



SAFE AGRICULTURE/FOOD EXPORT (SAFE) PROJECT

**MIDTERM EVALUATION REPORT
APRIL 30, 2019**

**J.E. AUSTIN
ASSOCIATES, INC.**



SAFE AGRICULTURE/FOOD EXPORT (SAFE) PROJECT

MIDTERM EVALUATION REPORT

J.E. Austin Associates, Inc. produced this publication at the request of the National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA) in response to request for proposals (RFP) '*NCBA CLUSA International Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) Project Mid-Term Evaluation*'.

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DATE: April 30, 2019

Agreement No: FCC-517-2015/008-00

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Cover photo: Dairy producers delivering milk to a milk collection center in Arenoso, Duarte Province, Dominican Republic (Credit: David Rinck for J.E. Austin Associates, Inc.)

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ACRONYMS

ADHA	<i>Asociación Dominicana de Hacendados y Agricultores</i>
AGANI	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Nisibón, Inc.</i>
AI	Activity indicators(s)
AI	Artificial insemination
AGASAJUMA	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de San Juan de la Maguana</i>
ASOCARNE	<i>Asociación Nacional de Productores de Ganado de Carne</i>
BAGRICOLA	Banco Agrícola
CAFTA-DR	Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement
CBSP	Community-Based Service Providers
CCA	Central Competent Authority
CCC	Commodity Credit Corporation
CDPMN	Caribbean Drought & Precipitation Monitoring Network
CDSO	Crude degummed soybean oil
CLUSA	Cooperative League of the USA
CONALECHE	<i>Consejo Nacional para la Reglamentación y Fomento de la Industria Lechera</i>
COOPAGASAJUMA	<i>Cooperativa de Ganaderos de San Juan, Inc.</i>
COP	Chief of Party
CRI	Cooperative Resources International (GENEX)
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
DFI	Development Finance Institution
DIGEMAPS	<i>Dirección General de Medicamentos, Alimentos y Productos Sanitarios</i>
DIGEGA	<i>Dirección General de Ganadería</i>
DOP	Dominican Peso
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Center
EQ	Evaluation question
ET	Evaluation Team
FAS	Foreign Agricultural Service
FEDA	<i>Fondo Especial para el Desarrollo Agropecuario</i>
FEDEGANO	<i>Federación de Ganaderos de la Línea Noroeste</i>
FEDAGARE	<i>Federación de Asociaciones de Ganaderos de la Región Este</i>
FEDEGANORTE	<i>Federación de Ganaderos de la Región Norte</i>
FEGACIBAO	<i>Federación de Ganaderos del Cibao</i>
FEGASUR	<i>Federación de Ganaderos de la Región Sur</i>
FFPr	Food for Progress
FFS	Farmer Field School(s)
FGD	Focus group discussion(s)
FSIS	Food Safety and Inspection Service
GoDR	Government of the Dominican Republic
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
HA	Hectare(s)
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IIBI	<i>Instituto de Innovación en Biotecnología e Industria</i>
INDOCAL	<i>Instituto Dominicano para la Calidad</i>
ITESIL	<i>Instituto Tecnológico San Ignacio de Loyola de Dajabón</i>

JAA	J.E. Austin Associates, Inc.
JAD	<i>Junta Agroempresarial Dominicana</i>
KII	Key Informant Interview(s)
l/c/d	Liters per cow per day
LAD	<i>Laboratorio Agroempresarial Dominicano</i>
LANAR	<i>Laboratorio Nacional de Residuos (de Honduras)</i>
LAVECEN	<i>Laboratorio Veterinario Central</i>
LFS	Livestock Field School(s)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCC	Milk Collection Center(s)
MT	Metric tons
MTE	Midterm Evaluation
NCBA	National Cooperative Business Association
OIRSA	<i>Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria</i>
OTSCORP S.A.	Optima, Technical Services
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PO	Producer Organization(s)
PPP	Public-Private Partnership(s)
PROGIS	Progana Information System
RFP	Request for Proposals
RI	Results Indicator(s)
SAFE	Safe Agriculture/Food Export (project)
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises(s)
SoQ	Seal of Quality
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
SPS	Sanitation Performance Standards
SRT	Self-Reporting Tool
TA	Technical Assistance
TAF	Technical Assistance Fund
TAMU	Texas A&M University (Borlaug Institute)
TOR	Terms of Reference
US\$	United States Dollars
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USSEC	United States Soy Export Council
USG	United States Government
USGC	United States Grains Council

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The J.E. Austin Associates, Inc. Evaluation Team wishes to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of NCBA CLUSA staff, both at their headquarters office in Washington DC and in the Dominican Republic, who worked with us collaboratively to complete this *Midterm Evaluation of the Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) Project*. In addition, the team wishes to recognize the invaluable assistance of staff at SAFE partner agencies, including the *Dirección General de Medicamentos, Alimentos y Productos Sanitarios (DIGEMAPS)* and the *Dirección General de Ganadería (DIGEGA)*, as well as at *Junta Agroempresarial Dominicana (JAD)*, the Borlaug Institute at Texas A&M University (TAMU), and Cooperative Resources International (GENEX), all of whom provided critical insights into the subject matter for this evaluation. The team also acknowledges the gracious support of the private business operators and employees, and producers and producer associations in the Dominican Republic that welcomed us into their business places, farms, and homes and shared their time and knowledge with us over the course of our fieldwork. Notwithstanding this support, this report presents an independent evaluation of the SAFE Project, and the team takes full responsibility for any errors, omissions, or oversights that appear within the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT OVERVIEW

On September 29, 2015, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) awarded the Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) project (known locally as PROGANA) to the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) CLUSA International (CLUSA) through the Food for Progress (FFPr) program. SAFE is a five-year project in the Dominican Republic, ending November 29, 2020 (activities are currently scheduled to end August 31, 2020). The project is funded through monetization of donated commodities estimated to value US\$14,282,200, US\$1,753,087 in Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds, and US\$176,834 in anticipated interest earned. SAFE implementing partners include the *Junta Agroempresarial Dominicana* (JAD), the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and its Center for Food Safety at Texas A&M (TAMU), and Cooperative Resources International (CRI/GENEX). The project works with 14,406 direct beneficiaries over the life of the project, out of which 13,500 are farmers and about 1,300 are members of other stakeholder groups. Specific objectives fall into two areas: 1) Improve productivity in the livestock (beef and dairy) value chain; and 2) Expand trade of beef and dairy products (which CLUSA staff stress is the more important of the two).

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

The purpose of this Midterm Evaluation (MTE) was to develop concrete and feasible recommendations to advance and redirect intervention strategies and activities, if and where required. Between January and May 2019, J.E. Austin Associates, Inc. (JAA), an independent contractor based in Washington DC, deployed a two-person evaluation team (ET) to implement this MTE, including a Team Leader and a Dominican Republic-based Agricultural and Trade Economist. JAA also sub-contracted a Quantitative Research Team based in Santo Domingo to carry out data collection, while home office JAA staff provided remote support to the ET. The MTE assessed the SAFE project in terms of 23 evaluation questions (EQ) under six topics: 1) goal achievement; 2) relevance of project activities; 3) project effectiveness; 4) efficiency of systems and processes; 5) sustainability; and 6) impact.

The ET deployed a mixed methods approach, including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to implement this MTE. Specific methodologies included document review and project indicator analysis prior to fieldwork, as well as quantitative surveys of a statistically significant sample of 365 project beneficiaries, key informant interviews (KIIs) with 72 individuals from six stakeholder groups related to the project, and 13 focus group discussions (FGDs) with functional project beneficiary groups. The ET recorded and analyzed data in real time using sequential and parallel methodologies in order to identify emerging issues for probing questions and to strengthen findings. Specific data analyses methodologies included triangulation, content analysis and trend analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

EQ 1.1 To what extent have the project goals been achieved?

The SAFE project has lagged in terms of the number of continuing beneficiaries reached largely due to challenges during initial project years, though the project is on track to meet or exceed targets with regard to the number of cumulative beneficiaries it has reached due to achieving higher numbers in later project years. However, the precise number of beneficiaries SAFE has reached is unclear due to inconsistencies between data sources including project summary reports and the Proana Information System (PROGIS) online M&E platform.

Under ‘Increased Agricultural Productivity’ (**FFPr SO1**), the project is significantly behind in terms of its target of a 50% increase over the baseline of 7.5 l/c/d of milk amongst target beneficiaries (currently the increase stands at only 6%). This may be due to several factors, possibly including over-estimation of baseline value, as well as on-going drought and early project implementation challenges in TA delivery.

Under the second Strategic Objective of ‘Expanded Trade in Agricultural Products (Domestic, Regional, and International)’ (**FFPr SO2**), the project has met its targets in terms of dairy producer organizations (POs) applying new techniques and technologies, but these improvements have not resulted in significant increases in volumes of Grade A milk handled by these organizations.

Also, under the second Strategic Objective, at the time of this MTE, the *equivalence process* has yet come to fruition i.e. the achievement of certification by the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) that a system for beef inspection that is ‘equivalent’ to the U.S. system, is in place in the Dominican Republic. Notably, sanitation challenges at slaughterhouses have proven greater than anticipated at the time of project development. However, SAFE has implemented a number of key steps toward achievement of this goal, including facilitating an Equivalence Board which convenes key stakeholders in the process, facilitating a market study for Dominican beef products in Puerto Rican markets, facilitating visits by consultants that developed a ‘critical pathway’ for sanitary improvements at slaughterhouses, and supporting the identification of designated testing labs. The GoDR has responded by committing required investments into inspection services to monitor sanitary conditions and approving the selection of designated labs. As a result, stakeholders express optimism in the process will achieve a positive outcome during the life of the project. However, stakeholders also agree that the pace at which final steps are completed is dependent on the sustained political will of the GoDR to make investments into upgrades of inspection services.

EQ 1.2 Which activities have been successful in meeting their targets?

Infrastructure: Improve Beef and Dairy Value Chains – As of the end of FY18, SAFE has met targets for disbursing co-investments for beef processing facilities participating in the Equivalence Process through grants to MERCARNE and Suplidora de Carne A&B.

Market Access: Facilitate Public-Private Partnerships – The project has met its annual target for this activity and is on track to meet its project target.

Training: Beef and Dairy Quality Standards – The project has met its annual targets for this activity through audits and training with dairy and beef processing companies.

EQ 1.3 How can the change be described since the inception of the project?

Initial challenges in technical assistance (TA) delivery resulted in significant lags in progress toward early annual targets in terms of reach and application of new techniques and technologies by individual dairy producers. However, adoption of the livestock field schools (LFS) approach to producer TA delivery and improved coordination of the equivalence process stakeholders since January 2018, has generated progress resulting in optimism for a successful outcome during remaining project years.

EQ 1.4 Which activities failed to reach their targets and why? Include analysis of factors that delay/prohibit adequate progress towards results.

Capacity Building: Develop Public Information Campaign and Improve Marketing and Branding
No dairy processors have yet obtained the Seal of Quality (SoQ) to date; the project has not reached its targets for this activity due to lack of product supply. Two dairy processors are, however, close to obtaining the certification.

Capacity Building: Private Sector Agricultural Extension Services – While the project is on track to ultimately meet targets for training of private sector extension agents (reaching about 60% of the project target), to date only one grant has been issued. In addition, recipients of the single grant to date have yet to be deployed as project staff consider whether producers organizations are willing to pay for services adequately.

Capacity Building: Producer Associations & Groups –The project has been successful in reaching higher numbers of continuing, new, and cumulative beneficiary POs and has leveraged resources to implement a number of upgrades at milk collection centers (MCCs). However, despite these successes, training has not resulted in increases in delivery of Grade A milk from MCCs to processors.

Capacity Building: Promote Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework – To date, the process has yet to reach fruition and no new markets or buyers have been reached at this point. However, in coordination with the Equivalence Board, the project has assisted the GoDR to realize a number of important steps in support of the equivalence process, such as making new budget and staff allocations, as well as with regard to assignment of testing laboratories and investments into inspection services.

Financial Services: Facilitate Agricultural Lending and Private/Public Investment – The project lags far behind in terms of the number and value of loans disbursed through its financial institution partners. The underlying factor for the low levels of loans reflects poor rates of application for improved techniques and technologies, which may in turn have resulted from early challenges in targeting and TA delivery methodology.

Training: Farm Management – Despite the development and dissemination of SAFE Logbooks, or ‘production registers’, the project has lagged behind targets in terms of the number of farmers making decisions based on financial considerations or analysis.

Market Access: Facilitate Buyer-Seller Relationships – With the lack of any awards of the SoQ to date, and the ongoing nature of the equivalence process, the project has not yet met targets for this activity. However, as noted, two dairy processors are close to obtaining the SoQ, and there is optimism that the equivalence process will be complete during the life of the project.

Training: Improved Agricultural Production Techniques – The project has successfully met targets related to training delivery. It is, however, significantly behind targets for application of improved techniques and technologies, largely due to challenges with TA delivery in early project years.

EQ 2.1 Are the project activities in alignment with GoDR priorities and strategies?

SAFE project activities align with GoDR priorities with regard to the equivalence process and improvements in dairy productivity. Notably, the Ministry of Agriculture has demonstrated its commitment to project objectives by committing to invest in the expansion of milking parlors on a two-to-one basis in order to improve milk quality through better hand-udder sanitation.

EQ 2.2 Do the project activities respond to the aspirations and needs of the project beneficiaries/participants?

SAFE project activities have done a ‘fair’ job responding to the aspirations and needs of the project beneficiaries. The project could improve through greater focus on resilience to recurring drought conditions, which are undermining productivity.

EQ 2.3 Are the project activities in alignment with USDA/US Government development goals, objectives, and strategies?

SAFE project activities align with USDA/USG development goals, objectives, and strategies. However, the project could improve in this regard through increased marketing and branding related to informing the public that USDA is the project donor.

EQ 2.4 Are the activities in alignment with the USDA award agreement?

SAFE project activities under both objectives are aligned with the USDA award agreement. However, both SAFE and USDA staff pointed out that the pace at which the project will achieve some targets, especially those specifically related to the equivalence process and to dairy productivity targets, is also dependent on the sustained commitment of GoDR stakeholders and the dairy processors themselves.

EQ 3.1 To what extent have different actors in the value chain been able to increase quantity e.g., yield/ha and minimize waste since project inception?

SAFE measures increase in quantity primarily in terms of changes in l/c/d of milk. To date, the project is significantly behind in terms of its target of a 50% increase over the

baseline of 7.5 l/c/d of milk amongst target beneficiaries (currently the increase stands at only 6%). Increases have been undermined by recurring drought conditions, and initial challenges in TA delivery that resulted in low application of TA.

EQ 3.2 To what extent have all actors in the value chain adopted quality standards?

To date, no value chain actors have adopted quality standards. However, two dairy processors are close to meeting requirements for the SoQ. Likewise, the project, through its implementing partner Texas A&M University, has developed a critical path for improving slaughterhouse compliance with HACCP and sanitation standards, and two have actively applied recommended corrective actions.

EQ 3.3 To what extent have value chain actors been trained in quality standards?

The SAFE project has made 'fair' progress in training value chain actors in quality standards. However, progress has been challenging due to the unanticipated scale of sanitary problems in both the beef and dairy sectors, the practice of mixing milk of various standards and selling it as lower grade, and due to limited financial motivation of producers to invest in upgrades due to marginal returns for higher grade milk.

EQ 3.4 Are partner organizations providing training to beneficiaries that is tailored to the local context and achieving increased use of agricultural techniques and technologies, increased use of improved post-harvest processing and handling practices, and improved marketing and branding?

Most SAFE partner organizations are providing training that is tailored to the local context. Specifically, SAFE implementing partner TAMU focuses their training on addressing weaknesses in the inspection services and sanitary problems in order to advance the equivalence process. In addition, implementing partner CRI/GENEX has adapted their approaches to focus on delivering TA on 'basic practices' related to livestock breeding. The transition to the LFS approach, led by staff at SAFE implementing partner *Junta Agroempresarial Dominicana* (JAD), has improved producer satisfaction with TA and enhanced the capacity of POs to deliver TA to membership.

EQ 3.5 Are local government extension officers offering technical support to farmers in new techniques and technologies?

To date, most government extension officers, i.e. the MEGALECHE extension unit of the *Dirección General de Ganadería*, are reported to have generally performed poorly in terms of offering technical support to farmers.

EQ 3.6 Have effective linkages been established between different project participants e.g., between producers and processors?

Effective linkages have been established between project participants related to the beef value chain through the Equivalence Board, which has realized a number of important steps in the equivalence process through coordination between DIGEGA, DIGEMAPS, the slaughterhouses, and TA providers.

EQ 4.1 What internal and external factors have influenced the ability of the project to meet expected results and targets?

Internal factors that have influenced the ability of the project to meet expected results and targets include staffing challenges, which ultimately resulted in replacement of key staff (notably, the former Chief of Party), as well as initial targeting and TA delivery problems.

External factors that have influenced the ability of the project to meet expected results and targets included recurring droughts, which have undermined dairy productivity, have influenced the ability of the project to meet some expected results and targets, especially related to productivity. An additional factor is willingness of the GoDR and slaughterhouses to make required investments into inspection services and sanitary conditions.

EQ 4.2 Do project staffing, training activities and management structures efficiently support the achievement of expected project outcomes?

Despite initial staffing challenges, which generated delays and challenges in partner relations, the current project staffing, training activities and management structures efficiently support the achievement of expected project outcomes. The transition to the LFS approach to TA delivery was a key improvement in training activities.

EQ 4.3 Does the project resource allocation to activities and to the project's geographic areas efficiently support achievement of project outcomes?

There is no reason to believe that project resource allocation to activities and to the project's geographic areas do not efficiently support the achievement of expected project outcomes.

EQ 5.1 What factors are likely to contribute towards the sustainability of the following issues addressed by the SAFE project: policy environment, financial incentives (i.e., profit motive), access to inputs and information, market access, etc.

The factor most likely to result in sustainability is the ability of the project to deliver value chain-wide improvements in productivity and trade expansion. Dairy processors and slaughterhouses that have received value chain-wide assistance are closest to being able to meet targets.

EQ 5.2 What factors are likely to hinder sustainability of the following issues addressed by the SAFE project: policy environment, financial incentives (i.e., profit motive), access to inputs and information, market access, etc.?

Conversely, the factor most likely to hinder sustainability is incomplete value chain-wide adoption of improvements in productivity and trade expansion. Specifically, incomplete adoption of quality enhancing improved techniques and technologies by dairy producers and MCCs leads to mixed Grade A milk with lower grades that sells at lower prices. Similarly, marginal price improvements for dairy producers, among other factors, are likely to impede sustainability of activities that enhance productivity.

As noted, both SAFE and USDA assert that a ‘key factor’ in the pace of the equivalence is continuous commitment by the GoDR to allocate resources to inspection services in such a way that they remain adequate to meet the requirements of the U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Likewise, slaughterhouses will need to maintain sanitary conditions in line with HACCP requirements.

EQ 5.3 What project activities are likely to contribute towards sustainability and is there evidence that project activities or benefits will be sustained after the project ends?

Association-wide activities that improve milk quality and thus price are most likely to contribute to sustainability. Furthermore, *demonstrated* improvements in milk prices are likely to lead to sustainable application of *productivity* enhancing improved techniques and technologies, and eventually to investments into their adoption.

EQ 6.1 What impacts are the project activities having on the project participants, both positive and negative, especially in relation to the expected results and strategic objectives?

The impact of project activities on the project participants have been limited in scale due to initial challenges in TA delivery, as well as incomplete value chain-wide adoption of quality enhancing improved techniques and technologies, which has undermined the realization of improvements in prices for milk. Likewise, despite the realization of key steps in the equivalence process, this remains incomplete and no dairy processors have yet obtained the SoQ.

EQ 6.2 To what extent can impact be attributed to project activities?

New commitments by the GoDR to SAFE objectives can be attributed to project activities that have advanced the equivalence process, as well (to a lesser degree) to the alignment of SAFE activities with GoDR economic development strategies, especially regarding export expansion.

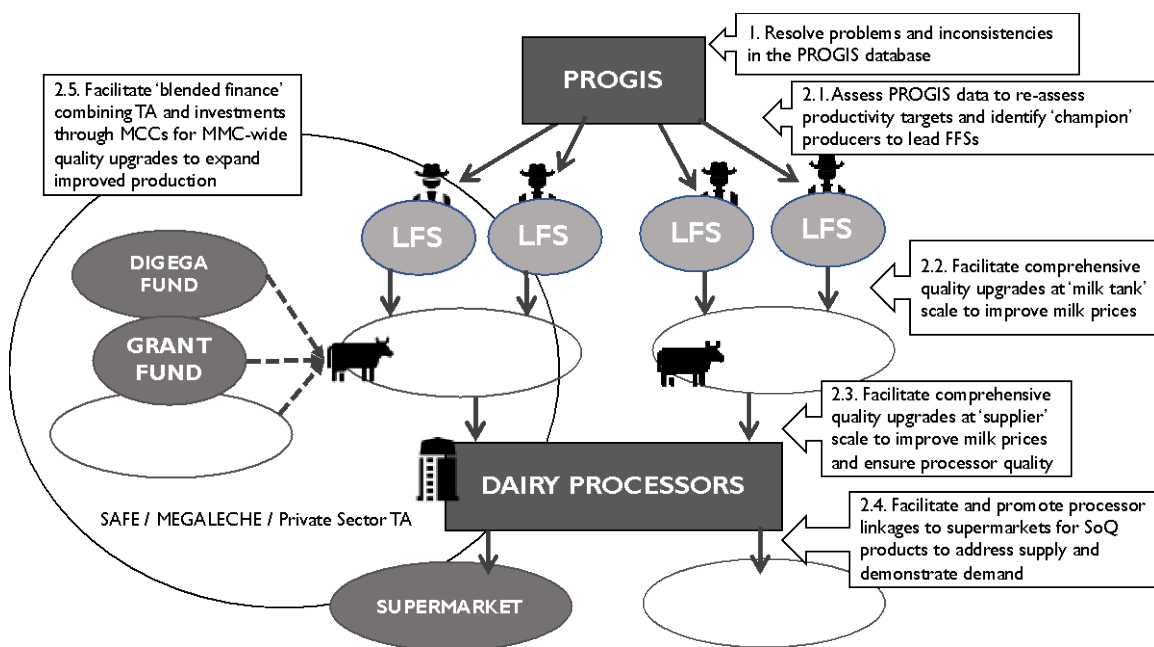
EQ 6.3 To what extent have target groups (farmers, processors, vendors, consumers, etc.) adopted promoted techniques that have economic benefits?

The extent of target group adoption of promoted techniques that have economic benefits has been low and incomplete. Going forward, achieving illustrative successes in market expansion by processors and slaughterhouses, as well as more comprehensive value chain-wide work will be key to improved adoption levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Based on the conclusions described above, the ET recommends NCBA CLUSA take the followings steps to advance and redirect SAFE intervention strategies and activities:

1. Resolve inconsistencies in the Prokana Information System (PROGIS) platform.
2. Adopt a value chain-wide approach to dairy quality upgrades through five steps:



Overall, the project should work with partners to develop a phased approach to expanding milking parlors and other quality enhancing techniques and technologies starting initially with higher performing LFSs already linked to dairy processors in order to demonstrate the efficacy of the TA package in terms of price improvements (and cost savings).

Subsequently, these partners should incrementally increase focus on *resiliency* enhancing techniques and technologies, such as improved pastures, in order to expand the quantity of l/c/d.

The partners should deliver financing through a mixed approach, with a component of repayable loans combined with a grant component. Throughout, the process should align TA and financing for specific products i.e. the TA addresses borrower weaknesses to reduce risk, create bankable investments, and improve repayment rates. This integration of TA into finance to de-risk lending is known as “blended finance”, while an entity integrating these elements is a Technical Assistance Facility (TAF). The TAF can ultimately receive additional capitalization, including from private investors or development finance institutions (DFIs), in order to expand operations and/or support new activities. Likewise, this entity can also adopt equity models in order to finance upgrades to POs and enterprises.

3. Continue advocating for inspection services and slaughterhouses to progress on the critical path routes toward conformity with the FSIS standards in order to prepare for ‘mock’ audits in line with their recommended next steps in the equivalence process. Focus TA on advancing one slaughterhouse on this ‘critical pathway’ for improving compliance with HACCP and sanitation standards in order to demonstrate the viability of the process to the entire industry while also maximizing the chances of success.

4. Audit project marketing and branding strategies to better inform the public that USDA is the project donor.

Over the course of this MTE, the ET identified the following lessons learned:

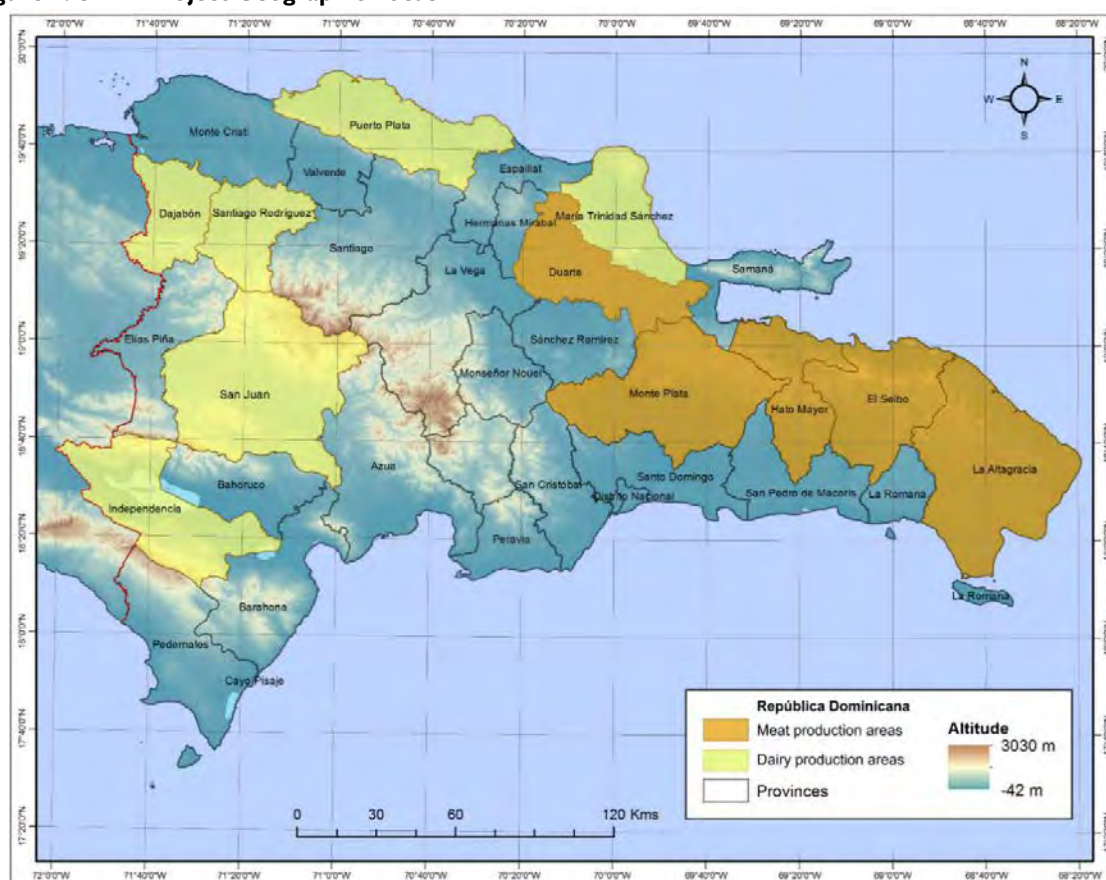
1. Dairy development projects need to take into account climatic conditions and **focus on resiliency** in cases where climate challenges impact the ability of producers to expand production.
2. In order to realize the benefits of upgrades, especially in terms of enhanced quality, dairy sector improvements need to take a **value chain-wide approach**.
3. In economies characterized by high levels of subsidies, implementers need to **demonstrate alternative sustainable models** for TA and finance to private and public sector actors, including revolving funds and blended finance.

I. EVALUATION OVERVIEW

I.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On September 29, 2015, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) awarded the Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) project known locally as PROGANA, in the Dominican Republic, through the Food for Progress (FFPr) program. The National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA) is implementing this project over a period of five years ending November 29, 2020 (activities are scheduled to end August 31, 2020).¹ The project is funded through a Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) donation of 2,120 MT of yellow grease, 2,200 MT of inedible tallow, and 16,100 MT of crude degummed soybean oil (CDSO) for monetization in the Dominican Republic estimated to value US\$14,282,200, in addition to US\$1,753,087 in CCC funds to assist administration and monitoring, and US\$176,834 in anticipated interest earned.²

Figure I: SAFE Project Geographic Focus



¹ 'Cooperative Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and National Cooperative Business Association for the Provision of Agricultural Commodities Through the Food for Progress Act (USDA Award FCC-517-2015-008-00)' USDA FAS, Washington DC, October 24, 2015)

² 'Cooperative Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and National Cooperative Business Association for the Provision of Agricultural Commodities Through the Food for Progress Act (USDA Award FCC-517-2015-008-00) – Amendment I' USDA FAS, Washington DC, December 12, 2015

SAFE implementing partners include *Junta Agroempresarial Dominicana* (JAD), which is the primary sub-recipient. JAD is responsible for the provision of extension services and building producer capacity. The Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and its Center for Food Safety at Texas A&M (TAMU) provides technical support in Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures and food safety systems. The Cooperative Resources International (CRI/GENEX) provides technical support in genetics.

NCBA CLUSA and its partners implement the SAFE project in the provinces of Santiago Rodríguez, Dajabón, Independencia, San Juan, Monte Plata, La Altagracia, Hato Mayor, El Seibo, María Trinidad Sánchez, Duarte, and Puerto Plata. The project seeks to work with 14,406 direct beneficiaries over the life of the project out of which 13,500 are individuals trained in short-term agricultural sector productivity (farmers); about 1,300 others, including 200 public extension, 250 people in related firms, 40 civil society leaders, 280 extension workers, and 200 individuals trained in trade policy and advocacy, and 330 beef and dairy processor staff. The specific objectives of the project fall into two areas:

1. Improve agricultural productivity in the livestock (beef and dairy) value chain by increasing the use of improved techniques and technologies; improving farm management; increasing the availability of improved inputs and use of financial services; strengthening the capacity of government institutions and key groups; and increasing the leverage of private sector resources.
2. Expand trade of beef and dairy products by adding value to post-production; increasing the adoption of established standards; increasing access to markets; building linkages between buyers and sellers; improving post-harvest infrastructure; increasing the use and efficiency of post-production processes; improving the policy and regulatory framework; and strengthening the capacity of key organizations in the trade sector.

To achieve these two main objectives, NCBA CLUSA identified twelve activities to address links in the Dominican beef and dairy livestock value chains, each of which was disaggregated into specific tasks and actions with discreet indicators measured throughout the five years of the project and their end targets (see **Annex. A: Results Frameworks** and **Annex B. Project Activities**).

1.2 EVALUATION PURPOSE

This midterm evaluation (MTE) assessed the SAFE project in terms of the following topics derived from the USDA project framework:

1. Project accomplishments in relation to *goal achievement*;
2. *Relevance* of project activities;
3. Early signs of project *effectiveness*;
4. *Efficiency* of systems and processes;
5. *Sustainability* of project activities; and
6. *Impact* of project activities.

The purpose of this evaluation was to develop concrete and feasible recommendations based on available human and financial resources that will advance and redirect the intervention strategies and activities if and where required.³

1.3 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This MTE specifically addresses 23 specific evaluation questions (EQs), which are organized around six topics related to the USDA FFPr framework, including: 1) goal achievement; 2) relevance 3) effectiveness; 4) efficiency; 5) sustainability; and 6) impact.

Table 1: Evaluation Questions

Topic	Questions
Goal Achievement	• To what extent have the project goals been achieved? • Which activities have been successful in meeting their targets? • How can the change be described since the inception of the project? • Which activities failed to reach their targets and why? Include analysis of factors that delay/prohibit adequate progress towards results.
Relevance	• Are the project activities in alignment with GoDR priorities and strategies? • Do the project activities respond to the aspirations and needs of the project beneficiaries/participants? • Are the project activities in alignment with USDA/US Government development goals, objectives, and strategies? • Are the project activities in alignment with award agreement with USDA?
Effectiveness	• To what extent have different actors in the value chain been able to increase quantity e.g., yield/ha and minimize waste since the inception of the project? • To what extent have all actors in the value chain adopted quality standards? • To what extent have value chain actors been trained in quality standards? • Are partner organizations providing training to beneficiaries that is tailored to the local context and achieving increased use of agricultural techniques and technologies, increased use of improved post-harvest processing and handling practices, and improved marketing and branding? • Are local government extension officers offering technical support to farmers in new techniques and technologies? • Have effective linkages been established between different project participants e.g., between producers and processors?

³ 'NCBA CLUSA International Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) Project Mid-Term Evaluation (Terms of Reference)' NCBA CLUSA International (approved by USDA), July 25, 2018

Efficiency	• What internal and external factors have influenced the ability of the project to meet expected results and targets? • Do project staffing, training activities and management structures efficiently support the achievement of expected project outcomes? • Does the project resource allocation to activities and to the project's geographic areas efficiently support the achievement of expected project outcomes?
Sustainability	• What factors are likely to contribute towards the sustainability of the following issues addressed by the SAFE project: policy environment, financial incentives (i.e., profit motive), access to inputs and information, market access, etc. • What factors are likely to hinder sustainability of the following issues addressed by the SAFE project: policy environment, financial incentives (i.e., profit motive), access to inputs and information, market access, etc.? • What project activities are likely to contribute towards sustainability and is there evidence that project activities or benefits will be sustained after the project ends?
Impact	• What impacts are the project activities having on the project participants, both positive and negative, especially in relation to the expected results and strategic objectives? • To what extent can impact be attributed to project activities? • To what extent have target groups (farmers, processors, vendors, consumers, etc.) adopted the promoted techniques that have economic benefits?

Source: 'NCBA CLUSA International Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) Project Mid-Term Evaluation (Terms of Reference)' NCBA CLUSA International (approved by USDA), July 25, 2018

2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Between January and May 2019, JAA deployed a two-person evaluation team (ET) to implement this MTE, which included in-country fieldwork from February 11-March 4, 2019. The ET consisted of the Team Leader who was responsible for overall supervision of the MTE implementation and deliverables. It also included a Dominican Republic-based Agricultural and Trade Economist who analyzed indicator and quantitative survey data and assisted with in-country logistics. In addition, JAA sub-contracted a Quantitative Research Team based in Santo Domingo to carry out data collection. Home office staff at JAA headquarters in Washington, D.C. provided remote support to the ET throughout the evaluation process (see **Annex C. Evaluation Team** and **Annex D. Evaluation Timeline**).

The ET deployed a mixed methods approach, including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to implement this MTE. Analysis was sequential and parallel in order to both identify emerging issues and to probe and strengthen findings as they emerged. Following fieldwork, the ET triangulated M&E and survey data with qualitative findings to ensure the reliability of conclusions.

2.1 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The mixed methods approach of the MTE combined secondary and primary quantitative and qualitative data collection methods as follows:

Document review: Initially, prior to deployment to the field, to inform data collection tools and probing questions, the ET implemented a desk review of SAFE project reporting data, including the SAFE Cooperative Agreement and amendments, the SAFE Baseline Report, Semi-Annual Narrative Activity Reports, success and ‘impact’ stories, as well as related reference works. The ET reviewed the SAFE baseline survey to assess how best to adopt data collection methodologies to ensure comparability of data between studies (see **Annex E. Citations and References**).

Indicator analysis: Prior to departure for the field, the ET implemented an indicator analysis in order to evaluate whether the SAFE project is on track to reach activity and results targets at midpoint. At the time of this MTE, the SAFE project has 101 indicators for monitoring progress in achieving results, comprised of 70 Activity Indicators (AIs) and 31 Results Indicators (RIs) for which the project records data (see **Annex G. Indicator Analysis**). To implement this analysis, the ET utilized data drawn from PROGIS, an online M&E platform created by NCBA CLUSA in 2018, to provide real time measurement of indicator progress. The ET chose this data source for indicator analysis, as opposed to other project reports, because SAFE staff stated that PROGIS data reflected a more accurate representation of the current project status (SAFE staff had updated PROGIS data as recently as March 15, 2019). However, where suitable, progress reports are also cited. Analysis of relevant indicators is included in corresponding sections of findings below (see **3. Findings and Conclusions**).

Quantitative survey: Following document review and indicator analysis, under the guidance of the ET, the Quantitative Research Team implemented quantitative surveys of a representative random sample of project beneficiaries stratified by population distribution across province, gender, profession and value chain (dairy and beef).

Table 2: Sample Frame by Province and Profession

Province	Beneficiaries	Percent
Santiago Rodríguez	1,178	14%
Dajabón	1,174	14%
Puerto Plata	1,158	14%
San Juan	1,119	13%
Monte Plata	763	9%
Duarte	672	8%
La Altagracia	569	7%
Hato Mayo	532	6%
María Trinidad Sánchez	367	4%
Independencia	292	3%
El Seibo	271	3%
Santo Domingo	195	2%
Samaná/a	37	0.4%
Española/a	23	0.3%
Santiago/a	23	0.3%
Barahona/a	1	0.1%
Elías Piña/a	1	0.1%
La Romana/a	1	0.1%
Profession	Beneficiaries	Percent
Milk producers	6,917	83%
Private Sector	549	7%
Civil Society	270	3%
Milk processing	173	2%
Beef & milk producers	162	2%
Public Sector	153	2%
Extension service	85	1%
Total	8,376	100%

Source: SAFE Database, December 2018

- a. Not surveyed due to low beneficiary populations

Individual beneficiaries were selected from a beneficiary database provided by CLUSA using stratified sampling methods, by dividing beneficiaries into homogeneous subgroups before sampling. The ET applied proportionate allocation in which a sampling fraction in each of the strata is proportional to that of the total population. Therefore, the survey random sample was selected through a multi-stage segmentation using the proportion of beneficiaries in each main province, taking in consideration profession and gender repartition in each and the significance of each value chain, as well as the number of beneficiaries associated at each producer organization. In cases where randomly selected beneficiaries were unavailable, either due to scheduling constraints or contact data error, the ET undertook limited replacement, adding the next selected beneficiary to the sample.

The ET based the survey sample size on the SAFE beneficiary database, which indicated a total of 8,376 beneficiaries distributed across 18 provinces as of November 30, 2018. The MTE Terms of Reference (TOR) stipulates a survey drawn from only 11 provinces (Dajabón, Santiago Rodríguez, Puerto Plata, María Trinidad Sánchez, Duarte, Monte Plata, La Altagracia, El Seibo, Hato Mayor, San Juan de la Maguana, and Independencia).⁴

⁴ 'NCBA CLUSA International Safe Agriculture Food/Export (SAFE) Project Mid-Term Evaluation (Terms of Reference)' NCBA CLUSA International (approved by USDA), July 25, 2018

However, the ET noted that the database lists six provinces having less than 50 beneficiaries i.e. less than 1% of the total beneficiary population. In addition, the ET also noted that the majority of beneficiaries listed are milk producers (6,917, or 83% of the sample frame), while beef producers (68) and dual-purpose producers (i.e. beef and milk) (162) accounted for just 1% percent and 2% of the total population respectively. Furthermore, 39 beef producers (57%) are located in Santo Domingo province. Because of the concentration of beef farmers in Santo Domingo province, the ET also included this province in the sample frame on a purposive replacement basis resulting in a total of 12 provinces surveyed over the course of this MTE. Additionally, producer beneficiaries included in the SAFE database are drawn from the membership of 138 organizations with a total of 6,441 members, although only 105 have associated members as beneficiaries of the project. With regard to gender, approximately 88% of the sample frame is male, while only 12% is female. The highest percentages of female beneficiaries are found in the provinces of Monte Plata (20%), El Seibo (20%), Samaná (16%), Dajabón (15%), Hato Mayor (15%) and Santo Domingo (14%). Based on these distributions, a proportionate multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select beneficiaries.

The ET determined the survey sample size to ensure a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error utilizing the Cochran Sample Size Formula. The Cochran formula facilitates calculating an ideal sample size given a desired confidence level and level of precision (i.e. margin of error), as follows:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

- e is the desired level of precision (i.e. margin of error);
- p is the sampling size of the population;
- q is 1 – p; and
- Z is the Standard Normal Probability (Z^2 is 1.96 in this case)

The Evaluation Team chose a 50% distribution level, which is the most conservative. Hence, applying the above statistical parameters and determining a confidence level of 95% with a 5% margin of error to the population of 8,376 beneficiaries, the ideal sample size of the quantitative survey ranged between 354 and 367 beneficiaries.

Table 3: Calculation of Sample Population by Confidence Level

	Confidence level = 95%			Confidence level = 99%		
	Margin of Error			Margin of Error		
Population Size	5%	2.50%	1%	5%	2.50%	1%
100	80	94	99	87	96	99
500	217	377	475	285	421	485
1,000	278	606	906	399	727	943
10,000	370/a	1,332	4,899	622	2,098	6,239
100,000	383	1,513	8,762	659	2,585	14,227
500,000	384	1,532	9,423	663	2,640	16,055
1,000,000	384	1,534	9,512	663	2,647	16,317

a. Selected sample size

The SAFE team provided the ET with an updated beneficiary database on February 12, 2019. Subsequently, the database was cleaned and updated prior to calculation of the survey sample frame (for example, eliminating duplicate entries and updating contact numbers). This updated database included 9,494 beneficiaries, i.e., 118 or 13% more than the initial database. However, this increase did not impact the validity of the survey sample size. Conversely, the revised data facilitated improved contact information for selected beneficiaries.

In terms of purposive replacement, the ET included ten additional beef producers and five additional dual purpose (beef and dairy) producers in the evaluation sample, replacing 15 beneficiaries from the private sector and civil society stakeholder groups for a total sample size of 365. Analysis of relevant survey results are included in corresponding sections of findings below (see **3. Findings and Conclusions** and **Annex F: Data Collection Tools**).

Key informant interviews: Following analysis of the initial test surveys in the province of Monte Plata, the ET implemented key informant interviews (KIIs) with a purposively selected sample of members of all project stakeholder groups. The purpose of the KIIs was to better understand project challenges and success and identify lessons learned through probing results of the document review, indicator analysis, and quantitative survey. Based on information obtained through document review, the ET identified the following stakeholder groups for participation in KIIs:

1. **SAFE project and partner staff**, including NCBA CLUSA headquarters and field-based SAFE staff, as well as staff from SAFE partners *Junta Agroempresarial Dominicana* (JAD), Cooperative Resources International (CRI)/GENEX Inc., and Texas A&M University (TAMU) (Borlaug Institute);
2. **Donor staff**, including Washington DC and Santo Domingo-based USDA FAS officials;
3. **Government of the Dominican Republic (GoDR) officials**, including national and local staff at the *Dirección General de Ganadería* (DIGEGA) and *Dirección General de Medicamentos, Alimentos y Productos Sanitarios* (DIGEMAPS), and MEGALECHE extension staff;
4. **Financial institution staff**, including staff at the *Consejo Nacional para la Reglamentación y Fomento de la Industria Lechera* (CONALECHE) and Banco Agrícola;
5. **Producer Organization (PO) staff**, including staff from dairy and beef associations, cooperatives, and federations, and;
6. **Enterprises**, including milk collection centers (MCCs), dairy and beef processors (including cheese makers), and slaughterhouse staff.

Purposive sampling of KII participants included selection according to the likelihood of significant knowledge of SAFE project activities, as well as convenience of access, so as to access the largest number of informants possible over the course of fieldwork within the limited time and personnel resources available to the ET.

KIIs consisted of in-depth facilitated discussions conducted with individuals or small functional groups of related individuals (e.g., two to four participants) using an “evolving subject-driven”, which refers to an iterative process so that information gathered transversely across successive interviews can be aggregated and analyzed in a cohesive and consistent manner.⁵

For KIIs, the ET approach facilitated open conversation with probing questions in places where informants felt comfortable (i.e. offices and other places of work). KIIs with SAFE project staff, donor staff, and GoDR officials were unstructured (open discussions), while KIIs with other informants were semi-structured (adhering to a structured interview guide). Data was entered into MS Word forms in real time in order to facilitate the aggregation of topics and themes. Findings from the KIIs are included in findings below (see **3. Findings and Conclusions, Annex F: Data Collection Tools** and **Annex H. Survey Results**).

Table 4: Key Informant Interviews by Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder Group	Number
SAFE Project and Partner Staff	17
Donor Staff	4
GoDR Officials	12
Financial Institution Staff	3
Producer Organization (PO) Staff	22
Enterprises	15
TOTAL	72

Over the course of this MTE, the ET conducted 72 KIIs including 17 SAFE project and partner staff, four donor staff, 12 GoDR officials, three financial institution staff, 22 PO staff, and 15 staff at related private sector enterprises. (see **Annex I. List of Contacts**). KIIs were conducted in all selected target provinces with the exception of Dajabón which was omitted due to logistics constraints.

Focus group discussions: The ET also implemented focus group discussions (FGDs) with a purposively selected sample of PO staff and associated beneficiary producers (dairy, beef, and dual-purpose producers), dairy processor (MCC) staff, and field staff (extension agents). As with KIIs, purposive sampling of participants included selection according to the likelihood of individuals having significant knowledge of SAFE activities and convenience in access to reach the largest number of informants possible. FGDs were semi-structured, moderated discussions with small functional groups of five to 15 individuals. The ET employed a semi-structured format using a discussion guide, and also relied heavily on probing questions drawing on topics identified in the document review, indicator analysis, emerging survey findings and previous FGDs and KIIs. As with the KIIs, the purpose of the FGDs was to better understand project challenges and successes to date and identify lessons learned. Data was entered into MS Word forms in real time in order to facilitate aggregation of topics as they emerged. To maintain participant focus, FGDs were held at venues where participants felt comfortable and the ET provided participants with water and snacks.

⁵ King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sydney Verba *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* Princeton University Press, 2016

Table 5: Focus Group Discussions by Location

Location	Organization	Participants
Santo Domingo	MEGALECHE	6 extension agents
Villa Riva	FEGACIBAO	7 federation staff
Villa Riva	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Villa Riva y Arenoso</i>	6 dairy producers
Arroyo Ancho	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Arroyo Ancho</i>	7 association staff
Arroyo Ancho	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Arroyo Ancho</i>	5 MCC staff
Montellano	FEDEGANORTE	6 federation staff
Montellano	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Villa Montellano</i>	6 association staff
Montellano	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Arroyo Ancho</i>	13 dairy producers
San Juan de la Maguana	FEGASUR	6 federation staff
San Juan de la Maguana	AGASAJUMA	11 dairy producers
Hato Mayor	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Hato Mayor</i>	4 dual purpose producers
El Seibo	AGANI	6 beef producers
Higüey	AGANI	8 association staff

The ET carried out 13 FGDs consisting of 91 individuals over the course of this MTE, including six MEGALECHE extension agents, 19 federation staff, 21 association staff, 30 dairy producers, ten dual purpose producers, and five MCC staff. FGDs were conducted in seven provinces -Santo Domingo, Duarte, Puerto Plata, San Juan de Maguana, Hato Mayor, El Seibo, and La Altagracia (Higüey) (see **Annex I. List of Contacts**).

Site visits and observations: The ET visited a purposively selected sample of producer and processor sites as well as markets in order to understand context and experiences of project beneficiaries, identify unintended outcomes, assess successes and challenges in implementation, and identify lessons learned based on firsthand observations. During site visits, members of the ET implemented observations of farming and processing operations accompanied by farmers and processor staff to inform findings, conclusions, and recommendations (see **Annex I. List of Contacts**).

Table 6: Site Visits by Location

Location	Organization	Site Type
Villa Riva	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Villa Riva y Arenoso</i>	Milk collection center
Villa Riva	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Villa Riva y Arenoso</i>	Milking parlor
Cabrera	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Cabrera, Rio San Juan</i>	Milking parlor
Arroyo Ancho	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Arroyo Ancho</i>	Milk collection center
Arroyo Ancho	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Arroyo Ancho</i>	Input supply store
Luperón	Quesería Rottis	Cheese processor
Luperón	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de El Toro</i>	Milk collection center
Santiago Rodríguez	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Santiago Rodríguez</i>	Milk collection center
Santiago Rodríguez	<i>Asociación de Ganaderos de Santiago Rodríguez</i>	Milk laboratory
San Juan de la Maguana	COOPAGASAJUMA	Milk collection center
San Juan de la Maguana	COOPAGASAJUMA	Veterinary supply store
San Juan de la Maguana	COOPAGASAJUMA	Input supply store
El Seibo	Finca Juliana	Beef ranch

Over the course of this MTE, the ET visited 13 sites including five MCCs, two milking parlors (*salas de ordeño*), two input and veterinary supply stores, one cheese processing facility, one laboratory, as well as associated beneficiary dairy farms and ranches.

2.2 DATA ANALYSIS

For the quantitative survey, the Quantitative Research Team input data into tablets and conducted basic analysis on an ongoing basis throughout survey implementation to identify any emerging trends such as frequency distribution and sub-group comparison via cross-tabulation. Analyses were transmitted to the ET as they became available and were used to inform probing questions during subsequent KIIs, FGDs, and site visits. Upon completion, data was aggregated into an online Excel-based spreadsheet. For each question/statement, the Quantitative Research Team calculated the percentage of interviewed beneficiaries responding and the average score based on points (1–5) for each statement. The higher the score, the more strongly respondents agree with the relevant question. A score of 5 indicates that the interviewed beneficiary strongly agrees with the relevant sentence, while a score of 1 indicates they strongly disagree.

For the qualitative data, The ET utilized triangulation of data obtained initially during indicator analysis and the quantitative surveys to develop parallel protocols with same or similar questions across KIIs and FGDs. Throughout the KIIs, FGDs, and site visits, the ET, with oversight from the Team Leader, recorded data directly into MS Word doc-based forms in real time. The ET analyzed feedback daily to identify emerging trends to aggregate findings around common themes and generate further probing questions. Following the conclusion of data collection, the ET aggregated data obtained from the KIIs and FGDs around common themes related to the six areas of EQs. The ET tabulated responses and disaggregated data by province and value chain (beef and dairy) to understand events and outcomes related to the six EQs areas. Data analysis methods used by the ET included:

- **Triangulation** – Subsequent to fieldwork, triangulation enabled the ET to cross-verify and cross-validate findings that emerged from the data sources to identify correlations between findings related to the six EQ areas. Methodological triangulation also enabled the ET to strengthen potential linkages and accuracy of data where results obtained through one method were less conclusive than another method.
- **Content Analysis**– Content analysis entailed the ET’s intensive review of KII and FGD data to identify and highlight notable examples of SAFE successes and challenges that contributed to or hindered progress against indicator targets identified through the indicator analysis.

While preliminary data analysis was conducted throughout the evaluation intensive data analysis began immediately following the ET out-briefing at the SAFE office in Santo Domingo and continued until submission of the **Draft Evaluation Report**. Following submission, the survey datasets collected by the ET will be available to SAFE and USDA in formats as required.

2.2 POTENTIAL BIASES AND LIMITATIONS

The SAFE MTE methodology has a number of potential biases and limitations that have implications for the types of findings and conclusions that can be drawn from this Midterm Evaluation Report. These, and the steps the ET took to mitigate them, include:

Positive response ('halo') bias: Probing questions regarding income, growth, and outcomes may result in positive response bias i.e. the tendency of respondents to subjectively focus on positive outcomes. The ET mitigated this bias by probing for both successes and challenges throughout each method to develop the most holistic picture possible of SAFE achievements and shortcomings.

Selection bias: Selection bias is an inherent risk when implementers help to facilitate contact with project beneficiaries. The ET worked closely with SAFE staff to organize KIs and FGDs with project beneficiaries. However there remains a risk that SAFE staff selected the most active, responsive, or engaged beneficiaries meaning that the ET may only have heard from key informants or trainees anticipated to report positive experiences. To mitigate the risk of selection bias, prior to launching this MTE, the ET requested that SAFE provide a universal list of stakeholders in advance. Subsequently, the ET identified individuals and sites from the initial sample of partners and beneficiaries provided by SAFE staff. However, the final list of field sites was selected in collaboration with SAFE staff to take into account logistics challenges and maximize exposure to beneficiaries and informants within the limited resources available to the ET.

Indirect effects: The MTE methodology and timeframe mean that the ET was obliged to focus primarily on direct project beneficiaries which are the finite list of entities and individuals within each stakeholder group identified. Nonetheless the ET recognizes that there may be additional indirect beneficiaries of certain activities including PO staff, associated and unassociated producers, and enterprises; the evaluation methodology did not allow the ET to evaluate indirect impacts.

Sampling limitations: Due to time and resource constraints, the ET was only able to conduct KIs and FGDs with a purposively selected sample of stakeholders. While the ET worked closely with the SAFE staff to identify a reasonably representative sample set of stakeholders this does not provide a fully comprehensive picture of SAFE performance and results but rather serves to probe around findings derived from the statistically significant quantitative survey.

Subjective measurements: Qualitative approaches can result in performance analysis being dependent on the professional opinions and experience of the ET which may leave findings, conclusions, and recommendations open to their subjective interpretation. The ET mitigated this bias through systematic triangulation of findings across stakeholder groups and methods and drew evidence-based conclusions and recommendations based on the data rather than on their professional experiences. In addition, where possible the ET sought out the professional opinions of relevant skilled personnel to collaborate and review findings and conclusions to improve their accuracy and soundness.

3. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This section presents the findings of the ET related to the 23 EQs addressed by this MTE. As noted, the EQs are organized around six EQ topics related to the USDA FFR framework. Each topic is followed by summary conclusions addressing the relevant EQs.

3.1 GOAL ACHIEVEMENT – FINDINGS

This MTE addressed four EQs related to goal achievement, as follows:

Table 7: Goal Achievement Evaluation Questions

EQ 1.1 To what extent have the project goals been achieved?
EQ 1.2 Which activities have been successful in meeting their targets?
EQ 1.3 How can the change be described since the inception of the project?
EQ 1.4 Which activities failed to reach their targets and why? Include analysis of factors that delay/prohibit adequate progress towards results.

In terms of overall scale, as noted, the SAFE project seeks to work with a total of 14,406 direct beneficiaries over the life of the project, out of which 13,500 are farmers and approximately 1,300 others, including 200 public extension, 250 people in related firms, 40 civil society leaders, 280 extension workers, 200 individuals trained in trade policy and advocacy, 330 beef and dairy processor staff (see **I. Project Overview**). The SAFE Project Monitoring Plan (PMP) measures direct beneficiaries through four Results Indicators (RIs), as follows:⁶

1. **RI 2** (PMP 13.2): 'Total number of individuals benefitting directly as a result of USDA assistance (beneficiaries continuing)'
2. **RI 3** (PMP 13.3): 'Total number of individuals benefitting directly as a result of USDA assistance (female cumulative)'
3. **RI 4** (PMP 13.4): 'Total number of individuals benefitting directly as a result of USDA assistance (male cumulative)'
4. **RI 5** (PMP 13.5) 'Total number of individuals benefitting directly as a result of USDA assistance (beneficiaries new)'

These RIs calculate the number of individuals benefiting directly from USDA assistance. Indicator definitions require that such individuals must be engaged with a project activity or come into direct contact with a set of interventions (goods or services) provided by the SAFE project. They may include members of all stakeholder groups. Individuals merely contacted or involved in an activity through brief attendance (non-recurring participation) are not counted. However, individuals participating in SAFE-sponsored trainings in multiple fiscal years may be counted once in each fiscal year.⁷

⁶ 'Agreement Between the Government of the United States of American and National Cooperative Business Association for the Provision of Agricultural Commodities Through the Food for Progress Act (USDA Award FCC-517-2015-008-00) – Amendment II' USDA FAS, Washington DC, October 18, 2018

⁷ 'Food for Progress and McGovern-Dole Indicators Definitions' USDA/FAS, Washington DC, July 15, 2014

RI 2 Individuals (continuing) measures the number of beneficiaries that continue benefitting directly from SAFE project activities on an annual basis. RI 3 Female (cumulative) and RI 4 Male (cumulative) measure the 'cumulative number', respectively of male and female beneficiaries that first benefited directly from an intervention in the previous year and continue to directly benefit. Finally, RI 5 Individuals (new) measures the number of new beneficiaries each fiscal year.

The end of project target for RI 2 Individuals (continuing) is 8,599 beneficiaries that continue to benefit from SAFE project assistance, representing approximately 60% of cumulative total target beneficiaries of 14,406. As of the end of FY2018, only 1,344 beneficiaries have continued to benefit from project activities initiated in FY17, representing 63% of the annual target and only 16% of the project target are continuing beneficiaries. Therefore, the SAFE project is on track to reach just 30% of the project target for this RI of 8,599. The end of the project target for RI 3 female (cumulative) is 4,011 female beneficiaries. As of the end of FY2018, 2,875 women were benefitting from project activities, mostly females that participated in five regional consultation workshops in 2018 to better understand the barriers and opportunities around women's engagement in livestock activities. Therefore, to date the SAFE project has met 72% of its project target for this RI. RI 4 male (cumulative) measures the number of male beneficiaries. The end of project target is to reach 10,395 male beneficiaries. As of the end of FY2018, 7,804 men were benefitting from project activities. Therefore, the SAFE project has met 75% of its end of project target for this RI.

Finally, RI 5 Individuals (new) is calculated as the balance between the sum of cumulative number of male and female beneficiaries and the number of beneficiaries continuing to receive technical assistance (i.e. $RI\ 5 = (RI\ 3 + RI\ 4) - RI\ 2$). However, the performance of this indicator is somewhat misleading, suggesting performance above target (161%) due to poor performance of RI 2, which is currently at 16% of target.

Table 8: RI 2-5 – Individuals Benefitting Directly as a Result of USDA Assistance

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 2 Individuals (cont.)	0	0	1,344	8,599	7,255	16%
RI 3 Females (cumulative)	0	400	2,875	4,011	1,136	72%
RI 4 Male (cumulative)	0	3,085	7,804	10,395	2,591	75%
RI 5 Individuals (new)	0	3,485	9,335	5,807	-3,528	161%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

This analysis finds that SAFE is lagging in terms of 'continuing' beneficiaries while the project is on track to meet or exceed targets with regard to number of 'cumulative' beneficiaries due to reaching higher numbers in later years. In KIs, when asked about challenges that may have led to this, SAFE staff and partners and PO staff cited 'slow start-up' as well as the initial 'theoretical' methodological approach to producer training as opposed to the more 'practical' approach of farmer field schools (FFSs), subsequently adopted as 'livestock field schools' (LFSs) (see **3.5 Effectiveness - Findings**).⁸

⁸ For example, KIs, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, February 12-March 1, 2019 and PO staff, various locations, February 12-March 1, 2019

The ET also found several potential discrepancies with these estimations. First, PROGIS only listed 8,367 individuals at the beginning of December 2018 which is lower than the implied total number of 10,659 beneficiaries (7,804 male plus 2,875 female) by end of the FY2018 (i.e. September 30, 2018). SAFE staff described this problem as a result of challenges in coordination of indicator definitions with MEGALECHE staff; they are also responsible for reporting data that is uploaded into PROGIS.⁹ In addition, as noted, the SAFE team provided the ET with a new database on February 12, 2019 which includes 9,494 individuals or about 13% more than were included in the previous database (see **2. Methodology**). Second, the number of new beneficiaries calculated as the difference between total number and those continuing in FY18 of 9,335 was also incorrect as of September 30, 2018 in that it was slightly lower than the new total of 9,494.

As noted, the objectives of the SAFE project are aggregated into two areas (see **1. Project Overview**):

1. Improve agricultural productivity in the livestock (beef and dairy) value chain by increasing the use of improved techniques and technologies; improving farm management; increasing the availability of improved inputs and use of financial services; strengthening the capacity of government institutions and key groups; and increasing the leverage of private sector resources.
2. Expand trade of beef and dairy products by adding value to post-production; increasing the adoption of established standards; increasing access to markets; building linkages between buyers and sellers; improving post-harvest infrastructure; increasing the use and efficiency of post-production processes; improving the policy and regulatory framework; and strengthening the capacity of key organizations in the trade sector.

The key indicator under the first goal of ‘improving agricultural productivity in the livestock (beef and dairy) value chain’ which the SAFE project addresses through ‘Increased Agricultural Productivity’ (**FFPr SOI**), is **RI 1** (PMP 13.1): ‘Percentage increase in the number of liters produced per cow per day’ (l/c/d). The SAFE target for this indicator is a 50% increase in l/c/d over the life of the project against the baseline value.

Table 9: RI 1: Percentage Increase in L/D/C

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
Average (l/c/d)	7.5/a	6.4	7.725	11.25	3.525	6%
RI 1 (% increase in l/c/d)/b	0	-15%	3%	50%	-47%	6%

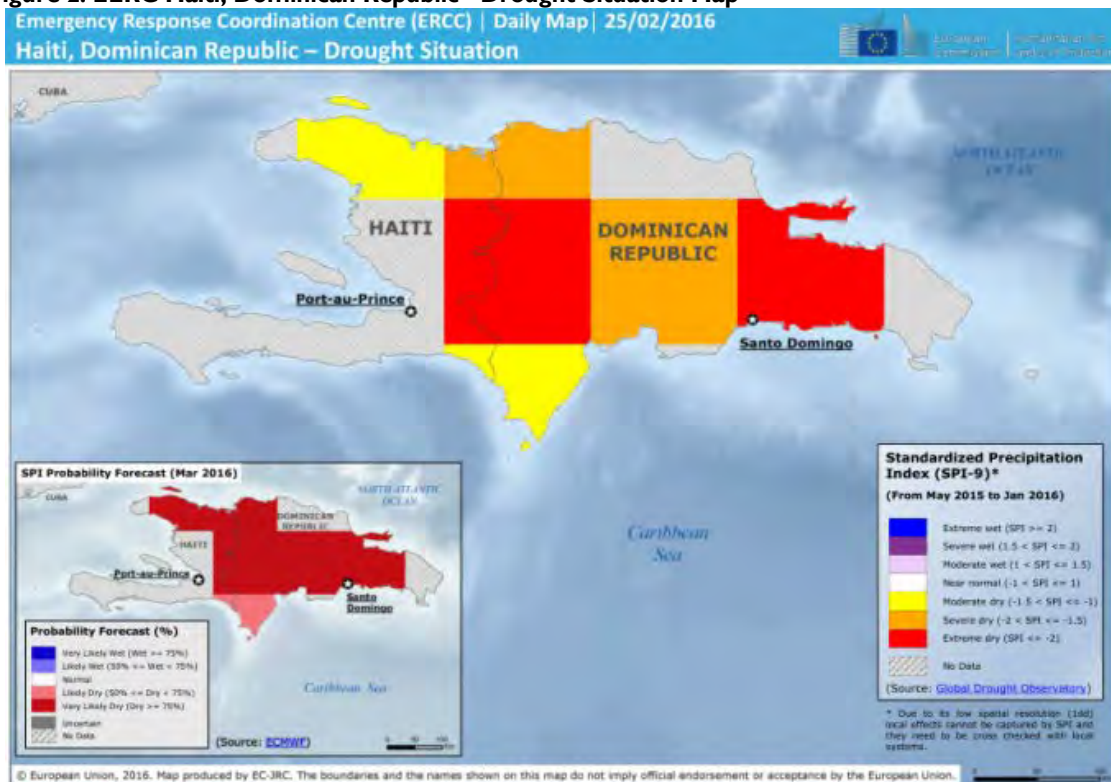
- a. ‘Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) Program- Dominican Republic Project Baseline Survey (Agreement No: FCC-517-2015/008-00)’ Optima, Technical Services (OTSCORP S.A.) Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 13, 2016
- b. ‘Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)’

⁹ KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, February 22, 2019

During the baseline study in 2016, a survey of about 500 farms, about two thirds of which are now SAFE beneficiaries, found that dairy productivity ranged between 2.1-12.3 l/c/d with an average of 7.5 l/c/d. However, perversely, the following year, 2016 productivity averaged just 6.4 l/c/d, 15% below the baseline as a result of reduction in pasture due to drought. Subsequently, by the end of FY 2018, productivity increased to about 7.725 l/c/d, a 3% increase over baseline representing a 47% shortfall below the project target.

In FGDs with dairy producers, participants cited ‘normal’ productivity figures between about 2-7 l/c/d. However, when asked about challenges to productivity KII and FGD respondents almost unanimously cited drought related to El Niño as a dominant long-term exogenous condition, significantly reducing productivity every two years.¹⁰ Background research confirmed these statements. The Emergency Response Coordination Center (ERCC) regional climate maps showed ‘severe’ and ‘extreme’ dry conditions throughout SAFE project areas in 2016, and the Caribbean Drought & Precipitation Monitoring Network (CDPMN) described ‘long-term drought conditions’ throughout the island of Hispaniola in 2018-19.¹¹ One PO leader stated that drought conditions were “the most urgent issue (facing dairy farmers). If we managed the resources, we would put them all into assistance for affected producers.”¹²

Figure 2: EERC Haiti, Dominican Republic - Drought Situation Map



¹⁰ For example, FGD, dairy producers, San Juan de la Maguana, February 22, 2019

¹¹ ‘Caribbean Drought Bulletin’ Volume V, Issue10, Caribbean Drought & Precipitation Monitoring Network (CDPMN), March 2019

¹² KII, PO staff, San Juan de la Maguana, February 22, 2019

The SAFE project addresses ‘Increased Agricultural Productivity’ (**FFPr SOI**) through two Results. The first is ‘Increased Use of Improved Agricultural Techniques and Technologies’ (**FFPr I.2**), which includes three Sub-Results and activities as follows:

FFPr I.2.1: Increased Availability of Improved Inputs;

Activity: Inputs: Develop agro-dealers, and/or other input suppliers.

FFPr I.2.3: Increased Use of Financial Services;

Activity: Financial Services: Facilitate Agricultural Lending and Private and/or Public Investment.

FFPr I.2.4: Increased Knowledge by Farmers of Improved Agricultural Techniques and Technologies;

Activity: Training: Improved agricultural production techniques.

SAFE staff stated that activities under this result present producers with assistance ‘to improve productivity and access required inputs and financing to obtain inputs’.¹³ Specifically, the project promotes a techniques, technologies, and practices for pasture and farm management, milking and milk handling, reproduction and genetics, and animal health and well-being. Through the grants program and budget, the project also offers producers a *programa de coinversión productivo* (PCP), which is a specific set of inputs supplied to qualifying participants of the LFS based on regular attendance. The LFSs promote the entire TA package, but what the farmers receive is an input package of pasture seeds, fertilizers, jerrycans, Embrapa kits (a Brazilian-designed unit used to clean teats and improve hygiene during milking), and other inputs with a total value of US\$500-700 per producer. The project delivers this TA through its partnership with the MEGALECHE extension team, a program under DIGEGA dedicated to the development of the livestock sector created by the GoDR in 2001. MEGALECHE links producers to relevant research through a network of farm schools and extension agents distributed throughout the country. In addition, CONALECHE provides loans at heavily subsidized rates to associated small-scale dairy producers (6% annual interest for eight to ten-year loans of up to DOP 1.5 million). CONALECHE also facilitates pre-approval of co-financing with Banco Agrícola for larger loans at 8% annual interest.¹⁴ The GoDR established BAGRICOLA in 1945 to support primary production. The bank offers similarly subsidized loans (8% annual interest for production loans and 9.5% for marketing loans with loan sizes up to DOP 380 million).

Under ‘Increased Availability of Improved Inputs’, the project implements the ‘Inputs: Develop agro-dealers, and/or other input suppliers’ activity through coordination of training events on the use of seeds for improved pasture and veterinary supplies by inviting agro-dealers located in SAFE areas to participate in trainings to promote adequate use of inputs. In some cases, agro-dealers are affiliated with specific POs and operate on the premises of association-operated MCCs. However, the number of these affiliated agro-dealers is ‘limited’ and SAFE staff report that participation by independent agro-dealers has often been ‘passive’.¹⁵

¹³ KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, February 22, 2019

¹⁴ KII, financial institution staff, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019

¹⁵ KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, February 22, 2019

Under the sub-result ‘Increased Use of Financial Services’, SAFE implements the activity ‘Financial Services: Facilitate Agricultural Lending and Private and/or Public Investment’ through its facilitation of co-investments with CONALECHE or other institutions. It deploys a US\$1.5 million grant fund (which includes targets of US\$50,000 for slaughterhouse SPS improvements, US\$264,000 for MCC infrastructure improvements, and US\$270,000 for Private Sector Extension services. The remainder is for miscellaneous grant expenses from which the PCP was created in October 2018 to foster application of technologies.¹⁶ To date, the project has also co-financed cooling tanks and two sets of solar panels at PO-operated MCCs to reduce operating costs derived from dependence on the subsidized Dominican power grid, which is prone to outages in rural areas. Staff at BAGRICOLA reported that co-investments are ‘useful’ in that they facilitate loans in excess of their maximum loan amount.¹⁷

Finally, under ‘Increased Knowledge by Farmers of Improved Agricultural Techniques and Technologies,’ the project implements ‘Training: Improved agricultural production techniques’ through its partnership with the MEGALECHE extension team. During the initial two project years, TA was implemented in classrooms-type environments. However, in KIIs and FGDs, respondents described numerous problems with MEGALECHE performance related to ‘lack of resources’ (especially fuel for vehicles) and ‘motivation’.¹⁸ Several respondents stated that some MEGALECHE staff delivered TA ‘only by phone’ and described ‘forging signatures’ on training reports.¹⁹ One respondent stated that ‘there is a lot of dead wood’ at MEGALECHE.²⁰ In response, in July 2018 the project adopted farmer field schools (FFSs) as ‘livestock field schools’ (LFS) to prioritize ‘practical’ approaches to TA delivery (see **3.5 Effectiveness**).²¹

SAFE Farm Follow-Up Reports in February 2019 surveyed approximately 900 beneficiary producers across SAFE project areas. These surveys showed that producers applying one or more of the techniques promoted by SAFE had achieved higher average productivity rates of 7.97 l/c/d as compared to producers not adopting the package (5.9 l/c/d).²² However, SAFE staff note that there are ‘significant regional variations’ that must be taken into account when prescribing the specific use of agricultural techniques and technologies, especially types of improved pasture and the intensity of paddock rotation. These variations must also take into consideration herd size and breed types as well as optimal types of pasture under various drought conditions. As a result, producers will continue to rely on recommendations from qualified technicians for site-specific application of TA topics.²³

¹⁶ KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

¹⁷ KII, financial institution staff, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019

¹⁸ For example, FGD, association staff, Arroyo Ancho, February 19, 2019, KII, financial institution staff, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019, and USDA staff, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019

¹⁹ For example, FGD, association staff, Arroyo Ancho, February 19, 2019

²⁰ KII, financial institution staff, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019

²¹ See ‘Farmer Field School (FFS) Manual’ FAO, Special Framework of Assistance, St. Lucia, 2006

²² ‘Visitas a Fincas y Técnicas; October 18-February 19, 2019’ NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, March 2019

²³ KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, March 22, 2019

Under the result 'Increased Use of Improved Agricultural Techniques and Technologies' (**FFPr 1.2**), the SAFE project measures the total farm area where these activities are implemented in terms of hectares (HA) under improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance through two indicators:

1. **RI 11** (PMP 17.2) Number of hectares under improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance (continuing)
2. **RI 12** (PMP 17.2) Number of hectares under improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance (new)

Table 10: RI 11-12 Hectares under Improved Techniques and Technologies

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 11 Hectares (continuing)	0	0	895	2,600	1,705	34%
RI 12 Hectares (cumulative)	0	5,212	8,519	4,800	1,493	177%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

SAFE indicators related to productivity results demonstrate that SAFE is lagging in terms of HA (continuing) under improved techniques and technologies (only 34% of project target). In KIIs, SAFE staff attributed this lag to challenges in 'slow start-up' and the problematic TA delivery methodology during the initial project years. The project has now exceeded its target in terms of HA (cumulative) where they are being applied (177% of project target).

Likewise, the number of producers applying these techniques and technologies is measured through four indicators:

1. **RI 13** (PMP 12.1) Number of individuals who have applied improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance (male)
2. **RI 14** (PMP 12.4) Number of individuals who have applied improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance (new)
3. **RI 15** (PMP 12.2) Number of individuals who have applied improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance (continuing)
4. **RI 16** (PMP 12.3) Number of individuals who have applied improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance (female)

Table 11: RI 13-19 Individuals who have Applied Improved Techniques

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 13 Male (cumulative)	0	1,373	2,325	8,348	6,023	28%
RI 14 Individuals (new)	0	1,381	1,906	8,447	6,541	23%
RI 15 Individuals (continuing)	0	0	465	3,479	3,014	13%
RI 16 Female (Cumulative)	0	8	46	3,578	3,532	1%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

In contrast to indicators measuring area (HA) under improved techniques and technologies, analysis of indicators measuring the number of individuals applying improved practices demonstrate that the project is lagging in all calculations i.e. cumulative, new, and continuing, suggesting persistently low application rates despite increased numbers of individuals participating in project activities in later years.

The project measures application of several specific types of new techniques and technologies (animal health, breed genetics, and animal feed) under three RIs:

1. **RI 17** (PMP 12.6) (Other-Animal Health) Number of individuals who have applied new techniques or technologies as a result of USDA assistance
2. **RI 18** (PMP 12.7) (Other-Breed Genetics) Number of individuals who have applied new techniques or technologies as a result of USDA assistance
3. **RI 19** (PMP 6.5) (Other—Animal Feed) Number of individuals who have applied new techniques or technologies as a result of USDA assistance

Table 12: RI 17-19 Individuals who have Applied Specific New Techniques

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 17 Individuals (Animal Health)	0	18	230	10,800	10,570	2%
RI 18 Individuals (Breed Genetics)	0	34	245	2,700	2,455	9%
RI 19 Individuals (Animal Feed)	0	1,329	1,854	10,800	8,946	17%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

RIs 13-19 demonstrate low application rates of these techniques and technologies falling far short of project targets, i.e. between 2% for animal health practices and 17% for animal feed practices. Furthermore, analysis of activity indicators (AIs) related to several areas of application of improved techniques reflects the disparity in project progress in delivering training and progress toward targets related to application. In KIIs, SAFE staff indicated that reflects low motivation resulting from classroom-based training, which lacked follow-up.²⁴

Table 13: AIs Related to Application of New Improved Techniques

AI #	Activity Indicator	Mid-Point (%)
AI 95	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (other-animal feed)	44%
AI 94	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (other breed genetics)	23%
AI 93	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (other-animal health)	5%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

The AI related to 'Financial Services: Facilitate Agricultural Lending and Private and/or Public Investment,' i.e. AI 14 'Number of loans disbursed as a result of USDA assistance', falls far short of the project target with only 3% of the target number of loans reached.

²⁴ KII, SAFE staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

Table 14: AI 65 – Number of Loans Disbursed as Result of USDA Assistance

AI #	Activity Indicator	Mid-Point (%)
AI 65	Number of loans disbursed as a result of USDA assistance	3%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

The latest Project Performance Report Summary outlines a number of steps the project intends to take to expand options for co-investments including developing materials related to breed genetics and improved pasture, which the project would promote through demonstration farms that will collect production data related to the PCP.²⁵

The second Result under 'Increased Agricultural Productivity' (**FFPr SO1**) is 'Improved Farm Management (Operations, Financial)' (**FFPr 1.3**), which includes one Sub-Result and one related activity:

FFPr 1.3.1: Improved Knowledge Regarding Farm Management;
Activity: Training: Farm Management.

To implement this activity, the SAFE project developed PROGANA Logbooks, or 'production registers', which record farm management actions such as dates of vaccination, breeding activities, daily production (liters), and other topics. SAFE staff stated that the purpose of the registers is to increase producer understanding of variation in productivity and to promote 'good decision making'.²⁶ SAFE staff stated that they had also envisioned the logbooks including a cost of production calculation function in order to improve financial decision making. However, staff reported encountering 'lots of resistance' to this function due to producers' perception that this would lead to higher taxation.²⁷ Despite skepticism from SAFE Staff, some producers expressed enthusiasm for the logbooks in several FGDs, stating that 'once they had experience of their use, they realized their importance', especially with regard to breeding decisions, though project studies and assessments suggest the recordkeeping remains very low.²⁸

The SAFE project measures progress toward this sub-result through one indicator: RI 10 (PMP 17.1) 'Number of farmers in the dairy and/or beef sector making farm decisions based on economic considerations or analysis as a result of USDA assistance'. To date, SAFE has met 47% of the project target for this indicator.

Table 15: RI 10 Farmers Making Decisions on Economic Considerations or Analysis

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 10 Farmers (cumulative)	0	40	1,761	3,690	1,969	47%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

²⁵ 'Performance Report Summary – April 1st, 2018 – September 30, 2018' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, November 15, 2018

²⁶ KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, March 22, 2019

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ For example, KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, March 22, 2019 and FGD, dairy producers, San Juan de la Maguana, February 22, 2019

The SAFE project also addresses three Foundational Results and corresponding activities under ‘Increased Agricultural Productivity (FFPr SOI)’:

FFPr 1.4.1: Increased Capacity of Government Institutions;

Activity: Capacity Building: Private Sector Agricultural Extension Agents/Services.

FFPr 1.4.4: Improved Capacity of Key Groups in the Agriculture Production Sector;

Activity: Capacity Building: Private Sector Agricultural Extension Agents/Services.

FFPr 1.4.5: Increased Leverage of Private-Sector Resources;

Activity: Financial Services: Facilitate Agricultural Lending and Private and/or Public Investment

SAFE chose to develop private sector agricultural extension services primarily because the baseline study showed that only 50% of farmers receive any extension services.²⁹ Therefore, SAFE works with POs to develop integrated extension services, which ideally would include a permanent extension agent embedded in each PO.

Table 16: AIs Related to Private Sector Extension Services

AI #	Activity Indicator	Mid-Point (%)
AI 34	Number of extension agents trained in improved agricultural techniques and technologies	60
AI 35	Number of co-financed grants to companies (OP, processors of dairy products and meat processors) to establish or improve an extension system	1
AI 36	Value of co-financed grants to businesses (OP, dairy processors and meat processors) to establish or improve an extension system	14,000

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

- a. SAFE suspended four grants scheduled for disbursement during the second half of FY18 in order to allow for more time to assess recipient PO capacity to provide adequate resources for extension staff. SAFE staff anticipated implementation of these grants in 2019.

To date, SAFE has provided one grant of US\$14,000 to the *Instituto Tecnológico de San Ignacio de la Loyola* (ITESIL) a technical high school in Dajabón. The purpose of the grant was to support students who would be embedded into POs. However, in KIIs SAFE staff stated that POs have been resistant to providing required resources to the technicians and these students have yet to be deployed.³⁰ Four additional co-investments to support trainers at LFSs were planned, but were suspended at the time of the most recent Performance Report Summary to provide more time to assess PO capacity to sustainably finance extension staff. In addition, SAFE added new specialized staff to address extension service strengthening. In KIIs with SAFE staff, respondents reported that they anticipate implementing these grants in 2019.³¹

²⁹ *Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) Program- Dominican Republic Project Baseline Survey (Agreement No: FCC-517-2015/008-00)* Optima, Technical Services (OTSCORP S.A.) Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 13, 2016

³⁰ KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, February 13, 2019

³¹ *Performance Report Summary – April 1st, 2018 – September 30, 2018* NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, November 15, 2018 and KII, KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, February 14, 2019

The second Strategic Objective ‘Expanded Trade in Agricultural Products (Domestic, Regional, and International)’ (**FFPr SO2**) addresses improvements in quality and access to new markets for dairy and beef producers under the second goal of ‘expanding trade of beef and dairy products by adding value to post-production’.

Key processes addressed by this Strategic Objective include the adoption of a Seal of Quality (SoQ) for dairy product producers, as well as ‘equivalence’ for beef processors. The SoQ is intended to provide consumers with assurance that dairy products are manufactured under hygienic conditions. The ‘equivalence’ process guarantees that public health standards, including laboratory inspections, applied to Dominican beef products meet the standards set forth by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and are hence fit for export to U.S. markets (specifically, as manufactured ‘trimmings’ for the Puerto Rican market).

Table 17: Equivalence

Equivalence is a prerequisite for trade for the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Equivalence is the process of determining whether a country’s food safety inspection system achieves FSIS’s appropriate level of protection for public health as applied domestically in the U.S. Additionally, the country’s food safety inspection system is to provide standards equivalent to FSIS to ensure other non-food safety requirements (such as humane handling, accurate labeling, and assurance that meat, poultry, or egg products are not economically adulterated) are met. This means that the country is not required to develop and implement the same procedures that the US does, but rather the country must objectively demonstrate how its procedures meets the US level of protection. In order to determine whether a country’s food safety inspection system is equivalent, FSIS assesses information collected through a questionnaire called the Self-Reporting Tool (SRT).

Source: ‘2016 - Self Reporting Tool - Version 5 (Equivalence)’ USDA FAS, January 10, 2017

The SAFE project addresses Strategic Objective Two through two Sub-Results. The first Sub-Result under FFPr SO2 is ‘Increased Value Added to Post-Production Agricultural Products’ (**FFPr 2.1**), which has two further Sub-Results and five related activities:

- FFPr 2.1.1:** Improved Quality of Post-Production Agricultural Products;
 - FFPr 2.1.1.1:** Increased Adoption of Established Standards by Industry;
 - Activity:** Training: Beef and Dairy Quality Standards.
 - Activity:** Capacity Building: Develop Public Information Campaign and Improve Marketing and Branding.
- FFPr 2.1.2:** Increased Efficiency of Post-Production Processes;
 - FFPr 2.1.2.1:** Increased Use of Improved Post-Production Processing and Handling Practices;
 - Activity:** Training: Beef and Dairy Quality Standards
- FFPr 2.1.2:** Increased Efficiency of Post-Production Processes
 - FFPr 2.1.2.2:** Improved Post-Harvest Infrastructure;
 - Activity:** Infrastructure: Improve Beef and Dairy Value Chain.
 - FFPr 2.2.3.1:** Increased Use of Financial Services;
 - Activity:** Financial Services: Facilitate Agricultural Lending and Private and/or Public Investment.

Under 'Improved Quality of Post-Production Agricultural Products' (**FFPr 2.1.1**) and 'Increased Efficiency of Post-Production Processes' (**FFPr 2.1.2**), the project implements two activities to support producer capacity to obtain the SoQ and meet the requirements laid out in the equivalence process: 'Training: Beef and Dairy Quality Standards' and 'Capacity Building: Develop Public Information Campaign and Improve Marketing and Branding'. The most recent Project Performance Report Summary describes training of dairy processor staff on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and beef processor staff on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles 'as a prerequisite for equivalence standards'.³² The report also states that project staff implemented 103 trainings across the SAFE project zone training 2,898 farmers in milk handling and milk handling practices, representing 111% of the annual target.³³ As such, according to the report, to date 'the project already achieved its target of processor staff trained for dairy products and also achieved its goal for audits of dairy and beef processing facilities' suggesting that training activities are largely on track to meet project targets. The report notes that this improvement was largely facilitated by the shift to the more 'practical' LFS approach, as well as having SAFE implementing partner TAMU provide more TA to the slaughterhouses (as opposed to only evaluations).

Related to (**FFPr 2.1.2**), under the activity 'Infrastructure: Improve Beef and Dairy Value Chain' the project measures 'Number of co-investments provided to beef processors to improve beef processing infrastructure related to SPS control'. As of the end of FY 2018, SAFE had disbursed co-investments totaling US\$20,580.79 to beef processing facilities participating in the equivalence process (specifically, MERCARNE and A&B slaughterhouses), representing 102% of the annual target.³⁴

In terms of application of new techniques and technologies related to improved quality, the project measures activity progress under 'Increased Efficiency of Post-Production Processes' through RIs 20-23 (PMP 17.12) 'Number of private enterprises, producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and CBOs that applied improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance.' This is measured in terms of 'continuing', 'joint' (in groups), 'new', and 'cumulative' numbers of enterprises and POs.

Table 18: RI 20-23 POs and Enterprises Applying Improved Techniques

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 20 POs (continuing)	0	0	27	21	-6	129%
RI 21 POs (joint)	0	18	67	54	-13	124%
RI 22 POs (new)	0	18	40	54	14	74%
RI 23 POs (cumulative)	0	12	31	38	7	82%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

³² 'Performance Report Summary – April 1st, 2018 – September 30, 2018' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, November 15, 2018

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid

As of the end of FY 2018, the project had exceeded targets or was on track to meet them with enterprises and POs applying improved techniques and technologies in the areas of establishing improved pasture, improved management of MCCs, expanding milk quality testing, improved milking and milk handling techniques, expanding artificial insemination, improved financial and administrative procedures, and improved sanitary standards supporting the equivalence process.

Enterprise and PO application of new improved techniques and technologies has lagged significantly in terms of milk quality improvements. Additional key (custom) indicators related to milk quality under these Sub-Objectives include RI 24 (PMP 17.15) 'Percentage increase in volume of grade "A" milk sold to processors by USDA supported milk collection centers' and RI 27 (PMP 20.1) 'Number of milk collection centers with USDA assistance using improved equipment to collect and cool milk'.

Table 19: RI 24, 27 Increase in Grade "A" Milk Sold and New MCC Equipment

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 24 Increase in "A" Grade Milk	0	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%
RI 27 Milk collection centers	0	0	2	50	48	4%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

As of the end of FY18, the project reports no progress toward the target of a 100% increase in volume of Grade A milk sold to processors. During the same period, the project had facilitated five grants, including two for solar panels to two MCCs, and one for MCC infrastructure, through SAFE co-investment grants. Additionally, one more solar panel investment was leveraged with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)-funded PRORURAL project. With regard to increases in collection of Grade A milk, SAFE staff explained that a challenge is that the MCCs mix Grade A milk with other milk qualities and sell at the lower grade. Hence, they may not be able to provide accurate information on volume of grade "A" milk sold to processors.³⁵

During MCC site visits, the ET found that 'financial motivation' may be one potential cause of low application of improved techniques and technologies required to improve milk quality. For example, at one MCC producers were receiving only marginal increased prices for Grade A milk of DOP 22.5 per liter, as opposed to DOP 21 per liter for Grade B milk. At another MCC, the price differential was DOP 24 per liter for Grade A and DOP 22 per liter for Grade B.³⁶ Likewise, at one FGD with dual-purpose producers (beef and dairy), respondents stated that they sold 'warm milk' (i.e. uncooled) directly to intermediaries for DOP 19 per liter because "time spent managing a MCC was time spent away from more lucrative businesses in town."³⁷

³⁵ KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, February 14, 2019

³⁶ FGD, dairy producers, Villa Riva, February 18, 2019 and FGD, dairy producers, Montellano, February 19, 2019

³⁷ FGD, dual-use producers, El Seibo, February 25, 2019

Finally, 'Financial Services: Facilitate Agricultural Lending and Private and/or Public Investment' registered poor performance under AI 14 'Number of loans disbursed as a result of USDA assistance' with only 3% of the target number of loans was reached at project mid-point (see above). However, the project reports several promising achievements during the most recent project period with regard to co-investments with enterprises and POs. For example, In KII with SAFE staff respondents reported that during the second part of FY18 the project began implementing a previously established MOU with IFAD under which it facilitated PRORURAL funding for 11 livestock POs for infrastructure improvements with the POs providing a match worth a total of US\$18,852.56. In addition, SAFE implemented a co-investment with four POs that provided matches worth an average of US\$6,720. Finally, two slaughterhouses, AGROCARNE and MERCARNE, provided US\$4,348 in financing as part of a new agreement signed with the Ministry of Public Health for support related to the equivalence process, in addition to US\$727,584 in infrastructure investments they made in 2018, largely in relation to the 'critical routes' developed by SAFE implementing partner TAMU (these are required for compliance with equivalence standards for an anticipated FSIS audit of the inspection system).

The second Sub-Result under 'Expanded Trade in Agricultural Products (Domestic, Regional, and International)' (**FFPr SO2**) is 'Increased Access to Markets to Sell Agricultural Products' (**FFPr 2.2**), which has one related activity:

FFPr 2.2.2: Improved Linkages Between Buyers and Sellers

Activity: Market Access: Facilitate Buyer-Seller Relationships.

The latest Performance Report Summary describes this activity as meeting 70% of its annual target value of sales and 37% of its project target. Only 9% of its target was met for volume of sales (7.6 million liters of milk) as a result of producer, MCC and processor training, and facilitation of buyer-seller meetings.³⁸ This includes a meeting between an international buyer (Cooperativa Dos Pinos) and two POs during FY18.³⁹ However, the SoQ and equivalence process remain in progress (see below).

In a related activity in FY18, the project facilitated a market study of the Puerto Rican beef market to obtain insights on beef export requirements and potential demand for Dominican beef. This was conducted by ASOCARNE [REDACTED] and Professor [REDACTED] of Texas A&M University (TAMU). Early conclusions of this study found that Dominican producers have an advantage in the Puerto Rico because Nicaragua exports frozen beef. In contrast, the Dominican Republic can export 'manufacturing trimmings' (which would not compete with U.S. prime cut exports) at a lower cost via a scheduled container ferry service between Santo Domingo and San Juan.⁴⁰

³⁸ 'Performance Report Summary – April 1st, 2018 – September 30, 2018' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, November 15, 2018

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ KII, enterprise, February 13, 2019

However, in KIIs, experts at TAMU stated that developing beef quality that could meet demand would require improved farm management as there is currently no quality incentive for prime cuts and beef producers are paid by weight.⁴¹ TAMU staff stated that to develop quality cut exports the Dominican Republic would also eventually need a quality certification regime; SAFE staff does not foresee this in the near future (for further details, see **Annex J: Staff Notes in Equivalence**).⁴²

The SAFE project also implements three Foundational Results, and four related activities, under 'Expanded Trade of Agricultural Products (Domestic, Regional, and International)' (**FFPr SO2**) primary related to the SoQ and equivalence process:

FFPr 2.4.2: Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework;

Activity: Capacity Building: Promote Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework

Activity: Market Access: Facilitate Private and/or Public Partnerships

FFPr 2.4.4: Improved Capacity of Key Organizations in the Trade Sector

Activity: Capacity Building: Producer Groups

FFPr 2.4.5: Increased Leverage of Private-Sector Resources;

Activity: Market Access: Facilitate Private and/or Public Partnerships

Under these Sub-Results, key RIs related to the activity 'Capacity Building: Promote Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework' include 'Number of policies, procedures, regulations and/or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development (stage 5)' and 'Number of regulatory policy and regulatory framework meetings for debate and consultation with stakeholders'. The most recent Performance Report Summary states that progress toward annual project targets stands at '133% and 131% of annual project targets respectively'.⁴³ The report also states that for FY18 the project exceeded annual targets for the indicators 'Number of training sessions in trade policy analysis and advocacy provided for individuals' by 150% and 'Number of individuals trained in policy analysis and advocacy' by 274%, 'representing 50% and 72% of LOP targets, respectively'.⁴⁴ In KIIs with SAFE staff, respondents reported that the focus of policy work has been related to the equivalence process.

With no certifications to date, the project has failed to meet the target of five processors dairy processors obtaining the SoQ by the end of FY 2018. However, the project has conducted a number of audits of conditions at dairy processing plants and the Dominican Ministry of Health conducts regular inspections, though these regularly find conditions at the majority of facilities falling far short of existing requirements.⁴⁵

⁴¹ KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ 'Performance Report Summary – April 1st, 2018 – September 30, 2018' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, November 15, 2018

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ For example, see Aquino, Felix 'Informe Inspección a Queso Don Manuel (Higüey)' DIGEMAPS, Santo Domingo, August 28, 2018

Site visits to supermarkets revealed that a high proportion of inventory consists of imported dairy products demonstrating domestic demand for higher quality dairy products. However in KII, respondents stated there is reluctance on the part of dairy processors to make investments required to meet the SoQ standards due to perceived lack of demand for domestic products, and because DIGEMAPS does not enforce any recourse against processors that fail to meet standards (i.e. fines or closure).⁴⁶ In KIIs, TAMU staff mentioned that the project has ‘not focused on dairy as required by the TOR and is behind in this area’.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, the project has implemented a public information campaign in local media to develop demand for the SoQ, which reached over 200,000 people as of the end of FY 2018, representing about 20% of project target.

Table 20: AI 34 People Reached through Public Information Campaign

AI #	Activity Indicator	Mid-Point (%)
AI 34	Number of people reached through the public information campaign for Good Manufacturing Practices and Best Management Practices for Livestock	20

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

Notwithstanding questions regarding demand, through intensive value chain-wide work by the SAFE project, at least two dairy processors have made considerable progress toward the SoQ. These are Geo Heinsen S.A. and Quesería Rottis.

Table 21: Case Study - Quesería Rottis

Quesería Rottis is a cheese factory established in 1996 located in the province of Puerto Plata. The current ownership bought this facility five years ago. Rottis sources a total of 8,000 liters of milk daily from three MCCs and 58 additional producers that supply milk directly to the facility. Quesería Rottis currently produces seven types of cheeses, including ‘hollandaise’, mozzarella, yellow cheese, and Brie, selling about 80% of its products in the U.S. (especially in New York). It seeks to expand limited sales in the Dominican Republic, currently through supermarkets in Santiago Rodríguez and Santo Domingo. The SAFE project initially provided Rottis with training on antibiotic use and sanitary milk handling and has also advanced plans to launch an LFS with the associations from which it sources as well as with the producers that deliver directly to the plant. The company’s president stated that prior to the training, up to 60% of its supply was ‘very bad’ (Grade C), while after training, this had been reduced to only 10%. Finally, SAFE recently approved a 40% co-investment with Rottis for equipment to check water content, but this is on hold as the company focuses resources on drought mitigation. At the time of this MTE, the company is waiting for an environmental certificate to finalize obtaining the SoQ.

Source: KII, Enterprise, Puerto Plata, February 20, 2019

Since its inception, the SAFE project has facilitated frequent meetings of an ‘Equivalence Board’, which includes DIGEGA and DIGEMAPS staff as well as management of Dominican slaughterhouses. As of October 2018, the Board has identified labs required for compliance. According to KII respondents, two of these labs have been selected to undertake microbiological testing: *Instituto de Innovación e Biotecnología Industrial* (IIBI); and the *Laboratorio Agroempresarial Dominicano* (LAD). The third lab, which will do chemical residue testing, is the *Laboratorio Nacional de Residuos* (LANAR) located in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

⁴⁶ For example, KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

⁴⁷ KII, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

This third lab is owned by the Honduran government but is administered by the *Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria* (OIRSA).⁴⁸ Previously, the Equivalence Board identified the Dominican lab *Laboratorio Veterinario Central* (LAVECEN) to do both microbiology and chemical residue testing, but this lab was unable to implement the ‘critical route’ developed by TAMU for sample control.⁴⁹ KII informants noted that, while OIRSA administers LAVECEN, this lab belongs to the Ministry of Agriculture and DIGEGA, and receives funds directly from the GoDR, which leaves OIRSA unable to implement management decisions regarding budget or personnel. These respondents noted that if ‘OIRSA controlled LAVECEN in the same way it controls other labs in Honduras and Guatemala’, it would be able to ‘better manage these issues’.⁵⁰ As such, LAVECEN’s role will be limited to receiving tissue samples in the Dominican Republic and forwarding them to Honduras without testing or otherwise manipulating them.

The SAFE project measures progress against two key indicators for activities related to the equivalence process: RI 28 (PMP 21.1) ‘Number of new distinct markets to which beef is exported’ and RI 29 (PMP 22.1) ‘Number of signed agreements (contracts, memoranda of understanding, etc.) between beef exporters or dairy farmers and buyers in the United States as a result of USDA assistance’.

Table 22: RI 28 29 New Beef Markets and Signed Agreements for Exports

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 28 Beef Markets (new)	0	0	0	2	2	0%
RI 29 Export Agreements (new)	0	0	0	14	14	0%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

As of the time of this MTE, the project reported no completed results against the targets for these indicators. However, despite delays and challenges, SAFE has recorded considerable achievements in coordination with the Equivalence Board that have resulted in consensus amongst stakeholders that it is realistic to expect that the process will come to fruition during the project timespan.⁵¹ DIGEMAPS, with assistance from SAFE, completed a second version of the Self-Reporting Tool (SRT) and sent it to FSIS in March 2018 (an initial version of the SRT was sent in May 2017, but was returned with numerous outstanding issues). However, in KIIs with USDA staff, respondents stated that the SRT was initially completed in Spanish despite FSIS recommendations that completing the form in English would expedite the review process (an updated English translation version of the SRT was sent to FSIS in December 2018). Respondents reported that FSIS is expected to provide a response to the English version SRT during April or May 2019.⁵²

⁴⁸ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019

⁴⁹ KII, SAFE staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019.

⁵⁰ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019 and KII, USDA staff, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019

In addition, KII respondents also stated that identifying LANAR as the lab conducting chemical residue testing has resolved a critical impasse in the equivalence process. During initial project years, TAMU staff described challenges working with LAVECEN. For example, consultant recommendations regarding required improvements were not adopted, resulting in delays. According to TAMU staff, there were significant delays due to DIGEMAPS ‘waiting on a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)’ before acting, while ‘updates must be made on a daily basis’.⁵³ With LAVECEN’s role now limited to forwarding samples to LANAR in Honduras via OIRSA, through a new technique developed by LANAR staff, this problem has been circumvented. However, TAMU staff also noted that ‘these labs now need to be prepared for an audit’ and they have ‘not yet looked at the other labs’.⁵⁴

In KIIs, TAMU staff reported similar challenges working with the DIGEMAPS inspection services responsible for assessment of slaughterhouse sanitation, describing them as ‘very defensive’.⁵⁵ These respondents noted that ‘a lot of trainings were cancelled, often because the DIGEMAPS did not approve the trainers’. However, they stated that ‘this changed beginning in February 2018’, and now consultants are ‘better able to support improvements and provide capacity building, including remotely via WhatsApp’. For example, in January 2019, a consultant contracted by TAMU visited the Dominican Republic and provided inspectors with assistance ‘as if he was an FSIS auditor’. This consultant also helped them adopt the inspection forms so they would be more concise and similar to the ones used by FSIS in the U.S. (a challenge now is for inspectors to correctly implement the new procedures and forms developed with assistance from TAMU consultants to better understand the FSIS regulations, and to interact with the quality control staff of the corresponding establishments).

TAMU also stated that initially the number of inspectors was insufficient. However, in 2018, the GoDR provided DIGEMAPS with funding to hire more than 30 new staff to work in the slaughterhouses, including medical veterinarians and inspectors. These people are already in place and SAFE subsequently provided them with training on the use of the programs and forms required by FSIS.⁵⁶ In KIIs, TAMU staff stated that “changes took a while and time was lost. It took about a year and a half to get things going” noting that this was largely because “nobody understood the severity of the (prevailing sanitary) issues at the time the (SAFE) proposal was designed”.⁵⁷ However, [REDACTED] visited the Dominican Republic in January and February 2019 to evaluate the organization of the DIGEMAPS central office, and conduct trainings for official inspectors on how to evaluate inspection reports for non-conformities. SAFE now plans ‘mock audits’ three weeks before the FSIS official audit is scheduled.⁵⁸

⁵³ KII, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019 and KII, SAFE staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

⁵⁷ KII, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

⁵⁸ KII, SAFE staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

In KIs with SAFE and DIGEMAPS staff, respondents recognized that there was considerable skepticism at slaughterhouse management that the equivalence process will come to fruition. The last attempt to establish equivalence ended unsuccessfully in 2011. Therefore, respondents felt that going forward the strategy should be to focus on one to three slaughterhouses, so that they can ‘demonstrate a success story’. They believe this will motivate other slaughterhouses to make required investments.⁵⁹ In contrast, in KIs TAMU staff stated that, although they have developed a seven-month ‘critical route’ for the three slaughterhouses to improve HACCP and sanitation programs the board should focus on only one slaughterhouse ‘because if there are too many, FSIS will be more likely to find a problem’.⁶⁰ SAFE and DIGEMAPS staff stated that two slaughterhouses are close to ready to export (MERCARNE in Santo Domingo and AGROCARNE in La Romana) but ‘others need assistance’. In summary, they stated that *“if one can export, then the others will be confident that we have the capacity to export, and the other slaughterhouses will follow (making the investments needed)”*.⁶¹

3.2 GOAL ACHIEVEMENT – CONCLUSIONS

EQ 1.1 To what extent have the project goals been achieved?

The SAFE project has lagged in terms of the number of continuing beneficiaries reached largely due to challenges during initial project years, though the project is on track to meet or exceed targets with regard to the number of cumulative beneficiaries it has reached due to achieving higher numbers in later project years. However, the precise number of beneficiaries SAFE has reached is unclear due to inconsistencies between data sources including project summary reports and the PROGIS online M&E system.

With regard to the first goal of ‘Increased Agricultural Productivity’ (**FFPr SO1**), the project is significantly behind in terms of its target of a 50% increase over the baseline of 7.5 l/c/d of milk amongst target beneficiaries (currently the increase stands at only 6%). Given the low application rates of the TA package, and that beneficiaries that have applied the TA package have achieved average rates of only 7.97 l/c/d, and under the prevailing drought conditions, it is unlikely that the project will achieve this goal over the remaining life of the project.

Under the second Strategic Objective of ‘Expanded Trade in Agricultural Products (Domestic, Regional, and International)’ (**FFPr SO2**), the project has met its targets in terms of dairy POs applying new techniques and technologies, but these improvements have not resulted in significant increases in volumes of Grade A milk handled by these organizations. Likewise, despite the implementation of a public information campaign to promote the SoQ for dairy products, no processors have yet obtained this seal due to reluctance to make required investments (though at least two cheese manufacturers are likely to obtain the seal during the remainder of the project life).

⁵⁹ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019 and KII, SAFE staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

⁶⁰ KII, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

⁶¹ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019 and KII, SAFE staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

Finally, also under the second Strategic Objective, despite the completion of a market study that finds opportunities for Dominican beef products in Puerto Rican markets, and several positive steps involving submission of the SRT, identification of labs, and strengthening of inspection services, HACCP systems and sanitation programs at participating slaughterhouses, the equivalence process has yet to come to fruition, and no new markets for beef exports have yet been entered. Next steps in this process entail preparation for audits of inspection services and slaughterhouses.

EQ 1.2 Which activities have been successful in meeting their targets?

Infrastructure: Improve Beef and Dairy Value Chains – As of the end of FY18, the SAFE project has met its targets having disbursed co-investments totaling US\$20,580.79 for beef processing facilities participating in the Equivalence Process to MERCARNE and Suplidora de Carne A&B slaughterhouses. In addition, the co-investment with MERCARNE and investments made by AGROCARNE Central Romana as part of the critical path route developed by SAFE implementing partner TAMU, represent key steps in the Equivalence Board strategy to support at least one slaughterhouse to meet FSIS inspection requirements in order to provide a success story that will motivate others to make required investments.

Market Access: Facilitate Public-Private Partnerships – The project has met its annual target for this activity and is on track to meet its project target, as a result of progress toward the equivalence process related to identification of participating laboratories to which SAFE provides assistance.

Training: Beef and Dairy Quality Standards – The project has met its annual targets for this activity through audits and training with dairy and beef processing companies. Given the likelihood that one or two companies will successfully obtain the SoQ and the equivalence process will reach fruition, it is likely the project will successfully reach project targets as well.

EQ 1.3 How can the change be described since the inception of the project?

Initial challenges in TA delivery resulted in significant lags in progress toward early annual targets in terms of reach and application of new techniques and technologies by individual producers. Likewise, challenges in TA delivery to laboratories and inspection services related to the equivalence process resulted in delays to the completion of this process. Both of these factors undermined progress toward targets related to both beef and dairy processor companies and POs. However, adoption of the LFS approach to producer TA delivery and improved coordination of equivalence process stakeholders since staff changes in January 2018, including investments in inspection services by the GoDR, has generated optimism for improved results over the remaining project years. Likewise, intensive value chain work with both producers and processors has generated progress toward the development of the SoQ. However, the impact of recurring drought conditions and the limited remaining project timeframe present challenges to the full realization of project targets.

EQ 1.4 Which activities failed to reach their targets and why? Include analysis of factors that delay/prohibit adequate progress towards results.

Capacity Building: Develop Public Information Campaign and Improve Marketing and Branding – With no dairy processors obtaining the SoQ to date, the project has failed to reach targets for this activity due to lack of product supply. Furthermore, the high cost of improvements and lack of recourse by DIGEMAPS against processors that fail to meet sanitary standards has generated reluctance to make improvements. Nonetheless, near completion of SoQ requirements by at least two companies has demonstrated that intensive value chain work with processors can result in progress toward targets.

Capacity Building: Private Sector Agricultural Extension Services – While the project is on track to ultimately meet targets for training of private sector extension agents (reaching about 60% of the project target), to date only one grant has been issued under this activity, and agents are yet to be deployed due to PO capacity to provide required financial resources for the maintenance of agents. The transition to an LFS approach may improve PO demand for private TA in subsequent project years.

Capacity Building: Producer Associations & Groups –The project has been successful in reaching higher numbers of continuing, new, and cumulative beneficiary POs and has leveraged resources to implement a number of upgrades at MCCs. However, although the project has reached 109% of its target for the number of suppliers delivering grade A milk to the MCCs, training has not resulted in increases in delivery of Grade A milk to processors. This is likely the result of early challenges in meeting targets for individual beneficiary numbers, and low application rates of improved techniques and technologies by these individuals. An additional factor may also be poor financial motivation due to low marginal benefits of quality improvements, which undermines economic incentives.

Capacity Building: Promote Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework – As noted, in coordination with the Equivalence Board, the project has realized a number of important steps in equivalence process. However, to date, the process has yet to reach fruition and no new markets or buyers have been reached.

Financial Services: Facilitate Agricultural Lending and Private/Public Investment – The project lags far behind in terms of the number and value of loans disbursed through its financial institution partners. The underlying factor for low levels of loans reflects poor rates of application for improved techniques and technologies, may in turn have resulted from early challenges in targeting and TA delivery methodology.

Training: Farm Management – Despite the development and dissemination of SAFE Logbooks, or ‘production registers’, the project has lagged behind targets in terms of the number of farmers making decisions based on financial considerations or analysis. This lag reflects the low number of individuals reached in early project years, as well as low application rates of improved techniques and technologies. An additional consideration is producer concern that records will lead to higher rates of taxation. However, the interest of farmers that have correctly utilized the registers suggests that producer-led training on use through LFSs may lead to improved future adoption.

Inputs: Facilitate Agro-dealers and other Input Suppliers – The project has lagged behind targets for this activity in line with lower early rates of individual beneficiaries reached and low rates of adoption of improved techniques and technologies. Likewise, passive input supplier participation in early training limited engagement with producers.

Market Access: Facilitate Buyer-Seller Relationships – With the lack of any awards of the SoQ to date, and the incomplete status of the equivalence process, the project has not yet met targets for this activity.

Training: Improved Agricultural Production Techniques – While the project has successfully met targets related to training delivery, it is significantly behind targets for application of improved techniques and technologies largely due to challenges with TA delivery in early project years. Higher numbers of cumulative beneficiaries in recent project years suggests that the adoption of the more practical LFS approach is likely to improve progress in the future.

3.3 RELEVANCE – FINDINGS

This MTE addressed four EQs related to relevance, as follows:

Table 23: Relevance Evaluation Questions

EQ 2.1	Are the project activities in alignment with GoDR priorities and strategies?
EQ 2.2	Do the project activities respond to the aspirations and needs of the project beneficiaries/participants?
EQ 2.3	Are the project activities in alignment with USDA/US Government development goals, objectives, and strategies?
EQ 2.4	Are the project activities in alignment with award agreement with USDA?

In KII with the GoDR, the Minister of Agriculture confirmed that SAFE activities aimed at improved productivity and expanded trade for the beef and dairy sectors were aligned with DIGEGA priorities and strategies (the minister had formerly served as the director of JAD, and was involved in the original design of the SAFE project).⁶² Notably, he expressed concern regarding prevailing poor sanitary conditions at dairy processing facilities and confirmed the need to improve the quality of milk inputs and producer productivity levels in order to respond to increased consumer demand for higher quality dairy products.⁶³ The Minister noted that, as confirmed during site visits by the ET, an expanding portion of dairy product inventory at urban supermarkets was comprised of imported products, confirming this growing demand.⁶⁴ Specifically, he stated that his office was prepared to provide a ‘two-to-one match’ for SAFE co-investments into the construction of producer milking parlors, which he identified as a key activity for upgrading milk quality.⁶⁵

⁶² KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, March 4, 2019

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, March 4, 2019 and site visits, Santo Domingo, Puerto Plata, Santiago Rodriguez, February 13-21, 2019

⁶⁵ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, March 4, 2019

Beef exports from the Dominican Republic to the U.S. ceased in 1995. As noted, subsequently, several attempts were made to establish equivalency in order to re-launch exports, the last of which was in 2011. However, to date these have all been unsuccessful due to challenges related to the quality of laboratories in the Dominican Republic and weaknesses in the inspection services. However, in KII with GoDR staff, DIGEMAPS staff stated that new information that a country could utilize a laboratory located in a third country had provided new impetus to the process.⁶⁶ Subsequently, in a KII, the Minister of Agriculture stated that DIGEMAPS had adopted equivalency as a key strategy in expanding agricultural exports in order to leverage new opportunities presented by the completion of the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR).⁶⁷ One DIGEMAPS staff respondent stated that, “the equivalence is fundamental for the GoDR”.⁶⁸

Table 24: Dominican Beef Exports under DR-CAFTA

After the signing of CAFTA-DR in 2004, Dominican beef exporters began looking again at the US and Puerto Rican markets however the country has not been able to meet the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), which requires an exporting country to demonstrate that its sanitary measures attain the same level of protection as measures in the importing country. This regulation effectively blocked the export of all meat, poultry and egg products from the DR to the US. The DR must now achieve initial equivalency with US food safety regulatory systems in order to export beef to the United States. Source: ‘Intro and Strategic Analysis’ NCBA CLUSA, Washington DC, 2015
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The MTE measured the degree to which SAFE project activities responded to the aspirations and needs of project beneficiaries and participants through two questions, with responses ranking degree on a scale of 1-5. Asked to what degree the project has addressed the core issues of beneficiaries’ activities (farms, business, and associations), 93% of beneficiaries responded with an average score of 3.43 (‘fair). In terms of the degree to which the project helped strengthen beneficiary farms, businesses and associations, 96% of beneficiaries responded with an average score of 3.57 (‘fair).

Table 25: Quantitative Survey Results - Relevance of Interventions

SECTION 2: Relevance of Interventions		Rate	Average
2.A.1	The project has addressed the core issues of my activity	93%	3.43
2.A.2	The project has helped strengthen my farm/business/association	96%	3.57

Source: SAFE MTE Quantitative Survey

In KIIs and FGDs with producers and association members and staff, the most common criticism of project activities was related to the initial TA delivery methodology, which entailed classroom-based training on improved techniques and technologies. In one FGD, a dairy producer respondent described how extension agents had presented a PowerPoint, which they described as ‘not useful’.⁶⁹ As noted, TA delivery was shifted to the LFS approach in 2018 (see **3.1 Goal Achievement**).

⁶⁶ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019

⁶⁷ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, March 4, 2019

⁶⁸ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019

⁶⁹ For example, FGD, dairy producers, San Juan de la Maguana, February 22, 2019

Additionally, in several FGDs with dairy producers, respondents specified that their priority was effectively dealing with recurring drought conditions, which had decimated productivity due to reduction in pasture and water for cattle, and stated that the project should do more to assist them in this regard (although producers have resisted investments).⁷⁰ Additionally, in two FGDs with federation and PO staff, respondents stated that they “knew what the priorities were” i.e. federation and PO-associated businesses, and they would have preferred resources were ‘provided directly to them’.⁷¹

In KIIs with Santo Domingo-based USDA staff, respondents confirmed that SAFE project activities align with USDA/US Government development goals, objectives, and strategies, especially with regard to export promotion related to the equivalence process, which demonstrates the effectiveness of CAFTA-DR.⁷² One respondent stated that the project was important in that it provides ‘leverage in achieving policy objectives with the GoDR’.⁷³ However, these respondents also criticized the project as not having done enough to represent SAFE as a USDA project, especially in early years, and requested that SAFE improve marketing and branding to better ‘inform the public that USDA is the project donor’.⁷⁴

The same respondents confirmed that the project activities align with the project award agreement with USDA, stating that they had sufficient input into design during the project development phase, as well as ongoing interaction with SAFE staff over the course of subsequent implementation, including amendments.⁷⁵ However, they also stated that interaction in initial project years was ‘difficult’, though this had ‘improved in recent years’, especially subsequent to ‘staff changes in 2018’.⁷⁶ Likewise, these respondents noted that ‘SAFE can only do so much’ and progress (with regard to the equivalence process) is ‘really up to the GoDR’, which ‘ultimately determines the pace’ through decisive decisions (in areas such as final selection of laboratories and investments in upgrades to the inspection service).⁷⁷

3.4 RELEVANCE – CONCLUSIONS

EQ 2.1 Are the project activities in alignment with GoDR priorities and strategies?

SAFE project activities align with GoDR priorities with regard to the equivalence process and improvements in dairy productivity, and the Ministry of Agriculture is prepared to invest in the expansion of milking parlors on a two-to-one basis in order to improve milk quality through better hand-udder sanitation.

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ FGD, federation staff, Montellano, February 19, 2019 and PO staff, San Juan de la Maguana, February 22, 2019

⁷² KIIs, donor (USDA) staff, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ibid

EQ 2.2 Do the project activities respond to the aspirations and needs of the project beneficiaries/participants?

SAFE project activities have done a 'fair' job responding to the aspirations and needs of the project beneficiaries. The project could improve in this regard through greater focus on resilience to recurring drought conditions, which are undermining productivity through reduction of pasture and water available for livestock.

EQ 2.3 Are the project activities in alignment with USDA/US Government development goals, objectives, and strategies?

SAFE project activities align with USDA/USG development goals, objectives, and strategies. However, the project could improve in this regard through increased marketing and branding related to informing the public that USDA is the project donor.

EQ 2.4 Are the project activities in alignment with the award agreement with USDA?

SAFE project activities are aligned with the USDA award agreement. However, the project's ability to achieve some targets, especially related to the equivalence process and dairy productivity, are dependent on the commitment of external stakeholders, especially the GoDR.

3.5 EFFECTIVENESS – FINDINGS

This MTE addressed six EQs related to effectiveness, as follows:

Table 26: Effectiveness Evaluation Questions

EQ 3.1	To what extent have different actors in the value chain been able to increase quantity e.g., yield/ha and minimize waste since the inception of the project?
EQ 3.2	To what extent have all actors in the value chain adopted quality standards?
EQ 3.3	To what extent have value chain actors been trained in quality standards?
EQ 3.4	Are partner organizations providing training to beneficiaries that is tailored to the local context and achieving increased use of agricultural techniques and technologies, increased use of improved post-harvest processing and handling practices, and improved marketing and branding?
EQ 3.5	Are local government extension officers offering technical support to farmers in new techniques and technologies?
EQ 3.6	Have effective linkages been established between different project participants e.g., between producers and processors?

The quantitative survey carried out by the ET addressed project effectiveness through a series of questions that asked beneficiaries to rank the level of effectiveness related to 16 topics, as well as three questions specifically related to productivity, processing capacity, and managerial skills. For each topic, survey respondents provided rankings between 3-4, indicating that the project was 'fairly' effective in these areas (the exception was 'facilitating access to financial services', which was ranked 'poor' i.e. 2.52).

Table 27: Quantitative Survey Results - Effectiveness of Interventions

SECTION 3: Effectiveness of Interventions		Rate	Average
3.A.	The SAFE project has been effective in improving my business in the following activities:		
3.A.1	Export & Market promotion	95%	3.31
3.A.2	Milking & milk handling	91%	3.80
3.A.3	The use of milking parlors	90%	3.32
3.A.4	Animal nutrition	93%	3.54
3.A.5	Animal health	93%	3.67
3.A.6	Genetics & animal reproduction	93%	3.41
3.A.7	The Livestock Field School	93%	3.49
3.A.8	Sanitary measures	96%	3.88
3.A.9	Safety measures	96%	3.88
3.A.10	Export compliance measures	93%	3.46
3.A.11	Milk Handling Practice (or Beef Carcass Handling)	94%	3.77
3.A.12	GAP, GMP & HACCP	96%	3.44
3.A.13	Improving/expanding livestock productivity	95%	3.57
3.A.14	Improving/expanding processing capacity	5%	3.65
3.A.15	Improving management capacity of my farm or business	95%	3.61
3.A.16	Facilitating access to financial services	95%	2.52
3.C.1	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my productivity	96%	3.66
3.C.2	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my processing capacity	5%	3.72
3.C.3	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my managerial skills	95%	3.63

Source: SAFE MTE Quantitative Survey

As noted, indicator analysis shows that, to date, the SAFE project has fallen far short of its target of a 50% increase in l/c/d of milk, with an increase of only 6%, or about 7.725 l/c/d, at the time of this MTE (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**).

Table 28: RI 1: Percentage Increase in L/D/C

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
Average (l/c/d)	7.5/a	6.4	7.725	11.25	3.525	6%
RI 1 (% increase in l/c/d)/b	0	-15%	3%	50%	-47%	6%

- 'Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) Program- Dominican Republic Project Baseline Survey (Agreement No: FCC-517-2015/008-00)' Optima, Technical Services (OTSCORP S.A.) Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 13, 2016
- Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

Specifically, when asked to rank the quality of the training approach in enhancing productivity, survey respondents provided a ranking of 3.66, or 'fair', and, as noted, SAFE Farm Follow-Up Reports in February 2019 showed that producers applying the TA package promoted by the project had achieved average productivity rates of 7.97 l/c/d, which is far below the initial project target of 11.25 l/c/d.⁷⁸ Findings related to goal achievement also indicated that productivity was undermined by recurring drought conditions, as well as low application rates of improved techniques and technologies delivered under the SAFE TA 'package', especially in early project years, as reflected by the low number of HA (continuing) under these new practices (though the indicator for cumulative HA suggests this number improved in later years, which FGD and KII findings suggested was a result of improvements in TA delivery mechanisms) (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**).

⁷⁸ 'Visitas a Fincas y Técnicas; October 18-February 19, 2019' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, March 2019

Table 29: RI 11-12 Hectares under Improved Techniques and Technologies

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 11 Hectares (continuing)	0	0	895	2,600	1,705	34%
RI 12 Hectares (cumulative)	0	5,212	8,519	4,800	1,493	177%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

SAFE facilitated the transition of the MEGALECHE TA delivery approach through farm schools or classroom-based training to LFSs through a consultant who developed the LFS training with 22 topics across 16 iterative modules in July 2018. This consultant was hired as a full-time National Technical Coordinator in June 2018, and subsequently, SAFE began implementing the LFS approach on July 22, 2018.⁷⁹ However, as noted, despite this transition, and the positive beneficiary reaction to the more 'practical' LFS approach, quantitative survey respondents ranked 'facilitating access to financial services' as ranked 'poor' (score: 2.52), and producer investments into farming systems remains low, as demonstrated by the low level of loans disbursed through USDA assistance (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**).

Table 30: AI 65 – Number of Loans Disbursed as Result of USDA Assistance

AI #	Activity Indicator	Mid-Point (%)
AI 95	Number of loans disbursed as a result of USDA assistance	3%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

When asked about low investment rates into production systems, several KII respondents commented that 'farmers do not make investments' and rather 'wait for government to bail them out'. These respondents explained that the government is concerned with dependence on imported dairy products, and therefore habitually offers subsidized assistance, negating the need for investments.⁸⁰ These respondents noted that DIGEGA had recently announced provisional plans for a number of subsidized feedlots, as a measure to counter drought effects through providing feed to livestock producers, which may undermine individual producer investments into new pasture. SAFE staff state that this may also undermine individual producer investments into preparation of feed conservation (haylage or silage) for future droughts.

As noted, to date no dairy processors have obtained the SoQ for their products. However, two dairy processors are close to obtain the seal: Geo Heinsen S.A. and Quesería Rottis, through intensive value chain work by SAFE. Likewise, TAMU staff have developed a seven-month 'critical route' for three slaughterhouses to improve HACCP and sanitation standards.⁸¹ SAFE project staff and DIGEMAPS staff stated that two of these slaughterhouses are close to ready (MERCARNE in Santo Domingo and AGROCARNE in La Romana), but some respondents stated that 'only one could obtain equivalence, and 'others need assistance' (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**).⁸²

⁷⁹ KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, February 13, 2019

⁸⁰ For example, KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

⁸¹ KII, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

⁸² KII, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 3, 2019 and KII, GoDR, Santo Domingo, February 22, 2019

The project has implemented training on standards by focusing on GMPs and HACCP principals for livestock, as well as training and audits of sanitary conditions at cheese manufacturing facilities and slaughterhouses. By the end of the most recent reporting period, SAFE reported implementing training for 20 dairy processor staff on GMP and 176 beef processor staff on HACCP principles, as a prerequisite for Equivalence Standards.⁸³ During the same period, the project reported carrying out 11 audits of dairy processing facilities (including Quesería Rottis), related to the SoQ in partnership with DIGEMAPS.⁸⁴ Finally, the project reported implementing ‘103 sessions across the (targeted) 11 provinces training 2,898 farmers in milk handling and milk handling practices representing 111% of the annual target’.

In topics related to quality standards, quantitative survey respondents ranked activities ‘fair’, including ‘milk and milk handling’ (score: 3.80), ‘use of milking parlors (sheds)’ (score: 3.32), ‘sanitary measures’ (score: 3.88), ‘export compliance measures’ (score: 3.46), ‘milk handling practice (or beef carcass handling)’ (score: 3.77), and ‘GAP, GMP and HACCP’ (score: 3.44). However, numerous KII respondents described prevailing sanitary conditions as more challenging than initially thought. As noted, in KIIs with SAFE partners, TAMU staff reported that “*nobody understood the severity of the (prevailing sanitary) issues at the time the (SAFE) proposal was designed*”.⁸⁵ Likewise, DIGEMAPS inspections have found that conditions at the majority of facilities fall far short of existing health certification requirements.⁸⁶ Finally, as described by SAFE staff, MCCs mix Grade A milk with other milk qualities and sell at the lower grade,⁸⁷ while financial motivation remains a challenge, with markets providing only marginal increases in price for Grade A milk (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**).

Nonetheless, on a positive note, in FGDs, dairy producers described the use of milking parlors, which is fundamental to sanitary improvement in the dairy value chain, as resulting in several notable and significant positive improvements, including ‘increasing productivity’ and ‘ease of milking’.⁸⁸ As noted, recognizing this fundamental step in improving dairy quality, the Minister of Agriculture stated that his office was prepared to provide a ‘two-to-one match’ for SAFE co-investments into the construction of producer milking parlors (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**).⁸⁹ Finally, in KIIs, several project stakeholders described the SAFE project as motivating the emergence of a ‘culture of food safety’.⁹⁰ These respondents stated that processors, especially in the dairy sector, were aware that consumers were increasingly taking safety into consideration in their purchasing decisions.

⁸³ ‘Performance Report Summary – April 1st, 2018 – September 30, 2018’ NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, November 15, 2018

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ KII, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

⁸⁶ For example, see Aquino, Félix ‘Informe Inspección a Queso Don Manuel (Higüey)’ DIGEMAPS, Santo Domingo, August 28, 2018

⁸⁷ KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, February 14, 2019

⁸⁸ FGD, dairy producers, Villa Riva, February 18, 2019 and FGD, dairy producers, Montellano, February 19, 2019

⁸⁹ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, March 4, 2019

⁹⁰ For example, KII, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

The SAFE project has provided TA directly, as well as through partner organizations. Key partner organizations that provide TA include TAMU and CRI/GENEX, as well as the MEGALECHE extension unit and partner beef and dairy POs, cooperatives, and producer federations. Specifically, SAFE has mobilized TA to beef and dairy processors, as well as to DIGEGA and DIGEMAPS, for improved post-harvest processing and handling practices, and improved marketing and branding specifically focused on inspection services and producer capacity to meet standards. TAMU provides TA through consultants affiliated with the Borlaug Institute, which was established at TAMU in 1984 and is specialized in design and implementation of agricultural development and training programs. Under its mandate, the institute has implemented similar projects in a number of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, including El Salvador, Guatemala, and Panama.⁹¹

TAMU focuses on beef exports (equivalency), but also is mandated to work on dairy standards. As noted, in KIIs with TAMU staff, respondents reported that, “*nobody understood the severity of the (prevailing sanitary) issues at the time the (SAFE) proposal was designed*” and initially recommendations were not implemented resulting in a loss of time, though this has improved since 2018 as labs were identified and DIGEMAPS received supplemental funding for additional inspectors (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**).⁹² Likewise, TAMU consultants initially assessed conditions at several cheese processors and ‘found deficiencies in the cold chain’ amongst other significant problems with sanitary conditions, which producers were reluctant to correct because of cost and because ‘DIGEMAPS did not take recourse against them’.⁹³ As noted, these respondents pointed that the project agreement also mandates a focus on the dairy sector standards, but is behind in this regard.⁹⁴

In KIIs, CRI/GENEX staff described themselves as a private company focused on ‘support of genetic development for livestock cooperatives.’⁹⁵ The company’s role in the SAFE project is promoting the increased use of agricultural techniques and technologies related to livestock breeding. Respondents at CRI/GENEX stated that they initially implemented an assessment of conditions to put together a training program on farm management focused on reproductive issues (especially timing of reproduction). This training was targeted to MEGALECHE extension agents but has ‘now transitioned to working more directly with farmers.’ Although training was originally carried out by ‘master and PhD-level consultants’, which is ‘how CRI/GENEX usually works’, “*training has transitioned to more basic practices with farmers, such as looking for ‘heat’ every 22 days, and understanding differences between dairy, beef, and dual-use cattle, which is not really a job for high-level staff*”.⁹⁶ The present trainer, who began following staff changes at SAFE in 2018, was originally a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic.

⁹¹ <https://borlaug.tamu.edu>

⁹² KII, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ KII, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

⁹⁶ Ibid

KII respondents at CRI/GENEX stated that ‘initially, there were a lot of stops and starts as SAFE restructured’ and likewise, ‘poor logistics negatively impacted the initial trainings (for example, at some trainings there were no cows available on which to demonstrate practices)’.⁹⁷ However, these staff stated logistics has improved and ‘about 146 producers received TA last summer over two series of trainings in four different areas’ and a more recent training had ‘about 40 people at two locations (80 total)’.⁹⁸ They found that working with associations to set up ‘artificial insemination (AI) circuits with multiple routes has been effective’.⁹⁹ CRI/GENEX promotes each association having stored semen and an AI technician. The ‘idea of a route is that each farm has 10-20 cows, and each association has a technician that can be called in when a cow needs to be bred’. These staff stated that ‘association leadership is pretty motivated, though ‘at the association-level, this is in early stages.’¹⁰⁰ The CRI/GENEX staff were not familiar with LFS and has rather worked with demonstration farms. In the quantitative survey carried out by the ET, respondents ranked the effectiveness of activities associated with ‘genetics and animal reproduction’ as ‘fair’ (score: 3.41), with 93% of beneficiaries responding.

Reflecting noted challenges in TA delivery with the MEGALECHE extension unit, the most recent project report states that SAFE has reached agreement with DIGEGA to begin replacement of under-performing staff (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**), i.e. *‘One ongoing challenge of the project has been the lack of performance from the public extension workers (MEGALECHE). After a series of performance evaluations, it was determined in conjunction with MEGALECHE management that underperforming ones will be replaced’.*¹⁰¹

In FGDs with beef and dairy PO and cooperative staff, as well as with producer federation staff, the majority of respondents stated that their organizations provide TA to their membership through regular ‘meetings’, though the quality of this assistance could not be verified.¹⁰² With regard to TA delivery, in FGDs, PO membership described positively the transition to the LFS approach, recognizing its focus on ‘practical’ training.¹⁰³ A number of respondents specifically appreciated the way in which LFSs allowed them to receive training at ‘the times that worked best for them (according to their schedules)’.¹⁰⁴ However, as noted, SAFE staff reported that, to date, there is concern about their ‘capacity to provide financial resources for private extension services’, and the project has lagged in terms of implementing co-investments with these organizations to develop these services (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**).¹⁰⁵

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ ‘Performance Report Summary – April 1st, 2018 – September 30, 2018’ NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, November 15, 2018

¹⁰² For example, FGDs, federation staff, Villa Riva, February 18, 2019 and association staff, Arroyo Ancho, February 19, 2019

¹⁰³ For example, dairy producers, San Juan de la Maguana, February 22, 2019

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ KII, SAFE staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

In terms of coordination and linkages between project stakeholders, with regard to the beef value chain, as noted, SAFE has facilitated frequent meetings of an Equivalence Board, which has realized a number of important steps in the equivalence process through coordination between DIGEGA, DIGEMAPS, the slaughterhouses, and TA providers (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**). However, coordination and linkages between stakeholders in the dairy sector have faced several challenges. First, as noted, a challenge is that most MCCs mix Grade A milk with other milk qualities and sell at the lower grade, thus undermining the realization of price increases in line with quality improvements (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**). In addition, in KILs with SAFE staff, respondents stated that initial targeting was ‘haphazard’, with the project often selecting unrelated producers, MCCs, and processors, for TA and co-investments.¹⁰⁶ These respondents confirmed that this resulted in challenges in realizing value chain-wide improvements, with some improvements lost as a result of partial adoption of improved techniques and technologies i.e. in some cases, improved quality milk was mixed with inferior quality milk at both the MCC and processor sites.

In response, in July - August 2018, SAFE began implementing assessments of milk quality at MCCs that commercialize their output to large processing plants, initially focusing on three collection centers that receive milk from 163 farmers across the northwest of the Dominican Republic. Because milk quality testing is not frequently conducted at farm-level by individual producers and those that do test quality do not keep farm records, assessments analyzed milk samples at MCCs in order to identify those producers that fail to comply with standards so that ‘improvements can be implemented through working sessions and visits to the problem farms’.¹⁰⁷ According to SAFE staff, by the end of October 2018, the project had implemented these assessments at 41 MCCs and selected 20 for development of investment plans, with the intention of completing investment plans at all 41 in order to ‘know where to concentrate efforts to increase milk quality at the producer level, for their respective value chains’.¹⁰⁸

3.6 EFFECTIVENESS – CONCLUSIONS

EQ 3.1 To what extent have different actors in the value chain been able to increase quantity e.g., yield/ha and minimize waste since project inception?

SAFE measures increase in quantity primarily in terms of changes in l/c/d of milk. To date, the project is significantly behind in terms of its target of a 50% increase over the baseline of 7.5 l/c/d of milk amongst target beneficiaries (currently the increase stands at only 6%). Increases have been undermined by recurring drought conditions, and initial challenges in TA delivery that resulted in low application of TA. Nevertheless, the transition to an LFS approach in 2018 has improved application of TA, though investment into farming systems remains problematic, possibly as a result of recurring subsidies undermining the perceived need to make financial investments.

¹⁰⁶ For example, KIL, SAFE staff, Santo Domingo, February 13, 2019

¹⁰⁷ Costa, Dr. Mildred ‘Informe Sobre Monitoreo Realizado en La Línea Noroeste; El Cajuil (Loma de Cabrera), Santiago de la Cruz (Dajabón), El Chaquey y Sabana Larga (Dajabón)’ NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, July 16, 2018

¹⁰⁸ For example, KIL, SAFE staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

EQ 3.2 To what extent have all actors in the value chain adopted quality standards?

To date, no value chain actors have adopted quality standards. Two dairy processors are close to meeting requirements for the SoQ and can be anticipated to obtain it before the end of the SAFE project. Likewise, SAFE implementing partner TAMU has developed a critical path for improving compliance with HACCP and sanitation standards, and two are close to ready.

EQ 3.3 To what extent have value chain actors been trained in quality standards?

The SAFE project has made 'fair' progress in training value chain actors in quality standards. However, progress toward value chain-wide improvements of standards has been challenging due to the unanticipated scale of sanitary problems in both the beef and dairy sectors, the practice of mixing milk of various standards and selling it as lower grade, and possibly due to the limited financial motivation of producers to invest in upgrades due to marginal returns for higher grade milk.

EQ 3.4 Are partner organizations providing training to beneficiaries that is tailored to the local context and achieving increased use of agricultural techniques and technologies, increased use of improved post-harvest processing and handling practices, and improved marketing and branding?

Most SAFE partner organizations are providing training that is tailored to the local context. Specifically, TAMU consultants affiliated with the Borlaug Institute have focused their training on addressing weaknesses in the inspection services and sanitary problems revealed through audits of dairy processing facilities and slaughterhouses. SAFE implementing partner CRI/GENEX has adapted their approaches to focus on delivering TA on 'basic practices' related to livestock breeding directly to producers and developing association capacity to manage AI routes. The transition to the LFS approach has improved producer satisfaction with TA and enhanced the capacity of POs to deliver TA to membership.

However, initially the project lagged in terms of application of achieving increased use of improved agricultural techniques and technologies, increased use of improved post-harvest processing and handling practices, and improved marketing and branding, especially due to initial challenges in TA delivery. Nonetheless, the transition to the LFS approach, and investments in inspection services by the GoDR, seem to have improved project performance in this regard since 2018.

EQ 3.5 Are local government extension officers offering technical support to farmers in new techniques and technologies?

To date, government extension officers, i.e. the MEGALECHE extension unit, have performed poorly in terms of offering technical support to farmers in new techniques and technologies.

EQ 3.6 Have effective linkages been established between different project participants e.g., between producers and processors?

Effective linkages have been established between project participants related to the beef value chain through the Equivalence Board, which has realized a number of important steps in the equivalence process through coordination between DIGEGA, DIGEMAPS, the slaughterhouses, and TA providers. However, to date, effective linkages between project participants related to the dairy value chain have not been fully established, undermining improvements in milk quality due to incomplete adoption of upgrades by related value chain actors, i.e. producers, MCCs, and dairy processors.

3.7 EFFICIENCY – FINDINGS

This MTE addressed three EQs related to efficiency, as follows:

Table 31: Efficiency Evaluation Questions

EQ 4.1 What internal and external factors have influenced the ability of the project to meet expected results and targets?
EQ 4.2 Do project staffing, training activities and management structures efficiently support the achievement of expected project outcomes?
EQ 4.3 Does the project resource allocation to activities and to the project's geographic areas efficiently support the achievement of expected project outcomes?

As noted, in KIIs with SAFE staff and partners, as well as with USDA staff, a number of respondents described initial delays in implementation due to internal staff problems, as well as problems in inter-agency relations (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings** and **3.5 Effectiveness - Findings**). For example, one SAFE partner staff stated that ‘initially, there were a lot of stops and starts as SAFE restructured’, while another stated that, “DIGEMAPS was resistant (to implement recommendations). The same thing happened with the inspection services, and they were very defensive, and it seemed like the previous CoP sided with the inspection service”.¹⁰⁹ In KIIs with USDA staff, respondents provided similar comments, stating that ‘the previous Chief of Party (CoP) didn’t coordinate well, and we lost time’.¹¹⁰ SAFE staff agreed, stating “they (SAFE staff) project had too many interests, they tried to do a little for everyone (which undermined targeting), but they didn’t coordinate the activities (use a value chain approach)”.¹¹¹

In KIIs with SAFE staff and partners, respondents described a restructure of the SAFE team in 2018 in response to these problems, which entailed replacement of key staff, stating that this restructure resulted in considerable improvements. For example, one SAFE partner stated that, ‘the new Chief of Party has improved relations, and we’ve started to make progress, while another stated that, “the new staff were behind the move (to the LFS approach). He knew the right people from other experience, and brought them in, and it has made a huge difference. The project gained credibility with DIGEGA”’.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ For example, KIIs, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

¹¹⁰ KII, USDA staff, Santo Domingo, February 28, 2019

¹¹¹ KII, SAFE staff, Santo Domingo, February 22, 2019

¹¹² KIIs, SAFE partner staff, Skype, March 1, 2019

In terms of external factors, as noted, throughout fieldwork for this MTE, KII and FGD respondents consistently cited drought related to El Niño as a dominant long-term exogenous condition significantly reducing productivity every two years, while background document review confirmed drought conditions in 2016 and 2018-19 (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**).¹¹³

Figure 3: Capacity Development Survey Results Disaggregated by Site



Source: SAFE MTE Quantitative Survey

¹¹³ 'Caribbean Drought Bulletin' Volume V, Issue 10, Caribbean Drought & Precipitation Monitoring Network (CDPMN), March 2019

In terms of allocation of resources across activities and geography, analysis of the responses to questions ranking capacity development activities related to productivity, processing, and managerial skills, showed moderate co-variation when disaggregated across the 12 provinces surveyed. For example, the order of preference for rankings i.e. 1-5, was significantly uniform across all provinces (with preference for 'fair' scores completely uniform across all provinces). Likewise, in FGDs and KIIs, respondents did not generally raise issues with resource allocation, and were not able to cite recommendations or lessons learned in this regard. The sole exception to this was one KII with financial institution staff, in which the Director of Credit at Banco Agrícola stated, relative to the performance of SAFE with regard to facilitating lending, *“previously, the project facilitated regular meetings with us and other banks, which helped us to plan our lending activities and strategize. Since the restructuring (of the staff), these meetings have not been held. They were useful, SAFE should re-start them”*.¹¹⁴

3.8 EFFICIENCY – CONCLUSIONS

EQ 4.1 What internal and external factors have influenced the ability of the project to meet expected results and targets?

Internal factors that influenced the ability of the project to meet expected results and targets included staffing challenges, which resulted in delays and problems in coordination and relations between project partners. The critical external factor that has influenced the ability of the project to meet expected results and targets is recurring drought conditions, which have undermined dairy productivity.

EQ 4.2 Do project staffing, training activities and management structures efficiently support the achievement of expected project outcomes?

Despite initial staffing challenges, which generated delays and challenges in partner relations, following a restructure in 2018, the current project staffing, training activities and management structures efficiently support the achievement of expected project outcomes. A restructuring of SAFE staff in 2018, including replacement of key staff, has improved efficiency in supporting the achievement of expected project outcomes. The transition to the LFS approach to TA delivery was a key improvement in training activities.

EQ 4.3 Does the project resource allocation to activities and to the project's geographic areas efficiently support the achievement of expected project outcomes?

There is no reason to believe that project resource allocation to activities and to the project's geographic areas do not efficiently support the achievement of expected project outcomes. Previously regular meetings between SAFE and financial institution partners, were reportedly helpful, but ceased in 2018.

¹¹⁴ KIIs, financial institution staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

3.9 SUSTAINABILITY – FINDINGS

This MTE addressed three EQs related to sustainability, as follows:

Table 32: Sustainability Evaluation Questions

- EQ 5.1 What factors are likely to contribute towards the sustainability of the following issues addressed by the SAFE project: policy environment, financial incentives (i.e., profit motive), access to inputs and information, market access, etc.
- EQ 5.2 What factors are likely to hinder sustainability of the following factors addressed by the SAFE project: policy environment, financial incentives (i.e., profit motive), access to inputs and information, market access, etc.?
- EQ 5.3 What project activities are likely to contribute towards sustainability and is there evidence that project activities or benefits will be sustained after the project ends?

Over the course of the quantitative survey carried out as part of this MTE, the ET asked respondents to rank their agreement with two statements related to sustainability on a scale of 1-5. When asked to rank their agreement with the statement ‘At the end of the project I will be able to continue to apply what I learned with no problem’, the average response was ‘good’ (score; 4.08) with 95% of individuals surveyed providing a response. Likewise, these respondents provided an average response of ‘good’ (score: 4.22) to the statement ‘I would like this or a similar project of technical assistance to continue after its scheduled end’, with 96% of beneficiaries providing a response.

Table 33: Quantitative Survey Results - Sustainability of Interventions

SECTION 2: Sustainability of Interventions		Rate	Average
4.1	At the end of the project I will be able to continue to apply what I learned with no problem.	95%	4.08
4.2	I would like this or a similar project of technical assistance to continue after its scheduled end	96%	4.22

Source: SAFE MTE Quantitative Survey

In FGDs and KIs, beef and dairy producers positively described access to inputs and information provided by the SAFE project. Specifically, they described the ‘practical’ approach to TA delivery under the LFS methodology has been ‘very useful’ and ‘a significant improvement (over previous experience with TA)’.¹¹⁵ Dairy producers specifically cited milking parlors as improving their operations. One producer that had recently constructed a Milking parlor with SAFE assistance stated, “*now it’s easy to clean the teat, and the shed makes the cow more relaxed, so it’s easy to milk the cow and more milk comes.*”¹¹⁶ In contrast, respondents did not raise issues related to improved profitability as motivating their positive responses to TA. As noted, despite saving that are possible through the TA package, with only marginal price improvements between Grade A and Grade B milk, financial incentive appears to be limited. Also, MCCs blending Grade A milk with lower grades and selling it as lower quality milk, as well as incomplete adoption of improvements, has limited realization of improved prices for dairy producers (SAFE recently tried to address this through MCC/producer assessments) (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings** and **3.5 Effectiveness - Findings**).

¹¹⁵ For example, dairy producers, San Juan de la Maguana, February 22, 2019

¹¹⁶ KI, dairy producer, Villa Riva, February 18, 2019

In KIIs with dairy processors, staff at two companies that had made significant progress toward obtaining the SoQ through SAFE support on improvements in sanitary conditions, including improvements in milk quality through work with supplier milk producers, described this assistance as supporting their marketing objectives, which they stated includes expanding their share of domestic markets for higher quality products (both of these processors agreed with the assessment that there is increasing domestic demand for higher quality products, as evidenced by the portion of inventory in local supermarkets consisting of imported dairy products).¹¹⁷ As noted, both of these processors anticipate obtaining the SoQ in the near future (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings**). Also, as noted, in KIIs with GoDR staff, the Minister of Agriculture cited improvements in milk quality as fundamental to improving the Dominican dairy sector, and confirmed that his office was prepared to provide a ‘two-to-one match’ for SAFE co-investments into construction of producer milking parlors (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings** and **3.5 Effectiveness - Findings**).¹¹⁸

However, as noted, in KIIs, a number of respondents explained that the GoDR habitually offers subsidized assistance to dairy farmers for political reasons, negating the need for individuals to make farm investments.¹¹⁹ These respondents pointed out that, in previous drought years, DIGEGA has ‘bailed’ out producers, and as a result, many simply wait for assistance as opposed to making resiliency enhancing investments into their production systems (see and **3.5 Effectiveness - Findings**).¹²⁰

In KIIs with beef processors, staff at slaughterhouses that had received significant SAFE support and have been identified as strategic to demonstrating success toward the equivalence process requirements confirmed that the equivalence process conformed with their marketing objectives. For example, in a KII with staff at AGROCARNE, the president stated, “we are trying to establish quality standards to improve the reputation of Dominican beef. There is currently no standards regime for beef (in the Dominican Republic), and demand for higher quality processed meat products is very limited, but it is growing (as evidenced by imports of higher quality products). Nicaragua does well because standards are enforced effectively.”¹²¹ Likewise, in a KII with MERCARNE staff, a respondent stated ‘we are trying to meet the standards for export to the U.S.’, noting specifically that ‘SAFE provided a co-investment of about DOP 2 million of which about DOP 500,000 was to improve equipment’ (leveraging almost DOP 1.5 million from MERCARNE) and that ‘MERCARNE is waiting for the inspectors to come to do the inspections’.¹²² However, this respondent also stated that ‘the co-inversion has taken a long time, and we are still waiting for the final installment of DOP 180,000 for the contractor’ and she is ‘not really aware of other activities. SAFE did not provide any information about the overall objectives of the project’ (this informant was brought on board in mid-2018).¹²³

¹¹⁷ KIIs, enterprises, Montellano and Puerto Plata, February 20, 2019

¹¹⁸ KII, Government of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, March 4, 2019

¹¹⁹ For example, KII, SAFE project and partner staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019

¹²⁰ Ibid

¹²¹ KII, enterprise, Santo Domingo, February 13, 2019

¹²² KII, enterprise, Santo Domingo, February 16, 2019

¹²³ Ibid

3.10 SUSTAINABILITY – CONCLUSIONS

EQ 5.1 What factors are likely to contribute towards the sustainability of the following issues addressed by the SAFE project: policy environment, financial incentives (i.e., profit motive), access to inputs and information, market access, etc.

While SAFE has varying degrees of success in meeting targets with regard to the issues the project addresses, the factor most likely to result in sustainability is the ability of the project to deliver value chain-wide improvements in productivity and trade expansion. Dairy processors and slaughterhouses that have received value chain-wide assistance are closest to being able to obtain SoQ certification or equivalence requirements, and hence motivate additional enterprises to follow suit by providing examples of success.

EQ 5.2 What factors are likely to hinder sustainability of the following issues addressed by the SAFE project: policy environment, financial incentives (i.e., profit motive), access to inputs and information, market access, etc.?

Conversely, the factor most likely to hinder sustainability is incomplete value chain-wide adoption of improvements in productivity and trade expansion. Specifically, incomplete adoption of quality enhancing improved techniques and technologies by dairy producers and MCCs leads to mixed Grade A milk with lower grades that sells at lower prices. Similarly, marginal price improvements for dairy producers, among other factors, are likely to impede sustainability of activities that enhance productivity, including making investments into improved production systems. Likewise, improvements in dairy processor quality are unlikely to result in their meeting domestic market expansion objectives if overall supplier milk quality does not improve. Dairy processors are unlikely to obtain SoQ certification, and thus provide examples of success to additional enterprises, if problems persist in their supply chains.

EQ 5.3 What project activities are likely to contribute towards sustainability and is there evidence that project activities or benefits will be sustained after the project ends?

Association-wide activities that improve milk quality and thus price are most likely to contribute to sustainability. Furthermore, *demonstrated* improvements in milk prices are likely to lead to sustainable application of *productivity* enhancing improved techniques and technologies, and eventually to investments into their adoption. However, given limited SAFE resources, the project will require innovative sustainable approaches to delivering improvements at the required scale, i.e. association-wide, as opposed to previous GoDR-subsidized approaches. The Minister of Agriculture has confirmed that his office is prepared to match SAFE investments into construction of milking parlors, which the Ministry regards as fundamental to improving milk quality, on a two-to-one basis, and SAFE staff has recently implemented assessments of MCCs and related farmers to determine where problems lie, and to facilitate steps to address these problems. However, to date there is no evidence that project activities will be sustained after the project ends.

3.11 IMPACT – FINDINGS

This MTE addressed three EQs related to impact, as follows:

Table 34: Impact Evaluation Questions

EQ 6.1 What impacts are the project activities having on the project participants, both positive and negative, especially in relation to the expected results and strategic objectives?
EQ 6.2 To what extent can impact be attributed to project activities?
EQ 6.3 To what extent have target groups (farmers, processors, vendors, consumers, etc.) adopted the promoted techniques that have economic benefits?

As noted, document review demonstrates that SAFE fell behind on a number of key results in initial project years. Notably, this includes application of improved techniques and technologies (especially through agricultural lending for investments into production system upgrades), and improvement in l/c/d of milk remain limited. Also, numerous stakeholders cited performance challenges related to MEGALECHE TA delivery.

Table 35: RI 13-19 Individuals who have Applied Improved Techniques

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 13 Male (cumulative)	0	1,373	2,325	8,348	6,023	28%
RI 14 Individuals (new)	0	1,381	1,906	8,447	6,541	23%
RI 15 Individuals (continuing)	0	0	465	3,479	3,014	13%
RI 16 Female (Cumulative)	0	8	46	3,578	3,532	1%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

Table 36: RI 1: Percentage Increase in L/D/C

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
Average (l/c/d)	7.5/a	6.4	7.725	11.25	3.525	6%
RI 1 (% increase in l/c/d)/b	0	-15%	3%	50%	-47%	6%

- 'Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) Program- Dominican Republic Project Baseline Survey (Agreement No: FCC-517-2015/008-00)' Optima, Technical Services (OTSCORP S.A.) Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 13, 2016
- Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

Concurrently, there has been incomplete adoption of dairy productivity and quality enhancing practices, which has undermined improvements in prices to dairy producers, and, to date, no dairy processors have obtained the SoQ. With regard to beef production, the equivalence process is in progress, but has yet to come to fruition (see 3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings and 3.5 Effectiveness - Findings).

Table 37: RI 24, 27 Increase in Grade "A" Milk Sold and New MCC Equipment

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 24 Increase in "A" Grade Milk	0	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%
RI 27 Milk collection centers	0	0	2	50	48	4%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

Table 38: RI 28 29 New Beef Markets and Signed Agreements for Exports

Indicator	Baseline Value	FY17 Complete	FY18 Complete	FY20 Target	FY20 Gap	FY20 % on track
RI 28 Beef Markets (new)	0	0	0	2	2	0%
RI 29 Export Agreements (new)	0	0	0	14	14	0%

Source: PROGIS (SAFE online M&E platform)

On the other hand, the transition to the LFS methodology in 2018 has enhanced beneficiary satisfaction with TA, and project data demonstrates higher adoption of improved techniques and technologies in subsequent project years (though lending to finance upgrades remains far behind targets). In addition, at least two dairy processors anticipate obtaining the SoQ soon, and project stakeholders engaged in the equivalence process note several promising steps toward equivalence that has resulted in optimism that the process will come to fruition during the life of the SAFE project. In KIIs, a number of respondents stated that, despite a number of previous unsuccessful attempts to re-launch Dominican beef exports to the U.S., which generated pessimism on the part of beef processors, successful outcomes for one-three companies in this regard will demonstrate viability and motivate additional companies to follow suit (see **3.1 Goal Achievement – Findings** and **3.5 Effectiveness - Findings**).¹²⁴

Importantly, as noted, the GoDR has obligated increased financial resources to DIGEMAPS for expanding inspection services, which the agency has used to hire additional inspectors and the Minister of Agriculture has confirmed obligation of funds for expanding milking parlors (see **3.5 Effectiveness - Findings**). Finally, in KIIs with SAFE and GoDR staff, several respondents described the emergence of a ‘culture of food safety’ that is ‘growing and will continue to grow’ in line with evolving consumer demand.¹²⁵ The Minister of Agriculture specified that this is ‘a chain’ that will ‘lead to an export-oriented economy’, and ultimately to ‘economic growth in the Dominican Republic’.¹²⁶

3.12 IMPACT – CONCLUSIONS

EQ 6.1 What impacts are the project activities having on the project participants, both positive and negative, especially in relation to the expected results and strategic objectives?

To date, the impact of project activities on the project participants have been limited in scale due to initial challenges in TA delivery, as well as incomplete value chain-wide adoption of quality enhancing improved techniques and technologies, which has undermined the realization of improvements in prices for milk. Likewise, despite the realization of key steps in the equivalence process, this remains incomplete and no dairy processors have yet obtained the SoQ.

¹²⁴ For example, KII, SAFE staff, Santo Domingo, March 1, 2019 and KII, GoDR staff, Santo Domingo, February 22, 2019

¹²⁵ For example, KII, SAFE staff, Santo Domingo, February 22, 2019 and KII, GoDR staff, Santo Domingo, March 4, 2019

¹²⁶ GoDR staff, Santo Domingo, March 4, 2019

However, subsequent to improvements in project implementation in 2018, the GoDR has demonstrated commitments to SAFE objectives, as expressed in the obligation of funding to DIGEMAPS for expansion of inspection services, and commitments by the Minister of Agriculture to provide matching funds for expansion of milking parlors as a fundamental step to improving milk quality.

EQ 6.2 To what extent can impact be attributed to project activities?

New commitments by the GoDR to SAFE objectives can be attributed to project activities that have advanced the equivalence process, as well (to a lesser degree) to the alignment of SAFE activities with GoDR economic development strategies, especially regarding export expansion.

EQ 6.3 To what extent have target groups (farmers, processors, vendors, consumers, etc.) adopted the promoted techniques that have economic benefits?

To date, the extent of target group adoption of promoted techniques that have economic benefits has been low and incomplete. Going forward, achieving illustrative successes in market expansion by processors and slaughterhouses, as well as more comprehensive value chain-wide work will be key to improved adoption levels.

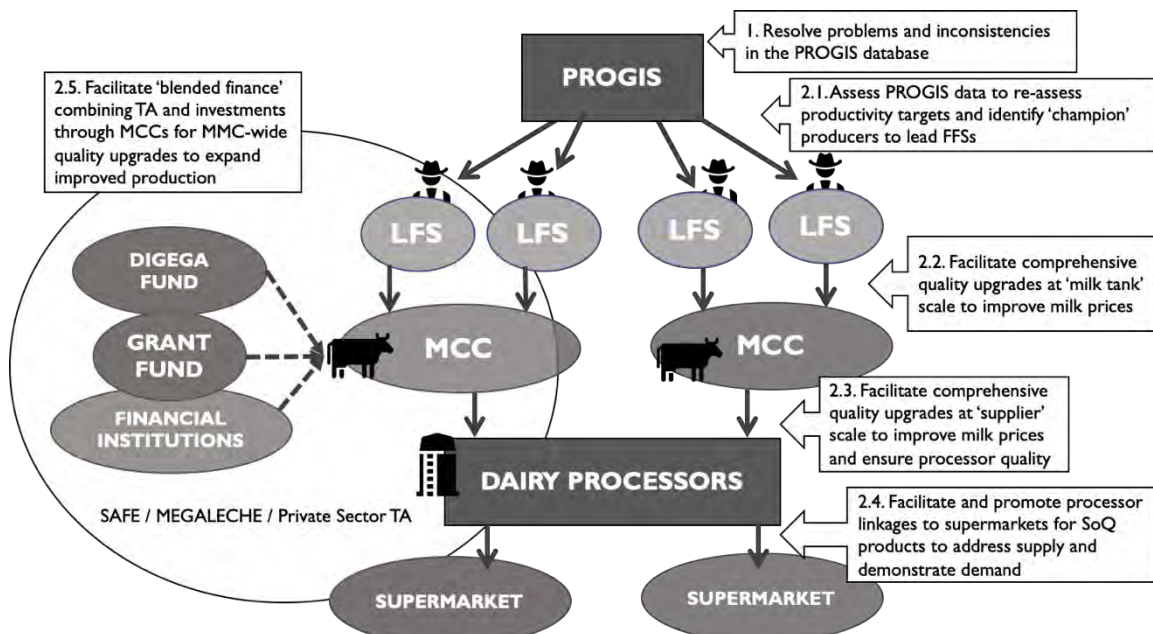
4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This section presents recommendations, which the ET derived from the conclusions presented above, followed by lessons learned identified by the ET through this MTE.

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Resolve problems and inconsistencies in the PROGIS database:** The ET found several problems in the data entered into the PROGIS online M&E platform, including incorrect or missing beneficiary contact data, as well as duplication of beneficiaries and inconsistencies in the overall number of project beneficiaries. SAFE staff should audit beneficiary contact data and update entries where required. Staff should also use this audit to resolve inconsistencies in overall beneficiary numbers and disaggregate by beneficiary type.
- 2. Adopt a value chain-wide approach to dairy quality upgrades:** The ET found that SAFE has lagged in terms of meeting targets related to adoption of improved techniques and technologies that improve dairy productivity and quality of milk. This is due to exogenous factors, especially recurring drought conditions that reduce water and pasture available to livestock, as well as due to poor financial motivation for producers to adopt improved practices, especially through investments into their production systems. Likewise, the ET found that poor financial motivation is related to MCCs mixing Grade A milk with lower grades and selling it as lower quality milk, as well as due to 'incomplete' adoption of quality upgrades i.e. partial adoption by associated producers by MCCs, and by supplier MCCs selling to processors, both of which undermine the realization of improved prices. Therefore, the ET recommends adopting a value chain-wide approach through five steps, as follows:

Figure 4: Chain-Wide Approach to Quality Upgrades



2.1 Assess PROGIS data to re-assess productivity targets and identify ‘champion’ producers to lead LFS: Following resolution of inconsistencies in the PROGIS online M&E platform, SAFE staff should stratify dairy producer beneficiaries according to ‘full’, ‘partial’ and ‘non’ adoption of the TA package and assess the correlation between adoption levels and productivity increases. Based on this assessment, the project should re-assess targets in order to set realistic performance objectives related to improvements in l/c/d of milk with the context of recurring drought conditions in the project target areas. Analysis of this data should also inform specific expert TA recommendations to producers based on regional variations across the project zones. Finally, through this assessment, the SAFE staff should identify ‘champion’ farmers that can lead LFS, utilizing their production systems as effective demonstration sites.

Specifically, participation in ‘champion’ LFS should address lagging project performance in terms of farmers making decisions based on economic considerations or analysis by *making use of PROGANA logbooks (including cost of production records) a mandatory prerequisite for participation* in order to facilitate development of producer financial records that will be subsequently required for financing, as well as useful in enhancing M&E data.

2.2 Facilitate comprehensive quality upgrades at ‘milk tank’ scale to improve milk prices: The SAFE project should identify high performing LFS that deliver Grade A quality milk at the scale of MCC tanks (generally 3,000-5,000 liters). The project should facilitate separate handling of Grade A milk by MCCs to processors at corresponding prices, realizing a profit to supplier producers in order to facilitate upgrades in their product quality.

2.3 Facilitate comprehensive quality upgrades at ‘supplier’ scale to improve milk prices and ensure processor quality: The project should facilitate relationships between MCCs capable of supplying separately handled Grade A milk and processors seeking to upgrade their products in order to meet SoQ requirements, focusing on ‘champion’ processors (closest to obtaining the SoQ). Facilitation should entail face-to-face meetings between MCC leadership in order to negotiate additional linkages that may improve milk prices, such as timing and scale of delivery.

2.4 Facilitate and promote processor linkages to supermarkets for SoQ products to address supply and demonstrate demand: SAFE staff should facilitate further supply chain linkages between ‘champion processors’ (closest to obtaining the SoQ) and supermarkets in order to better understand market requirements for higher quality dairy products and, after obtaining the SoQ, initiate and promote supply to consumers. Likewise, the project should promote the SoQ to additional processors through demonstration of verified market demand in order to motivate expansion of the standards.

2.5 Facilitate ‘blended finance’ combining TA and investments for MCC-wide quality upgrades to expand improved production: As noted, the project has lagged in terms of targets for agricultural lending, which is required to finance resiliency upgrades in production systems. *The project should re-launch regular meetings with financial institution partners and integrate DIGEGA into these meetings in order to develop a comprehensive approach to implementing DIGEGA’s commitment to match SAFE grant funds for the expansion of milking parlors. Likewise, the project should expand focus on farm financial management in TA delivered through LFS in collaboration with the MEGALECHE.*

Overall, the project should work with these partners to develop a phased approach to expanding milking parlors and other quality enhancing techniques and technologies starting initially with higher performing LFSs already linked to dairy processors, in order to demonstrate the efficacy of the TA package in terms of price improvements. Subsequently, these partners should incrementally increase focus on resiliency enhancing techniques and technologies, such as improved pastures, in order to expand the quantity of l/c/d. For example, an important technique to ensure milk production during dry seasons is feed conservation such as haylage or silage. This seasonal preparation technique during ideal weather conditions could have possibly mitigated some of the effects of the drought occurring now and is not currently practiced at a wide-scale in the country. The partners should deliver financing through a mixed approach, with a component of repayable loans combined with a grant component. Throughout, the process should align TA and financing for specific products i.e. the TA addresses borrower weaknesses to reduce risk, create bankable investments, and improve repayment rates. This integration of TA into finance to de-risk lending is known as “blended finance”, while an entity integrating these elements is a Technical Assistance Facility (TAF). The TAF can ultimately receive additional capitalization, including from private investors or development finance institutions (DFIs), in order to expand operations and/or support new activities. Likewise, this entity can also adopt equity models in order to finance upgrades to POs and enterprises.

3. **Advocate for inspection services and slaughterhouses to progress on the ‘critical path’ routes toward conformity with the FSIS standards:** Given the anticipated response to the SRT by FSIS, the project should advocate for inspection services and slaughterhouses to progress on the critical path routes toward conformity with the FSIS standards in order to prepare for ‘mock’ audits by TAMU consultants in line with their recommended next steps in the equivalence process. Advocacy should include the highest levels of Dominican government agencies. Also, the project should focus TA on advancing one slaughterhouse on this ‘critical pathway’ for improving compliance with HACCP and sanitation standards developed by TAMU in order to demonstrate the viability of the process to the entire industry while also maximizing the chances of success.

4. **Audit project marketing and branding strategies to better inform the public that USDA is the project donor:** SAFE staff should implement an audit of the project's marketing and branding strategies in order to improve the ability of the project to inform the public that USDA is the donor.

4.2 LESSONS LEARNED

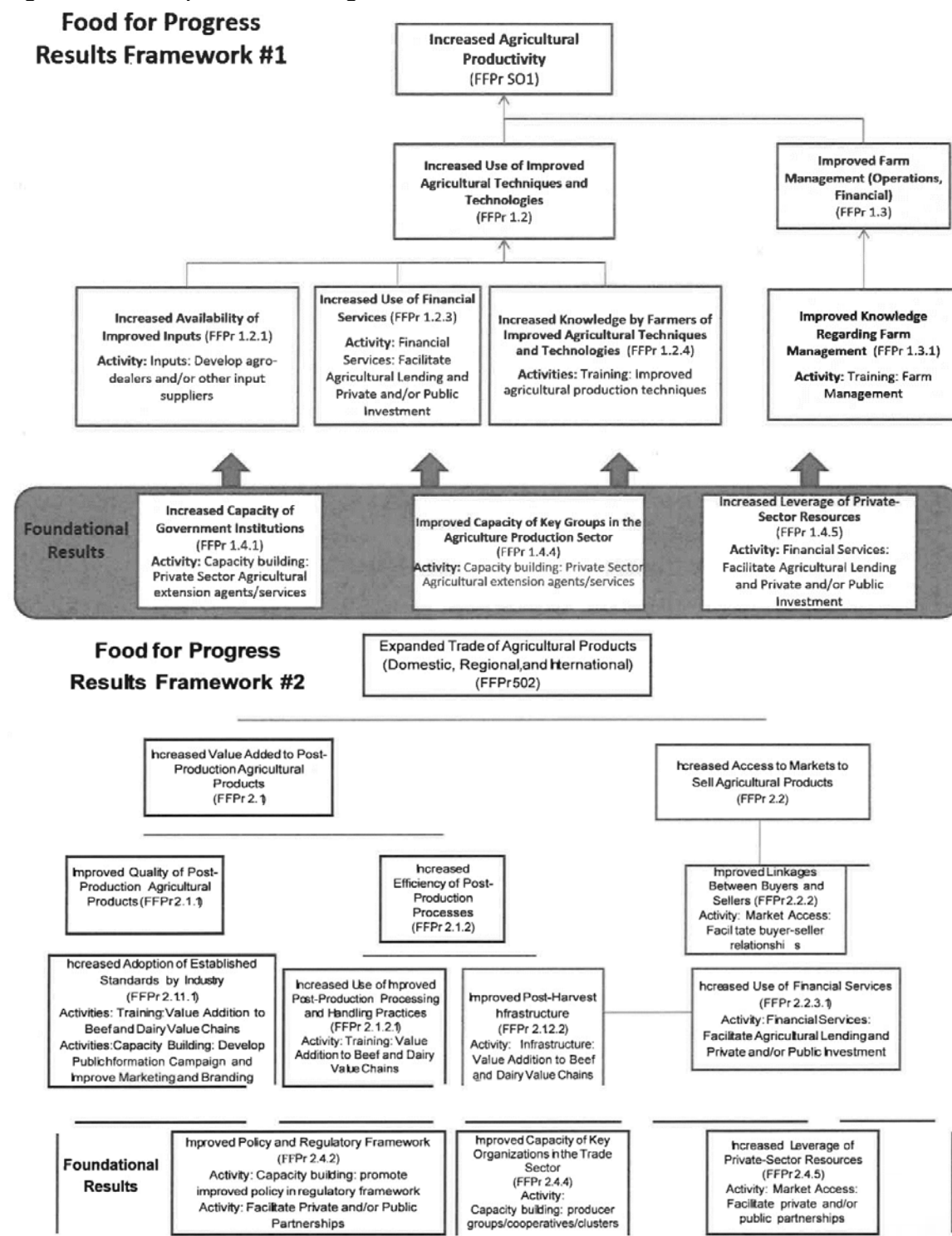
Dairy development projects need to take into account climatic conditions and focus on resiliency in cases where climate challenges impact the ability of producers to expand production: Increased climatic challenges related to global climate change will increasingly challenge dairy producers to improve productivity due to limiting water and pasture available for livestock. An additional negative consequence of global climate change will be increased sanitary challenges with livestock in tropical and semi-tropical regions experiencing greater incidence of disease due to warmer weather (though this evaluation did not find this to be the case in the Dominican Republic specifically at the time of this evaluation). Therefore, projects that address dairy sector improvements need to prioritize increased resiliency through adoption of climate smart practices.

In order to realize the benefits of upgrades, especially in terms of enhanced quality, dairy sector improvements need to take a value chain-wide approach: Partial adoption of improvements in dairy production undermine the realization of improved prices due to MCC challenges in separately handling improved quality milk at the MCC level. Likewise, comprehensive improvements in quality determine the ability of processors to upgrade product quality. Therefore, dairy value chain projects need to take a value chain-wide approach that takes into account supply chain scale at the MCC and processor levels.

In economies characterized by high levels of subsidies, implementers need to demonstrate sustainable models for TA and finance to private sector actors: As noted, the GoDR has provided subsidized assistance to private sector actors through a number of programs implemented by public sector institutions, including subsidized power through the electric company, loans through Banco Agrícola and CONALCHE, as well as recurring drought assistance to livestock producers through DIGEGA. This assistance, while useful, undermines sustainable producer investments into production systems that could lead to improved resiliency. In cases where economies are characterized by high levels of subsidies, implementers need to demonstrate sustainable models for TA and finance to private sector actors, including revolving loans funds tied to TA, or TAFs and 'smart' subsidies that increase demand for services by offsetting their cost.

ANNEX A. RESULTS FRAMEWORKS

Figure 5: SAFE Project Food for Progress Results Frameworks



ANNEX B. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project Theory of Change (TOC) outlines the following 12 project activities:¹²⁷

ACTIVITY 1: TRAINING ON IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES

The project focuses on the adoption of improved agricultural techniques through training and technical assistance on the planting of improved pastures and their pasture management techniques with training sessions on the following: animal nutrition, animal feed; milking and milk-handling practices, animal health (use of pharmaceuticals, herd vaccinations, tick prevention and animal handling), sanitary standards for dairy and beef processing facilities i.e. Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), sanitary registration of products, and training on the implementation of sustainable livestock management.

ACTIVITY 2: TRAINING ON FARM MANAGEMENT

This activity refers to the implementation of training on agribusiness and training and application of tools and techniques to improve farmer capacity in terms of farm administration and management in an orderly and documented way by recording the relevant information of the farms in terms of production i.e. quantity of milk, number of cows, reproductive records), management of personnel and payroll, and farm economic management (income and expenses records). The documentation and registration of activities on the farm is a tool for making administrative and productive decisions that allow for a business approach to farm management thereby improving the levels of herd profitability.

ACTIVITY 3: FACILITATE AGRODEALERS AND INPUT SUPPLIERS

The project coordinates technical assistance activities with input suppliers to design and establish demonstration farms for management, milking parlors, and other modules of improved practices. These suppliers include Semillas Latinas, ABODOM, Ferquido, Vitrogan, Enda Caribe, and others. It has signed MOUs with Nestle, and Rica. Inputs include seeds, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, etc. The project links input suppliers which are interested in supplying inputs to producers in the target provinces, providing technical training to extension agents on the use of their inputs, discounting and sharing the cost of the required inputs for establishing demonstration plots and providing specific technical assistance (TA) to farmers.

ACTIVITY 4: IMPROVE THE BEEF AND DAIRY VALUE CHAIN

The project provides matching grants for dairy processors and Producer Organizations (POs) to strengthen milk collection centers (MCCs) and beef processors supporting the Equivalence process. Infrastructure improvements for dairy include milk handling equipment for farmers, chilling equipment for MCCs and laboratory equipment for milk testing facilities. Infrastructure improvements in beef processing includes Sanitary Performance Standards control systems identified by the regulatory assessment and agreed to by the GoDR and private sector partners. SAFE works with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Presidency, and slaughterhouses to achieve Equivalence. The project has signed MOUs with APROLECHE, CONALECHE, INDOCAL, Asociación de los Mataderos, Asociación Dominicana de Hacendados y Agricultores (ADHA), and also works Asociación de Ganaderos de Carne (ASOCARNE).

¹²⁷ 'NCBA CLUSA International Safe Agriculture Food Export (SAFE) Project Mid-Term Evaluation (Terms of Reference)' NCBA CLUSA International (approved by USDA), July 25, 2018

ACTIVITY 5: CAPACITY BUILDING OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AGENTS/ SERVICES

The project will provide more support to key private sector value chain actors to establish and improve private extension systems. To date, 38 students were trained at the Technological Institute of San Ignacio de Loyola (ITESIL) as new extension agents, of which two are working on farms around the area. Also, SAFE worked with project partners to provide training to private and public agricultural extension workers. Private sector companies included ABODOM, HESATECH, NUGEGA, MULTILAB, Nestle, and Rica. Public sector organizations included Ministry of Agriculture MEGALECHE extension unit, Vitrogan, and the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD).

ACTIVITY 6: CAPACITY BUILDING OF PRODUCER GROUPS

There are five livestock federations collaborating with the project: FEDEGANO; FEDEGANORTE; FEGACIBAO; FEDEGARES, and; FEGASUR. The project signed coordination agreements with the first two federations and with three associations; AGAMPTA; San Francisco de Macorís Livestock Farmers Association, and; *Asociación de Hato Mayor*. The five federations aggregate around 90% of associated livestock farmers within the eleven target provinces. The obligations of both parties are to share resources, mainly technical support and expertise to contribute to the Project's goals. One of the SAFE Project's goals is to strengthen the capacities of livestock POs focusing on organizational, administrative, financial and technical aspects.

ACTIVITY 7: CAPACITY BUILDING FOR PROMOTING IMPROVED POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Under this activity, the project is supporting the development of necessary infrastructure overseeing the control and implementation of the sanitary standards equivalent to those demanded in the U.S. for the beef sector that are required to export beef to the U.S. market in Puerto Rico. Three main actors of the beef value chain are essential to attaining Equivalence: DIGEMAPS (General Directorate of Medicines, Food and Health Products of the MoH), the official public agency responsible for the sanitary inspection system in the Dominican Republic; LAVECEN, the reference laboratory to be certified and the official laboratory to be audited by the FSIS; and, the three preselected slaughterhouses, ideally the most advanced will be selected and audited by FSIS, to determine whether the MoH is operating a beef inspection system for beef that is equivalent to the U.S. inspection system. SAFE is providing technical assistance to slaughterhouses and beef farmers supplying slaughterhouses on a proposed course of action needed to achieve those standards.

ACTIVITY 8: FINANCIAL SERVICES - FACILITATE AGRICULTURAL LENDING AND PRIVATE AND PUBLIC- SECTOR INVESTMENT

The project provides training to financial institutions (FIs) on the financing needs of dairy farmers and processors. The SAFE project collaborates with FIs to conduct outreach to identify credit-worthy dairy producers and processors. Investment plans for small farms are developed as part of the support of the project. The project links these small farmers with financial institutions to facilitate producers' and processors' access to credit based on the result of the small investment plans supported by the project. These include Banco Agrícola, Coopesur, CONALECHE, and the government-supported *Fondo Especial para el Desarrollo Agropecuario* (FEDA). Additionally, the SAFE project facilitates the participation of farmers and processors at exposition, trade, and finance fairs to promote available financial products.

ACTIVITY 9: TRAINING - BEEF AND DAIRY QUALITY STANDARDS

SAFE provides training to small and medium dairy manufacturers throughout the Dominican Republic. These trainings guide processors on how to improve the quality of cheese and other dairy products by applying GMP such as the use of sanitation materials, avoidance of adulterating milk with peroxide, the use of proper manufacturing clothes (hats, boots, etc.), and avoiding product cross contamination. For beef, the project trains beef processing staff on GMP, specifically related to SPS gaps. Additional training on HACCP will be aimed at beef processors and slaughterhouses.

ACTIVITY 10: MARKET ACCESS: FACILITATE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS

SAFE signed a general agreement with DIGEGA that was made operational by the articulation of 26 MEGALECHE agents responsible for providing TA to targeted farmers and POs through the public extension system. In addition, SAFE works with a Consultative Technical Council (CTC) and the Equivalence Group to achieve the Equivalence certification to export beef to the USA (Puerto Rico). The approach establishes public-private partnerships to focus on the Equivalence certification (SAFE's primary result) with FSIS standards.

ACTIVITY 11: CAPACITY BUILDING - DEVELOP PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN AND IMPROVE MARKETING AND BRANDING

The project implements a comprehensive approach to develop the use of the Seal of Quality in dairy products. To improve the quality of milk at the consumer level, the project works from the beginning of the milk value chain, training milk producers on hygienic and safe milking techniques that will improve the quality of the milk, seeking to produce Grade "A". Next, the Project trains milk processors on the requirements for the attainment of the Seal of Quality. Finally, the project accompanies milk processors in the attainment of the sanitary registration from the Ministry of Health and the *Instituto Dominicano para Calidad* (INDOCAL), in addition to posterior attainment of the Seal of Quality through technical assistance. Several visual materials are developed and distributed along the value chain with messages about adequate production and processing practices. There were public information campaigns at the beginning of the project through trade fairs, which will continue in 2019.

ACTIVITY 12: MARKET ACCESS - FACILITATE BUYER-SELLER RELATIONSHIPS

In the dairy sub-sector, the SAFE project aims to facilitate linkages at four levels: 1) between POs/MCCs and processors; 2) between processors and individual farmers; 3) between equipment and service providers and processors; and 4) between producers and equipment and service providers. The project organizes meetings between MCCs and processors with nearby independent dairy farmers. Also, the project works on linkages between cheese producers and U.S. buyers, and beef producers exploring the Puerto Rico market for Dominican exports once equivalence is achieved.

ANNEX C. EVALUATION TEAM

David Rinck (*Team Leader*) was responsible for overall supervision of the ET and MTE implementation and deliverables. Mr. Rinck has more than 20 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation of economic growth initiatives, specializing in food security, agriculture and agro-enterprise development, market systems and economic policy analysis. In addition, he brings over 20 years of experience as Team Leader for complex project evaluations. Previously, Mr. Rinck was Chief of Party for a State Department-funded project to enhance agricultural trade and investment in North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt). In Rwanda, he was the USAID focal point for the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Plan (CAADP) compact.

His publications include “*Implementing Sustainable Private Sector Development: Relief to Development in Crisis-Affected Economies*” ILO BDS Reader, September 2006 and “*Market Development in Crisis- Affected Environments: Emerging Lessons for Achieving Pro-Poor Economic Reconstruction*” Small Enterprise Education and Promotion Network (SEEP), 2007. Mr. Rinck holds a master’s degree in Social Sciences from the University of Chicago, and a degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of California at Davis. He has also studied economics, languages and sociology at many locations worldwide, including Beijing University, as well as in the Middle East at Damascus, Beirut, and Sana'a. He speaks English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese.

Antonio Cordella (*Agricultural and Trade Economist*) is an international expert of Agricultural economics, Agricultural Policy and Trade Policy, with expertise in development issues in n African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and emerging economies, including agriculture, commodities, trade, rural development, micro-credit, sector consolidation, poverty reduction, environment and gender issues, public-private partnership. He has extensive expertise in ex-ante and ex-post evaluations of technical cooperation projects, including trade policy, agricultural policy, rural development policy, and private sector competitiveness. Dr. Cordella also carried out numerous reviews/evaluations of food/commodity marketing systems and mapping of economic market chains; agribusiness; and backward and forward farm links at regional and national level.

Recently, Dr. Cordella performed the mid-term evaluation of the ‘Exporting Quality and Safety’ project implemented by International Executive Service Corps (IESC) in the Dominican Republic. The project is focusing on greenhouse and oriental vegetables, avocado, cacao, and pineapple value chains. Specifically, he designed and facilitated a questionnaire survey of 335 direct beneficiaries of the project and facilitated various KIs and FGDs with key stakeholders. Dr. Cordella also assessed the performance of the 36 result and activity indicators and presented results of the evaluation. He is fluent in Italian, Spanish, English, and French.

Xerius Research & Consulting, S.R.L. (*Quantitative Research Team*) is a firm based in Santo Domingo. Xerius carried out data collection by providing enumerators, supervisors, logistics and coordination for data collected in provinces of the Dominican Republic. This enabled the ET to implement the assignment quickly and efficiently. The ET supported training of enumerators and supervised testing of data collection forms.

Evaluation Management: In addition to the ET members described above, JAA Headquarters staff supported the ET throughout the evaluation process. JAA was responsible for overall contract management and administration and ensuring that deliverables were submitted on time and met JAA and NCBA CLUSA's quality standards. JAA was also responsible for all supervision, data management, quality control, and analysis.

ANNEX D. EVALUATION TIMELINE

Table 39: Evaluation Timeline

Task / Deliverable (deliverables in bold)	Date (2019)
Review background documents	January 14
Draft Survey Forms submitted to SAFE Team	January 14
Survey Forms approved by SAFE Team	January 18
Field test of Survey Forms in Monte Plata	January 19-20
Draft Inception Report submitted to SAFE Team	January 21
Indicator Analysis	January 25-February 1
Survey Implementation	January 25-February 10
Team Leader arrives in Dominican Republic	February 11
In-Brief with SAFE Team in Santo Domingo	February 12
Initial survey data analysis	February 15
Finalize KII and FGD protocols	February 15
Develop Fieldwork Schedule for field visits with SAFE Staff	February 15
Final Inception Report submitted to SAFE Team	February 16
Initial KIIs in Santo Domingo	February 11-15
Data Collection and Site Visits	February 18-28
Mid-Brief with SAFE Team (if required)	February 22
Data analysis in country	February 25
Out-Brief Presentation with SAFE Team in Santo Domingo	March 4
Team Leader departs Dominican Republic	March 5
Produce Draft Evaluation Report	March 5 - 22
Submit Draft Evaluation Report to SAFE Team	March 27
SAFE and USDA review draft report and provide comments	TBD
Review draft comments, edit, finalize report	TBD
Final Evaluation Report submitted to SAFE Team	TBD

ANNEX E. CITATIONS AND REFERENCES

'2016 - Self Reporting Tool - Version 5 (Equivalence)' USDA FAS, January 10, 2017

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'Agreement Between the Government of the United States of American and National Cooperative Business Association for the Provision of Agricultural Commodities Through the Food for Progress Act (USDA Award FCC-517-2015-008-00) – Amendment II' USDA FAS, Washington DC, October 18, 2018

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'Caribbean Drought Bulletin' Volume V, Issue10, Caribbean Drought & Precipitation Monitoring Network (CDPMN), March 2019

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'Farmer Field School (FFS) Manual' FAO, Special Framework of Assistance, St. Lucia, 2006

'Food for Progress and McGovern-Dole Indictors Definitions' USDA/FAS, Washington DC, July 15, 2014

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'Milk quality monitoring key to improving Dominican Dairy industry (impact story)' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, May 26, 2017

Moran, John *'Business Management for Tropical Dairy Farmers'* Landlinks Press, Collingwood, Australia, 2009 (reprinted)

'Monitoring Milk Quality in the Dominican Republic (success story)' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, August 21, 2018

'NCBA CLUSA International Safe Agriculture Food Export (SAFE) Project Mid-Term Evaluation (Terms of Reference)' NCBA CLUSA International (approved by USDA), July 25, 2018

'NCBA CLUSA Trains Small and Medium Dairy Processors in Dominican Republic (success story)' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, December 28, 2017

'Performance Monitoring Plan' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, December 3, 2018

'Performance Report Summary – April 1st, 2018 – September 30, 2018' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, November 15, 2018

'Review and update of Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)' Optima, Technical Services (OTSCORP S.A.) Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, June 6, 2016 (rev. Sept. 2016)

'Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) Program- Dominican Republic Project Baseline Survey (Agreement No: FCC-517-2015/008-00): Baseline Study - Performance Report Summary April 1st, 2018-September 30, 2018' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, September 2018

'Safe Agriculture/Food Export (SAFE) Program- Dominican Republic Project Baseline Survey (Agreement No: FCC-517-2015/008-00): Baseline Study - Status of the Livestock Sector in Eleven Provinces of the Dominican Republic' Optima, Technical Services (OTSCORP S.A.) Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 13, 2016

'SAFE/PROGANA Project Holds Panel Discussion on Best Practices for Cost-Effective Livestock Farming and Improving Value Chain for Export Purposes (success story)' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, July 7, 2017

'SAFE/PROGANA Signs Agreement with Farmers to Establish Demonstration Farms (success story)' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, August 21, 2017

'SAFE Semi-Annual Reports (all-in-one)' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, March 15, 2017

'SAFE Marches Towards its Goals with the Continuous Support of its Technical Advisory Council (success story)' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, June 5, 2017

'Semi-Annual Narrative Activity Report October 1st, 2017 to March 31th, 2018' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, March 2018

'Semi-Annual Narrative Activity Report April 1st, 2017 to September 30th, 2017' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, September 2017

'Training Dominican Farmers on Livestock Artificial Insemination (success story)' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, April 24, 2018

'USDA-Dominican Republic Visits NCBA CLUSA SAFE Project (success story)' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, December 20, 2017

'Visitas a Fincas y Técnicas; October 18-February 19, 2019' NCBA CLUSA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, March 2019

ANNEX F. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Table 40: Quantitative Survey Forms

SAFE Program Mid-Term Evaluation Questionnaire – General Form

Instructions: This is an anonymous questionnaire. The facilitator will provide you the anonymous identification number. The match between this number and your name is only known to the facilitator. Please provide information regarding your activity, kind of production and gender. Please give your answers or comments in writing or indicate the extent to which you evaluate the activities/performances of the Exporting Quality & Safety Program on the topics on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (highest). NB: In case you believe the issue is “Not Applicable to Me”, please fill in accordingly.

A) DIRECT INTERVIEW		B) PHONE		C) OTHER	
CODE No.:		NAME:			
PROVINCE:		ORGANIZATION:			
MUNICIPALITY:					
GENDER:	A) MALE ____ B) FEMALE ____	DATE:			

INTERVIEWED BENEFICIARY:		
A) MILK PRODUCER	B) BEEF PRODUCER	C) MILK & BEEF PRODUCER
D) EMPLOYEE	E) EXTENSION OFFICER	F) PROCESSOR
G) TRADER	H) TECHNICIAN	I) PRIVATE SECTOR
J) PUBLIC SECTOR	K) CIVIL SOCIETY	L) OTHER ()

SECTION 1 Program Achievements and Challenges		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
1.A.1	The quality of my business has improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.2	The value of my business has increased thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.3	My technical skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.4	My commercial skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.5	Please quantify the improvements due to program activities	0	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
1.B.1	The program has helped me to achieve more than I expected	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.B.2	Please provide more details						
1.C.1	My business has faced major challenges during the last 24 months	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.C.2	Please name some of these challenges, if any						
1.C.3	The program has been able to help me to counter these challenges	0	1	2	3	4	5

1.C.4	How can the SAFE Program further support you in your business challenges?
1.D1	How can the SAFE Program help you in unexpected situations?

SECTION 2 Relevance of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
2.A.1	The program has been able to address the core issues of my activity	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.2	The program has helped strengthen my organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.3	How can the SAFE Program improve the relevance of its assistance to better support you?						
SECTION 3 Efficiency of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
3.A.	The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities:						
3.A.1	Export & Market promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.2	Milking & milk handling	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.3	The use of milking parlors	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.4	Animal nutrition	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.5	Animal health	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.6	Genetics & animal reproduction	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.7	The Livestock Field School	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.8	Sanitary measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.9	Safety measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.10	Export compliance measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.11	Milk Handling Practice (or Beef Carcass Handling)	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.12	GAP, GMP & HACCP	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.13	Improving/expanding livestock productivity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.14	Improving/expanding processing capacity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.15	Improving management capacity of my farm or business	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.16	Facilitating access to financial services	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.17	How can the SAFE Program improve the effectiveness of its assistance?						
3.B.1	The program has encouraged participation of women in its activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.B.2	The program has been very effective at reaching women beneficiaries	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.B.3	What could be done to improve women's participation in target value chains?						
3.C.1	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my productivity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.2	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my processing capacity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.3	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my managerial skills	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.4	How can the SAFE Program improve the training approach to better support you?						

SECTION 4 Sustainability of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
4.1	At the end of the program I will be able to continue to apply what I learned with no problem.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	I would like this or a similar program of technical assistance to continue after its scheduled end	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	I would prefer that this or a similar program of assistance is continued by	0	DR Public sector (A)	DR Private sector (B)	DR NGO (C)	Foreign company (D)	
4.4	How can the SAFE Program ensure that this type of assistance is available after their program ends?						

SAFE Program Mid-Term Evaluation Questionnaire - Producers

Instructions: This is an anonymous questionnaire. The facilitator will provide you the anonymous identification number. The match between this number and your name is only known to the facilitator. Please provide information regarding your activity, kind of production and gender. Please give your answers or comments in writing or indicate the extent to which you evaluate the activities/performances of the Exporting Quality & Safety Program on the topics on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (highest). NB: In case you believe the issue is "Not Applicable to Me", please fill in accordingly.

A) DIRECT INTERVIEW		B) PHONE		C) OTHER	
CODE No.:		NAME:			
PROVINCE:		ORGANIZATION:			
MUNICIPALITY:					
GENDER:	A) MALE ____ B) FEMALE ____	DATE:			

INTERVIEWED BENEFICIARY:		
A) MILK PRODUCER	B) BEEF PRODUCER	C) MILK & BEEF PRODUCER
D) EMPLOYEE	E) EXTENSION OFFICER	F) PROCESSOR
G) TRADER	H) TECHNICIAN	I) PRIVATE SECTOR
J) PUBLIC SECTOR	K) CIVIL SOCIETY	L) OTHER ()

SECTION 1 Program Achievements and Challenges		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
1.A.1	The quality of my production has improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.2	The value of my business has increased thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.3	My technical skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.4	My commercial skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.5	Please quantify the improvements due to program activities	0	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
1.B.1	The program has helped me to achieve more than I expected	0	1	2	3	4	5

1.B.2	Please provide more details						
1.C.1	My business has faced major challenges during the last 24 months	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.C.2	Please name some of these challenges, if any						
1.C.3	The program has been able to help me to counter these challenges	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.C.4	How can the SAFE Program further support you in your business challenges?						
1.D1	How can the SAFE Program help you in unexpected situations?						

SECTION 2 Relevance of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
2.A.1	The program has been able to address the core issues of my activity	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.2	The program has helped strengthen my organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.3	How can the SAFE Program improve the relevance of its assistance to better support you?						
SECTION 3 Efficiency of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
3.A.	The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities:						
3.A.1	Export & Market promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.2	Milking & milk handling	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.3	The use of milking parlors	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.4	Animal nutrition	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.5	Animal health	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.6	Genetics & animal reproduction	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.7	The Livestock Field School	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.8	Sanitary measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.9	Safety measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.10	Export compliance measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.11	Milk Handling Practice	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.12	GAP	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.13	Improving/expanding livestock productivity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.14							
3.A.15	Improving management capacity of my farm	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.16	Facilitating access to financial services	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.17	How can the SAFE Program improve the effectiveness of its assistance?						
3.B.1	The program has encouraged participation of women in its activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.B.2	The program has been very effective at reaching women beneficiaries	0	1	2	3	4	5

3.B.3	What could be done to improve women's participation in target value chains?						
3.C.1	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my productivity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.2							
3.C.3	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my managerial skills	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.4	How can the SAFE Program improve the training approach to better support you?						
SECTION 4 Sustainability of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
4.1	At the end of the program I will be able to continue to apply what I learned with no problem.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	I would like this or a similar program of technical assistance to continue after its scheduled end	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	I would prefer that this or a similar program of assistance is continued by	0	DR Public sector (A)	DR Private sector (B)	DR NGO (C)	Foreign company (D)	
4.4	How can the SAFE Program ensure that this type of assistance is available after their program ends?						

SAFE Program Mid-Term Evaluation Questionnaire - Employees

Instructions: This is an anonymous questionnaire. The facilitator will provide you the anonymous identification number. The match between this number and your name is only known to the facilitator. Please provide information regarding your activity, kind of production and gender. Please give your answers or comments in writing or indicate the extent to which you evaluate the activities/performances of the Exporting Quality & Safety Program on the topics on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (highest). NB: In case you believe the issue is "Not Applicable to Me", please fill in accordingly.

A) DIRECT INTERVIEW		B) PHONE		C) OTHER	
CODE No.:		NAME:			
PROVINCE:		ORGANIZATION:			
MUNICIPALITY:					
GENDER:	A) MALE ____ B) FEMALE ____	DATE:			
INTERVIEWED BENEFICIARY:					
A) MILK PRODUCER	B) BEEF PRODUCER	C) MILK & BEEF PRODUCER			
D) EMPLOYEE	E) EXTENSION OFFICER	F) PROCESSOR			
G) TRADER	H) TECHNICIAN	I) PRIVATE SECTOR			
J) PUBLIC SECTOR	K) CIVIL SOCIETY	L) OTHER ()			

SECTION 1 Program Achievements and Challenges		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
1.A.1	The quality of my business has improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.2	The value of my business has increased thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.3	My technical skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.4	My commercial skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.5	Please quantify the improvements due to program activities	0	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
1.B.1	The program has helped me to achieve more than I expected	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.B.2	Please provide more details						
1.C.1							
1.C.2							
1.C.3							
1.C.4	How can the SAFE Program further support you in your business challenges?						
1.D1	How can the SAFE Program help you in unexpected situations?						

SECTION 2 Relevance of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
2.A.1	The program has been able to address the core issues of my activity	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.2	The program has helped strengthen my organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.3	How can the SAFE Program improve the relevance of its assistance to better support you?						
SECTION 3 Efficiency of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
3.A.	The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my work in the following activities:						
3.A.1							
3.A.2							
3.A.3							
3.A.4							
3.A.5							
3.A.6							
3.A.7							
3.A.8	Sanitary measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.9	Safety measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.10							
3.A.11	Milk Handling Practice (or Beef Carcass Handling)	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.12	GMP & HACCP	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.13							
3.A.14	Improving/expanding processing capacity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.15	Improving management capacity of my employer's firm or organization	0	1	2	3	4	5

3.A.16							
3.A.17	How can the SAFE Program improve the effectiveness of its assistance?						
3.B.1	The program has encouraged participation of women in its activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.B.2	The program has been very effective at reaching women beneficiaries	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.B.3	What could be done to improve women's participation in target value chains?						
3.C.1	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my productivity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.2	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my processing capacity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.3							
3.C.4	How can the SAFE Program improve the training approach to better support you?						
SECTION 4 Sustainability of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
4.1	At the end of the program I will be able to continue to apply what I learned with no problem.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	I would like this or a similar program of technical assistance to continue after its scheduled end	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	I would prefer that this or a similar program of assistance is continued by	0	DR Public sector (A)	DR Private sector (B)	DR NGO (C)	Foreign company (D)	
4.4	How can the SAFE Program ensure that this type of assistance is available after their program ends?						

SAFE Program Mid-Term Evaluation Questionnaire – Extension Workers

Instructions: This is an anonymous questionnaire. The facilitator will provide you the anonymous identification number. The match between this number and your name is only known to the facilitator. Please provide information regarding your activity, kind of production and gender. Please give your answers or comments in writing or indicate the extent to which you evaluate the activities/performances of the Exporting Quality & Safety Program on the topics on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (highest). NB: In case you believe the issue is "Not Applicable to Me", please fill in accordingly.

A) DIRECT INTERVIEW		B) ON THE PHONE		C) OTHER	
CODE No.:		NAME:			
PROVINCE:		ORGANIZATION:			
MUNICIPALITY:					
GENDER:	A) MALE ____ B) FEMALE ____	DATE:			
INTERVIEWED BENEFICIARY:					
A) MILK PRODUCER		B) BEEF PRODUCER		C) MILK & BEEF PRODUCER	
D) EMPLOYEE		E) EXTENSION OFFICER		F) PROCESSOR	
G) TRADER		H) TECHNICIAN		I) PRIVATE SECTOR	

J) PUBLIC SECTOR	K) CIVIL SOCIETY	L) OTHER ()
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SECTION 1 Program Achievements and Challenges		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
1.A.1							
1.A.2							
1.A.3	My technical skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.4	My commercial skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.5	Please quantify the improvements due to program activities	0	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
1.B.1	The program has helped me to achieve more than I expected	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.B.2	Please provide more details						
1.C.1							
1.C.2							
1.C.3							
1.C.4							
1.D1							

SECTION 2 Relevance of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
2.A.1	The program has been able to address the core issues of my activity	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.2	The program has helped strengthen my organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.3	How can the SAFE Program improve the relevance of its assistance to better support you?						

SECTION 3 Efficiency of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
3.A.	The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my knowledge in the following activities:						
3.A.1	Export & Market promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.2	Milking & milk handling	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.3	The use of milking parlors	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.4	Animal nutrition	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.5	Animal health	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.6	Genetics & animal reproduction	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.7	The Livestock Field School	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.8	Sanitary measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.9	Safety measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.10	Export compliance measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.11	Milk Handling Practice (or Beef Carcass Handling)	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.12	GAP, GMP & HACCP	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.13	Improving/expanding livestock productivity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.14	Improving/expanding processing capacity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.15	Improving management capacity of my farm	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.16	Facilitating access to financial services	0	1	2	3	4	5

3.A.17	How can the SAFE Program improve the effectiveness of its assistance?						
3.B.1	The program has encouraged participation of women in its activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.B.2	The program has been very effective at reaching women beneficiaries	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.B.3	What could be done to improve women's participation in target value chains?						
3.C.1	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my productivity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.2	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my processing capacity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.3	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my managerial skills	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.4	How can the SAFE Program improve the training approach to better support you?						
SECTION 4 Sustainability of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
4.1	At the end of the program I will be able to continue to apply what I learned with no problem.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	I would like this or a similar program of technical assistance to continue after its scheduled end	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	I would prefer that this or a similar program of assistance is continued by	0	DR Public sector (A)	DR Private sector (B)	DR NGO (C)	Foreign company (D)	
4.4	How can the SAFE Program ensure that this type of assistance is available after their program ends?						

SAFE Program Mid-Term Evaluation Questionnaire - Processors

Instructions: This is an anonymous questionnaire. The facilitator will provide you the anonymous identification number. The match between this number and your name is only known to the facilitator. Please provide information regarding your activity, kind of production and gender. Please give your answers or comments in writing or indicate the extent to which you evaluate the activities/performances of the Exporting Quality & Safety Program on the topics on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (highest). NB: In case you believe the issue is "Not Applicable to Me", please fill in accordingly.

A) DIRECT INTERVIEW		B) PHONE		C) OTHER	
CODE No.:		NAME:			
PROVINCE:		ORGANIZATION:			
MUNICIPALITY:					
GENDER:	A) MALE ____ B) FEMALE ____	DATE:			
INTERVIEWED BENEFICIARY:					
A) MILK PRODUCER		B) BEEF PRODUCER		C) MILK & BEEF PRODUCER	

D) EMPLOYEE	E) EXTENSION OFFICER	F) PROCESSOR
G) TRADER	H) TECHNICIAN	I) PRIVATE SECTOR
J) PUBLIC SECTOR	K) CIVIL SOCIETY	L) OTHER ()

SECTION 1 Program Achievements and Challenges		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
1.A.1	The quality of my business has improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.2	The value of my business has increased thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.3	My technical skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.4	My commercial skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.5	Please quantify the improvements due to program activities	0	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
1.B.1	The program has helped me to achieve more than I expected	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.B.2	Please provide more details						
1.C.1	My business has faced major challenges during the last 24 months	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.C.2	Please name some of these challenges, if any						
1.C.3	The program has been able to help me to counter these challenges	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.C.4	How can the SAFE Program further support you in your business challenges?						
1.D1	How can the SAFE Program help you in unexpected situations?						

SECTION 2 Relevance of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
2.A.1	The program has been able to address the core issues of my activity	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.2	The program has helped strengthen my organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.3	How can the SAFE Program improve the relevance of its assistance to better support you?						

SECTION 3 Efficiency of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
3.A.	The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities:						
3.A.1	Export & Market promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.2							
3.A.3							
3.A.4							
3.A.5							
3.A.6							

3.A.7							
3.A.8	Sanitary measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.9	Safety measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.10	Export compliance measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.11	Milk Handling Practice (or Beef Carcass Handling)	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.12	GAP, GMP & HACCP	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.13							
3.A.14	Improving/expanding processing capacity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.15	Improving management capacity of my business	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.16	Facilitating access to financial services	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.17	How can the SAFE Program improve the effectiveness of its assistance?						
3.B.1	The program has encouraged participation of women in its activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.B.2	The program has been very effective at reaching women beneficiaries	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.B.3	What could be done to improve women's participation in target value chains?						
3.C.1	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my productivity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.2	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my processing capacity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.3	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my managerial skills	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.4	How can the SAFE Program improve the training approach to better support you?						
SECTION 4 Sustainability of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
4.1	At the end of the program I will be able to continue to apply what I learned with no problem.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	I would like this or a similar program of technical assistance to continue after its scheduled end	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	I would prefer that this or a similar program of assistance is continued by	0	DR Public sector (A)	DR Private sector (B)	DR NGO (C)		Foreign company (D)
4.4	How can the SAFE Program ensure that this type of assistance is available after their program ends?						

SAFE Program Mid-Term Evaluation Questionnaire - Traders

Instructions: This is an anonymous questionnaire. The facilitator will provide you the anonymous identification number. The match between this number and your name is only known to the facilitator. Please provide information regarding your activity, kind of production and gender. Please give your answers or comments in writing or indicate the extent to which you evaluate the activities/performances of the Exporting Quality & Safety Program on the topics on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (highest). NB: In case you believe the issue is "Not Applicable to Me", please fill in accordingly.

A) DIRECT INTERVIEW		B) PHONE		C) OTHER	
CODE No.:		NAME:			
PROVINCE:		ORGANIZATION:			

MUNICIPALITY:			
GENDER:	A) MALE ____ B) FEMALE ____	DATE:	

INTERVIEWED BENEFICIARY:

A) MILK PRODUCER	B) BEEF PRODUCER	C) MILK & BEEF PRODUCER
D) EMPLOYEE	E) EXTENSION OFFICER	F) PROCESSOR
G) TRADER	H) TECHNICIAN	I) PRIVATE SECTOR
J) PUBLIC SECTOR	K) CIVIL SOCIETY	L) OTHER ()

SECTION 1 Program Achievements and Challenges		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
1.A.1	The quality of my business has improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.2	The value of my business has increased thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.3	My technical skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.4	My commercial skills have improved thanks to program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.A.5	Please quantify the improvements due to program activities	0	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
1.B.1	The program has helped me to achieve more than I expected	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.B.2	Please provide more details						
1.C.1	My business has faced major challenges during the last 24 months	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.C.2	Please name some of these challenges, if any						
1.C.3	The program has been able to help me to counter these challenges	0	1	2	3	4	5
1.C.4	How can the SAFE Program further support you in your business challenges?						
1.D1	How can the SAFE Program help you in unexpected situations?						

SECTION 2 Relevance of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
2.A.1	The program has been able to address the core issues of my activity	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.2	The program has helped strengthen my organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.A.3	How can the SAFE Program improve the relevance of its assistance to better support you?						

SECTION 3 Efficiency of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
3.A.	The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities:						
3.A.1	Export & Market promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5

3.A2							
3.A.3							
3.A.4							
3.A.5							
3.A.6							
3.A.7							
3.A.8	Sanitary measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.9	Safety measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.10	Export compliance measures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.11							
3.A.12	Good Commercial Practices & HACCP	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.13		0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.14		0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.15	Improving management capacity of my firm/business	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.16	Facilitating access to financial services	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.A.17	How can the SAFE Program improve the effectiveness of its assistance?						
3.B.1	The program has encouraged participation of women in its activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.B.2	The program has been very effective at reaching women beneficiaries	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.B.3	What could be done to improve women's participation in target value chains?						
3.C.1	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my productivity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.2	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my processing capacity	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.3	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my managerial skills	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.C.4	How can the SAFE Program improve the training approach to better support you?						
SECTION 4 Sustainability of Interventions		Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agree
4.1	At the end of the program I will be able to continue to apply what I learned with no problem.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	I would like this or a similar program of technical assistance to continue after its scheduled end	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	I would prefer that this or a similar program of assistance is continued by	0	DR Public sector (A)	DR Private sector (B)	DR NGO (C)	Foreign company (D)	
4.4	How can the SAFE Program ensure that this type of assistance is available after their program ends?						

Table 41: FGD KII Guide

I. FGD/KII Guide – Consent Statement

Interview date and location:

Interviewer:

Consent Statement: Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is [NAME]. I am a researcher from an organization called J.E. Austin Inc., a company that is based in the United States. Our team is in the Dominican Republic to conduct a study about the SAFE project, which was funded by the United States Department of Agriculture Food for Progress program.

We would like to conduct a brief interview today to learn about your perspectives on project performance. This information will be used in report for USDA that will be publicly available. It is important to understand that while we would like your help in this study, you do not have to take part if you do not want to, and you do not have to answer any questions if you do not feel comfortable doing so.

The objective of this research is to improve the performance of projects like SAFE. The information may be used by other organizations as well.

The interview is expected to take about 60 minutes.

Do you have any questions? You may ask questions at any time. If you have questions or concerns about the research after we leave today, you can contact [insert ET name and contact information].

By saying “yes,” and participating in this study, you are indicating that you have heard this consent statement, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation and voluntarily consent to participate.

Will you participate in this interview? You may answer yes or no.

- ☐ Yes, I will participate
- ☐ No, I will not participate

SAFE MTE Dominican Republic KII FGD Guide

NAME:

ORGANIZATION:

POSITION:

NAME:

ORGANIZATION:

POSITION:

- 1. Please describe the history of your organization and its function:**
- 2. Please describe your experience and role in the SAFE project:**
- 3. Please describe the SAFE activities and indicators you have experience with:**
- 4. Please describe the effectiveness / impact of these activities:**
- 5. Please describe changes and modifications to the activities you have experience with (if any):**
- 6. How did these changes and modifications improve (or not) the impact of the SAFE project in terms of productivity / trade:**
- 7. Please describe successes and challenges you encountered in your role with the SAFE project:**
- 8. Please describe lessons learned (if any) you have gained during your experience with the SAFE project:**

ANNEX G. INDICATOR ANALYSIS

The ET has analyzed performance against each indicator, so that data collection can provide information on the following questions:

1. What have been the main reasons for progress achievements against activity and objective indicator targets?
2. What are recommended course corrections that will improve the likelihoods of the project reaching its activity and objective indicator targets?
3. For targets not on track to be met, are there changes to initial assumptions or within the operating context that warrants review, and which are recommended (this may include a recommendation for a revision of the targets)?

To implement this review, the ET requested that NCBA CLUSA transfer required documents to the ET via Dropbox, which the agency did prior to seasonal holidays in December 2018. Subsequently, in early February 2019, the SAFE team provided an update of progress achieved during FY 2017 and FY2018, and the ET accordingly used these new data for analysis, though data for some indicators still did not add up correctly. Finally, the SAFE team supplied a new set of data and suggestions for target modifications on March 15th.

Therefore, this attachment lists the Program Performance Indicator data as presented in Modification II Attachment E, which became effective on October 18th, 2018. This Modification Amendment lists a total of 101 indicators including 31 Result indicators and 70 Activity Indicators. It also lists End of Project Targets for each Result Indicator (RI) and annual (i.e. end of each FY) ad life of project targets for each Activity Indicator (AI). This analysis evaluated the performance of each RI by estimating the degree to which they are on track to reach end of project targets. As for AIs, this analysis evaluated performance against annual (i.e. FY) targets as well against mid-point targets.

Although both Modification II of Attachment E and Project Status Comparison Outcome data differentiate between Result and Activity Indicators, neither of them ordered these as progressive numbers (i.e. RI 1, RI 2, and so on). Therefore, the ET maintained the ordering provided by the PROGIS system to avoid arbitrary classification of the indicators. However, PROGIS does not formally distinguish between 'Result' and 'Activity' indicators. However, the ET has done so to improve clarification and understanding of the analysis. Moreover, since the PROGIS system only includes 88 Indicators, the ET has classified missing indicators taking in consideration existing classification criteria. Moreover, indicator performance data provided by the PROGIS system is generally not up-to-date and/or incorrect. As for Project Status Comparison Outcome, this still includes a significant portion of indicators that were eliminated in subsequent amendments due because the USDA FAIS platform does not allow their elimination if previous data was reported.

In consideration of the above issues, the ET has maintained (as long as possible) the PROGIS classification but utilized data provided in both Modification II of Attachment E and the Project Status Comparison Outcome for analyzing the performance of the indicators during Program implementation. Only where relevant data was missing, the ET used data from PROGIS (for example, the initial estimation of the volume of milk sales in RI 9, modified according to information supplied in February and March 2019). Therefore, this indicator analysis used the new data supplied by the SAFE program on March 15th, 2019, except for progress achieved for indicators RI 1 and RI 9 for which a more conservative estimation (but still based on data initially supplied by the SAFE program).

A. SAFE PROGRAM RESULT INDICATORS ANALYSIS

A total of 31 Result Indicators are listed in Modification II, but only 30 of these are currently calculated by the SAFE project. The missing Result Indicator measures the performance of “Number of events supported by USDA aimed at promoting private-public partnerships for improving beef and dairy developments at the farm, processors and exporter”.

This analysis found that six Result Indicators out of 31, i.e. 19%, have already reached or surpassed their end of project target and an additional six RI have achieved between 50% and 99% of that target. Therefore 39 % of RIs are on track for reaching their end of project target. However, four RI (13%) have a score between 50 and 25% and as many as 15 RI (48%) are well below one fourth of end of project target. A visual representation of the performance of the Result Indicators is provided in the table below, while the following table provides a quantitative overview of progress against end of progress targets for each RI.

Table 42: Result Indicators –Performance Against End of Project Targets

RI #	Result Indicators (RI)	Complete Against Target (%)
RI 5	Total number of people who benefit directly as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 17) (New)	161%
RI 20	Number of private companies, producer organizations, water user associations, women's groups, business and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 7) (continuing)	129%
RI 21	Number of private companies, producer organizations, water user associations, women's groups, business and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 7) (joint)	124%
RI 7	Value of investment / private sector resources that supports research / extension of agriculture that is consistent with government priorities as a result of USDA assistance	118%
RI 8	Number of policies, regulations and / or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance (Stage 5) (FFPr indicator 12)	117%

RI 23	Number of private companies, producer organizations, water user associations, women's groups, business and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 7) (Farmers organizations)	82%
RI 25	Number of meetings on the regulatory policy and the regulatory framework for beef for public discussion and / or consultation with interested parties on the new policy or the new regulation / administrative procedure reviewed	77%
RI 4	Total number of people who benefit directly as a result of USDA assistance(FFPr Indicator 17) (Male)	75%
RI 22	Number of private companies, producer organizations, water user associations, women's groups, business and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied improved techniques and technologies as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 7) (New)	74%
RI 3	Total number of people who benefit directly as a result of USDA assistance(FFPr Indicator 17) (Female)	72%
RI 12	Number of hectares under improved techniques or technologies as a result of USDA assistance(FFPr Indicator 1) (new)	69%
RI 6	Number of private sector institutions that are providing monetary or in-kind resources to support agricultural productivity (for example, in areas that include research, market information, agricultural inputs, etc.) as a result of USDA Assistance	55%
RI 10	Number of farmers in the dairy and / or beef sector who make agricultural decisions based on economic considerations or analyzes as a result of USDA assistance	47%
RI 101	Number of events supported by USDA aimed at promoting public-private partnerships to improve the dairy and meat chain at the farm, processor and exporter level.	38%
RI 11	Number of hectares under improved techniques or technologies as a result of USDA assistance(FFPr Indicator 1) (continuing)	34%
RI 13	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (male)	28%
RI 14	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (new)	23%
RI 19	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (other-animal feed)	17%
RI 2	Total number of people who benefit directly as a result of USDA assistance(FFPr Indicator 17) (Continuing)	16%
RI 9	"Volume of milk supplied (millions of liters) by farmers to the USDA milk collection centers"	15%
RI 15	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (continuing)	13%
RI 30	Number of companies that access credit through formal financial products as a result of USDA assistance	10%
RI 18	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (other breed genetics)	9%
RI 1	Percentage increase in the average milk produced per cow per day	6%
RI 27	Number of milk collection centers with USDA assistance using improved equipment to collect and cool milk	4%
RI 26	Number of milk producers using improved milking and milk handling techniques as a result of USDA assistance	2%
RI 17	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (other-animal health)	2%

RI 16	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (female)	1%
RI 24	Percent increase in the volume of grade A milk sold to processors by the collection centers supported by USDA	0%
RI 28	Number of new markets to which beef is exported	0%
RI 29	Number of signed agreements (Contracts, Memoranda of Understanding, etc.) between beef exporters or dairy farmers and buyers in the United States as a result of USDA assistance	0%

Color Key:

Green highlight	Achieved or surpassed targets
Yellow highlight	On track to achieve targets
Red highlight	Has not met targets

2. ANALYSIS OF SAFE PROGRAM ACTIVITY INDICATORS

70 Activity Indicators are listed in Modification II of Annex E, but only 68 have been tracked by the SAFE team (just 58 of them are currently in the PROGIS system). The two missing AIs are “Number of individuals who have implemented improved farm management practices (governance, administration or financial management) as a result of USDA assistance (farmers)” (AI 96) and “Total Number of individuals who benefiting directly as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 17) (continuing)” (AI 100). For both of these indicators, performance estimations were provided by the SAFE team. Therefore, they are included in this analysis.

More than half of the AIs have performed at or above their mid-point targets (39 AI or 56%), while eight AIs or 11% have performed below target but above 50% of annual target; the remaining one third of AIs (23 indicators) are well below mid-point targets. A visual representation of the performance of the AIs is provided in the figure below, while the following table provides a quantitative overview of progress against mid-point targets for each AI.

Table 43: Activity Indicators - Performance Against Mid-Point Targets

AI #	Activity Indicators (AIs)	Complete Against Target (%)
AI 78	Number of people who have received short-term training in agricultural sector productivity and food security as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 16) (civil society)	8,410%
AI 42	Number of employees of meat processors trained in sanitary systems and standards	1147%
AI 61	Number of training sessions on access to financial services for post-harvest technologies provided to companies	825%
AI 76	Number of people who have received short-term training in agricultural sector productivity and food security as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 16) (people from companies)	717%
AI 88	Value of new public and private partnerships formed as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 9)	477%
AI 41	Number of beef processors demonstrating improved SPS control systems as a result of USDA assistance.	400%

AI 33	Number of people reached through the public information campaign of the Seal of Quality	392%
AI 31	Number of actors in the value chain that participate in the Seal of Quality	351%
AI 39	Number of employees responsible for the processing of dairy products trained in sanitary standards	277%
AI 98	Total Number of individuals who benefiting directly as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 17) (new)	241%
AI 60	Number of jobs attributed to USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 15) (Female)	233%
AI 70	Number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 16) (total)	194%
AI 71	Number of people who have received short-term training in agricultural sector productivity and food security as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 16) (female)	194%
AI 77	Number of people who have received short-term training in agricultural sector productivity and food security as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 16) (government)	193%
AI 97	Total Number of individuals who benefiting directly as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 17) (male)	184%
AI 72	Number of people who have received short-term training in agricultural sector productivity and food security as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 16) (Male)	179%
AI 57	Number of jobs attributed to USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 15)	176%
AI 59	Number of jobs attributed to USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 15) (male)	164%
AI 38	Number of members of associations of dairy producers trained in the establishment / management of milk collection centers	164%
AI 40	Number of meat establishments audited for compliance with health standards	160%
AI 99	Total Number of individuals who benefiting directly as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 17) (female)	152%
AI 73	Number of people who have received short-term training in agricultural sector productivity and food security as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 16) (New)	152%
AI 48	Number of individuals trained in policy analysis and support	143%
AI 75	Number of people who have received short-term training in agricultural sector productivity and food security as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 16) (farmers)	137%
AI 43	Number of training sessions in milking and milk management carried out for milk producers	137%
AI 81	Number of value chain meetings held between buyers and sellers in the dairy and beef sectors	133%
AI 34	Number of extension agents trained in improved agricultural techniques and technologies	131%
AI 84	Number of events supported by USDA aimed at promoting public-private partnerships to improve the dairy and meat chain at the farm, processor and exporter level.	125%
AI 82	Number of individuals who indirectly benefit from interventions funded by USDA (FFPr indicator 18)	116%
AI 66	Number of co-financing granted to groups of producers / processors of dairy products to establish or improve milk collection centers	111%
AI 37	Number of milk producers that supply grade "A" milk to milk collection centers supported by USDA	109%

AI 79	Number of productive demonstrations of meat and milk established or improved with USDA support	107%
AI 69	Value of co-financing granted to beef processors to improve beef processing infrastructure related to sanitary control	103%
AI 44	Number of milk producers trained in milking and milk management	100%
AI 45	Number of dairy processing facilities audited for compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary standards	100%
AI 46	Number of completed evaluations of food safety regulations and systems	100%
AI 47	Number of training sessions in policy analysis and support provided for individuals	100%
AI 68	Number of co-financing granted to processing companies of beef to improve meat processing infrastructure in health systems	100%
AI 80	Number of international trade missions carried out with agricultural exporters and foreign buyers	100%
AI 86	Number of dairy extension agents from the private sector that support farmers in association with government extension services	95%
AI 67	Value of co-financing provided to milk-producing groups to establish or improve milk collection centers	86%
AI 89	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (male)	72%
AI 100	Total Number of individuals who benefiting directly as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 17) (continuing)	63%
AI 74	Number of people who have received short-term training in agricultural sector productivity and food security as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 16) (continuing)	56%
AI 90	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (new)	51%
AI 91	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (continuing)	50%
AI 95	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (other-animal feed)	44%
AI 83	Sales value of project beneficiaries (FFPr Indicator 13) (US\$ million)	41%
AI 87	Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 8)	40%
AI 49	Number of business plans produced for meat and milk with USDA assistance	35%
AI 53	Number of individuals who have implemented improved farm management practices (governance, administration or financial management) as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 3) (government staff)	33%
AI 62	Value of the Loans provided as a result of the USDA Assistance (FFPr Indicator 6) (Male)	26%
AI 55	Number of individuals receiving financial services as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 4) (Female)	25%
AI 94	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (other breed genetics)	23%
AI 51	Number of individuals who have implemented improved farm management practices (governance, administration or financial management) as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 3) (Male)	20%
AI 35	Number of co-financing granted to companies (OP, processors of dairy products and meat processors) to establish or improve an extension system	17%
AI 64	Value of the Loans provided as a result of the USDA Assistance (FFPr Indicator 6) (joint)	16%

AI 54	Number of individuals who have implemented improved farm management practices (governance, administration or financial management) as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 3) (Total)	16%
AI 58	Number of individuals receiving financial services as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 4) (Male)	11%
AI 56	Number of individuals receiving financial services as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 4) (joint)	11%
AI 36	Value of co-financing granted to companies (OP, dairy processors and meat processors) to establish or improve an extension system	8%
AI 96	Number of individuals who have implemented improved farm management practices (governance, administration or financial management) as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 3) (farmers)	8%
AI 85	Volume of commodities (metric tons) sold by project beneficiaries (FFPr Indicator 14)	7%
AI 93	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (other-animal health)	5%
AI 52	Number of individuals who have implemented improved farm management practices (governance, administration or financial management) as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 3) (Female)	5%
AI 92	Number of individuals who have applied new improved techniques as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr indicator 2) (female)	3%
AI 65	Number of loans disbursed as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 5)	3%
AI 50	Number of individuals who have implemented improved farm management practices (governance, administration or financial management) as a result of USDA assistance (FFPr Indicator 3) (people from companies)	2%
AI 63	Value of the Loans provided as a result of the USDA Assistance (FFPr Indicator 6) (female)	2%
AI 32	Number of products that use the seal of quality in their commercialization	0%

Color Key:

Green highlight	Achieved or surpassed targets
Yellow highlight	On track to achieve targets
Red highlight	Has not met targets

ANNEX H. SURVEY RESULTS

I. Overall Survey Results

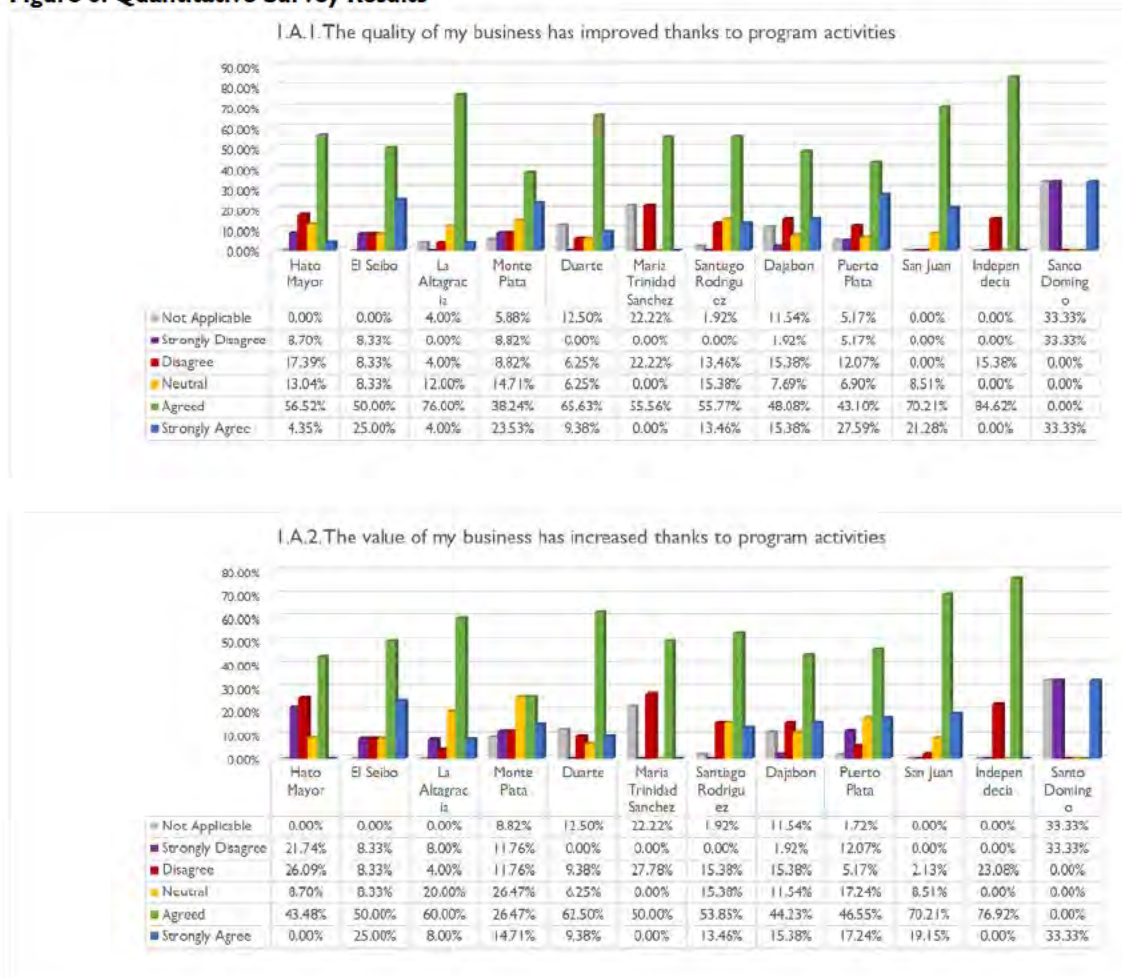
Overall results of the survey are shown in the table below. For each question/statement, column one demonstrates the percentage of beneficiaries that provided answers to a given question, while column two provides an average 'score' calculated according to the response provided for a given statement (1–5, where '5' indicates that the respondent strongly agree with the statement, while '1' indicates strong disagreement. Thus, an average score above '3' indicates positive perception. Graphic representations of results by province are provided in the subsequent tables in this Annex.

Table 44: Overall Survey Results

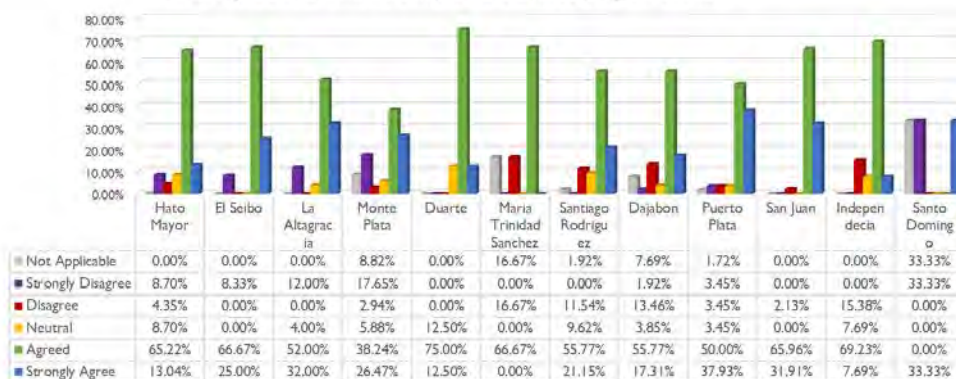
SECTION 1: Program Achievements and Challenges		Beneficiaries answering (%)	Average score
I.A.1	The quality of my business has improved thanks to program activities	94%	3,75
I.A.2	The value of my business has increased thanks to program activities	95%	3,58
I.A.3	My technical skills have improved thanks to program activities	96%	3,92
I.A.4	My commercial skills have improved thanks to program activities	96%	3,51
I.A.5	Please quantify the improvements due to program activities	81%	2,10
I.B.1	The program has helped me to achieve more than I expected	95%	3,39
I.B.2	Please provide more details	80%	
I.C.1	My business has faced major challenges during the last 24 months	89%	3,41
I.C.2	Please name some of these challenges, if any	72%	
I.C.3	The program has been able to help me to counter these challenges	72%	2,64
I.C.4	How can the SAFE Program further support you in your business challenges?	98%	
I.C.5	How can the SAFE Program help you in unexpected situations?	96%	
SECTION 2: Relevance of Interventions			
2.A.1	The program has addressed the core issues of my activity	93%	3,43
2.A.2	The program has helped strengthen my farm/business/association	96%	3,57
2.A.3	How can the SAFE Program improve the relevance of its assistance to better support you?	99%	
SECTION 3: Effectiveness of Interventions			
3.A.	The SAFE project has been effective in improving my business in the following activities:		
3.A.1	Export & Market promotion	95%	3,31
3.A.2	Milking & milk handling	91%	3,80
3.A.3	The use of milking parlors	90%	3,32
3.A.4	Animal nutrition	93%	3,54
3.A.5	Animal health	93%	3,67
3.A.6	Genetics & animal reproduction	93%	3,41
3.A.7	The Livestock Field School	93%	3,49
3.A.8	Sanitary measures	96%	3,88
3.A.9	Safety measures	96%	3,88
3.A.10	Export compliance measures	93%	3,46
3.A.11	Milk Handling Practice (or Beef Carcass Handling)	94%	3,77
3.A.12	GAP, GMP & HACCP	96%	3,44
3.A.13	Improving/expanding livestock productivity	95%	3,57
3.A.14	Improving/expanding processing capacity	5%	3,65
3.A.15	Improving management capacity of my farm or business	95%	3,61
3.A.16	Facilitating access to financial services	95%	2,52
3.A.17	How can the SAFE Program improve the effectiveness of its assistance?	96%	

3.B.1	The program has encouraged participation of women in its activities	96%	3,47
3.B.2	The program has been very effective at reaching women beneficiaries	96%	3,32
3.B.3	What could be done to improve women's participation in target value chains?	96%	
3.C.1	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my productivity	96%	3,66
3.C.2	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my processing capacity	5%	3,72
3.C.3	The training approach has been very good at enhancing my managerial skills	95%	3,63
3.C.4	How can the SAFE Program improve the training approach to better support you?	95%	
SECTION 4: Sustainability of Interventions			
4.1	At the end of the project I will be able to continue to apply what I learned with no problem.	95%	4,08
4.2	I would like this or a similar project of technical assistance to continue after its scheduled end	96%	4,22
4.3	I would prefer that this or a similar program of assistance is continued	93%	
4.4	How can the SAFE Program ensure that this type of assistance is available after the project ends?	93%	

Figure 6: Quantitative Survey Results



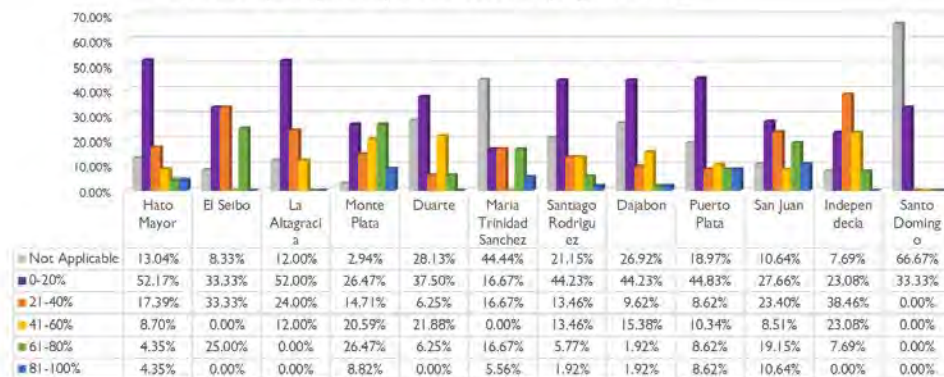
I.A.3. My technical skills have improved thanks to program activities



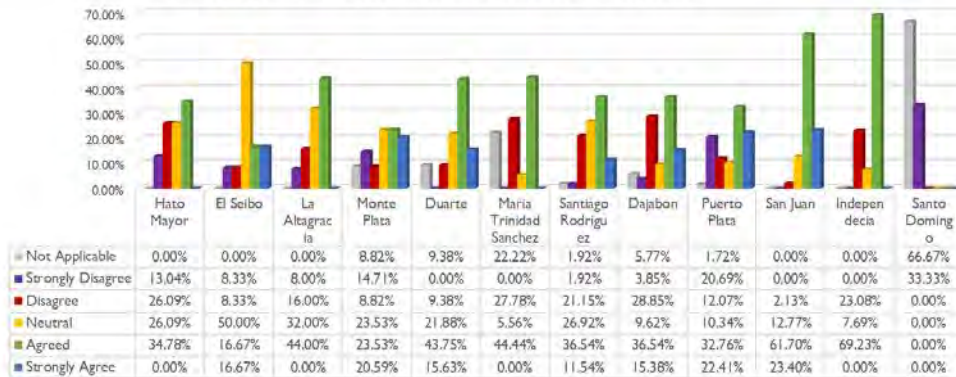
I.A.4. My commercial skills have improved thanks to program activities



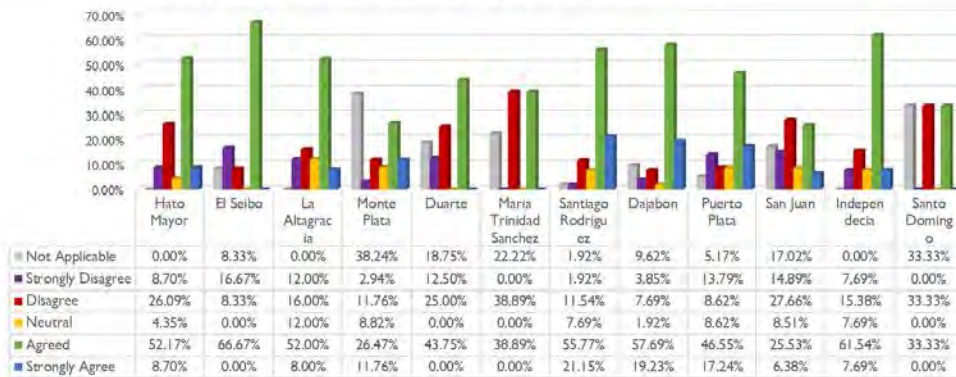
I.A.5 Please quantify the improvements due to program activities



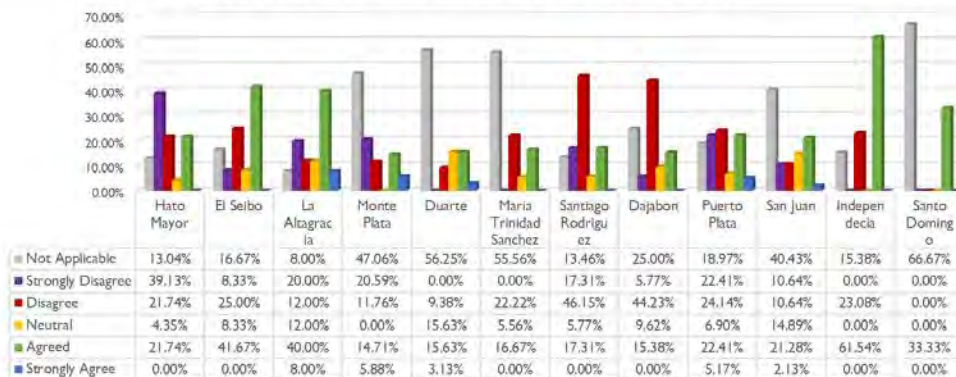
I.B.1. The program has helped me to achieve more than I expected



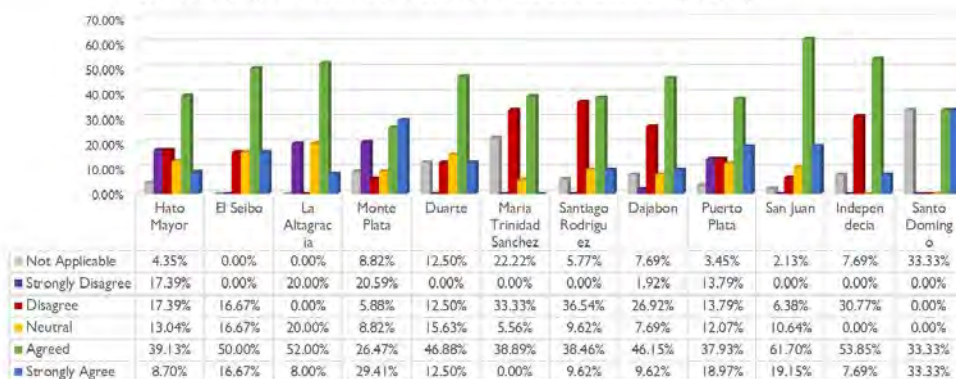
I.C.1. My business has faced major challenges during the last 24 months



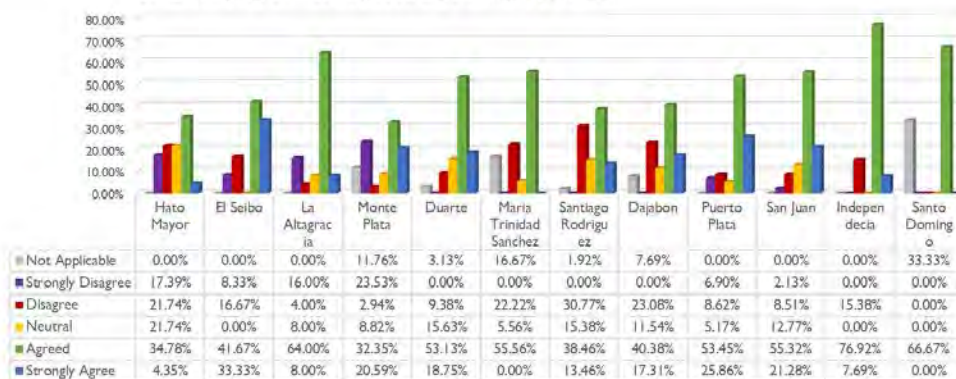
I.C.3. The program has been able to help me to counter these challenges



2.A.1. The program has been able to address the core issues of my activity



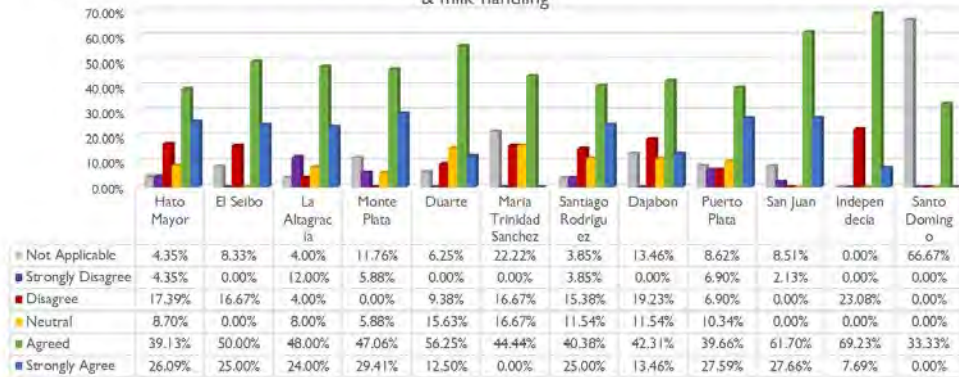
2.A.2. The program has helped strengthen my organization



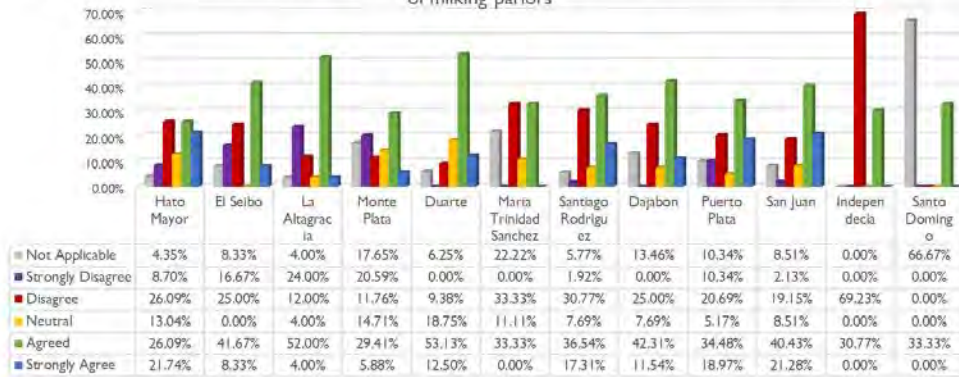
3.A.1. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: Export & Market promotion



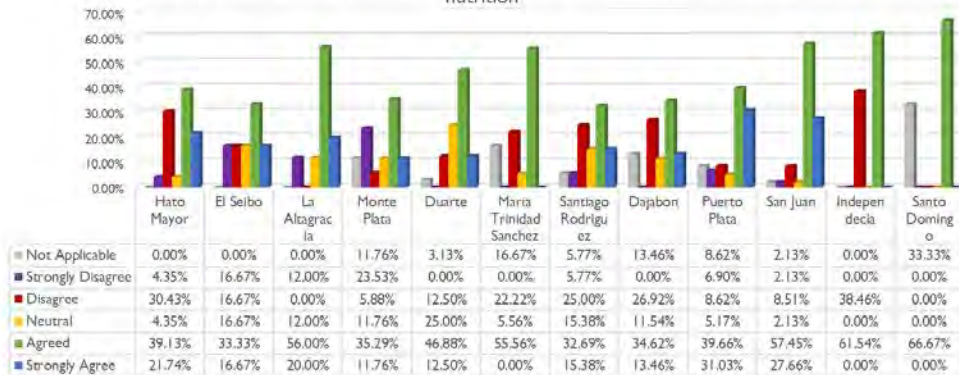
3.A.2. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: Milking & milk handling



3.A.3. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: The use of milking parlors



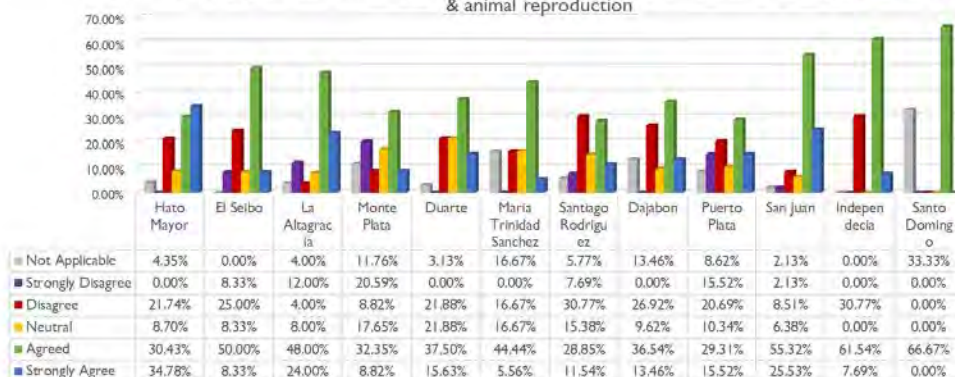
3.A.4. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: Animal nutrition



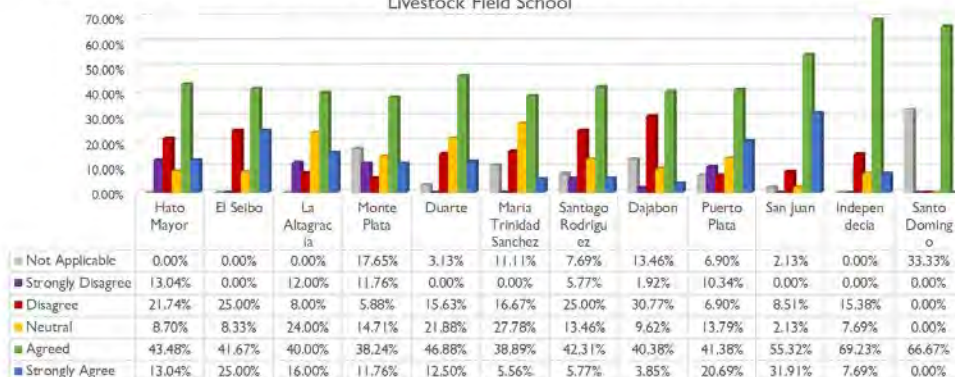
3.A.5. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: Animal health



3.A.6. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: Genetics & animal reproduction



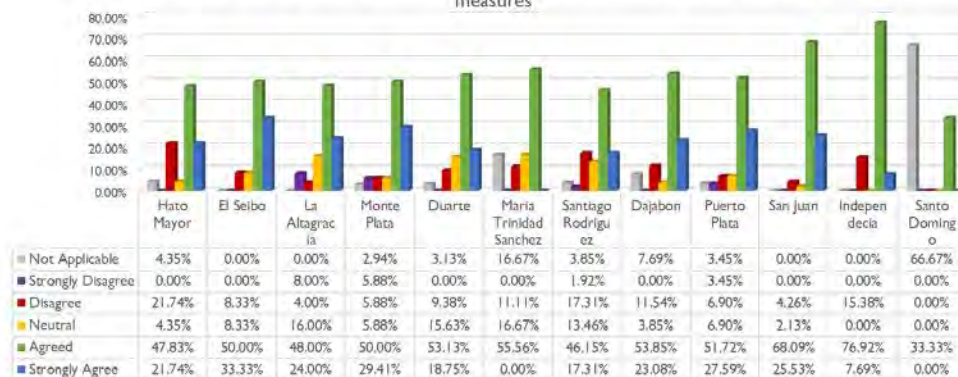
3.A.7. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: The Livestock Field School



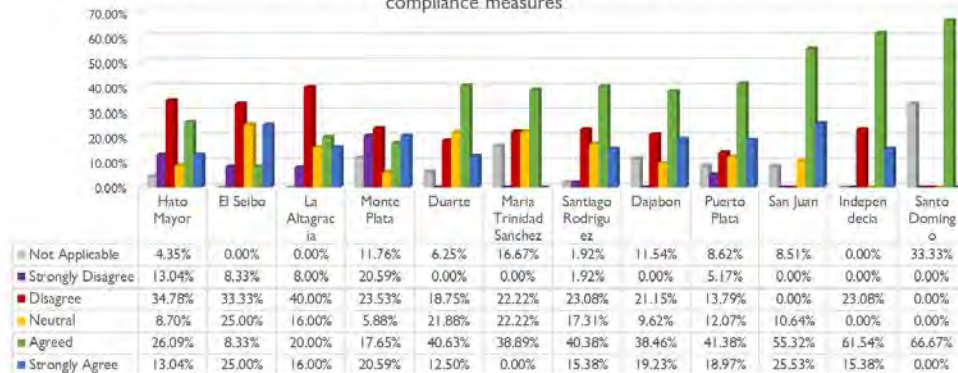
3.A.8. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: Sanitary measures



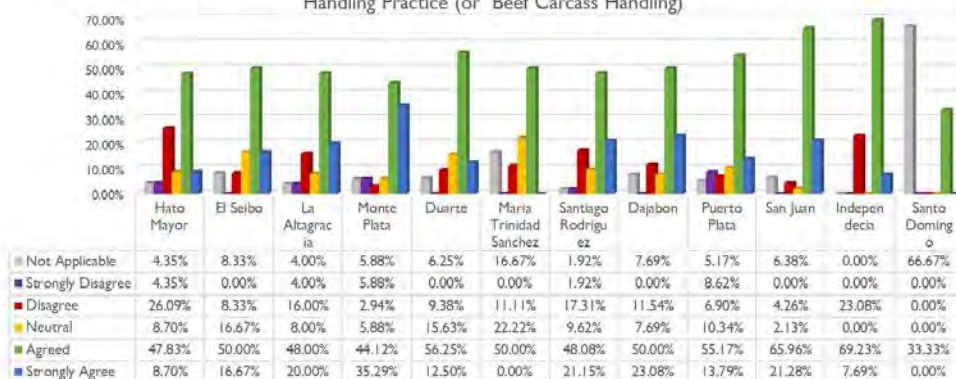
3.A.9. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: Safety measures



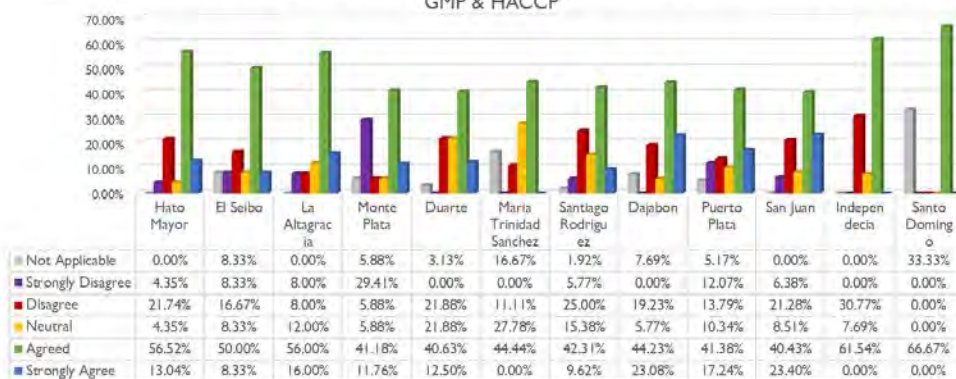
3.A.10. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: Export compliance measures



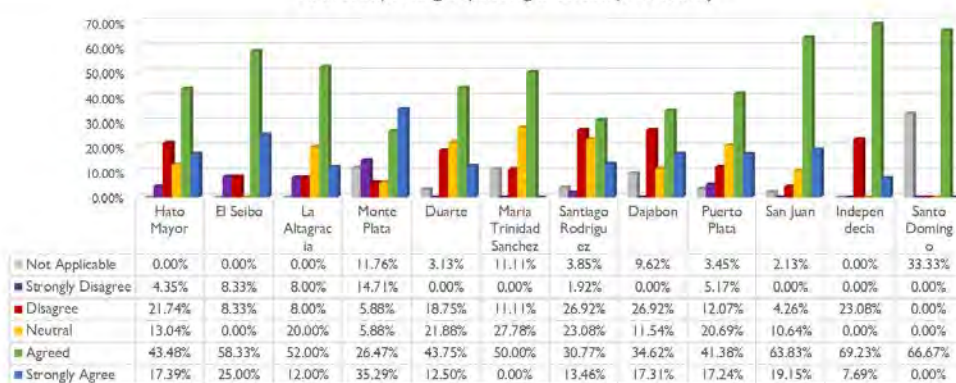
3.A.11. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: Milk Handling Practice (or Beef Carcass Handling)



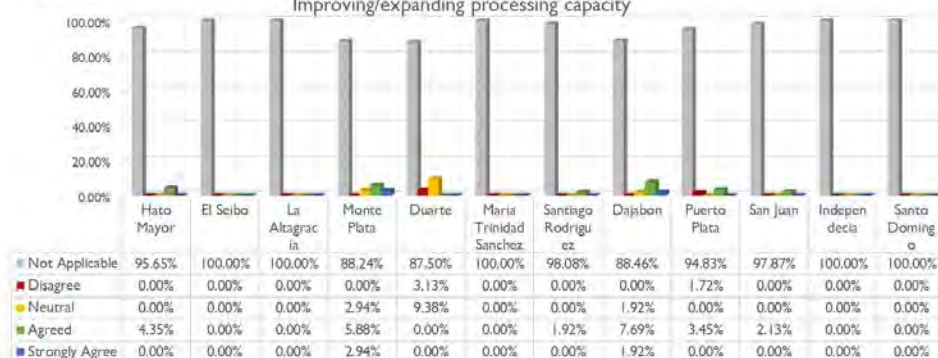
3.A.12. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities: GAP, GMP & HACCP



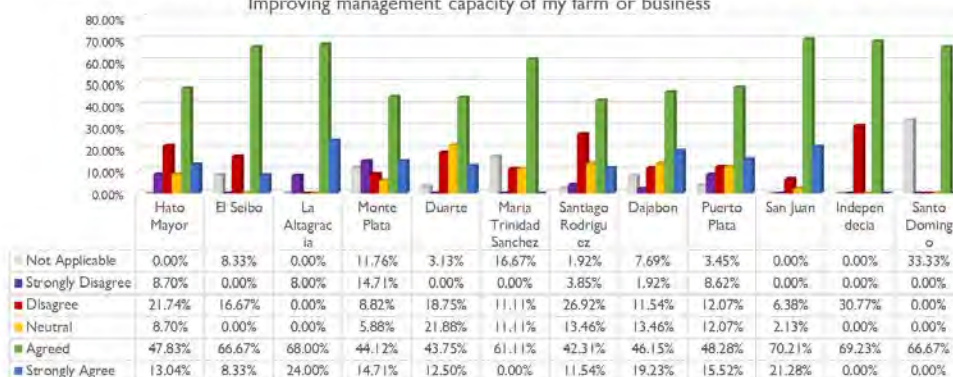
3.A.13. Improving/expanding livestock productivity



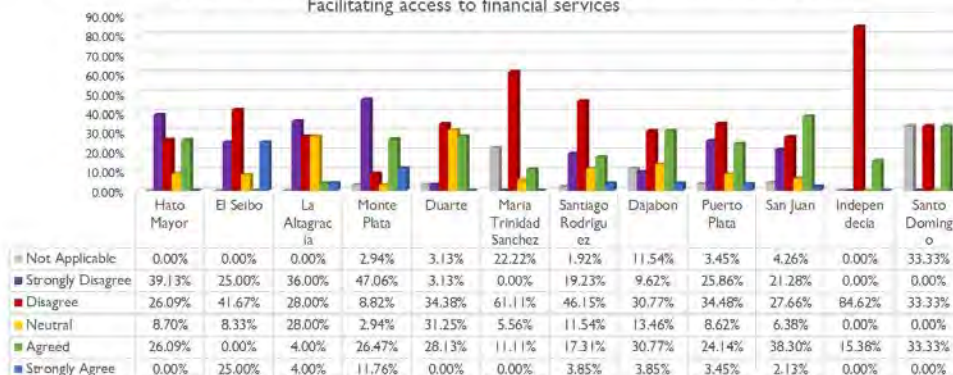
3.A.14. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities:
Improving/expanding processing capacity



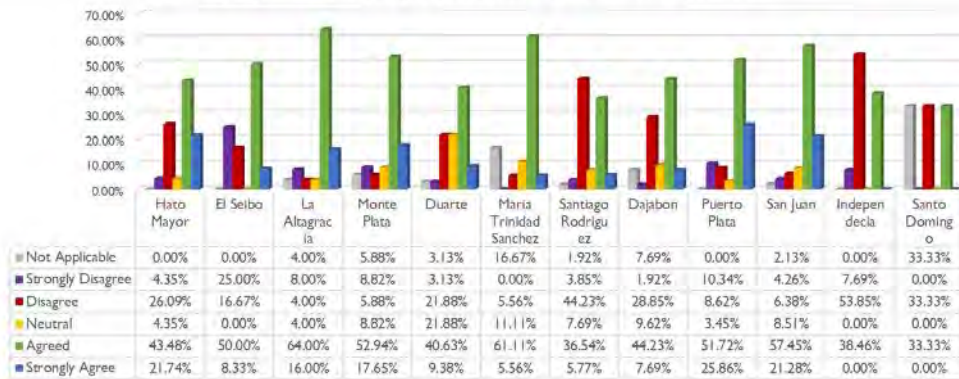
3.A.15. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities:
Improving management capacity of my farm or business



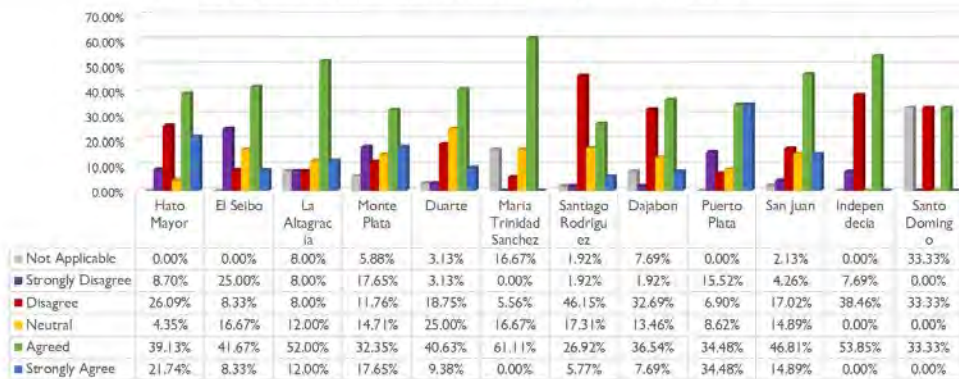
3.A.16. The SAFE program has been very effective in improving my business in the following activities:
Facilitating access to financial services



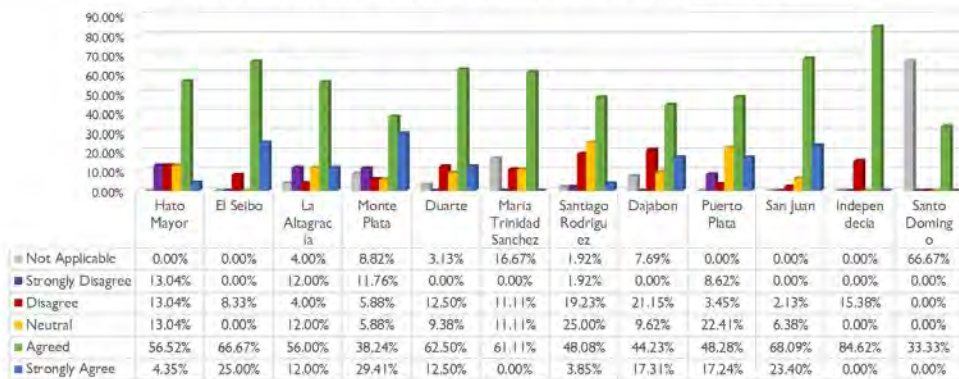
3.B.1. The program has encouraged participation of women in its activities



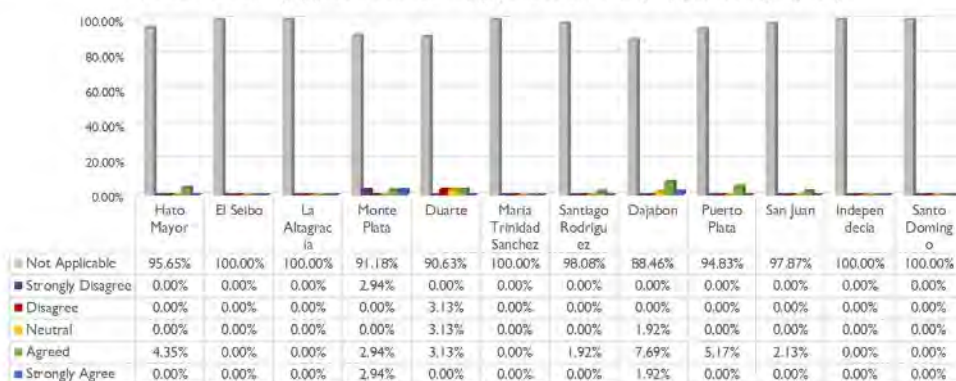
3.B.2. The program has been very effective at reaching women beneficiaries



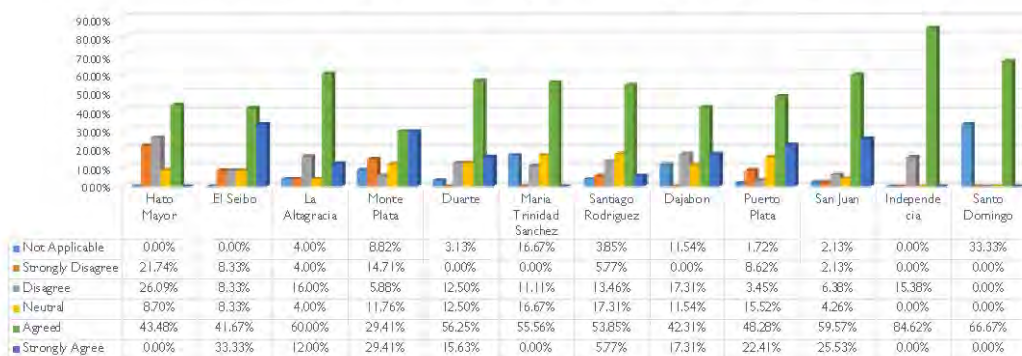
3.C.1. The training approach has been very good at enhancing my productivity



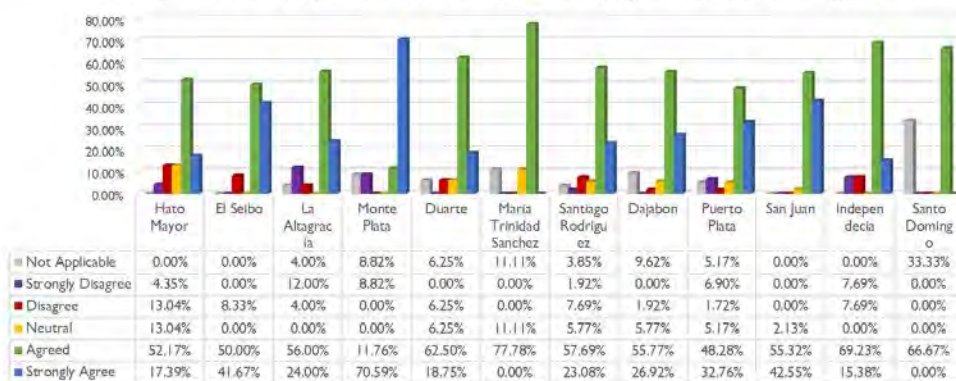
3.C.2.The training approach has been very good at enhancing my processing capacity



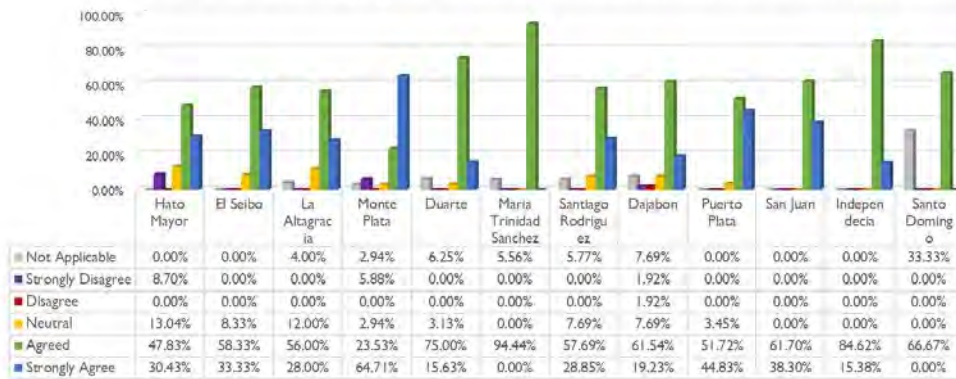
3.C.3.The training approach has been very good at enhancing my managerial skills



4.1.At the end of the program I will be able to continue to apply what I learned with no problem.



4.2. I would like this or a similar program of technical assistance to continue after its scheduled end



4.3. I would prefer that this or a similar program of assistance is continued by



ANNEX I. LIST OF CONTACTS

Table 45: Key Informant Interviews

Date	Name	Organization	Title
SAFE Project and Partner Staff			
02/12/19			
02/12/19			
02/12/19			
02/13/19			
02/13/19			
02/13/19			
02/13/19			
02/14/19			
02/14/19			
02/22/19			
02/22/19			
02/27/19			
03/01/19			
03/01/19			
03/01/19			
03/01/19			
Donor Staff (USDA)			
02/27/19	Anna (Ania) Madalinska	USDA FAS	International Program Specialist
02/28/19	Elizabeth Autry	USDA FAS / Santo Domingo	Senior Agricultural Attaché
02/28/19	Luis C. Gonzalez	USDA FAS / Santo Domingo	Agricultural Specialist
02/28/19	Virgilio A. Mayol	USDA FAS / Santo Domingo	Agricultural Specialist
Government of the Dominican Republic			
02/14/19			
02/14/19			
02/14/19			
02/14/19			
02/14/19			
02/14/19			
02/17/19			
02/18/19			
02/21/19			
02/28/19			
02/28/19			
03/04/19			
Financial Institutions			
02/22/19			
02/28/19			
03/01/19			
Producer Organization (PO) Staff (Dairy and Beef Associations, Cooperatives, and Federations)			
02/15/19			
02/15/19			

02/15/19

02/15/19

02/18/19

02/18/19

02/18/19

02/19/19

02/19/19

02/19/19

02/19/19

02/20/19

02/20/19

02/20/19

02/20/19

02/21/19

02/22/19

02/22/19

02/25/19

02/26/19

02/26/19

02/26/19

Enterprises (Milk Collection Centers, Processors and Slaughterhouses)

02/13/19

02/16/19

02/18/19

02/20/18

02/20/19

02/20/19

02/20/19

02/21/19

02/25/29

02/25/29

02/25/29

02/25/29

02/25/29

02/25/19

02/25/19

Table 46: Focus Group Discussions

Date	Location	Organization	Group
02/14/19	Santo Domingo	MEGALECHE	6 extension agents
02/18/19	Villa Riva	FEGACIBAO	7 federation staff
02/18/19	Villa Riva	Asociación de Ganaderos de Villa Riva y Arenoso	6 dairy producers

02/19/19	Arroyo Ancho	Asociación de Ganaderos de Arroyo Ancho	7 association staff
02/19/19	Arroyo Ancho	Asociación de Ganaderos de Arroyo Ancho	5 MCC staff
02/19/19	Montellano	FEDEGANORTE	6 federation staff
02/19/19	Montellano	Asociación de Ganaderos de Villa Montellano	6 association staff
02/19/19	Montellano	Asociación de Ganaderos de Arroyo Ancho	13 dairy producers (2 females)
02/22/19	San Juan de la Maguana	FEGASUR	6 federation staff
02/22/19	San Juan de la Maguana	AGASAJUMA	11 dairy producers
02/25/19	Hato Mayor	Asociación de Ganaderos de Hato Mayor	4 dual-purpose producers (1 female)
02/25/19	El Seibo	AGANI	6 dual-purpose producers
02/25/19	Higüey	AGANI	8 association staff

Table 47: Site Visits

Date	Location	Organization	Site Type
02/13/19	Santo Domingo	n/a	Supermarkets
02/18/19	Villa Riva	Asociación de Ganaderos de Villa Riva y Arenoso	Milk collection center
02/18/19	Villa Riva	Asociación de Ganaderos de Villa Riva y Arenoso	Milking parlor
02/18/19	Arenoso	Asociación de Ganaderos de Cabrera, Rio San Juan	Milking parlor
02/18/19	Puerto Plata	n/a	Supermarkets
02/19/19	Luperón	Asociación de Ganaderos de Villa Riva y Arenoso	Milk collection center
02/19/19	Luperón	Asociación de Ganaderos de Villa Riva y Arenoso	Input supply store
02/19/19	Luperón	Quesería Rottis	Cheese processor
02/20/19	Arroyo Ancho	Asociación de Ganaderos de El Toro	Milk collection center
02/21/19	Santiago Rodriguez	n/a	Supermarkets
02/21/19	Santiago Rodriguez	Asociación de Ganaderos de Santiago Rodriguez	Milk collection center
02/21/19	Santiago Rodriguez	Asociación de Ganaderos de Santiago Rodriguez	Milk laboratory
02/22/19	San Juan de la Maguana	COOPAGASAJUMA	Milk collection center
02/22/19	San Juan de la Maguana	COOPAGASAJUMA	Veterinary supply store
02/22/19	San Juan de la Maguana	COOPAGASAJUMA	Input supply store
02/25/19	El Seibo	Finca Juliana	Beef ranch
02/25/19	El Seibo	Finca Doña Elba	Beef ranch

ANNEX J: STAFF NOTES ON EQUIVALENCE

ET Note: This narrative was prepared by SAFE staff in order to provide information on post-evaluation activities and future plans related to the equivalence process. It is included here at their request.

Milestones in the Equivalence process

As several KI expressed to the ET, chances are the Equivalence will be granted to the DR beef inspection system during the lifetime of SAFE. USDA's relations with the Dominican government and the excellent articulation of SAFE's main local partner, the JAD, did establish the foundation of support for change in the policy and regulatory framework regarding the beef inspection system, and also laid the groundwork for changes to the application of regulations from the ministries of Health, and Agriculture, supported by the Presidency of the Republic through the Administrative Ministry of the President. The advances have been remarkable, as stated by the [REDACTED], who as the Central Competent Authority (CCA) leads the whole process.

SAFE started conducting an analysis of previous USDA FSIS evaluations as well as the overall beef and dairy value chains, and joined in 2017 the originally called "*Equivalence Round Table*" that leading producer organization ADHA had put together in 2016, composed of interested stakeholders from within the public and private sectors, including beef producers, the national processing plant association (ADM), leading processing plants (Mercarne, Agrocarne, and Suplidora de Carne A&B), and other relevant agencies. SAFE strengthened this platform that evolved as the "*Technical Equivalence Working Group*", where technicians from key entities discuss the required changes and provide follow-up. As time passed by it became clear for SAFE that the political decision-making level was not always present at the technical debates, thus slowing the required reforms, and through [REDACTED], was able to influence for the creation of the "*Presidential Commission for Beef Exportation*", with participation of the Administrative Ministry of the Presidency, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Public Health, along with other high level authorities. The meetings began in 2017 at the Presidential Palace and since August 2018 are being held as needed at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Based on the analysis of previous FSIS evaluations and with the guidance of experts from SAFE/TAMU, "critical path" routes were developed for each of the key actors in the equivalence process to address and correct any nonconformities with FSIS standards prior to the next official on-site audit including, but not limited: the national beef inspection system's documentation, management, and procedures; beef processing plant infrastructure, HACCP systems and Sanitary programs; and microbiological and residue testing laboratory systems.

I. Chemical Residues and Microbiological testing programs

One of the most important decisions was taken in September 2018, to address the barrier imposed by LAVECEN's lack of progress: in the light of one of the options given by the FSIS to the Central Competent Authority (CCA / DIGEMAPS), a network of supporting laboratories has been implemented, comprising three (3) laboratories from the public and private sectors, two (2) domestic and one (1) international: *Instituto de Innovación e Biotecnología Industrial* (IIBI) to analyze Salmonella and Generic E.coli; and the *Laboratorio Agroempresarial Dominicano* (LAD) for E.coli 0157:H7 and Non-0157 STECs, both located in the Dominican Republic; and the *Laboratorio Nacional de Residuos* (LANAR) located in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, to test chemical residues. The samples are being sent to LANAR-Honduras through OIRSA/LAVECEN.

For the local laboratories, SAFE fostered commitments from the Dominican government and the private sector to cost share the required laboratory testing during the equivalency process: while the project and the participating beef processing plants co-share the cost of the Microbiology testing, the Ministry of Agriculture is covering the chemical residues ones being done in Honduras. Therefore, the National Pathogen Control Program and the National Chemical Residues Control Program have been fully implemented since October 2018.

The decision of the CCA (DIGEMAPS) to create a network of supporting laboratories represented a huge step forward in the Equivalence process, as described by [REDACTED] (former FSIS, SAFE/TAMU's consultant for labs' compliance component). By the end of March 2019, 328 tests have been done for Microbiology, and 502 for Chemical Residues.

Meanwhile, observing sustainability considerations and per the Minister of Agriculture request, OIRSA keeps working to strengthen LAVECEN. The idea is to incorporate this laboratory as part of the supporting network, once it gets ready. OIRSA has hired a consultant that is helping to close non-conformities based on SAFE/TAMU reports. They also hired a firm for the disposition of residues/risky materials and are planning to start inter-laboratory-tests. The Head-Quarters of OIRSA already sent a positive response to the invitation of the Minister of Agriculture to determine if they wanted to manage the entire LAVECEN and they agreed as long as they get 100% control and management of the lab. Next steps are being prepared by the Legal Counselor of the Ministry. Experts from SAFE/TAMU provide follow-up to this process.

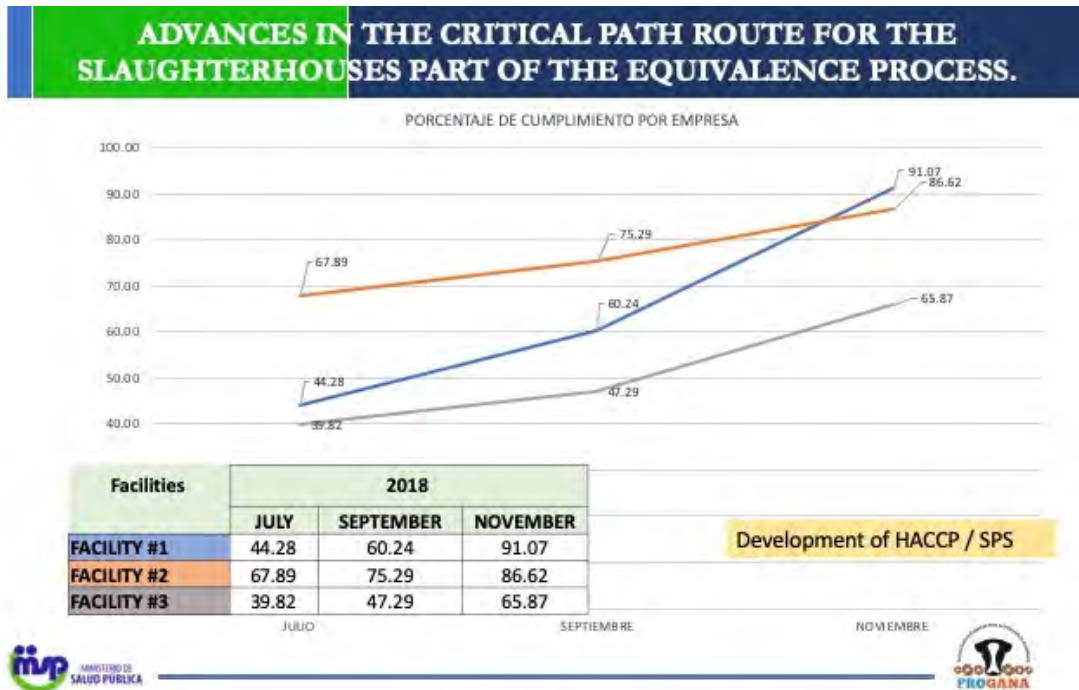
Following a recommendation provided by SAFE/TAMU, the CCA established a team of three (3) external auditors from [REDACTED] (a national reference lab that belongs to the Ministry of Health), that in November 2018 were trained by [REDACTED] (SAFE/TAMU) on how to prevent conflicts of interest and to conduct internal audits to verify third-party labs' practices on FSIS compliance. The auditors have already performed independent evaluations of the two local labs (IIBI and LAD/JAD) and, observing an official request sent by the Minister of Health in order to advance in implement FSIS procedures for the laboratories that are part of the Equivalence process, SAFE is supporting a mission of the three (3) auditors to travel to Honduras to evaluate LANAR in June 2019, as it has been schedule between DIGEMAPS and OIRSA/Honduras (since they run LANAR).



II. Beef Processing Plants

Regarding the three (3) beef processing plants actively participating in the Equivalence process, in April 2018 a critical path route was developed to improve their HACCP and Sanitary programs. The timeline included two (2) HACCP trainings and several related to SPS and FSIS regulations. Two evaluations were conducted in June and September 2018, respectively, to measure progress made, and a third/final one in November 2018 with an FSIS-like audit carried out by two

complementary missions integrated by [REDACTED] (for the slaughterhouses and the CCA central office & inspection services), and [REDACTED] (for the laboratory services), that allow for the CCA to decide on concentrating efforts in the two (2) facilities that have advanced the most, as shown in the following table:



On November the 20th, the CVO/CCA [REDACTED] presented the results to the *Presidential Commission for Beef Exportation* (USDA DR was present). The three plants do show real progress, although at different rates. At the moment, the validation of the HACCP system is taking place in Mercarne and Agrocarné, along with closing non-conformities related to SPS in their infrastructures.

During the week of January 28 – February 2, 2019, a hands-on training of DIGEMAPS inspection personnel and an evaluation of the two beef slaughterhouses preselected in November 2018: Mercarne S.R.L. and Agrocarne (Central Romana Corporation) were conducted jointly by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as part of the project to export raw beef products from the Dominican Republic to the United States (U.S.). The training primarily dealt with DIGEMAPS inspection personnel learning how to evaluate the various food safety programs of the establishments and how to use the new inspection verification forms developed by Dr. Santoni

A problem that is currently being faced relates to the facilities taking more time than expected to improve their infrastructures and implement the recommendations provided by the CCA, so, to tackle this, on March 27th, 2019, SAFE participated in a joint visit by the Ministers of Public Health and Agriculture to the Agrocarne facility, in Central Romana, to motivate the streamlining of the implementation of the recommendations for closing non-conformities with respect to FSIS requirements, in the framework of the Equivalence process. A similar visit is being planned by both ministers to Mercarne for similar purposes, and most likely to the third facility, Suplidora A&B.

III. THE General Directorate of Medicines, Food and Health Products (DIGEMAPS) of the Ministry of Health (MoH), as the Central Competent Authority (CCA)

On May 15, 2017, DIGEMAPS submitted the SRT with supporting documentation to FSIS via FSIS' Public Health Information System, which is a web-based application. On November 5, 2018, new documentation was sent, regarding the network of local and international laboratories to be used (instead of LAVECEN) to do the testing: LANAR-Honduras, IIBI, and LAD/JAD. As per FSIS request, the documentation was translated into English and uploaded to their PHIS on December 27, 2018 (at the beginning of 2019, Dr. Aaron did review the translation to make them more understandable for the FSIS inspectors, and those were also provided to the CCA for the corresponding action). [DIGEMAPS expects for the SRT to be reviewed by FSIS any time soon and therefore either ask for clarification on some of the responses or go ahead and schedule the FSIS verification audit for later this Summer 2019].

SAFE has also provided key support to improve the organization of the central office, along with the offices inside the participating facilities. Guidance has also been provided to the CCA by SAFE/TAMU consultants to improve the performance of the official inspectors along with their articulation with the Quality Control staff of Mercarne and Agrocarne, taking into consideration this has become a number one priority to guarantee beef inspection services are implemented following FSIS criteria. This is being complemented with on-site technical assistance to implement an inspector's performance evaluation mechanism, a practical versus theoretical approach to staff training, and standardized in-plant evaluations.

██████████ has reported that the resolution regarding the resting period for animals before the slaughter is having difficulties to be implemented in some facilities, due to the restriction on transportation (from the National Livestock Directorate -DIGEGA-) from 6:00 pm - 6:00 am to prevent robbery (a problem arises when a producer cannot take his animals to one of the three slaughterhouses participating in the Equivalence process due to time restrictions, so they sell them to another plant; ██████████ stated that he cannot enforce the resolution in all the other big facilities since he doesn't have enough inspectors – but DIGEMAPS is planning to hire more inspectors extensive to 9 facilities). The salary of the official inspectors has been unified and the beef processing plants no longer pay the extra time to the inspectors but deposit the corresponding amount in a bank account of the Ministry of Health (although a bit slow, so new authorities are reviewing this internal process).

It is expected that a set of tests for the official inspectors will be developed by the CVO/CCA following guidelines provided by ██████████ (SAFE/TAMU), and that for the first-time ever inspectors will be evaluated in a regular basis, starting in May 2019.

Finally, considering the need to keep improving the production of beef in the Dominican Republic, SAFE helped activate the DR Beef Producers Association (ASOCARNE) that had been dormant since 2001, and is setting the basis along with its new Value Chain Specialist to characterize the primary link that supplies to the participating slaughterhouses, including fostering links between producer groups and input suppliers such as the U.S. Grains Council (USG) and successful U.S. companies like Organic Valley to encourage changes in the formulation of animal feeds that comply with FSIS standards, without prohibited substances, including substituting chicken manure for Dried Distiller's Grains produced in the USA. This is being planned along with key partners like JAD, ADHA, and ASOCARNE, and a follow-up of the beef market study in Puerto Rico will take place in mid-2019.

IV. Notes on sustainability:

While SAFE is providing guidance so the DR gets the Equivalence to reinstate exportation of raw beef products to USA (Puerto Rico), no doubt the process is strengthening the country Beef Inspection System to the point that a real food safety culture is being fostered among key stakeholders. The Meat Department of the Ministry of Public Health's General Directorate for Medicine, Food, and Sanitary Products (DIGEMAPS) has now a staff of thirty-one (31) inspection officers, of which eleven (11) happen to be veterinarians [21 have been hired in the last three (3) years]. The central office has three (3) permanent veterinarians, including the CVO/CCA and new policies, procedures and inspection formularies have been developed and put in place observing FSIS criteria. SAFE has been encouraging the Central Competent Authority (CCA) to hire more inspectors to strengthen the national inspection system, so at the moment inspection services are being expanded to the nine (9) main slaughterhouses of the country (that provide around 60% of the beef) and the local laboratories are increasing their capacities also following FSIS criteria.

Despite the fact that LANAR-Honduras has been included as part of the supporting network of labs for the Equivalence process, SAFE has been supporting OIRSA to keep strengthening LAVECEN to be part of such a network in the near future.

SAFE has been key at training processing plants staff and official inspectors from the Central Competent Authority (CCA)/DIGEMAPS to improve their performance on : risk identification and food safety; evaluating the processing plant's HACCP plans; conducting ante mortem (general requirements, humane handling) and post mortem (General Requirements, Sanitary Dressing Procedures, SRM removal, Zero Tolerance) inspections based on FSIS standards; and sanitation (Sanitation Performance Standards, Sanitation Standard Operational Procedures both pre- and post-operational).

Therefore, actions are in-line to providing the DR with a permanent beef inspections service and beef processing capacities that will certainly prevail beyond the project.

V. Results:

Change in Policy/Regulations:

- Assisted the government to complete and submit the required Self Reporting Tool (SRT) for FSIS to audit the equivalency of its Beef Inspection System, that certainly includes SPS compliance.
- Strengthened the *Technical Equivalence Working Group* composed of businesses, producer groups, and relevant governmental technicians from the ministries responsible for implementing government policy, to guide the regulation reform process.
- Helped establish a *Presidential Commission for Beef Exportation* to the USA, where political will was motivated to provide the required support from the highest authorities
- Contributed to the development of new inspection procedures and formularies, and adapted inspection documentation to conform with USDA FSIS requirements.
- Trained producers and producer associations as well as public & private sector actors on Trade Policy Analysis.
- Facilitated the reform of HACCP systems, SPS programs, and regulations for processing plants, animal welfare, inspectors' working hours, and overtime payment mechanism (to avoid conflicts of interest). In the framework of the Equivalence process, the ministries

of Health and Agriculture have been able to advance on the following regulations / procedures along with key stakeholders:

- o Ministry of Health national resolution n.º 000011- 2018 that regulates slaughter working hours and set the basis for animal welfare (DIGEMAPS)
- o Development of agreements to pay overhead to inspectors working in slaughterhouses and transfers to be made to a MoH account (DIGEMAPS)
- o Animals showcased for sale at regional fairs must be certified Brucellosis and TB free (Minister of Agriculture)
- o National Directorate of Internal Taxes' General Standard No. 09-2018 permitted the extended the provisions contained in General Standard No. 01- 2008 to designate beef processing plants participating in the Equivalence process as agribusinesses relaxing their schedule for tax payments (motivated by former JAD Executive President)
- o Procedure established opening of a unique window in the General Customs Directorate that will be used for exports of beef and beef derivatives (along with DIGEMAPS)
- o Ministry of Health's new team of auditors for third party laboratories trained and stablished along with their set of procedures for the official evaluation and follow-up of the laboratories that perform microbiological and residues analytics on beef in the framework of the Equivalence process (DIGEMAPS)
- o Completion of the new, more simplified official inspection forms (DIGEMAPS).
- o Completion of the 2019 National Residues Program, by the CVO/CCA, as part of the documents to be shown to FSIS (DIGEMAPS)
- o Improvement of the new procedure for the evaluation of laboratories conducting beef analytics as part of the Equivalence process (DIGEMAPS)
- o New DIGEMAPS Protocol for Validation of the HACCP Systems of the Meat Processing Plants participating in the Equivalence process
- o First evaluations developed by the CVO/CCA regarding the Implementation of Official Functions and Tasks by the Inspection Personnel Assigned to an Authorized Establishment (DIGEMAPS)
- o Created new protocol to collect and send meat samples to be tested in a network of three domestic and international laboratories including *Instituto de Innovación e Biotecnología Industrial (IIBI)* to analyze Salmonella and generic E.coli; and the *Laboratorio Agroempresarial Dominicano (LAD)* for E.coli 0157:H7 and Non-0157 STECs, located in the Dominican Republic; and chemical residue testing by the *Laboratorio Nacional de Residuos (LANAR)* located in Tegucigalpa, Honduras (DIGEMAPS)
- o Created new protocol for the validation of Hazards Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) systems and SPS programs in processing plants (DIGEMAPS)

Develop Political Will for Risk-Based System

- Trained processing plants staff and official inspectors from the Central Competent Authority (CCA), the Ministry of Public Health's General Directorate for Medicine, Food, and Sanitary Products (DIGEMAPS) on risk analysis
- Supported Quality Control staff from processing plants to perform risk analyses to develop new or improve their existing HACCP systems with improved CCPs and sanitation programs.

Engage Producer Groups

- Supported beef producers to define their strategic priorities for exporting products
- Rescued and strengthened a Beef Producers Association (Asocarne) that was dormant since 2001 and helped them develop their priorities, highlighting beef exportation opportunities based on a beef markets study the project performed in Puerto Rico
- Trained beef producers to improve the quality of their products through activities that encourage quality competition such as prime cuts and marbling.
- Trained producers on Good Agricultural Practices, Good Manufacturing Practices, Food Defense, and Best Management Practices.
- Adapting the traditional technical assistance approach provided by the governmental extension system to include more practical demonstrations and hands-on learning while reducing the emphasis on theoretical TA has encouraged increased application of technologies and techniques that reduce costs, improve quality and production.
- Facilitated links between producer groups and input suppliers such as the U.S. Grains Council (USG) and successful U.S. companies like Organic Valley to encourage changes in the formulation of animal feeds that comply with equivalency standards. without substances prohibited by the FSIS standards including substituting chicken manure for Dried Distiller's Grains.

Train Officials in Risk Management and Surveillance Systems

- Trained government inspectors to improve their performance on - risk identification and food safety; evaluating the processing plant's HACCP plans; conducting ante mortem (general requirements, humane handling) and post mortem (General Requirements, Sanitary Dressing Procedures, SRM removal, Zero Tolerance) inspections based on FSIS standards; and sanitation (Sanitation Performance Standards, Sanitation Standard Operational Procedures both pre- and post-operational)
- Encouraged the Central Competent Authority (CCA) to hire more inspectors to strengthen the national inspection system
- Persuaded the Dominican government (motivated by former JAD Executive President) to provide funding to calibrate and acquire laboratory equipment and purchase reagents for the National Central Veterinary Laboratory, LAVECEN.
- Trained new food safety inspection auditors and the CCA on how to prevent conflicts of interest and to conduct internal audits to verify third-party labs' practices on FSIS compliance.
- Supported the CCA to implement an inspector's performance evaluation mechanism, and practical versus theoretical approach to staff training, and standardized in-plant evaluations.

Improve SPS Laboratory Systems

- Fostered commitments from the Dominican government and the private sector to cost share the required laboratory testing during the equivalency evaluation process.
- Supported the Government to create a network of public – private laboratories to support the national inspection system: IIBI (public), LAD (private), LANAR (public).
- Provided technical assistance to laboratory staff on ISO 17025 standards, quality controls, microbiology & residues testing methods.
- Conducted evaluations of labs and established “critical path” strategies to take corrective actions to address any equivalency non-conformities.

Identified Counterfeit/Poor Quality Inputs and Provided Farmers with Alternatives

- Connected producer groups with equivalency compliant input suppliers such as the USGC to substitute chicken manure in animal feeds for Dried Distiller's Grains.
- Executed communication campaigns to mitigate the use of prohibited substances such as the anti-parasitic ivermectin among others.

Private Sector Investments

- Leveraged \$1,132,399 in public-private partnerships including investments in processing plant infrastructure, laboratory equipment, microbiological and chemical residue testing, and others.
- \$421,298 in cost-share from infrastructure and input investments with producers and producer groups to improve quality and production