

Doing and Learning, Learning and Doing

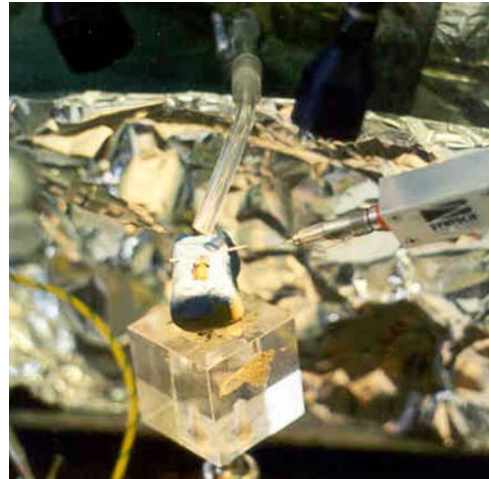
Project R8044 is researching how to improve management of the potato pests in Bolivia. An important component has been the development of in-country capacity through training and the exchange of skills. Consequently the impact of the project is likely to be far wider than the specific focus of the research as the approaches developed should be of great benefit in future research and promotion.

Throughout the project, researchers are challenged to improve and strengthen their interaction with farmers. Consequently problem identification and prioritisation is conducted through dialogue with the farmers. From these discussions researchers learnt that the farmers were seeking training in the safe use of pesticides, and on the biology and control of the potato weevil and tuber moth. Project technical personnel attended monthly community meetings where they discussed and gauged interest in



Farmers examine and assess the potato crop

participating in the training events and how these should be conducted. Training sessions were then implemented in communal headquarters or community schools in the evenings in the local language. They used training materials previously prepared for farmer field schools, slide projections and, in the case of potato tuber moths and Andean weevil, videos. Communication was two-way with feedback strengthening the training process.



Pheromone identification at NRI on material previously sent from Bolivia

In 2003, a PROINPA (Foundation for the Research and Promotion of Andean Products) staff member was trained at the Natural Resources Institute (NRI), in UK, on Andean potato weevil pheromone identification and molecular techniques for the identification of entomopathogenic viruses and became familiar with the equipment used in the laboratories for this purpose. Training with a UK research institute has enabled PROINPA staff to conduct analyses in their laboratories in Bolivia that previously had to be conducted overseas. PROINPA have incorporated information on both pheromones and entomopathogenic viruses into the training courses for PROINPA and Bolivian scientists.

During the research process this collaborative project involving scientists from different backgrounds and institutes has, through formal and informal training, developed the capacity of organisations in Bolivia to conduct research and promotion activities.

R8044: Integrated management of major insect pests of potatoes in hillside systems in Cochabamba region of Bolivia

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