

Ag College directs 'spark' to Colombia

by SUSANNE SCHAFER
Nebraskan Staff Writer

The University of Nebraska College of Agriculture is "involved" in Colombia, South America but not in a militaristic way.

The College of Agriculture

serves as the prime contractor of agricultural technical advisors for the Latin American country. Through the Agency for International Development (AID) the University provides technical assistants to establish agricultural programs at

Colombian universities.

The advisors are sent to Bogota, Medellin and Cali, Colombia. Their initial tour of duty lasts two years, although some members of the staff have chosen to stay longer.

Norm Teter, an assistant professor who served as head of agricultural engineering processing in Bogota, Colombia's capital city, said he sees the program as a "catalyst that encourages the Colombians to use their potential."

He noted that Colombia is a land of contrast, a developing nation, rich in natural and mechanic resources, "but they need a spark to get them started."

The program has implemented and improved University courses in home economics, veterinary science, animal science, agronomy and extension.

Research graduate and extension programs were also instigated through the assistants' work.

Deane Manbeck, assistant professor in agricultural engineering, observed that before his group began teaching, no Colombian university had agriculture courses on the graduate level.

"Now they are able to solve their own problems in their own language. I think that we have given them some needed self-confidence," said Teter.

The Kellogg and Ford Foundations combine with AID to provide funds for the program.

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