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INTSORMIL, "El Salvador President Tony Saca Releases Sorghum Forage Hybrid "CENTA SS - 44"" (2007). *INTSORMIL Impacts and Bulletins.* Paper 63.
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El Salvador President Tony Saca Releases Sorghum Forage Hybrid "CENTA SS - 44"

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Cutting CENTA SS-44 forage sorghum

"CENTA SS-44 has excellent nutritional value and increases milk production by 25 to 30 percent"

Pres. Saca wearing an INTSORMIL cap

President of the Republic of El Salvador, Don Elias Antonio Saca, on May 17, 2006 officially gave the green light to the opening of the agricultural year 2006-2007. Speaking in the city of Turin in the western department of Ahuachapán, El Salvador, he informed the nation's thousands of farmers that the opportune moment to begin planting had again arrived. The Chief of State let it be known that this celebration in Turin was a clear signal to the nation's farmers that the Government of El Salvador pledges its support to assist the farming community in producing the necessary food for domestic consumption and to support the farmers in taking advantage of export markets for their commodities.

The festive event, attended by about two thousand farmers, was virtuallly an "agricultural fair" with government and private research agencies demonstrating their latest research and agricultural industry representatives presenting their services. During the event President Saca officially released a new forage sorghum hybrid CENTA SS-44, that, "because of its excellent characteristics, will significantly benefit El Salvadoran dairy farmers." The Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Lic. Mario Ernesto Salaverría, speaking at the event, stated that "we want to give a big boost to the cattle and dairy sector with the

Farmer of the year speaking to the crowd at the "Launching of the Agricultural Year" celebration at Ahuachapán, El Salvador. The Minister of Agriculture Mario Ernesto Salaverría (seated at left behind sorghum heads) and President Tony Saca (next to podium).

INTSORMIL Report No. 15, May 15, 2007

INTSORMIL is funded by the United States Agency for International Development under Grant No. LAG -00-96-90009-00

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Pest control and vegetable seed companies exhibiting their products at the Ahuachapán agricultural fair

release of this new multicut forage sorghum hybrid. We are excited about the potential impact of this new hybrid on the dairy industry because of it's outstanding feeding qualities which will result in a 25 to 30 percent increase in milk production," Truly, CENTA SS-44 is a much better forage sorghum than any other variety available in El Salvador. It is currently being evaluated in other Central American countries and results so far are very promising.

The forage sorghum CENTA SS-44 is a hybrid developed by CENTA with the support of the International Sorghum and Millet (INTSORMIL) program funded by USAID. With parents from the ICRISAT breeding program it arrived in El Salvador from Texas as an experimental material, and successfully passed through 3 years of research, evaluation and validation, wherein it demonstrated superiority over other hybrids in yield, quality of forage, adaptability, and tolerance to pests and foliage diseases.

René Clará Valencia, CENTA sorghum breeder observing CENTA SS-44 plants at the Ahuachapán agricultural fair, (left) and a bag of CENTA SS-44 seed (right)

According to Ing. Rene Clara, INTSORMIL Regional Coordinator for Central America and CENTA sorghum breeder, "the outstanding characteristics of CENTA SS-44 include tolerance to sorghum powdery mildew and other foliar diseases, rapid growth, ability to be cut five times per year (a greenchop multicutting hybrid), good recovery and tillering ability after being cut and high yield of green matter of 30-35 metric tons per manzana (0.7 hectares) which is sufficient to feed 10-12 cows per year." Rene Clara, the sorghum breeder responsible for the development of the new hybrid and referred to as the "Father of CENTA SS-44," also stated that "cows love to eat CENTA SS-44 because its foliage is sweet, succulent and palatable."

Researchers of the CENTA Agricultural Chemistry Laboratory report that this forage hybrid has a high nutritional value with an increased protein content and digestibility as compared to the commercial check variety when sampled at different stages of plant development.

During the release of CENTA SS-44 President Saca announced that thousands of farmers throughout the country will receive between 25 and 50 pounds of seed per manzana for the agricultural cycle 2006-2007, under the "Program to Promote the Basic Grain Productivity". It is certain that both the El Salvadoran dairy industry and the consumers of dairy products will benefit from the planting of CENTA SS-44 through the increased production of milk and meat and the subsequent improvement in human nutrition.

Ministry of Agriculture scientists exhibiting new tropical fruit varieties at the Ahuachapán agricultural fair

President Tony Saca presenting a bag of CENTA SS-44 seed to a sorghum grower at the Ahuachapán agricultural fair

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