

Former Agricultural Economics Faculty

John Sanders



Dr. John Sanders put together five years working in Brazil doing his PhD thesis with a Foreign Area Fellowship and then worked for the Ford Foundation in a new master's program in Agricultural Economics at the University of Ceara in the Brazilian Northeast. Teaching Econometrics in Portuguese and advising 15 graduate students, when the other Ceara Professors refused to do so without a raise, was a challenging way to begin his professional career.

After Brazil John spent four years in the Center for Tropical Agriculture in Cali, Colombia in a multi-disciplinary team as the Bean Economist. Besides bean production John learned about civil wars from the barbed wire and bullet riddled cars in El Salvador. Then Purdue called and sent him to the very tranquil south of Portugal where the Portuguese Communists had implemented one million ha

of land reform. This Purdue program was to introduce a land grant type orientation in three Universities.

Then after two months back at Purdue, John went to Ouagadougou as the on-campus coordinator for the Purdue program in Burkina Faso. Two years later he became the only Economist on a six country multi-disciplinary program to do training, mentoring and research for agricultural scientists on sorghum and millet in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central America. Besides evaluating the impact of INTSORMIL technologies he became involved in a series of projects with AID, the World Bank, IFPRI, and several NGOs in Africa. In 2014-16 he and Botorou Ouendeba received a grant from the Gates Foundation to continue their implementation of development programs for sorghum and millet in Mali and Burkina Faso.

In 2017, he returned to his Latin American roots in a Purdue program to identify research and demonstration priorities for the Orinoco (tropical savanna and rainforest) region of Colombia. He was gratified by the development of Colombia highways through some of the very steep Andean mountains, which were no longer terrifying. With a Colombian agronomist he did farmer interviews and analyzed alternatives in programming models.

In his final years at Purdue, he taught an undergraduate course in international economic development after teaching the graduate course in development for 35 years plus both the Economics of Risk and Production Economics for several years.

To summarize his production: various awards including a Purdue award for international work, 30 graduate students funded, advised and finished, one book on technology for semi-arid regions of Africa with two of his graduate students (Johns Hopkins press), 67 refereed journal articles, 46 book chapters, and 28 bulletins.

He is especially proud of the introduction of moderate inorganic fertilizer and a new sorghum and millet cultivars on 6,000 ha of small farmers in Mali with the assistance of an AID funded extension program.

Also a study on the potential economic benefits of Bt cotton facilitated the successful introduction of this technology by Monsanto in Burkina Faso. Finally, there were three theses, four journal articles, and a book chapter on the impact of African agricultural development on women.