



CAC NEWS

CGIAR Collaborative Research Program for Sustainable Agricultural Development
in Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC)

No. 14

October-December, 2002

ARMENIA * AZERBAIJAN * GEORGIA

* KAZAKHSTAN * KYRGYZSTAN * TAJIKISTAN * TURKMENISTAN * UZBEKISTAN

Consortium
Members



IN THIS ISSUE:

A special Symposium on Central Asia Organized
in the USA
CGIAR Annual General Meeting
ICRISAT and ICARDA Won the Award for Chickpea
Improvement

Research Highlights:

- Germplasm enhancement;
- Conservation and evaluation of plant genetic resources;
- Natural resource conservation and management;
- Livestock management and feed production;
- Strengthening of NARS.

Meetings/Workshops/Conferences Organized
Human Resource Development
Miscellaneous News
Future Events

A SPECIAL SYMPOSIUM ON CENTRAL ASIA ORGANIZED IN THE USA

For the first time, a special symposium on Agricultural Development in Central Asia was organized in the USA. It was sponsored by ICARDA and German Center of Development Research (ZEF) with active participation of CIMMYT during the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Agronomy held on 11 November, 2002 in Indianapolis, the USA. The symposium was chaired by Prof. Paul Vlek, Director, Institute for Development Studies (ZEF, Germany), Dr. Nyle Drady, Ex-DG, IRRI, Dr. Ron Cantrell, DG, IRRI and Prof. Ahmet Mermut, University of Saskatchewan, Canada. A total of 17 papers related to Central Asia were presented during the symposium attended by more than 100 delegates from Canada, India, Pakistan, Mexico, the USA and other countries. Among them were: Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy, DG, ICARDA, Prof. B. Stewart, Ex-President, American Society of Soil Science, Prof. R. Lal, Ohio State University, Dr. J. Ryan, Soil Scientist, ICARDA, and many others.

The symposium provided an overview of the current agricultural problems, socio-economic and demographic constraints, research priorities and the improvement of crop and livestock sectors for increased and sustainable production. It became clear that resources, if utilized properly, would provide enough food for the nations in Central Asia.

Dr. Raj Paroda, Regional Coordinator, ICARDA-CAC, Tashkent, made an impressive keynote presentation entitled "An Overview of Agriculture in Central Asia and Caucasus". He provided a general view about crops, livestock, agricultural and land resources potentials.

(Continued on page 2)

Message from Dr. Sherali Nurmatov Co-Chairman, CGIAR Program Steering Committee

Dear readers,

On the eve of New Year, I, being the Co-Chairman of the CGIAR Program Steering Committee, have a great pleasure in wishing you good health, success in your activities and the fulfillment of all your desires in 2003.

For me, reading the CAC News is always very interesting since it regularly informs us about the latest achievements and activities of the Collaborative Program for Agricultural Research in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The Program is aimed towards priority problems faced by newly independent States in conditions of market economy.

I would like to express my words of appreciation for the Program Facilitation Unit, which is providing an effective coordination mechanism for research activities in the areas of PGR conservation, germplasm improvement, seed production, soil and water management, feed and livestock production and capacity building. One of the most important achievements of the Program is the introduction of modern experience from all over the world for intensification of agricultural production. For example, intensive technologies of feed production and animal fattening contributed to strengthening the livestock sector and increase of farmers' income. Each of the participating countries in the region have identified or released promising varieties of different crops. Socio-economic assessment has revealed major concerns of farmers related to low input availability and complex marketing situations. Different water management technologies have also been tested in specific environments that allow us to considerably increase our water use efficiency. All these programs are being addressed through joint collaboration with different CG Centers aiming at the improvement of livelihoods of farmers in the region.

In general, the Program has served well the lives of our researchers through effective integration of their research achievements.

I also wish to place on record our sincere appreciation to the donor organizations, such as ACIAR, ADB, GTZ, IFAD, SDC, GEF and the World Bank for supporting the collaborative research activities on technology transfer, natural resource management and human capacity building, including English language training of many of our young scientists.

The importance of the Collaborative Research Program for CAC is being repeatedly stressed and appreciated during the coordination meetings annually held with participation of Heads of NARS, scientists, economists and other stakeholders from the region and from the CG Centers and donor organizations. The practical outcomes of the Program will pave the way towards food security, poverty alleviation and natural resource management in the CAC region.

Let me once again wish the readers of the CAC News and all the researchers working under the Program a Happy New Year and fruitful results of our collaborative research activities for the benefit of all the people living in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Dr. Sherali Nurmatov, Deputy Minister, MAWM,
Director General, UzSPCA, Uzbekistan



(Continued from page 1)

He emphasized on the need to have a thorough land evaluation considered to be an extremely important issue. New innovative agricultural technologies could help in the rehabilitation of degraded lands and the sustainable land use. Dr. Paroda also emphasized many other challenges and opportunities including conservation tillage as one of the technologies that could be successfully used in the region; many different crops could be grown in various eco-regions through crop diversification; infrastructure and human resources need further strengthening; the rich genetic resources are being threatened, therefore efforts to establish gene banks and seed production systems need further support. Dr. Paroda emphasized the need for international research organizations, governments, and donor organizations to provide support and pay attention on the above-mentioned issues.

Subsequently, presentations by the scientists from Central Asia and those from CIMMYT, ICARDA and IWMI emphasized the importance of demographic and social change, agro-ecological characterization, economics of livestock production, carbon dioxide flux and soil carbon sequestration, water management, conservation tillage, germplasm enhancement, forage and range resources, pasture and food legumes and conservation of biodiversity. In particular, Dr. Erika Meng from CIMMYT presented a joint paper with Acad. R. Khusanov, Uzbekistan and Dr. A. Gulati, IFPRI, on "Demographic, Social, and Economic Changes in Central Asia". Dr. Paul Vlek from ZEF, Germany, made a presentation on "Development of Groundwater Salinity in a Lower Amu-Darya Region, Khorezm, Uzbekistan", prepared jointly with Dr. H. Ibrakhimov, Uzbekistan, and Dr. S. Park, ZEF. Dr. Luis Iniguez in a joint paper with leading livestock scientists from Central Asia (Dr. S. Yusupov, Uzbekistan, Dr. M. Kineyev, Kazakhstan, S. Kheremov, Turkmenistan, Dr. A. Ajibekov, Kyrgyzstan) and Dr. D. Thomas, University of Wisconsin, presented highlights of

the IFAD-supported project "Integrated Feed and Livestock Production in the Steppes of Central Asia". Dr. Mekhlis Suleimenov, ICARDA-CAC, in a joint paper with leading national scientists Drs. Z. Kaskarbayev from Kazakhstan, F. Khasanova from Uzbekistan and L. Martynova from Kyrgyzstan discussed issues of conservation tillage and cropping systems in the region based on the data obtained during implementation of the ADB-funded project "Soil and Water Management for Sustainable Agricultural Systems". Dr. Vilma Hotinkova, IWMI-Tashkent, made a presentation prepared jointly with Prof. Victor Dukhovniy, DG, SIC-ICWC, Uzbekistan, on "Water Resources in Central Asia, Current Constraints and Development Potential", Dr. M. Nasyrov, Samarkand State University, Uzbekistan, made a presentation on "Organic Carbon of Central Asia's Agro-ecosystems: Sources, Sinks, and Fluxes". He attracted attention of the audience to the serious degradation of natural resource base of the region: croplands, rangelands, and mountains. Studies carried out on the various soils of Central Asia have revealed a negative influence of the unjustified higher rates of the mineral fertilizers, frequent irrigation, and misuse of water on different field crops and the environments. Organic matter content, the main indicator of soil fertility, has on average dropped by 30-50 percent. Low soil fertility in the region and limited sources of organic fertilizers, are now forcing to adopt new approaches for recovering the soil organic matter. Dr. Nasyrov also discussed the need for new technologies and for better management of soil organic carbon sequestration.

All in all, the topics that were presented during the Symposium covered almost all aspects of agriculture in Central Asia and provided sufficient information to the participants to also think as to what could be done in future and what are the top priority concerns of the region.

CGIAR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING-2002

An international gathering of the world's top agricultural scientists, hosted by the Philippine Government, had taken place in Manila from 28 October to 1 November, 2002. For the first time, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) was organized outside of Washington, D.C.

The CGIAR is a strategic alliance of the 16 research centers, 22 developing countries, 21 industrialized countries, and a large number of other organizations, which work together to mobilize science to benefit poor people engaged in or dependent on agriculture in the developing world. The CGIAR is contributing new knowledge to strengthen search for solutions and these contributions are being made freely available to all. The meeting also highlighted the ways in which investments in agricultural research could reduce poverty and support sustainable development worldwide.

More than 500 delegates from 40 countries all over the world participated in the meeting. About 100 Filipino scientists from various Philippine scientific research agencies also attended the five-day conference.

Senior representatives of the 16 Future Harvest Centers of the CGIAR presented their research results in line with the theme of the 2002 AGM, "Agriculture for Growth and Development."

Four new Directors General of the CG Centers were introduced and made brief speeches during CGIAR Stakeholders Meeting. They were: Dr. Masa Iwanaga (CIMMYT); Dr. Joachim von Braun (IFPRI), Dr. Peter Hartmann



Directors General during the working session

(IITA) and Dr. Carlos Sere (ILRI).

The AGM-2002 used a new format for center presentations to stakeholders. Unlike in the past meetings, when each Director General made a full presentation of his/her Center's work, at this meeting there were only two full presentations one by the outgoing CDC Chair, Dr Meryl Williams, DG, ICLARM, and another one by the in-coming CDC Chair, Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy, DG, ICARDA. Each presentation covered all 16 CGIAR Centers, which had provided their input to both Dr. Williams and Prof. El-Beltagy for their systemwide presentations, and was supported by seven DGs each, who served as panelists.

The topic of Prof. El-Beltagy's presentation was "Improving Human Health and Halving Hunger and Poverty by 2015." He first drew the attention of his audience to the tragedy of hunger and poverty, the deteriorating health of our planet, and the link between poverty and natural resources degradation. He summed up the work of all 16 centers, to deal with these challenges, under four key domains: (i) improving human health and nutrition, (ii) natural resource management, (iii) crop diversification, and (iv) tools for policy change in line with changing trends in international agricultural research. He cited examples of CGIAR Center achievements in addressing the problems of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and lathyrism through agricultural research interventions; of improving human nutrition through improved crop varieties, particularly addressing the deficiency of Vitamin A in women and children; of new technologies for land, water and biodiversity management and conservation; of the role of crop diversification, including the use of neglected and underutilized crops for the sustainability of agriculture; of biodiversity and new tools of science in meeting the challenge of insect pests, diseases, and climate change; and of the role of tools that the CGIAR Centers are developing to help national governments bring about the necessary changes in policy to stay in tune with the changing environment, both natural and man-made. Referring to the role that CGIAR played in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg recently, Prof. El-Beltagy said that the in-roads made by the System should help in increased appreciation of the role of agriculture in improving national economies and alleviating poverty, and therefore increased support from donors. He said that agricultural subsidies, which currently stand at US\$150 billion per year, were not conducive to the welfare of small farmers, and there was a need to address the shortcomings of the international trade system and promote the concept of market security. "For more than 30 years, the CGIAR Centers, working with their partners, have demonstrated how international research, geared to produce international public goods, can be a key driving force behind sustainable agriculture, and in achieving food security and protection of the environment. In a changing world, the CGIAR centers are using innovative approaches and modalities for optimizing their performance, which the CGIAR has endorsed as part of the change process. We commit ourselves to work with our partners to produce, through research, appropriate technology packages and policy options, which will help us in achieving poverty alleviation and improved human health, and thus contribute to peace and stability," Prof. El-Beltagy said to conclude the presentation.

(Source: www.cgiar.org and the Week at ICARDA)

ICRISAT AND ICARDA WON THE KING BAUDOIN AWARD FOR CHICKPEA IMPROVEMENT

In a special session on 30 October, devoted to the announcement of the CGIAR awards, the CGIAR Chair, Dr Ian Johnson, announced that ICRISAT and ICARDA had jointly won the King Baudouin Award of the CGIAR for 2002 for chickpea improvement. The joint submission by the two centers, was titled "Changing Lives in Marginal Environments: a Winning Partnership in Chickpea Research." The award, given for innovation in science that helps to improve the welfare of resource-poor farmers and low-income people, promotes partnerships and has an impact on sustainable production systems, carries a testimonial signed by the CGIAR Chair and a US\$10,000 prize. Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy, DG, ICARDA; Dr William Dar, DG, ICRISAT; and Dr Jagdish Kumar, Principal Chickpea Breeder, ICRISAT, received the award from the CGIAR Chair.

ICARDA and ICRISAT share the world mandate for chickpea improvement. While ICRISAT focuses on *desi* types in the tropical latitudes of South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, ICARDA takes the lead in *kabuli* chickpea improvement in the arid temperate zones of Central and West Asia and North Africa (CWANA). The concept of winter sowing of ICARDA in the 1970s, represented a breakthrough in improving chickpea production in CWANA. The winter chickpea technology research at ICARDA was led by Dr K.B. Singh, Principal Chickpea Breeder, who, until his retirement in 1996, worked to develop new chickpea genotypes suitable for winter sowing. Although winter genotypes, making use of winter



Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy (right), ICARDA, DG; Dr. William Dar (left), ICRISAT, DG; and Dr. Jagdish Kumar, Principal Chickpea Breeder, ICRISAT, received the King Baudouin Award from the CGIAR Chair; Dr. Ian Jonson (second from right)

rainfall, produce as much as double the yield of spring types, the challenge was to combat a fungal disease *ascochyta blight*, which moist conditions promoted in the winter crop, and extreme cold during peak winter months. Over 20 years of research bore fruit when winter genotypes with tolerance to *ascochyta blight* and cold became available. The research, which also exploited the genetic potential of wild relatives of chickpea, has been multidisciplinary, involving input from related disciplines both at ICARDA and in national programs of CWANA. Partnerships have also included advanced research institutes in industrialized countries. The research efforts have led to the establishment of regional networks, and of various International Chickpea Nurseries, distributed to hundreds of cooperators each year within CWANA and beyond. Chickpea is an excellent source of high-quality protein, particularly for the poor who cannot afford meat. With the distinction of being delicious and used in more recipes than any other crop, chickpea features in the menu of millions in CWANA almost in every meal. Increased availability of improved *kabuli* chickpea in CWANA has not only helped in providing better nutrition to the poor but is also helping to promote food processing industry.

(Source: the Week at ICARDA)

Research Highlights

WHEAT

WINTER WHEAT VARIETY DOSTLIK RELEASED IN UZBEKISTAN

The increase in yields and sustainable grain production are the priority tasks of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The economy of the country, which used to be oriented mainly towards cotton growing, is now suffering from negative consequences of monocrop production. Previously, cereal crops were grown only under the rainfed areas and occupied just 500 thousand hectares. After the independence, the area under winter wheat has considerably expanded. It was more than 1.0 million hectares in 2002, since Government gave priority to self-sufficiency in food production.

Starting since 1995, the breeders of Uzbekistan have tested a large number of breeding material from the International Program of Winter Wheat Improvement Turkey/CIMMYT/ICARDA. As a result, many promising lines have been identified. These have demonstrated high yield

potential over the local standards (11-45% yield increase). One of such lines was BDME-9 (YMH/TOB/MCD/3/LIRA) that demonstrated an increase in yield by 10-40% over the standard variety Intensivnaya during multilocation trials. This line had been named as Dostlik. To release any promising line, it is necessary to have its seed produced in large quantity. Thanks to the assistance of the Director General, ICARDA, Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy, and Regional Coordinator, Dr. Raj Paroda, 5 tons of elite seed of this variety was imported and sown in an area of 20 hectares during 2001. In autumn 2002, owing to seed availability, this variety has been sown in an area of 370 hectares in Syrdaria province and 15 hectares in other provinces of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It is expected that around 1200 tons of seed of Dostlik will be available next year for its large scale adoption.

The variety Dostlik is drought and salt tolerant, has good resistance to pests and diseases, especially to yellow rust. One more advantage of this variety is that it is less input requiring. Currently, farmers face difficult situation associated mainly with limited water and fertilizers availability, thus, the new variety Dostlik has a great promise due to saving on production costs. Potential yield of this variety is 8 to 9 tons per hectare. Even when sown very late (November-December), variety Dostlik can provide a yield of 4 tons per hectare.

According to an important decision taken by the State Variety Testing Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the variety Dostlik has officially been released on 20 December, 2002. Promising regions for its cultivation are Karakalpakstan, Khoresm provinces (especially saline areas), Syrdaria, Jizzakh and Samarkand provinces of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Dostlik variety holds good promise and is likely to help resource-poor farmers in Uzbekistan.



PROMISING WINTER WHEAT LINES FOR THE REGION

(*SVTC - State Variety Testing Commission)

TURKEY/CIMMYT/ICARDA WINTER WHEAT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

COUNTRY	LINE	STATUS	YEAR OF SUBMISSION
ARMENIA	ATGF-1, ATGF-2, ATGF-3. ATGF-5	Submitted to SVTC*	2002
AZERBAIJAN	Azametly-95 Gobustan, Nurlu-99	Submitted to SVTC Submitted to SVTC	2000 2001
GEORGIA	DGDAS94 Mtshetskaya-1	Submitted to SVTC Released	1999 2002
KAZAKHSTAN	Egemen Akdan	Submitted to SVTC Submitted to SVTC	2001 2002
KYRGYZSTAN	Djamin Keremet, Zagadka, Zubkov, Azibosh, Aychurek, Cholpon, Kauz	Submitted to SVTC All submitted to SVTC	2001 2002
TAJIKISTAN	Kauz Tacicar, Norman-37 Alex, Ormon	Submitted to SVTC Submitted to SVTC Submitted to SVTC	1999 2000 2002
TURKMENISTAN	Bitatap, Garagum, Guncha	Submitted to SVTC	2000
UZBEKISTAN	Dostlik Rabat	Released Submitted to SVTC	2002 2002

MAIZE

MAIZE IMPROVEMENT IN CAC REGION

In 2002, improved maize germplasm including 150 open-pollinated varieties and hybrids of both normal and high quality protein maize was sent from CIMMYT, Mexico, for testing in the CAC region. This year, the maize genotypes were tested in Central Asia (Kazakhstan - 3 locations, Kyrgyzstan - 1 location, Tajikistan - 1 location, Turkmenistan - 1 location, and Uzbekistan - 2 locations). Summarizing the data received during two years of trials (2000-2002) and taking into consideration comments made by maize breeders from the region, we can say that cooperation with CIMMYT on maize improvement is a progressive step for all the national maize breeding programs. Still, these programs need more early-maturing maize varieties. Breeders from the region are interested in lines, land races and other input data from CIMMYT for their activities on the sites. Mainly, the entries received from CIMMYT-Mexico are tropical maize forms, which are not adapted to hot and dry climate of Central Asia. As a result of existing stresses, there is a threat to loose the yield during long growing period from tasseling to ear filling. In South Kazakhstan, more than 80% of the material was not adaptive to local conditions as well as in other countries of Central Asia

maize lines from CIMMYT required more irrigation and were susceptible to various diseases.

However, CIMMYT material was found suitable for subtropical high rainfall zones of Georgia and Azerbaijan. Some promising maize lines identified there could be included in the breeding programs. In order to establish more efficient cooperation, all the activities on maize improvement in the Caucasus will now be directly coordinated from CIMMYT Headquarters in Mexico and those ones in Central Asia will be coordinated by CIMMYT-CAC office.

(Source: Muratbek Karabayev, CIMMYT-CAC, Almaty)



Dr. A. Khusainov, Deputy Director, Tajik ARI (on the left) and N. Sharipov, Maize Breeder, Kazakh ARI, jointly visiting CIMMYT maize trials of Tajik ARI

LEGUMES

Turkmenistan used to be a specialized country on barbadenza cotton production. Currently, grain legumes are finding their niche in agricultural pattern of this country. Starting since 1999, ICARDA has provided the improved germplasm of different legume crops to Turkmenistan for testing on adaptability to local conditions. Scientists of Akhal Experimental Station selected this year some promising chickpea lines (FLIP-98-131C, FLIP-82-150C, FLIP-98-48C) and lentil (SLL, SPSILL-669), which are the most adopted for the existing environment. This fall, these lines were sown for seed multiplication and subsequent submission to the State Variety Testing Commission in 2003.

POTATO

As we informed earlier, three potato varieties through German NGO Agro Action, Kyrgyzstan, were supplied to Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. These were super early maturing variety Molly, early variety Agave, and medium maturing variety Karetta. According to the data provided by the scientists from Uzbek Research Institute of Vegetables and Melons, these varieties exceeded the standard variety Sante in yield by almost 5 - 30%. The seed potato will be further multiplied and distributed to farmers for large scale testing and possible adoption.

CONSERVATION AND EVALUATION OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

GENETIC RESOURCE CENTER IN TAJIKISTAN INAUGURATED

A Plant Genetic Resource Center was formally inaugurated in Tajikistan by Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy during his visit to this country in September, 2002. Since then, ICARDA has provided support for upgrading the facilities at the Center. In particular, 10,000 seed containers and electronic scales were delivered. A humidifier and thermostat for seed germination as well as other equipment are also being supplied to Tajikistan soon.

SUPPORT TO GENETIC RESOURCE CENTER IN KYRGYZSTAN

Upon the request received from Kyrgyz PGR scientists, ICARDA has provided support for upgrading the Kyrgyz storage facility through purchasing new equipment for the gene bank storage at the Kyrgyz PGR Center. As many as 5000 seed containers and electronic weighing scales have been delivered to the Center. A humidifier and cooling system as well as shelf stands will be procured in the near future. Dr. Bilal Humaid, Gene Bank Specialists, ICARDA, will visit both countries in January 2003 for detailed evaluation of seed storage conditions and suggestions for their improvement.



Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy, DG, ICARDA, and Acad. Bobo Sanginov, President, Tajik Academy of Agricultural Sciences (on his right) are opening the new PGR Center in Tajikistan

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

ON-FARM SOIL AND WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a request from ICARDA for a six-month extension of the project "On-farm Soil and Water Management for Sustainable Agricultural Systems in Central Asia" on a no-cost basis. This has become possible owing to careful budget planning and monitoring that resulted in saving of funds, sufficient to support the major research activities under the project. During the first phase of

the project, several technologies of soil and water management have been evolved and tested on farmers' fields. The no-cost extension of the project until 30 June, will ensure continuation of the research work during the current cropping season, so that important experiments as well as farmers' field demonstrations, are taken up for logical conclusions. Meanwhile, a proposal for the second phase of the project will be submitted to ADB soon.

EFFECTIVE USE OF TREATED WASTEWATER

The research carried out at Sorbulak site, Kazakhstan, revealed that wastewater (TWW) entering the Sorbulak lake after mechanical and biological treatments is quite suitable for irrigation of fodder crops and tree plantations. Besides, this technology was found to be highly efficient. Yield of green fodder of various crops, on an average for four years, was: Jerusalem artichoke - 57.1 t/ha, maize - 40.6 t/ha, sorghum - 44.0 t/ha, sunflower - 43.5 t/ha and fodder beet - 26.4 t/ha. An area with existing irrigation system (10,500 ha) at Sorbulak lake zone could utilize up to 50 M cub.m of wastewater for irrigation of fodder crops and tree plantations, which in fact is more than inflow of the lake at present. The wastewater is a good source of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. On an average, wastewater adds to the soil 51.6 kg/ha of N-NO₃, 14.7 kg/ha of P₂O₅ and 61.7 kg/ha of K₂O. Whereas during 1999, the soil of the site was assessed to be low in nitrogen, in 2002, the same was assessed to be moderate and rich in nitrogen. The typical sierozem soils in natural conditions have an increasing level of heavy metal contamination. The concentration of heavy metals, such as Zn, Fe, Cd, Cr, Ni, Pb and Co was found to be the same



at Jerusalem artichoke being irrigated with TWW (Kazakhstan)

the experimental site and close to virgin land. Thus, utilization of wastewater containing some quantity of heavy metals did not affect the soil quality. However, this technology requires further research for assessment of long-term influence of treated wastewater on the quality of both fodder and the soil.

ZERO TILLAGE TECHNOLOGY IN KAZAKHSTAN

Since 2000, CIMMYT has been carrying out experiments on zero-tillage technologies in Shortandy (North Kazakhstan) and Karagandy (Central Kazakhstan). They included sowing of wheat after different fallow treatments. The results of two-year experiments on zero tillage, have clearly demonstrated a great potential of conservation agriculture (CA) technologies for wheat production on the vast areas of North Kazakhstan. Taking into account this potential, FAO initiated a joint project with Kazakhstan and CIMMYT on introduction of CA technologies for crop production in North Kazakhstan. In autumn 2002, two planning and coordination meetings were held in Astana and Tashkent. Representatives of FAO, MoA, CIMMYT, farmers, agricultural scientists and specialists, as well as

representatives of machinery and chemical industry jointly discussed the details of the project, its separate components, action plan, the project office establishment. A special council consisted of FAO specialists, representatives of MoA and CIMMYT visited farms in Akmola, Kostanay provinces and North Kazakhstan province during an eight-day mission. As a result, four farms in Akmola and North Kazakhstan were identified as project pilot sites. Farms involved in the project are fully privatized and represent the main types of farms in North Kazakhstan. Each farmer earmarked 100 ha for testing and demonstration of CA technologies. Currently, CIMMYT-Kazakhstan office is responsible for in-country implementation/administration and technical supervision of the

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT AND FEED PRODUCTION

INTEGRATED FEED AND LIVESTOCK PROJECT

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has officially agreed on extension of the project on "Integrated Feed and Livestock Production in the Steppes of Central Asia". The project was launched in 1999, in the four countries of Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The objectives of the project to improve feed production as well as rangeland and livestock productivity were

successfully achieved, though some technologies still need further verification and testing. During the one-year extension period on a no-cost basis, major emphasis will be laid on improving and testing the most promising technologies of feed and livestock production so developed under the project. Also, ICARDA has developed a proposal for the second phase of the project to be submitted to IFAD shortly.

REORIENTATION OF LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION TO MEET MARKET DEMAND

New market conditions in Central Asian countries show the evidence of poor demand and low price for livestock products such as wool and pelts. Today, farmers are facing serious problems in accessing both wool and pelt markets resulting in significant income losses.

The "Integrated Feed and Livestock in the Steppes of Central Asia" project funded by IFAD envisages research activities for reorientation of livestock production for meeting the market demands. For this purpose, several technologies have been tested at the farm level. One of them is sheep milking and production of sheep milk derivatives. Results of socio-economic survey have revealed that there is a considerable potential for marketing sheep milk derivatives. Somehow, the local sheep breeds are not good milk producers.

In order to improve the situation, a new experiment on cross breeding of non-indigenous semi-fine wool sheep breeds with dairy sheep breed was initiated at the Boykazan farm, Tashkent province, Uzbekistan.

A special cross breeding program was initiated jointly by the Project Coordinator, Dr. Luis Iniguez together with Dr. Dave Thomas from the University of Wisconsin, USA, and the national livestock breeders from Uzbekistan. Subsequently, more than 1000 doses of frozen semen of dairy East Friesian and Lacaune breeds were imported from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA to Uzbekistan for artificial insemination.

Prior to inseminations, 600 ewes were synchronized with progesterone and super-ovulated to enhance the conception rates and get prepared. The crossbreeding operation was conducted during the end of October and beginning of November, 2002 by Dr. Ismeth Inonu of the Research Institute of Animal Science, Indonesia, a specialist in

intra-uterine insemination with laparoscopy. Dr. Inonu has an extensive experience in this procedure and is a well-known expert in sheep reproduction genetics. The whole process of operation lasted for 10 days with the rate of 60 animals per day.

A young scientist, Sobir Mavlonov, veterinarian from Uzbek Scientific Production Center for Agriculture, took an active part in the cross breeding operation and could get practical training in the process of laparoscopic artificial insemination. Another young social scientist, Ms. Madina Musaeva from ICARDA, Tashkent office provided logistic support.

The farmers of Boykazan and the Uzbek scientists are looking forward to the success of this unique artificial insemination initiative to improve the milk yield of local sheep breed, as a new dairy sheep breed will allow farmers to supply the market with more dairy products made of sheep milk and raise their income.

Dr. Inonu during laparoscopic insemination assisted by Ms. Madina Musayeva



Strengthening of NARS

PFU PROVIDES SUPPORT TO CAC REGIONAL FORUM

Prof. Azimkhan Satybaldin, the President, Regional Forum for CAC, addressed to the Steering Committee of the CGIAR Program for CAC with a request to extent a possible secretarial and logistic support to the CAC Regional Forum. The PSC considered this request and realized that for effectiveness of the Forum, there is a need for solid support for its secretarial functions. It was decided that the Program Facilitation Unit

(PFU) in Tashkent will provide the need-based secretarial support including opening of a bank account for the Forum. Dr. Raj Paroda, Head, PFU, and Prof. Satybaldin will work out other details of this arrangement.

As the first step, PFU announces a call for a logo design of the CAC Regional Forum. The best input will be recognized through our Newsletter.

GLOBAL MECHANISM FACILITATES STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Global Mechanism developed a strategic approach in 2001 targeting all levels of actors to support United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD) implementation in the Central Asian countries. A Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) for Implementation of UNCCD in the Central Asia sub-region was entered into between the GM, ADB, CIDA and CCD Project of GTZ in October 2001 at the Fifth Conference of Parties (COP5) held in Geneva.

The primary objective of this partnership is to enhance the co-ordination of the donor partners working in the sub-region. Coordination is conducted by regular information sharing, complementary program development, co-financing, parallel financing, and development of comprehensive and harmonized approaches for meeting dryland development needs. It is rooted in an approach, which aims at ensuring the strengthening of all the levels of UNCCD implementation in the

CARs, i.e. local, national and regional levels.

The SPA was accepted for presentation as an official "Type II Partnership" at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. The presentation was concluded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, the GM's host institution) and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) stating their respective commitments to join the SPA. The Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) has also indicated its interest in joining the SPA and it is anticipated that on-going consultation with the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) will lead to a positive response. ICARDA is also likely to sign SPA soon.



Meetings/Workshops/Conferences Organized

FIRST MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE PDF B PHASE

The grant to implement the PDF B phase on development of the project proposal on “*In situ*/on farm conservation of agricultural biodiversity (horticulture crops and wild fruit species) in Central Asia” is provided by the UNEP-GEF. To initiate start-up activities, the first meeting of the International Steering Committee for the PDF B phase was organized from 3-4 October, 2002 by IPGRI, which is the implementation agency for the project, in collaboration with the CGIAR-PFU. The meeting was hosted by the Uzbek Research and Production Center “Botany”.

The meeting was attended by twenty representatives from five Central Asian countries, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. An introductory presentation on objectives and activities for the PDF B phase was made by Ms. Muhabbat Turdieva, CGIAR-

PFU/IPGRI-CWANA. It is envisaged that duration of the PDF B phase will be 16 months and its main purpose is to test the outputs of the PDF A phase and to complete a final development of project proposal.

Participants of the meeting considered the issues related to establishment of links with other GEF projects being implemented in the region, also to provision of full information on the PDF B phase implementation to GEF by national focal points, and the work plan for the PDF B phase, as well as the administration and operating modalities of IPGRI-CWANA. It was agreed that the Steering Committee will organize three such meetings within the PDF B phase: the second one will be held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, and the third one in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

(Source: Muhabbat Turdieva, IPGRI-CWANA)

WORKSHOP ON AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION SYSTEM HELD IN AZERBAIJAN

A one-day workshop was organized in Baku on 10 October, 2002, jointly by ISNAR, Agrarian Scientific Center (ASC) of the MoA of Azerbaijan, and the Agency for Support to the Development of Agricultural Private Sector (ASDAPS). The workshop drew on the results of the project “Agricultural Innovation System of Azerbaijan: Assessment of Institutional Linkages”, completed in May, 2001. Specific objectives of the workshop included examination of the current situation in the area of cotton supply chain; priority problems and their solutions; identification of linkages among different agents through the Information, Knowledge, Skills, & Resources (IKSR); and establishment of an Information Exchange Network (IEN) for promoting the Agricultural Innovation System on cotton production. The gathered information will be used for developing of a joint project proposal on IEN establishment in Azerbaijan. This network would facilitate strengthening of organizational linkages through effective flow of IKSR in the system.

Participants of the workshop included representatives of agricultural policy, research, information dissemination, private sector (farmers, input supply firms, consultative, processing and marketing firms, and NGOs), and external sector organizations. Cotton is not a priority crop for Azerbaijan, but it has been chosen as a crop of investigation because of organizations dealing with cotton supply chain, have emerged during the last three years. Currently, agricultural policy and agricultural research priorities are not in place, and therefore, some more emphasis is to be made on issues relating to facilitation and management of the agricultural innovation system in general. Once outlined in the context of cotton, the application of the innovation system framework to other priority crops should not be difficult.

This information generated during the workshop will be further used for development of a joint project proposal (ISNAR, ASC, and ASDAPS) to be funded by different donors such as GTZ, EU, WB, etc.

(Source: Temel Tugrul, ISNAR)

SUSTAINABLE WHEAT PRODUCTION IN ROTATION WITH COTTON

The International Workshop on Conservation Agriculture for Sustainable Wheat Production in Rotation with Cotton in Limited Water Resource Areas was jointly organized by the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers (TIAME) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR), Uzbekistan, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Although FAO made a major financial contribution to the workshop, the local organizers managed to attract considerable funding from the other public and private sector sponsors, including UNESCO, UNDP, New Zealand Aid, ICARDA, CIMMYT, IWMI, USAID, Winrock International, IREX, GTZ, ZEF Bonn University, CASE, Kverneland and Aventis. The workshop was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from 13-18 October, 2002 with the purpose to bring together farmers, advisers, scientists, private sector and decision makers and to share information in order to introduce the practice of conservation tillage in cotton-wheat rotation. This workshop was a direct follow-up of the previous workshops held in Shortlandy/Kazakhstan (1999) and Lahore, Pakistan

(2001) and was built on the experiences gathered since those events.

Around 150 participants from 20 countries representing different stakeholders in conservation agriculture took part in the workshop. In all, 50 presentations were made and proceedings of the workshop contained two big volumes.

Conservation agriculture in Central Asia is still undeveloped. Generally, agricultural production is based on systems that focus on immediate production with no regard to long-term consequences. Current cultivation practices and cropping systems have already led to various types of land degradation, including soil compaction, loss of organic matter and salinization.

(Continued on page 9)



CA: wheat planting in Kazakhstan

Consequently, productivity and yields are being reduced, resources are not used efficiently and the system is becoming unsustainable. Agriculture in Central Asia is fully mechanized with large machinery intensively used for repeated deep tillage and seedbed preparation. As such, these systems represent "old style", expensive and unsustainable farming systems. Conservation agriculture is friendlier to the environment at large, reduces risk, requires less efforts and labor, and increases a general profitability of agriculture.

The workshop participants made valuable recommendations, which included development of awareness programs for government level personnel and all the stakeholders (governors, researchers, extension staff, farmers) basing on the need for and the advantages of conservation agriculture for sustainable land use and production.

It was also decided to develop and adopt a wheat cotton system on permanent, raised beds with zero tillage technology in both rainfed and irrigated environments; to establish pilot benchmark sites for promotion of conservation agriculture; to strengthen capacity building of academic institutions towards supporting multi-disciplinary aspects of conservation agriculture and to initiate training programs for the farmers. The workshop was found very innovative and well-timed as the concern of sustainable agriculture and lower production costs are becoming crucial for farmers in the region.

NEW ICAR PROJECT FOR CAC

The new project on International Cooperation for Agricultural Research in CAC initiated in summer 2002, aims at bringing together the agricultural scientists from the region and US universities and CIMMYT. The project is funded by USDA. The project has three main components: a) research network between the scientists of the region and the USA; b) competition based grants for on-farm demonstrations of advanced wheat varieties and technologies; c) human resource development and institutional capacity building.

Subsequently, two meetings were conducted in the region to initiate the project, finalize its objectives and activities and identify the priorities for the research grants: from 21-22 October, 2002 in Tashkent and from 24-25 October in Tbilisi. The meetings have resulted in identification of priorities for the research grants as listed below:

- ▶ Agronomy - conservation tillage, soil fertility, erosion control, permanent beds, increasing of yield potential, water use efficiency.
- ▶ Integrated pest management - weed and insect control.
- ▶ Alternative crops - forages, oilseeds, and legumes.

TOWARDS COMMON MARKET FOR SEED

ICARDA Seed Unit, the ICARDA-Iran Program and the Seed and Plant Improvement Institute (SPII), Karaj, Iran, jointly organized a workshop "Review of National Seed Systems and Regulations in Central Asia and West Asia", which was held from 2-3 November, 2002 in Karaj, Iran. The workshop participants were senior managers from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan as well as representatives of ISTA, UPOV, FAO and ICARDA.

It was unanimously stressed that at modern stage there is a trend toward practical and socio-economic integration at both sub-regional and regional levels to promote freer movement of goods and services. In this context, harmonization of policies and regulations for unrestricted movement of crop varieties and seed throughout Central and West Asia could lead

INTER-REGIONAL COTTON WORKSHOP

An inter-regional Cotton Workshop was held during 12-13 October, at Agricultural Research and Education Organization (AREO), Tehran, Iran, with participation of scientists from Azerbaijan, India, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and workshop sponsors: AREO, AARINENA, GFAR, CAC-Forum, APAARI, and ICARDA. A representative from EU also attended the workshop.

Following the opening statements by Drs. M. H. Roozitalab (AREO, AARINENA), Raj Paroda (GFAR, APAARI), A. Satybalidin (CAC-Forum), and H. Ketata (ICARDA-Tehran), the country representatives made presentations on cotton production and research in their respective countries. This was followed by group discussions on major cotton research problems. The participants, all the senior managers in their respective countries, stressed the importance of cotton as a fiber crop, being also a source of oil, feed, and fuel, and a key component of rotation systems (e.g cotton-wheat) in many areas of the region.

The participants agreed to establish an "Inter-regional Network for Research Collaboration on Sustainable Cotton Production in Asia and North Africa" that aims at fostering the collaboration in cotton research issues of common interest through exchange of germplasm, information and expertise in major production-related topics (breeding, irrigation management, integrated pest management, fiber quality, marketing, etc.). They also agreed on the establishment and composition of a Steering Committee, as well as a Facilitation and Coordination Unit (FCU) for the Network, to be located at the Iranian Institute for Cotton Research. The FCU will also facilitate the circulation of information through an electronic newsletter.

-
- ▶ Plant breeding - winter wheat, barley, maize, crosses with wild relatives, yellow rust resistance, grain quality, resistance to salinity, drought resistance, low-input technologies.
 - ▶ Seed production - establishment of seed production, multi-location yield trials.
 - ▶ Economics and marketing - economic assessment of new technologies, grain quality standards, establishment and development of Central Asian economic zone, credits to farmers, economics of water use.
 - ▶ Conservation of biodiversity - gene bank establishment, collection missions, regional and international cooperation.
- A call for proposals was distributed in December, 2002 with a deadline of 14 February, 2003. It is anticipated that about 5-6 projects will be funded for two years with approximate budget of US\$10,000-15,000. More information could be received by e-mail from the address: amorgounov@astel.kz.

(Source: Dr. Alex Morgounov, CIMMYT-Almaty)

to the establishment of a common regional seed market. This should attract private investment and help in creating a competitive, efficient and sustainable seed industry.

The Karaj workshop explored the opportunities for harmonization through presentations made by the workshop participants, in which they reviewed the national policies and regulations related to varieties and seeds.

The participants endorsed the harmonization initiative and agreed to take the first step by organizing an in-depth review of policies, laws and regulations relating to the seed sector of each country. This process that will end with the national meetings will be further continued at the regional level. FAO and ICARDA agreed to provide necessary backstopping to this important initiative.

(Source: the Week at ICARDA)



GLOBAL MOUNTAIN SUMMIT HELD IN BISHKEK

Mountain areas cover 26 percent of the Earth's land surface and host 12 percent of its people. They provide essential resources including fresh water for at least half of humanity, critical reserves of biodiversity, food, forests and minerals. Mountain regions affect every single one of us in many ways. Healthy mountain ecosystems are vital not only for mountain communities, plants and animals, but also for services to lowland peoples, including clean water, energy, food, recreation, and protection from natural disasters such as avalanches and floods. Today, war, poverty, hunger, climate change and environmental degradation are threatening the web of life that mountains support.

The Bishkek Global Mountain Summit was the final global event of the 2002 United Nations International Year of Mountains. It drew together the ideas and recommendations generated throughout the year, from all the levels and sectors of society. Over 600 people from sixty countries met for four days from 28 October to 1 November, 2002, in the capital of Kyrgyzstan, one of the most mountainous countries in the world. The Summit was organized by the Government of Kyrgyzstan with support from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Aga-Khan Foundation and other partners.

As the culminating global event of the United Nations International Year of Mountains (IYM), a "Bishkek Mountain Platform" document was unanimously adopted by the largest ever gathering of governments, international organizations, NGOs and individuals concerned with mountain issues. The document will be forwarded to the United Nations General Assembly by the Government of Kyrgyzstan. Bishkek Platform,

the main output of the Bishkek Summit, is designed to guide governments and everyone involved with mountain issues on future activities and actions in the 21st century. Its ultimate goal is to improve the livelihoods of mountain people, to protect mountain ecosystems and to use mountain resources more wisely. At the global level, the Bishkek Platform supports the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, agreed at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, as the framework to provide the follow-up to the IYM.

"The Bishkek Platform is an important document that will help, among other things, to ensure environmentally sound management in mountain regions, particularly in developing countries," said Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel, UNEP's Deputy Executive Director. "The Bishkek Summit has been extremely rich in substance and represents the largest ever assembly of ideas, reviews and actions on mountain issues," Mr. Kakakhel continued. "By bringing the world's mountain community together for the first time, the government of Kyrgyzstan has launched a critical process. Mountains are vital to all life on the Earth and to the well-being of people everywhere. What happens on the highest peak affects life in the lowlands, in freshwaters and even in the seas," he said.

A generous contribution by the governments of Italy and Switzerland will help FAO, as the lead agency of the IYM, and UNEP to ensure that the follow-up institutional arrangements are made, including support to the proposed establishment of a Network of Development Mountain States and Regions.

(Source: www.globalmountainsummit.org)

Human Resource Development

FRUIT TREES AND MANAGEMENT OF FIELD GENE BANK IN CENTRAL ASIA

The regional training course on "Fruit Trees and Management of Field Gene Bank in Central Asia" was organized by the gene bank of Iran under the support of IPGRI and FAO from 23-31 October, 2002 in Karaj, Islamic Republic of Iran, hosted by the Seed and Plant Improvement Institute (SPII) and the

National Plant Gene Bank of Iran (NPGBI).

The course was attended by twenty-five young scientists from Azerbaijan, Iran, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The lectures covered a broad range of subjects, including *in-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation of fruit trees, management of gene banks, complementary conservation and use strategies. Case studies on conservation of several fruit trees were presented. The participants were also introduced to Genetic Resources Information System (GRIS), a tool for documenting PGR data.

Besides theoretical lessons, field trips were arranged for the trainees to visit field collections of fruit crops maintained at the Citrus Research Institute near the Caspian Sea and at the National Plant Gene Bank of Iran in Karaj.

The broad and interesting information provided during the training course on different conservation methods and complementarity among them, as well as practical skills on PGR data management of fruit crops will be very useful for me in my activities on study, conservation and use of bio-diversity in Uzbekistan.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to IPGRI-CWANA office in Tashkent for supporting my participation in this training course.



Participants of the course, Karaj, Iran

(Source: Mr. Khamidullo Khasanov, Uzbek Research Institute of Plant Industry)

DIFFERENT TRAINING ACTIVITIES

TRAINING ON RICE

Mr. Ikrom Jumanov, a research fellow from Uzbek Rice Research Institute (URRI), completed a three-month international training on hybrid rice at Hunan Academy of Agricultural Sciences (HAAS), China. He learned a lot about rice breeding and hybridization and about processing of rice and rice-flour. His training was very useful for strengthening URRI's capacities and possible development of collaboration with HAAS. The Chinese Government supported his training program, whereas support for his travel was provided by PFU-CAC and ICARDA.

TRAINING ON POTATO

A junior scientist from Uzbek Research Institute of Vegetables and Melons, Mr. Durbek Khalikov was trained at CIP for more than one month from 25 October to 29 November in potato breeding and production. His training program included potato genetic recourse improvement, plant protection and potato seed production. He also got familiarized with modern equipment used in potato breeding.



Miscellaneous News

NEW FOCAL POINTS APPOINTED IN KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKMENISTAN

Two new Focal Points have been recently appointed by their respective Governments to represent NARS of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in the CGIAR Program Steering Committee for CAC. Dr. Akylbek Kurishbayev, Vice-Minister of Agriculture, will represent Kazakh NARS and supervise the activities of the National Coordinators under both CGIAR and ICARDA Programs for CAC in his country.

Dr. Mairammurad Seidov, Head, Department of Research and Extension of Research Achievements under the Ministry of Agriculture of Turkmenistan, will now represent Turkmen NARS and supervise the program activities in his country.

CGIAR-PFU and ICARDA-CAC congratulate both new members of the CGIAR Program Steering Committee and wish them all the best in their new appointments!

ICRISAT HONORS DR. RAJ PARODA

During an impressive function marked to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of ICRISAT on 12 December, 2002, the Board of Trustees and the Institute Management honored Dr. Raj Paroda, Head, PFU and Regional Coordinator, ICARDA, by naming its prestigious germplasm repository as "Rajendra S. Paroda Gene Bank" in recognition of his outstanding contributions both at the national and global levels towards genetic resource conservation. The ICRISAT Gene Bank is one of the largest and most sophisticated facilities in the CGIAR system as well as in the world. It serves as a repository for the genetic resources of sorghum, pearl millet, small millets, chickpea, pigeonpea and groundnut containing around 114,000 accessions from 130 countries. This important resource received invaluable support from Dr. Raj Paroda in his earlier capacities as the Director of the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), Deputy Director General (Crop Sciences) and the Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), when he also served as Chairman as well as Vice-Chairman of the ICRISAT Board. On this occasion, Dr. William D. Dar, Director General, ICRISAT, stated that by naming this facility as "Rajendra S. Paroda Gene Bank" the Institute has been able to honor in a singularly appropriate way a great visionary and friend of ICRISAT for his outstanding contributions.

Drs. Ian Jonson, Chairman and Francisco Reifschneider, Director, CGIAR, in their congratulatory message said that "...this is a well-deserved honor, and speaks to strength of ICRISAT's relationship with its country, India. It is also fitting recognition of Dr. Raj Paroda's multifaceted contributions to India's agricultural development as well as his support to the CGIAR".



During the naming ceremony of Rajendra S. Paroda Gene Bank

ICARDA-CAC SCIENTISTS VISIT THE U.S. UNIVERSITIES

Drs. Mekhlis Suleimenov and Akmal Karimov from ICARDA-CAC visited the Ohio State University, Columbus, USA from 6-9 November. They met Prof. Rattan Lal, an eminent soil scientist, the author of many books related to soil quality, soil tillage and carbon sequestration, as well as other senior scientists. Prof. Lal introduced ICARDA scientists to the Carbon Management and Sequestration Program being supervised by him. During the visit, issues of possible future collaboration in the area of carbon sequestration were discussed and it was agreed that both sides could start actions for a project development on carbon sequestration in the region of Central Asia.

Later, Drs. M. Suleimenov and M. Nasyrov (Samarkand State University) together with Drs. J. Ryan and E. de Pauw from ICARDA HQ, had a one-day visit to the Purdue University, after attending the ASA meetings in Indianapolis. This University was established in 1874 and its enrolment in fall 2001 reached 67,548 students with an annual budget of over \$1,2 billion, including \$ 263 million allocated for research.

Visitors were received by Dr. D. Sammons, Associate Dean and Director of International Program in Agriculture and introduced to its main activities. It is expected that the visit of ICARDA scientists will lay the ground for close collaboration of Central Asia and the Caucasus with the American Universities.

WELCOME TO NEW IPGRI STAFF

Ms. Shirin Karryeva from Turkmenistan has recently joined the IRGRI Regional office in Tashkent as a Regional Coordinator for PDF B Phase of the UNEP/GEF Project on "In-situ/on-farm conservation of Agricultural Biodiversity (horticultural crops and wild fruit species) in Central Asia".

Shirin will be responsible for coordination and implementation of the strategy and plan of activities in the partner countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) at the regional level, as well as for monitoring of management procedures developed by the International Steering Committee for PDF B phase in order to provide successful development of the project proposal.

She will be assisted by Mr. Sherzod Musadzanov, bilingual/technical assistant on implementation of PDF B Phase activities. Sherzod is from Uzbekistan and graduated from the Tashkent State University of Foreign Languages in 1982.

CGIAR-PFU welcomes both Shirin and Sherzod and wishes them all the successes in their new appointments.

THE SIXTH SCM MEETING

The sixth Steering Committee Meeting of the CGIAR Program for Central Asia and the Caucasus will be held from 24-26 May, 2003 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The meeting will be hosted by MAWM, Uzbekistan, with logistic support of CGIAR-PFU. All focal points from the eight CAC countries and ten CG Centers are invited to send their respective reports on activities during 2001/2002 to the PFU-Tashkent (pfu-tashkent@cgiar.org.uz).

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ORGANIC MATTER STABILIZATION

The International Conference on Mechanisms and Regulation of Organic Matter Stabilization in Soils will be held by DFD from 6-10 October, 2003, Munich, Germany. The scientists dealing with soil physics, organic chemistry, microbiology, ecology, agronomy and geography are invited to share their ideas regarding the subject of the Conference. More details are on the web site: wzw.tum.de/bk/hk.

ISNAR OPENS A NEW LEARNING PORTAL

ISNAR is pleased to share its new Portal on Learning for Institutional Innovation on: www.isnar.cgiar.org/learning. The sections of the portal are: calendar of learning events, newsletters, workshop reports, partnerships and others. In January 2003, a Virtual Learning Room is going to be launched. E-learning on "How to write concept notes" will be available and a forum of discussion will be monitored by the Learning team of ISNAR.

NEW RUSSIAN WEB PAGE

The World Bank Group has recently announced the opening of its web page in Russian language now available on: <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/ECA/Rus.nsf>. A visitor can find useful information about the World Bank, its current activities, country profiles and many other initiatives and programs.

TRAINING AT ISNAR

Ms. Ilona Kononenko, Project Administrative Assistant from ICARDA-Tashkent, attended a training workshop on "How to develop a convincing proposal" organized by ISNAR at Hague from 4-9 November, 2002. The objective was to teach the officers responsible for resource mobilization on how to approach research investors, design quality projects and prepare "convincing" concept notes and proposals. The training combined a balance of modern thinking around topical issues relating to resource mobilization and development of competent proposal documents with major emphasis on practical examples and discussions among the participants.

ICARDA-BOT MEETING

For the first time in the CAC region, the ICARDA Board of Trustees meeting will be held from 19-24 May, 2003 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The meeting will be hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management, Uzbekistan with logistic support to be provided by ICARDA-CAC office. The meeting will give an opportunity for Board members to also see the field activities in Uzbekistan.

NARES WORKSHOP IN INDIA

ICRISAT and ISNAR will jointly organize a 12-day workshop from 21 April to 03 May, 2003 in Patanchery, India for National Agricultural Research and Extension Systems (NARES) of Asia. The workshop aims at building capacity of local, national and regional research and extension organizations to facilitate the agricultural innovation process that ensures that research results are relevant to farmers and other stakeholders. The application form is available with PFU-Tashkent (pfu-tashkent@cgiar.org.uz).

SECOND WORLD CONGRESS ON CA

The second World Congress on Conservation Agriculture will be held from 11-15 August, 2003 in Parana, Brazil. The program of the Congress and other details can be found on the web site: www.febrapdp.org.br.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The Editorial Committee wishes to all our partners from the CGIAR and Central Asia and the Caucasus all the success in their endeavours for increased productivity, household food security, reduced poverty and sustainability of our natural resources!