

**The Secretary of State for the Council of Ministers and
Official Spokesperson for the Government of Timor-Leste
Ágio Pereira**



**January 24, 2011
Díli, Timor-Leste**

Ministry of Agriculture reports on the solid achievements of 2010 and plans for 2011 in Budget debate

The current budget debate in the National Parliament of Timor-Leste allows for Ministries to report on progress in 2010 and outline plans for 2011.

Delivering excellent results through nine primary programs in 2010, the Ministry of Agriculture continues to make progress in the national goals to achieve food self sufficiency, increase yields and production, diversify the range of produce and transition the country from traditional subsistence agriculture to a modernized and efficient agriculture sector with eventual capacity for increased export.

The implementation of the Agriculture and Horticulture Program in 2010 saw increased productivity in rice, maize and vegetables. European Potato productivity almost doubled, rising from an average of 2.04 ton/ha in 2009 to 4.7 ton/ha in 2010. Free tillage to prepare the ground for cultivation was used in 8,359 hectares and hundreds of tons of seeds were distributed. The number of plant diseases and plagues were reduced.

Under the Fisheries Program, 14 fish swamps were built across four districts to promote fish farming. Production in the fisheries sector was supported across the nation with the distribution of engines and boats to contribute to improved methods. Preparation of plant nurseries, maintenance of wood plantations, the building of demonstration plots at watershed areas and the prevention of illegal activities were achieved through the Forestry Program. The Quarantine and Bio-security Program worked towards compliance with international requirements in the area of importing and exporting agricultural products.

Coffee, Timor-Leste's primary export product, comes under the Coffee, Industrial and Agro-Business Program. The production of 312,000 coffee stems and rehabilitation of 150 ha of coffee belonging to the farmers in the districts of Ermera, Liquiça and Ainaro have seen production increase from 250 kg/ha to 500 kg/ha in 2010. A focus on diversification has seen the development of the cashew industry, the establishment of intercropping of coconut and cocoa and readiness training for the growth of black eyed peas, fore mungo and corn. In the Agricultural Technical Training Program over one thousand students were trained.

The Irrigation Program in 2010 saw the building of new irrigation and the protection of agricultural areas and irrigation channels against flooding; a high priority with 2010 being marked by unusually high rainfall with an extended wet season. Feasibility and technical studies have been completed in preparation for irrigation to be developed in five areas covering some 5,300 ha. Through the Agricultural Community Development Program support has been provided to livestock, horticulture, reforestation and agriculture activities including the distribution of animals and machinery. Finally the Research Program has worked on soil classification, wheat processing and ways to increase milk production with new techniques in trial increasing milk production from 1-6 liters to 2-9 liters.

Secretary of State Pereira noted that “in 2010 the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has continued to build on the strong results of previous years, despite the adverse weather conditions, and their determined work has seen very positive results. The next year will see further leaps in productivity and the transition of the agricultural sector, with a corresponding improvement in nutrition and the steady alleviation of rural poverty, a result which we will progress towards in 2011 as we continue working together.” **ENDS**

Ágio Pereira+670 723 0011

E-mail:

agio.pereira@cdm.gov.tl

or

govtlmedia@gmail.com

Website:

www.timor-leste.gov.tl