

# COOMAP NEWS

IT'S A PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO ONE OF THE CORNERSTONES OF OUR CO-OP:

## THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DEPARTMENT

This area of our co-op is one of our striking features! We mean it because through efficient technical assistance, it's possible to empower growers and speed up their development in such an incredible way, as you probably have already realized through our Grower of the Month stories. But before discussing how this department is able to improve our member's lives, let us show you everything that the 10-technician staff does to our members:



## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

COOMAP pays, with **Fairtrade** premium, one leaf and two soil analysis per year to our members. And based on them, technicians are responsible for making prescriptions and recommendations for our members' crops fertilization and diseases control.

All of it in a way to use exactly what's needed for the plant good development. By the way, the conscious use of agricultural pesticides is one of the main focus of this department.

It's also under their responsibility **helping our members** adjust machines like fertilizer spreaders, coffee harvesters and crop sprayers. Furthermore, it's their job to teach growers the best post-harvest practices, like finding the best time to start harvest and drying coffee in a way to keep its quality, including the correct use of coffee dryers.



The **technical department** is of great help to members when they need to plant new coffee fields, like setting the proper spacing between rows and even choosing the right species for the new field. They are always asked by members to provide support for management decisions, as when buying new areas of land or renewing crops.

Finally, technicians are involved in **helping members** discover their production costs, organizing training sections at different rural communities and excursions to events,

like the **International Coffee Week**, which takes place in Belo Horizonte, the capital of our state.

**WOW**, haven't you gotten tired just of talking about so much work? Just a reminder: we have around **640 members!!!**





# CERTIFICATION DEPARTMENT

Under the **RESPONSIBILITY** of this **Department**, we have the certification office.

The **THREE TECHNICIANS** who work there, are in charge of checking farms organization, guiding members about what has to be done in order to comply with **certifications requirements**, keeping member`s registration data up to date and conducting inspections/ audits at member`s farms to **CHECK** if instructions and recommendations **ARE BEING FOLLOWED**.



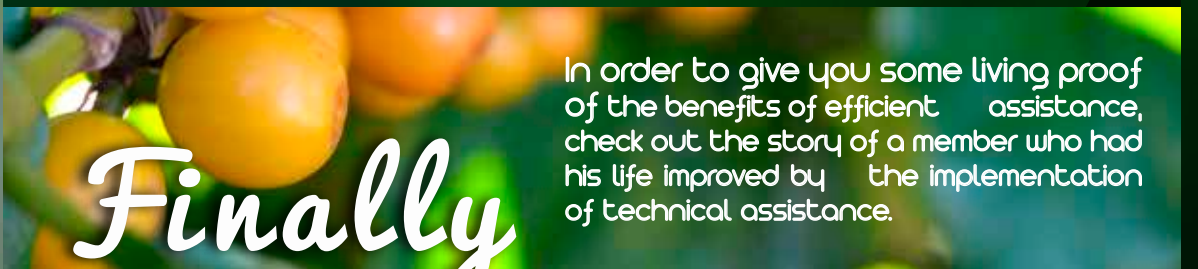
## ASSISTANCE

# Benefits

**A**s you were able to realize through the above explanation, the **Technical Assistance Department** has a vital role in our member's lives. Over several years this area has earned the respect of growers, that by applying the instructions given, are able to see **5-hectare farms** have the same yield as

huge and highly-professionalized farms that are not associated to any co-op.

Also, because our members know their production cost, they are in conditions to know the **appropriate moment** to sell their production and decide whether they want to do it or not, which is something really empowering to them.



In order to give you some living proof of the benefits of efficient assistance, check out the story of a member who had his life improved by the implementation of technical assistance.

# Finally

## GROWER OF THE MONTH!

**W**e are proud to introduce you to Mr. **Sebastião Xavier**, a 67-year old grower who never gets tired of looking back on his humble beginning!



His first contact with **coffee** was right after he married his wife, when his father-in-law gave him 1000 coffee trees so that he could make his family living from them. With the profit obtained from this small crop he was able to buy 3 hectares of land where he planted coffee. Discussing the challenges faced in his early days, he mentioned a year in which it hailed so hard that all of coffee trees and a corn crop were completely destroyed.

As years went by, he was able to buy more land and plant more **coffee**, which was really necessary because his family was growing. Nowadays he's got 7 sons, 1 daughter, 12 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild. All of his children have got their own small farms and make their living from coffee. **How did they manage to buy the land they have?**

The same way Mr. Xavier's father-in-law did to him when he married his daughter, by giving them a thousand coffee trees as a support for starting their adult lives. And this method seems to be working because some of Mr. Xavier's sons have got more land than him and all of them have their house in town and a car. By the end of the interview he said:

*"Look around you, please. Everything you see I have acquired through coffee and I am really thankful for it. On what depends on me, my family and I will work with coffee for the rest of our lives".*

Mr. Xavier is a very disciplined grower, who always puts into practice all of the suggestions and orientations given by the co-op technician.

Do you want a proof of it? Well, he's got 9 hectares of coffee crops and his average yield is 49 60-kg bags per hectare! Yes, you read it right... 49 bags per hectare!

The above **STORY** confirms the important, life-improving and empowering results that an efficient technical assistance might produce to growers and this is the reason why **OUR CO-OP FOCUS SO MUCH ON IT.**

**ON OUR NEXT EDITION WE ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT SOME OTHER NICE SOCIAL PROJECTS WE HAVE. SEE YOU!**

