

The most important award is the one farmers give: Bram Govaerts

On the 14th of May, the Río Fuerte Sur Farmers' Association (Asociación de Agricultores del Río Fuerte Sur, or AARFS), whose membership includes 2,500 farmers from northern Sinaloa, granted Bram Govaerts the 2018 Tecnoagro Award.

Starting 27 years ago, this award has been granted to people who promote the development of science and technologies aimed at improving farmers' productivity and their ability to overcome the challenges of Mexican agriculture.

Govaerts received the 2018 Tecnoagro Award in recognition of the efforts of CIMMYT and, in particular, of its Sustainable Intensification Program, for promoting the adoption of conservation agriculture in northern Sinaloa, where the MasAgro program has had great success thanks to its close collaboration with AARFS farmers.

"It gave me great satisfaction to hear the words of Montiel Ibarra, an agricultural engineer who is Chairman of the Management Committee of the AARFS, indicating that MasAgro practices are the most appropriate alternative because they allow farmers to reduce costs, become more competitive, transform Sinaloa's agriculture and make it more sustainable," said Govaerts. "The best award is the one farmers give," added CIMMYT's Regional Representative in the Americas.

CIMMYT's latest data indicate that Sinaloan farmers have saved, on average, \$4,564 Mexican pesos and increased their productivity by 1.3 tons per hectare by implementing MasAgro's sustainable intensification practices.

Additionally, conservation agriculture and the technologies that MasAgro promotes have made it possible for farmers to save up to 50% of the water used in their irrigation systems and reduce their pesticide applications by up to 66%, thanks to innovative integrated pest management practices.

Sinaloan farmers have also saved up to 170 kg of nitrogen fertilizer per hectare by applying optimal fertilizer doses estimated by remote sensors that very precisely determine the nutrient needs of maize or wheat crops.

Upon accepting the 2018 Tecnoagro Award, Govaerts joined AARFS' call for farmers to adopt the sustainable intensification practices promoted by CIMMYT through MasAgro and reaffirmed his commitment to agricultural development both in Mexico and the world.

CIMMYT. International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center

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