

Rationale and Recommended Response for Improving Productivity: technology acquisition and utilisation

Increased productivity will likely represent the main driver behind growth in agriculture in the 21st century, and the primary means of satisfying the growing need for food, feed and other agricultural products. At the level of the individual firm or farm, productivity has already become the principal determinant of competitiveness.

Given the increasing scarcity of agriculture-related resources and the new dynamics of the global market for agro-industrial and food products, technology now lies at the heart of productivity. Productivity-enhancing technologies must therefore be renewed continually, not just within the agricultural production or processing enterprise, but by all participants in the chain linking the enterprise to its input and output markets.

The private sector must assume overall responsibility for identifying, conceiving, selecting, acquiring and utilizing productivity-enhancing technology. However, it is essential that the public sector act pro-actively to facilitate and support private sector action.

This involves creating the policy, regulatory and institutional framework that:

- promotes investment in, and use of, relevant agro-industrial technologies at all levels of the value chain;
- alerts entrepreneurs, agro-processors and farmers to where the most significant productivity gains and improvements can be achieved;
- ensures a mutually supportive mix of technology acquisition, trained personnel and innovative business practices;
- addresses the specific constraints of small and medium-sized producers and processors;
- maintains the balance between technology use and such fundamental considerations as job creation, environmental sustainability and judicious use of non-renewable resources.

In short, "systemic" attention must be given to the introduction and application of technology in agro-industry.

Focus of the Debate

Do you agree with the proposition statement? Please discuss.