
El rol de la Universidad en el sistema de gestión agrícola en Ecuador

The role of the University in the agricultural management system in Ecuador

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Resumen: Se expone críticamente la actualidad del sistema agrario ecuatoriano y su interrelación con los procesos universitarios. Se utiliza el análisis relacional retrospectivo sustentado en pesquisas de comprobada cientificidad. Las reflexiones describen concepciones para consolidar mediante la intervención de las universidades impactos reveladores en la innovación del sistema agrícola en el desarrollo económico y en los derechos del buen vivir *-sumakkawsay-* de la sociedad ecuatoriana.

Palabras clave: Universidades ecuatorianas; Sistema agrario de Ecuador; Gestión agrícola; Programa de desarrollo; Soberanía alimentaria

Abstract: The relevance of the Ecuadorian agrarian system and its interrelation with university processes is critically analyzed in this paper. A retrospective relational analysis based on researches of proven scientificity is used. The reflections describe concepts to consolidate through the intervention of the universities, revealing an impact in the innovation of the agricultural system in the economic development and in the rights of good living *-sumakkawsay-* of the Ecuadorian society.

Keywords: Ecuadorian universities; Agrarian system of Ecuador; Agricultural management; Development program; Food sovereignty

From the relational analysis are presented reflections and criteria concerning the role of the university within the agricultural management system of Ecuador with the purpose of providing judgements, ideas and solutions sustained in scientific studies valid and reliable.

Informational references mainly come from journalistic sources or institutional reports, despite the fact that agriculture plays a decisive role in the Ecuadorian economy, scientific references are scarce.

The reflections expressed are taxed to strengthen the food sovereignty stated in the self-sufficiency of healthy, nutritious and culturally appropriate foods permanently to achieve

the objectives of public order, social interest and integral and intersectoral character and the rights of good living-*sumakkawsay*-in Ecuadorian Society.

The current results of the Ecuadorian agricultural management system describe growth and constitute the main source of employment in the country, representing 25% of the economically active population, corresponding to 1.6 million of people working in it.

However, some decisions in the agricultural management system are exclusionary for small producers, and tend to be more concentrated towards business agriculture. Small businesses and individual producers account for 15% of the agricultural production units (UPAs), and have 80% of the arable land.

The Ecuadorian agricultural management system has as main organisational form the commune, which arises from a social group that relates to common family and cultural ties that inhabit a particular physical space and have a division of work community.

Another organisational form of the agricultural management system of Ecuador is the UPAs, economic units with a land extension of 500 m² or more, wholly or partly devoted to agricultural production.

Together with these classifications there are agricultural organizations such as the National Confederation of Agricultural Organizations (CONAGRO), the assembly of peoples, communities and social organizations (APUCOS) and the Union of peasant organizations of Ecuador, among others, with provincial and regional offices.

The organisational forms of the system and its decisions have an impact on the political and economic measures on the development proposal and tend towards monoculture. The particularities of organizational forms of the Ecuadorian agricultural system lie in their lack of organization, training and defined policies of the control of their resources and their competences.

In the original research we identified that these organizations lack strategic thinking, show difficulties with social responsibility, there are shortcomings in the policies of sustainable development, the capacities are weak, management is inconsistent, as decisions related to technological innovation, knowledge management, and local development.

The scientific study carried out by this researcher states that Ecuador requires transformations in agricultural management; the system, as the country demands territorial approaches where, from the new forms and management approaches, transfer powers to peasants; it is necessary that the state rethink its traditional approach to intervention and to break the existing paradigms.

The agricultural management system requires the participation of actors in each one of the processes that generate a high added value for the country, which are achieved in chains that start from productive activity and conclude in the market both internal and external.

Critical analysis and previous reflections are considered determinant for the design and implementation of strategies of training, improvement, and consultancy, to combat the weaknesses and threats diagnosed in the research.

For the implementation of the previous strategies the Ecuadorian agricultural management system needs to incorporate as an actor the national and international Universities. The intervention of the university and its processes will allow the management system to forward and consolidate its local, social and economic objectives.

The university in the Ecuadorian agricultural management system does not yet concrete its social responsibility, its performance is not explicitly evidenced in the economic, social and cultural improvement as a system of life of the people. University processes are not directed. With an integrative vision, the previous situation establishes a gap between the university as a knowledge management institution responsible of innovative processes.

The Ecuadorian university performance at present generally does not favor its agricultural structures, nor the proposals of diversification of the production, of generation of added value, of selective substitution of imports, and of improvement of the exportable supply.

In the role of the university in Ecuador, work gaps are identified to achieve the necessary economic-productive transformation, in addition to squandering its potential to discover a productive structure based on technological knowledge.

The endemic possibility of the university for the expansion of scientific and technological knowledge is missed, for the increase of the general productivity of the agriculture and the

training of workers, peasants and other actors capable of elaborating and to market the new products and to provide the new services that close the productive cycle of the agricultural system.

On the other hand, the Ecuadorian scenario poses new challenges to its university which, in turn, appears as the great opportunity to reach a structure that admits to implement the complete cycle of the scientific-technological activity, settled in the areas prioritized and determinant for the Ecuadorian agricultural system.

The task takes a university committed to Ecuadorian agricultural development, which assumes an essential role in its economic and social development. This commitment must be directed towards the search for a change without a record in the productive matrix of the country.

Universities in Ecuador are required to achieve significant effects both in innovation in the agricultural system and in the economic development of the country. The university processes must have objectives and criteria of measures directed to the achievement of four cardinal axes: the diversification of the production, the generation of added value, the selective substitution of imports, the improvement of the export supply of products and services resulting from the agricultural sector.

The strengthening of the role of the Ecuadorian university is demanded since it presents new challenges and opportunities to discover a structure that allows to generate technological knowledge, scientific research, development and technological innovation.

The new university structure from its teaching plant, its infrastructure and its undergraduate and postgraduate curricula must constitute the auditing platform in priority areas of production and agricultural development and sustainable agriculture.

The relationship of the supply of agricultural products and their potential added value requires that the university meet the needs of knowledge generation and continuous training that imposes the balance between supply and domestic consumption, and skills for the preparation of human talents that guarantee the successful implementation of the agricultural strategies necessary for the development of the country.

The university must lead the processes of formulating agricultural policies that encourage research and that support the formation of a system of scientific and technological innovation, adapted to the agricultural system, and others that admits to create conditions of development and the generation of the necessary incentives to guarantee the professional development of the researchers.

The management of the agricultural management system should consider the interactions between university and the agricultural sector in a fundamental way with the promotion of values and a culture distinguished by being based on collaboration and with an integrative vision between the University as knowledge management institution and other influential institutions and actors that might be determinant for the agricultural development of Ecuador.

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