new crop feasibility. The resource profile should include natural (land and water), human (management and labor), and capital (venture, debt, and equity) resources present in the region. The total and potential hectarage of the current traditional crops should be identified. Present production schedules can then be examined. The new or supplemental crops must fit into the present production schedules of traditional crops, or the present schedules must be sufficiently flexible to allow for the incorporation of the new crop. The possibility of using existing facilities and equipment should also be examined. Other factors to consider include the present demand for labor, grower knowledge and/or receptiveness to training, and grower commitment. An assessment of grower attitudes toward cooperation within the region may be needed to assess the feasibility of regional new crop enterprises. Grower involvement in the various phases of the feasibility analysis is critical.

Assessment of economic potential

A simultaneous evaluation of market demand, cultural adaptation, and the determination of economic feasibility is essential. Establishing cost estimates of production, packaging, and handling are needed. Profitability must be possible in both the short-term (covering only variable costs) and in the long-term (covering fixed and variable costs). The evaluation of economic options, both individually and as a region, can be critical to the successful incorporation of new crops into the traditional production system. For many of these crops, the coordination of production by some form of grower association would provide a consistent supply of quality product to the market. This would protect the market from over-supply, which adversely affects market value. Quality control must remain a high priority for growers to maintain a place in the market. This systems approach delineates areas of potential economic risk in the production and marketing of the new or alternative crops studied. Successful crop diversification is then possible through the development of individual or regional marketing and production opportunities.

Literature Cited