OCHO SUR: "WE HAD PROJECTED TO INVOICE US$61 MILLION IN 2022, BUT IT WILL PROBABLY BE MORE"

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AGROPECUARIO

"Proyectamos facturar US$61 millones en el 2022"

Michael Spoor y Alfonso Morante –CFO y CFO de Ocho Sur, respectivamente– explican el crecimiento de la empresa de palma aceitera, impulsado por la mayor productividad de sus plantas y el favorable contexto internacional.

¿Cuál es la dimensión de sus operaciones?
Michael Spoor (MS): Venimos a Perú en el 2016 y compramos dos fundos en Ucayali en una subasta pública. En total, tenemos 12 mil hectáreas, de las cuales 10 mil ya estaban sembradas con palma aceitera. A la fecha hemos invertido casi US$150 millones para mejorar la productividad de los cultivos. En el 2021 producimos más del 50% de las exportaciones de Ucayali y somos el empleador formal más grande de la región.

¿Buscarán ampliar su número de hectáreas sembradas?
MS: No nos hemos expandido y no tenemos planes de hacerlo. Estamos abocados a crecer en productividad, generar mayores eficiencias y automatizar nuestra planta. En el 2021 producimos 180 mil toneladas y este año esperamos alcanzar 210 mil toneladas dado que la palma entra a su etapa de mayor productividad. El objetivo es alcanzar 250 mil toneladas en dos o tres años más.

¿Cómo se refleja el aumento de la producción en su facturación?
Alfonso Morante (AM): En el 2021 facturamos US$50 millones y en el 2022 esperamos alcanzar los US$61 millones, aunque posiblemente sea mucho más a juzgar por la evolución de los precios a partir de la coyuntura internacional. A comienzos del 2022 la tonelada métrica cotizaba en US$1200, hoy está en US$1,710.

Si la coyuntura internacional juega a su favor, y sus plantas están alcanzando altos niveles de productividad, ¿por qué no expandir las hectáreas sembradas?
AM: Es un tema complicado. La zonificación en la región no está terminada. Si hubiera una oportunidad de agregar un espacio ya intervenido en el que se pueda trabajar, habría que analizar el caso. **(LF)**

Michael Spoor

Alfonso Morante

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Michael Spoor and Alfonso Morante -CEO and CFO of Ocho Sur, respectively- explain the growth of the oil palm company, driven by the greater productivity of its plants and the favorable international context.

What is the size of your operations?

Michael Spoor (MS): We came to Peru in 2016 and bought two farms in Ucayali at a public auction. In total, we have 12 thousand hectares, of which 10 thousand were already planted with oil palm. To date we have invested almost US$150 million to improve crop productivity and build an extraction plant valued at US$20 million. In 2021 we produce more than 50% of Ucayali's exports and are the largest formal employer in the region.

How big is the oil palm market in Peru?

Alfonso Morante (AM): Palm cultivation is still very small, approximately 90 thousand hectares, far below coffee, rice and cocoa. Colombia has 500 thousand hectares planted and Ecuador, 250 thousand.

Will they seek to expand their number of planted hectares?

MS: We have not expanded and have no plans to do so. We are focused on growing productivity, generating greater efficiencies and automating our plant. In 2021 we produce 180 thousand tons, 18 tons of yield per hectare per year and this year we hope to reach 210 thousand tons since the palm enters its stage of greatest productivity. The goal is to reach 250 thousand tons in two or three more years.

How is the increase in production reflected in your billing?

AM: In 2021 we invoiced US$50 million, and in 2022 we hope to reach US$61 million, although it may possibly be much more judging by the evolution of prices based on the international situation. At the beginning of 2022 the metric ton was quoted at US$1,200, today it is US$1,710.

If the international situation is in your favor, and your plants are reaching high levels of productivity, why not expand the number of hectares planted?

AM: It's a complicated topic. Zoning in the region is not finished and the company has decided that all its operations must be within a very rigid sustainability framework. We are focused on working with small farmers. The company cannot be an actor that promotes deforestation. If there was an opportunity to add an already intervened space that could be worked on, the specific case would have to be analyzed.

Does this respond to improving your community relationship after the complaints related to the prior consultation?

MS: We do not have any conflict, the communities are happy to have us as neighbors because we are a partner in sustainable development and improving their standards of living.

There is an absence of clear regulation and territorial planning, it is difficult to expand without a clear roadmap between authorities and private companies. As long as these consensuses are not achieved, we prefer to ally with farmers who want to enter palm cultivation in Ucayali.

So, the complaints have been settled?

AM: There are organizations from outside the region that seek to cultivate conflicts and generate news about companies against communities that are false.

What are your investment prospects for 2022?

AM: We have a capex of more than S/35 million. We are investing in our mill to double the capacity from 45 tonnes per hour to 90. This is something we will achieve in the next two to three years. We are also acquiring a boiler, and this year we started phase two of the plant automation process. We have important purchases of vehicles and machinery, as well as road maintenance since we have more than 200 kilometers of internal roads.

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