

## Addressing a major constraint in Brazil

João Pedro Zabaleta is a researcher at the Temperate Climate Institute of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa). 'The ICRA vision for agricultural development is new here', he says. 'It improves research efficiency and includes a broader set of actors in the process, but this meets resistance from some mainstream researchers, some of them board directors. But our simple fieldwork had a huge impact in the region and proved the value of the approach.'

Zabaleta was part of a group who worked on constraints to the commercialisation of onions affecting small family

farms around São José do Norte in southern Brazil. Although traditional research provided improved varieties, the lack of infrastructure meant that it was difficult to find a market for the crop. Zabaleta built on the



work done during the ICRA field study and continued working with stakeholders. Two years later, a farmers' cooperative was established to market the region's onion crop. The next step will be to form links with industry and even start processing themselves.

'It wasn't easy to change attitudes within the institute', he remembers. 'If we had more ICRA alumni here, there would be more support for change. Our fieldwork has led to real changes in people's lives and I would like to see this happen in other commodities and regions.'