

TCD Practitioner Report: Conflict Management and Collaboration for Agricultural Environmental Management

Mauricio Nunez-Regueiro

I wish to start by thanking the support TCD and its practitioners grant for the financial support for this past summer. The activities carried away this past summer was centered in the following event:

- 1) Conducting a week-long course on “Conflict Management and Collaboration for Agricultural Environmental Management”

I collaborated with Jonathan (Jon) Dain (Fig. 1) in conducting the course. This course was given with the support of the National Institute for Agricultural Technology of Argentina (INTA in Spanish). Jon and I stayed for two weeks in the province of Parana (Argentina). The first week was devoted to finalize the planning for the course and meeting with some course participants. Being involved with the organization and teaching of the course enhanced my training in conflict management and collaboration, provided local organizations with key tools for effective management of agricultural environments, and deepened my connections with some of the most influential groups of environmental stakeholders in Argentina.

Managers and decision-makers are increasingly struggling with disciplinary fragmentation in a world that requires interdisciplinary integration of experiences and analytical perspectives for managing natural resources. This course aimed to provide



Fig. 1. Jon Dain giving a joint interview with a local scientist from INTA

the concepts and tools to bridge that gap. Learning how to listen effectively and incorporate ways to share knowledge, ideas, and experiences, considering different social and cultural backgrounds, are the basis for collaboration.

The teaching philosophy was based on a practical and theoretical learning approach. Participants experienced strategies that can be adopted to achieve an equitable, fair, and constructive interaction between different social actors. Practical and conceptual tools were provided using experiential teaching methods. The goal was for participants to develop the skills to more effectively facilitate communication between competing interests in the management, conservation, and use of natural resources. At the end, I believe both INTA and I benefited from these activities. INTA a) strengthened international relations with academic programs in agriculture and natural sciences (University of Florida, Argentine Institute of Food Science and Agriculture), b) we stimulated interdisciplinary cooperation and creative dialogue between and among local professionals from various disciplines and institutions and agricultural interests in a region with few resources to support these activities by themselves, and c) we encouraged collaborative and participatory approaches to environmental and natural resource management. I am in the process of developing a short video showing some highlights of this experience. From a personal perspective, collaborating in giving this course with an expert in this field, such as Jonathan Dain, not only helped cement my previous knowledge on the subject, but provided me with additional teaching experience.