

attractive type of organization to the farmers, as it is very easy to form and only one member of the group has to file the title to his land with the bank as a guarantee. (The members of a solidarity group accept common responsibility for debts incurred by the group.) As shown in Table 6.1, the number of farmers receiving credit from the Agricultural Bank increased to 1,865 in 1973, and the number of groups to 314.

Since 1970, the technical assistance agents have recommended the subdivision of large credit groups or societies. In many villages, groups that receive credit from the Impulsora and have more than 20 members have divided to form groups of about 10 members. Each of these subgroups has a leader or assistant representative. Coordinating the assistant representatives, there is a general representative or coordinator who is elected by all the members and is responsible for the organization at the village level. This subdivision of large groups into smaller units facilitates administration, internal communication, and contact with the technical assistance agents.

The solidarity groups that work with the Agricultural Bank have been encouraged to develop a similar organization at the village level. Many of the solidarity groups have preferred to maintain their independence, however, and this has limited the effectiveness of their village coordinators.

Beginning in 1973, vigilance committees have been formed in the villages with several subgroups receiving credit from the Impulsora or the Agricultural Bank. These

From 1969 onward, the technical assistance agents concentrated their efforts on promoting the organization of the farmers and in assisting the groups to use the improved production technologies adequately. By 1973, 7,194 farmers were organized in 553 groups and received credit from seven different sources.

committees are composed of one member from each of the subgroups in the village.

BENEFITS RECEIVED BY FARMERS THROUGH ORGANIZED ACTION

When the technical assistance agents began to promote the organization of farmers in 1969, it was assumed that organized action by farmers would be fruitful in many ways. In 1973, selected farmers were asked whether they were receiving benefits from working together in groups. Information was collected from 69 farmers in 35 groups scattered throughout the Project area. Some of the impressions obtained from the farmers about the importance of organized group action are cited in the following sections.

Better Understanding of the New Technology

The general impression of the farmers seems to be that organization has given them greater access to information about Project recommendations. Most of the meetings and demonstrations at which the technical assistance agents provide information on production practices are organized by the groups. Members of the groups are quite consistent in attending these sessions, and a better understanding of the new technology by the organized farmers should lead to a more effective use of the recommendations.

The difference between the average yields of farmers on credit lists and all farmers in the area (Table 9.8) has gradually decreases over the years. This seems to indicate that an increasing number of farmers not on credit lists are using the new technology. Perhaps, in terms of better information on technology, the advantages of being organized are most notable in the early years of the program.

