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Paraguay: IdB Loan Supports National Agricultural Education Project

by John Neagle

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With the assistance of a \$12.1 million loan by the Inter- American Development Bank (IDB), three agricultural schools are being built in eastern Paraguay. The schools are part of an agricultural education program which began in 1971 with the creation of the Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry Education to encourage and evaluate agricultural and forestry education. The Directorate currently administers six agricultural schools and supervises four private schools and five agricultural training centers. In 1986, there were 712 students in the official schools and 444 in the private schools. The IDB loan is taking the program a step further, adding three new schools with a capacity of 210 students; more classrooms at five public and one private agricultural school; a training school for teachers; three graduate-level scholarships for study abroad; and the services of three consultants. Agricultural activities account for one-third of Paraguay's gross domestic product, and nearly all of the country's export income. The program focuses on food production, land conservation and the proper use of farm equipment. Like other programs sponsored by multilateral development banks, it is also encouraging women to participate in agricultural training. The bank's loan will cover about 90 percent of the \$13.2 million estimated cost of the project. The loan was granted from the bank's Fund for Special Operations, for a term of 40 years and at a 1% annual interest rate in the first 10 years and 2% per year in the remaining 30 years. The loan will be repaid through semiannual payments, the first of which will be due 10-1/2 years after the date of the contract. (Basic data from WASHINGTON POST, 05/25/87)

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