

WILMAR SMALLHOLDERS SUPPORT HONDURAS (WISSH)

Summary, November 9, 2018

1. Introduction

In 2016, the three year Wilmar Smallholders Support Honduras (WISSH) training programme started in partnership with AIPAH (*Asociación Industrial de Productores de Aceite de Palma de Honduras*) with the aim to strengthen good agricultural and environmental practices of palm oil smallholders¹ in Honduras; *Empowering Smallholders & Improving Livelihoods*.

AIPAH is an association of nine mills, which represent close to 60 per cent of the total national palm oil production of Honduras. The WISSH programme trained around 2,000 associated² and 1,300 independent smallholders in 488 training sessions on different sustainability topics, in line with Wilmar's "No Deforestation, No Peat and No Exploitation" (NDPE) policy. The 3,300 trained smallholders represent approximately 23 per cent of all smallholders in Honduras.

For the implementation of WISSH, Wilmar appointed the Colombian based organisation NES Naturaleza³. Wilmar Europe, Nestle and Olenex were the three sponsors of WISSH.

In order to evaluate the WISSH programme, surveys and smallholder assessments (SHA) were conducted in the end of the programme. Furthermore, a closing event took place in October 2018, where several smallholder representatives presented their experiences during the WISSH programme.



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2. Methodology and Training topics

With WISSH, Wilmar aims not only to empower smallholders by increasing technical capacity and improving their livelihoods, but at the same time secure their compliance with Wilmar's NDPE

¹ Plantation <50 ha

² Associated Smallholders: smallholders who are related to the mill through a) belonging to a cooperative that owns the mill, b) being a shareholder of the mill c) being a supplier who receives benefits such as loans, training etc. The mill is not necessarily responsible for the smallholders' farm practices

³ NES creates value through a balanced equation between the environmental, social and economic perspectives, improving communities' livelihood, especially those living in rural areas.

policy. The programme strengthens the smallholders and brings them a step closer to international sustainability requirements.

A unique characteristic within the WISSH programme is the train-the-trainer concept where each mill assigned five or six employees as supervisors⁴ (50 supervisors in total) to participate in the programme as a trainer. NES Naturaleza trained these supervisors and some of the smallholders in different sustainability topics (figure 1). Afterwards, the supervisors trained the remaining smallholders in their respective mill's supply base.

Wilmar NDPE Policy and ABC of Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contextualise the producers with Wilmar's NDPE policy and different sustainability request from the European market.
Good environmental practices and protection of the ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create awareness of the importance of the protection of the ecosystem and biodiversity.
Social responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasise the importance of respecting the rights of workers and communities.
Good Business Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create awareness of the difference between having a farm and having a business by reinforcing the idea of entrepreneurship.
Pest and diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasise the importance of suitable and effective chemicals and biological control systems.
Monitoring and Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasise the importance and benefits of crop record keeping for performance measurement and control.

Figure 1: WISSH training topics

Different training techniques were used to teach the knowledge, including role play, drawing exercises, presentations, and demonstrations (picture 1).



Picture 1: WISSH training technique - presentation

⁴ In the WISSH programme the trainers employed by the mills are called *supervisors*

3. Baseline

One of the first steps in the WISSH programme was to determine a baseline for the smallholders who deliver their fresh fruit bunches (FFB) to the AIPAH mills. This baseline data consisted of socio-demographics, income, experience, production, and previously received training sessions. To collect this information, a survey with 14 questions was conducted and distributed to 396 smallholders during the first training sessions. The survey responses showed some interesting finds.

It revealed that around 49 per cent of the respondents had only primary education, while 12 per cent went to university or to technical schools. Also, a large proportion (42 per cent) of the respondents was over 60 years old. This indicates that many of the smallholders are highly dependent on the support of either the younger members of their family, or hired labour to do the field work.

The survey also revealed that about 33 per cent (139 persons) of the smallholders, responding to the survey, did never receive any formal training on good agricultural or environmental practices, 33 per cent received between one and three internal trainings, and 27 per cent received four or more trainings. Latter are mainly working at big corporations.

In terms of annual productivity, 51 per cent of smallholders have an average yield of over 16 metric tons (MT) of fresh fruit bunches per hectare (ha), 14 per cent have a yield of 11 to 15 MT, and 18 per cent have a yield of less than 10 MT of FFB per year. The smallholders with a higher yield are often associated to a mill.

4. Training Participation

The goal of the WISSH programme was to train 3,300 producers in Honduras in three years, on the six topics indicated in figure 1. The goal was achieved within 488 training sessions. While 97 per cent of the associated smallholders invited attended the training, the independent smallholders showed more than expected interest: 128 percent of the initially invited people attended the trainings. 40 per cent of the smallholders attended between one and three training session, 35 per cent attended four or five sessions, and 25 per cent attended more than five training session (figure 2).

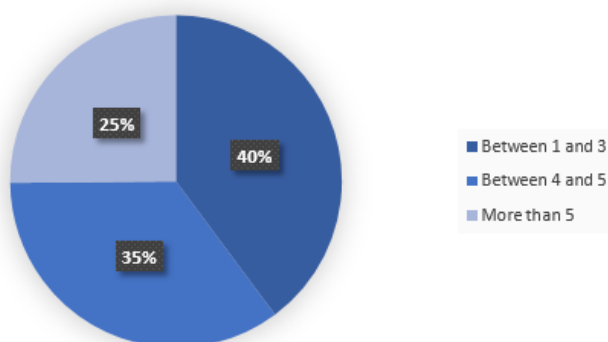


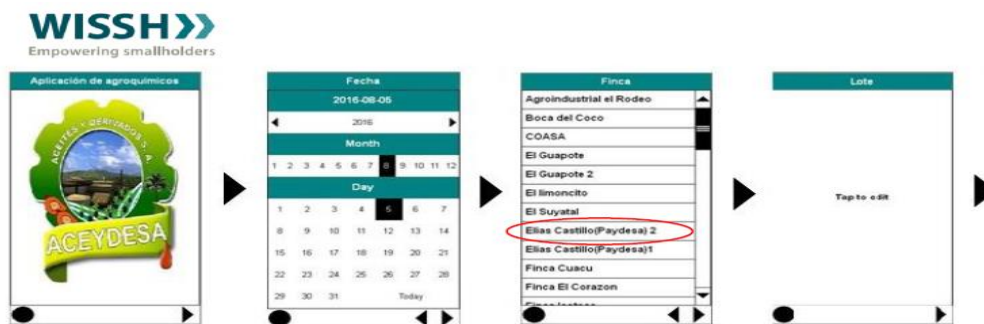
Figure 2: WISSH training participation 2016-2018

5. Monitoring and controlling tool (Cybertracking).

A mobile application (app) to facilitate crop management was introduced into the programme (picture 2). The app is a monitoring and controlling tool that was developed based on the standards framework of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and the International Sustainability and Carbon Certification (ISCC). It allows smallholders to monitor and manage their plantation daily at any time (Picture 3). The different field activities that can be monitored in this app are listed in figure 3.



Picture 2: Monitoring and controlling tool mobile application



Picture 3: Monitoring and controlling tool mobile application example

MONITORING and CONTROL TOOLS

1. Application of pesticides
2. Biodiversity data
3. Participation in trainings
4. Use of fossil fuels
5. Harvesting disposal of the agrochemicals containers
6. Application of fertilizers
7. Monitoring of pests
8. Monitoring of diseases

Figure 3: Monitoring and controlling tool field activities

Three out of nine mills successfully implemented the Monitoring and Control mobile application tool. The challenges which we encountered during the implementation of this app, was mainly related to the mobile phone version used by the supervisors. Some older models were not compatible with the Cybertracking software. Based upon the positive feedback of the active users, some of the remaining mill managers committed to update the mobile phones of the supervisors so they can also start implementing the tool.

6. Training results according to surveys

In order to evaluate the WISSH programme, surveys were distributed to the participants. The outcome shows that, out of 334 collected surveys, 100 per cent of the smallholders agreed that the training sessions received during these 3 years have contributed to a better productivity in the field. 99 per cent of the producers indicated that the acquired knowledge was recently applied on their farms and that it has helped improve results. 97 per cent of the supervisors think that WISSH contributed to reduced costs for the smallholders. 96 per cent of the participants distributed the knowledge they acquired during WISSH trainings. Also 98 per cent think that the quality of their lives will improve through implementation of the learned concepts. Finally, 99 per cent of the participants rated the program as excellent or good. The survey results are shown in Figure 4.

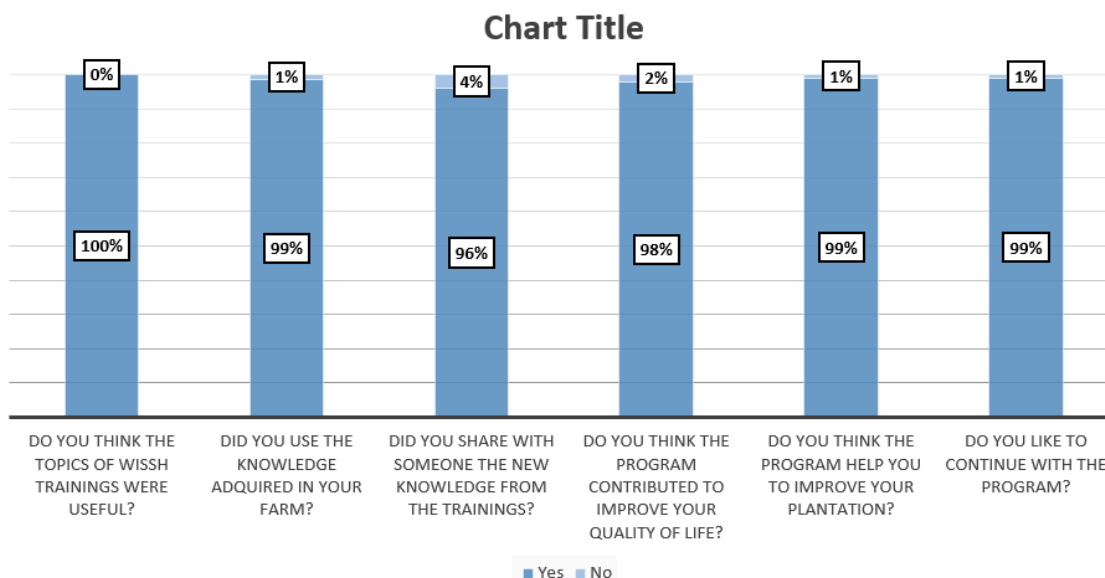


Figure 4: WISSH survey result

7. Smallholder Assessments (SHA)

Unique to the WISSH program is that additional to the surveys, **160 smallholder assessments** were conducted to verify if the acquired knowledge was actually applied on the farms. Those assessment were important for the smallholders as it was their first experience facing an auditor on their premises. Three techniques were used as a way to collect evidence: visual observation, examination of records, and employee interviews (picture 4).

Visual observation

Examination of records

Employee interviews



Picture 4: Control techniques assessments

An important conclusion of the SHA was that up to now no smallholder was able to implement *all* acquired knowledge of the WISSH program. However, tremendous progress was demonstrated. In order to improve their suppliers' plantation efficiency, productivity, environmental, safety and

health standards, each mill received an action plan to work on with the smallholders in their supply base, in the coming months.

8. Additional deliverables of the Program

During the program, in total six booklets were given to all supervisors and smallholder attendees in order to reinforce the topics addressed in each training (picture 5). The smallholders indicated that these booklets were of great value, as it also allowed them to share the knowledge with others on their farms.



Picture 5: Handbooks for supervisors and smallholders

9. Completion event – WISSHFULL THINKING, a real story about palm oil

In October 2018, a completion event took place in order to evaluate the programme together with the smallholders. There were 130 participants in total, thereof 50 smallholders, nine representatives from mills, three customers (5 persons) – amongst them the sponsors Nestle and Olenex –, one representative of the Dutch Embassy in Costa Rica, representatives of the Honduras banking industry and the regional government (see pictures 6 and 7).



Picture 6 and 7: WISSH Completion Event in La Ceiba, Honduras

During the event one smallholder of each mill, nine in total, held a short presentation to answer the questions 'What is the most important aspect you learned in WISSH?' and 'What aspect of WISSH are you already applying at your farm?'. One of the returning key learnings mentioned was the importance of keeping records; of fertilization, pruning, harvesting and salaries in some cases. Secondly, the smallholders highly valued to receive insight on how to manage their farms as a small business, including planning, budgeting and how to safeguard future resources. The 'No Burning' criteria was the most already applied learning (see pictures 8 and 9).



Picture 8 and 9: Smallholder presentation slides during WISSH Completion Event

The event provided an excellent opportunity for all stakeholders involved in WISSH to talk to each other about the successes and challenges experienced during the programme, but also to consider a sustainable path forward.

10. Conclusion

The WISSH programme was created to provide smallholders a basic first step towards more sustainable practices. Small farmers often cope with inadequate market information and limited knowledge about sustainable palm production, due to their small scale. Additionally, their yields are often relatively low.

Beside the first spin-off of WISSH, the WISSCo program in Colombia, Wilmar is now planning for the second training programme in Colombia WISSCo2. The latter will take place in a different region than the first one. A major lesson we can draw from WISSH is the value of the smallholder assessments (SHA's). We are therefore considering doing a SHA at the start of the program, in addition to the ones at the end. We learned that solely depending on the surveys provide too limited information for an accurate baseline.

The WISSH programme was a unique opportunity for smallholders to receive dedicated capacity building training sessions, as well as experience a sustainability assessment. WISSH did not only benefit the smallholders themselves, but also the mills. The supervisors now have the tools to engage their smallholder supply base and therewith share sustainability knowledge, which proofed to increase production and compliance with Wilmar's NDPE policy.

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For more information, please see: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/nVqGv2AmseY2T/>
Video WISSH programme: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Tpi0WeUmyc&feature=youtu.be>