

Dominican tractors helping to ready Haitian soils

IICA is supporting efforts to improve food security in the wake of the earthquake.

Cachimas, Belladere, Haiti, March 17, 2010, (IICA). The Secretariat of State for Agriculture of the Dominican Republic has delivered tractors and other equipment need to prepare agricultural lands in Haiti, in support of farmers affected by the January 12 earthquake.

The donation, consisting of twenty tractors equipped with plows, dozer blades and backhoes, as well as their respective operators and a number of agricultural specialists, was delivered in an official ceremony held at the customs house in the town of Cachimas, Belladere, Haiti, across the border from the province of Elisa Piña, in the Dominican Republic.

In attendance were the Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic, Felix Alcantara; the Director of the Southeastern Region, Ricardo Calderon; and the Head of the Agricultural Promotion Department, Jose, del Carmen Vicente. Epifanio Nova Rosario represented the province of Elisa Piña.

The Haitian government was represented by the Secretary of State for Plant Production, Jean Claude Delise, and government officials and authorities from Belladere. The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) was represented by its Representatives in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Alfredo Mena and Manuel Messina, respectively.

Delise thanked the government and people of the Dominican Republic and pledged that the Haitian people would make full use of the donation.

Mena referred to the joint efforts involving IICA and the Governments of Brazil and the United States to provide funds for reconstruction projects in Haiti.

The work of the tractors began on Saturday. In staggered shifts, operators from both countries managed to prepare more than 5,000 hectares in Belladere, with considerable support from farmers and community members.

After one week in Belladere, the tractors will move to Savane Diane and the surrounding area, enabling thousands of farmers to plant their spring crops on time, which are vital to food security in Haiti.

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