitute for wheat.

According to CENTA food technologist, Vilma Calderon (small photos below), two major constraints impede the increased use of sorghum flour in the El Salvador baking industry: (1) The availability of sufficient, high quality sorghum to meet processing requirements of large bakeries, and (2) for small rural grain processors, a more reliable, lower cost sorghum mill than the inefficient nixtamal mill currently used.

INTSORMIL supported CENTA scientists are working with farmers to increase the supply of high quality sorghum grain and to develop more efficient milling processes. The Omega VI mill (see below) is cost effective and several have been purchased by INTSORMIL for testing in rural areas. These can be manufactured locally (as they have been in Uganda) if they are accepted by small-scale sorghum processors.

The low cost Omega VI Grinder produced by the NGO, Compatible Technologies International, Minneapolis, MN, USA is designed for family use in rural areas of developing countries. The grinder produces excellent sorghum flour for baking.

August 1, 2008