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## **Idaho Beans in Costa Rica**

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## Idaho Beans in Costa Rica

### Abstract

The Global Scholars Program (GSP), sponsored by International Business Programs matches an Idaho company or organization with 10 students from a pool of applicants to carry out an international business research project. This year, GSP students are working in cooperation with the Idaho Bean Commission and the Idaho Department of Agriculture to explore new export market opportunities for Idaho bean producers.

Unfortunately, a drought in 2014 had a devastating impact on domestic production of red beans in Costa Rica. As a result, Costa Rica has been forced to look towards increased importation to cover shortfalls for domestic consumption. High importation taxes, strict phytosanitary requirements, and a reduction in beans available for import have all made importation difficult.

Idaho's current bean industry has the capacity to export beans for all of Central America and most of South America's annual consumption. Therefore, the Idaho Bean Commission welcomed this great opportunity to collaborate with farmers, distributors, retailers and a university in Costa Rica with hopes of expanding business there. The GSP Team is participating in the BSU Undergraduate Research Conference in order to present the results of its work as presented to the Idaho Bean Commission.

### Keywords

beans, blue tag seed program, Costa Rica, National Seed Organization

### Disciplines

International Business

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# Idaho Dry Bean Seed Exportation to Costa Rica for Improved Production Yields

Global Scholars

2015 Undergraduate Research Conference, Boise State University

## Hypothesis

Costa Rica will be an attainable market to export Idaho dry bean seed to and to will greatly benefit from higher production yields.

## Costa Rica: Bean Industry

Costa Rica currently imports 80% of their beans, the majority coming from Nicaragua and China. However, due to the implementation of phytosanitary standards, many of the imported beans are being rejected for failure to meet the requirements, resulting in a shortage. Beans are a staple to the Costa Rican diet, yet estimated 21,000 MT short. While they have the land capacity to produce within the country, poor farming practices, unclean and disease ridden beans, and inconsistent rainfall allow for them to produce only 20% of their consumption needs.

## Why Idaho Beans?

Idaho produces some of the best bean seed in the world. A long growing season, rich volcanic soil, and a unique quality control system allow for the production of high quality disease free bean seed. Idaho beans have been successfully exported all over the world.

## Certified Blue Tag Seed:

Idaho Crop Improvement Association (ICIA) has established the blue tag seed program to guarantee a reliable source of quality crop seed for growers. All seeds meet or exceeds the following quality standards:

- Variety documentation
- Uniform germination and growth potential
- Reduced risk from noxious weed seed
- Maximum of 1% defects in bean seed



## Our Findings & Next Steps

### Findings:

Costa Rica will greatly benefit from the use of Idaho Certified Blue Tag Seed. After meetings with the Foreign Agriculture Services, Ministry of Ag and various key producers and distributors, we are confident that a disease free bean will improve yields by up to 10 times their current production.

### Next Steps:

Because the bean industry is relatively protected in Costa Rica, the support of the government and National Seed Organization are vital for the success of this project. Idaho farmers will work to export a sample of Idaho variety seed as well as cleaned up Costa Rican variety seed to Costa Rica for a trial. Following the assumed success, a long term relationship will develop. Idaho will become a major exporter of bean seed and Costa Rica will become more self sufficient in production.

