After several years of planning and waiting, the Department of Agricultural Economics, Federal University of Ceara, Brazil, in August 1971, began offering classes leading to a Masters of Science degree in Agricultural Economics. This is the first graduate degree program in Agricultural Economics to be offered in Northeast Brazil; it is also the first graduate degree program in the School of Agronomy. Considerable satisfaction and pride accompanied the initiation of this program.

Northeast Brazil, with a population of approximately 28 million people, occupies an area roughly equal in size to the six western states of Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon and Washington. About 60 percent of the population lives in the rural areas; 40 percent of the gross product of the region (in value) comes from the rural sector. Average annual income per capita for the region is estimated at $190.

When these facts are considered it is easy to understand the desire and necessity for improving agricultural education and research in Northeast Brazil. It was the awareness of these facts, as well as others that led the University of Arizona, in 1964, to enter into a contract with the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Federal University of Ceara. The express purpose of the contract is to provide assistance to the Federal University of Ceara in the development of its School of Agronomy in the areas of teaching, research and extension. Progress during the seven year operation of the contract has been impressive.

Development of the graduate program in Agricultural Economics is one part of the overall plan to develop the School of Agronomy. The origins of the program can be traced, in part, to the efforts of Dr. Elmer Menzie, first University of Arizona advisor in agricultural economics. During his three and one-half year tour in Fortaleza he encouraged and assisted the department in (1) developing a plan for the graduate program; (2) establishing contact with possible funding agencies; and (3) training and expanding the faculty. Many of his ideas were adopted and implemented by his Brazilian colleagues.

The development of the program was reinforced by the implementation of a nationwide University Reform which, among other things, resulted in a strong departmental structure. Furthermore, a shift in Brazil's national priorities made funds available for improvements in the Physical facilities (see photo), employment of the faculty on a full-time basis, increased faculty salaries, and expansion of faculty.

In the light of these changes and improvements, outside funding agencies were stimulated to provide further assistance. The Ford Foundation, the Bank of Northeast Brazil, and the Federal University of Ceara signed a contract in December 1969 to provide additional funds for the initiation of graduate training in agricultural economics. Additionally, in August of 1970, after a two and one-half year interval, a new, full-time advisor in agricultural economics was provided through the University of Arizona contract.

During the period when there was no full-time advisor from Arizona, work on the program continued under Brazilian leadership with valuable advisory assistance from Dr. G. Edward Schuh of the Ford Foundation. Progress during this period was substantial. When the new advisor arrived, the second of two intensive

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College of Agriculture helps . . .

Brazilian University Launch Graduate Program

by Roger Fox and Faustino de Albuquerque Sobrinho

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On these pages are pictures of the recently completed Soils and Agricultural Economics buildings at the School of Agronomy, Federal University of Ceara in Brazil. It is at this institution that University of Arizona Agricultural faculty helped to launch a graduate degree program.

courses (four months each) were being conducted. These courses provided specific training in agricultural economics for 32 graduates of general agricultural curriculums. Furthermore, two faculty members had left for the U.S. for graduate training in agricultural economics and extension; acquisition of new materials for the library was underway; and the completed plan for the M.S. program had been submitted to University officials for approval.

The new graduate program has started on a fairly modest scale. Ten students selected from those completing the short courses were enrolled. All were employed at the time of their selection and enrollment and are currently on leave from a wide variety of government and semi-government organizations in Northeast Brazil (banks, extension service, agricultural colleges, etc.) They are expected to return to these agencies when their training is completed.

The curriculum follows closely the traditional M.S. program in the U.S. including economic theory, statistical analysis, research techniques, marketing, price analysis, farm management, social and technical change, etc. Where possible, course content will emphasize the situation and the problems of agriculture in Northeast Brazil. Each student will be required to prepare and submit a thesis concerning a specific economic problem confronting agriculture in the region. Expected completion time for the degree is 18 months.

With the initiation of this program among other developments, it is obvious that substantial progress has been made by the Department in the past few years, however, a number of important tasks remain. The completion of Ph.D. degrees by some of the faculty is a high priority item. At present, one faculty member is in the U.S. working towards this degree. Other faculty members will have to leave for training in the near future. Also, the research program will have to be expanded and pursued with imagination and vigor. Additional funding for research will be required. Improvement of the undergraduate program is necessary to eliminate the need for specialized short courses for those entering the graduate degree program. The planning for improving undergraduate majors within the School of Agronomy is now underway and should be implemented by 1973.

Government officials and others have expressed considerable interest in the teaching and research program of the Department. It is expected that the faculty and the graduates of the Department will make a significant contribution to the development of Northeast Brazil. Well trained people and new knowledge are at a premium in the Northeast.