

**FEASIBILITY STUDY OF EXPANDING DAIRY PRODUCTION IN
OCOSINGO, CHIAPAS, MEXICO**

An Abstract of
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ABSTRACT

The southern Mexican state of Chiapas has unfulfilled economic development potential. Despite its vibrant culture and wealth of resources, it remains one of the poorest parts of Mexico, in large part due to political and ethnic strife rooted in Mexico's colonial past. This thesis explores remedies to this long term situation by investigating ways to spark increased agricultural productivity and profitability. This thesis specifically hypothesizes that a reinvigorated dairy sector might generate increased wealth for small-scale farmers and rural communities in the region. The dairy sector was chosen through a strategic visioning process conducted by faculty members at the Universidad Tecnológica de la Selva, located in Ocosingo, Chiapas, Mexico. A key point identified in the process is that increased dairy production could help the growing cheese production sector. Hence, a focus on dairy could spur development along a food production value chain.

In order to test this hypothesis and measure the feasibility of expanding the dairy sector, the researcher conducted field surveys of 55 dairy farmers located in 38 ejidos (or rural farm communes) in rural Chiapas. Results of the surveys showed that farmers are interested joining marketing cooperatives or alliances as a strategy to help expand their markets, and hence, profitability. This could in turn help to spur broader economic development in Chiapas.