

IICA participates in OAS Assembly

The recent Assembly afforded the IICA delegation an opportunity to review preparations for the next agricultural summit of the Americas.



The OAS Secretary General, Jose Miguel Insulza, and IICA Director General Chelston Brathwaite, during a private lunch that took place during the OAS General Assembly.

During the recent General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) focused his attention on the global food crisis and preparations for the next Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life.

Chelston Brathwaite represented the Institute in the Assembly, held in Medellin, Colombia, from June 1-3.

IICA has taken part in other forums held to seek consensus on ways of tackling the food crisis. One of these was the *High-level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy*. Convened by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), it took place 3-5 June. The Director of Technical Leadership and Knowledge Management, James French, and the IICA Representative in Brazil, Carlos Basco attended the event on behalf of the Institute.

The Director General praised the Assembly for attaching special attention to the role of youth in building the future of the hemisphere.

He noted that IICA also attached critical importance to the preparation of young leaders in agriculture and rural life, who, with a global vision, will be responsible for tackling some of today's most complicated problems, including food security, production of agrofuels, food trade and the sustainable management of the environment.

While in Medellin, the Director General had the opportunity to discuss these and other topics with Ministers of Foreign Relations and Heads of Delegation.

At the meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), on June 2, Brathwaite presented IICA's vision of the current international context, which is characterized by higher prices for petroleum-based products, growing demand for protein in economies such as China and India, climate change and crop failures due to drought in several parts of the globe.

Brathwaite noted "What our countries need, more than short-term responses, are clear food security policies and, above all, to make the development of agriculture a top national priority."

The delegations of the Member States of the OAS were given a document that spells out the Institute's position on the subject of the food crisis, in which the Director General stresses the need to find long-term solutions.

Looking ahead to Jamaica 2009

"Friendly and constructive" is how Brathwaite described a meeting held in Colombia between the IICA delegation and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, Ronald A. Robinson, to discuss preparations for the Fifth Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life, scheduled for 2009 in Jamaica.

Minister Robinson was accompanied by his country's Ambassador to the OAS, Anthony Johnson, and the Charge D'Affaires and Consul General of Jamaica in Colombia, Elaine Sanchez. Representing IICA were Deputy Director General Christopher Hansen; IICA Representative in the United States David Hatch; Director for Follow-up of the Summit of the Americas Process Bernardo Badani; IICA Representative in Colombia, Jorge Caro; and the Coordinator of the Office of the Director General, Pamela Stroude.

Brathwaite reassured Minister Robinson of the Institute's commitment to work to improve agriculture in Jamaica; mentioned the recent visit of the Minister of Agriculture of Jamaica, Christopher Tufton, to IICA Headquarters in Costa Rica; and referred to a recent internship program in which a group of officials and producers received training in agricultural techniques for protected environments.

He also thanked the Government of Jamaica for offering to host the next Ministerial Meeting and the Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA).

During the OAS General Assembly, Minister Robinson announced that the Ministerial meeting would be held in his country next year.

During his meeting with the IICA delegation, the Minister offered details on national plans, for example, to support the dairy industry, increase rice production, or revitalize agricultural extension and animal and plant health services.

He also called attention to the need to establish disaster insurance schemes that can serve as a model for the Caribbean, above all, in light of the effects of climate change.

For further information

patricia.leon@iica.int



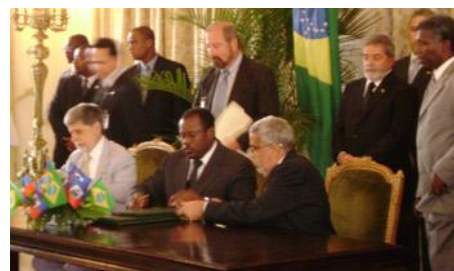
IICA to facilitate provision of Brazilian agricultural cooperation in Haiti

IICA will serve as facilitator for agricultural technical cooperation between the two countries.

Brazil and Haiti signed a new agricultural technical cooperation agreement on May 28, during the visit of Brazilian President Inacio Lula Da Silva to this Caribbean nation.

The agreement calls for the establishment of banks of seeds to be used in producing vegetables, and the creation of an experimental station, as well as a food security strategy for 2008-2011 and horizontal technical cooperation between the two countries, for which the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) will serve as facilitator.

Foreign Minister Celos Amorim, representing Brazil, Secretary of Agriculture Joanas Gue, on behalf of the Haitian government, and the IICA Representative in Haiti, Alfredo Mena, signed the document. Honorary witnesses to the signing were the Presidents of Brazil and Haiti, Inacio Lula Da Silva and Rene Preval, respectively.



Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim, Haiti's Secretary of Agriculture, Joanas Gue and IICA's Representative in Haiti, Alfredo Mena, pictured during the signing of the agreement. The Presidents of Brazil and Haiti (Luiz I. Lula da Silva and René Preval, respectively) served as witnesses of honor.

The next step for the three parties is to prepare a work plan, which they hope to have in place as soon as possible so that implementation of the technical cooperation can begin in this nation, where 46% of its 8.5 million inhabitants suffer from malnutrition.

This horizontal cooperation agreement is similar to others being implemented in Haiti with support from IICA. These include the animal and plant health agreement signed between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and the Pro-Huerta food safety program that Argentina has been implementing since 2005, which will begin receiving support from Canada in the coming weeks.

The IICA Office in Haiti attaches special priority to horizontal cooperation between Member States, in the belief that where there is a willingness to cooperate, few economic resources are needed to transfer experiences between countries that can contribute to developing the agricultural sector and improving rural communities in the Americas.

In the regard, the Office will continue its efforts to expand horizontal cooperation with other countries of the hemisphere interested in supporting this country.

For further information, contact

alfredo.mena@iica.int



Eighth meeting of CAS focuses on food prices

At the Eighth Special Meeting of the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS), the ministers of agriculture of Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay discussed rising food prices and their impact on the region.

The discussions at the Eighth Special Meeting of the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS) focused on the factors affecting the supply and demand for food worldwide and possible coordinated actions to tackle the current situation. IICA operates the Administrative-Technical Secretariat of the CAS.

The ministers of agriculture of Brazil (Reinhold Stephanes), Bolivia (Suzanne Rivero), Chile (Marigen Hornkohl), Paraguay (Alfredo Molinas) and Uruguay (Ernesto Agazzi) took part in the meeting, held 29 May in Uruguay.

As stated in the declaration issued at the end of the meeting, the CAS does not foresee widespread food shortages. The body also noted that its member countries' production was helping to bolster global food supplies and making a significant contribution to the efforts to narrow the shortfall in basic grains.

Although the Council recognized that high agricultural prices created a risk of inflationary pressures and a loss of consumer purchasing power, they regarded them as an outstanding opportunity to raise production and exports and consolidate the sustainability and development of agriculture.

“Higher prices oblige producers to seek ways of raising productivity and spur the modernization of the agricultural sector and its integration into production chains, thereby creating the conditions for sufficient growth to permit the incorporation and development of new technologies,” the Council said in its declaration.

The Council also believes the situation makes the conclusion of the Doha Round more likely, with positive results such as less protectionism and the reduction of subsidies, which distort international agricultural trade.

During the meeting, the CAS ministers pledged to coordinate efforts to adopt public policies that would stimulate production and make support for small producers and family agriculture a priority. The aim is to increase the supply and incorporate socially excluded sectors.

They also agreed to strengthen technology research and innovation systems in the agrifood sector; and improve information systems and make them more transparent, so all their countries' producers can enjoy the benefits and tap the opportunities.

The outlook for food

The CAS ministers said food prices had risen less than the prices of raw materials. However, people had begun talking about a food crisis, thereby fuelling demand and creating a situation that lent itself to speculation.

The factors driving global demand include increased consumption of meat, grains and oilseeds (especially in China, India and Russia), the use of certain crops to produce biofuels and the situation of the sub-prime funds, which had triggered speculative investments in the agricultural commodities market.

With regard to global food supplies, the ministers said the higher cost of agricultural inputs and transportation, certain adverse climatic situations and the decline in the stocks of exporting countries were affecting the current situation.

For further information,

cas@iica.org.uy

cas.comunicaciones@iica.org.uy



Bolivia's Ambassador to Uruguay (Marcelo Janko) and the ministers of agriculture of Paraguay (Alfredo Molinas), Uruguay (Ernesto Agazzi), Chile (Marigen Hornkohl) and Brazil (Reinhold Stephanes), pictured during the Eighth Special Meeting of the CAS.



IICA and OLADE to implement regional biofuels program

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE) signed a memorandum of understanding for the implementation of a joint regional biofuels program.

IICA and the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE) have just signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at executing a joint regional biofuels program. The program will enable the two organizations to carry out their respective mandates and tap their potential and experience.

IICA's Director of Technical Leadership and Knowledge Management, James French, and the Executive Secretary of OLADE, Carlos Florez, signed the document on 28 May 2008, during the Third Latin American and Caribbean Seminar on Biofuels.

Under the agreement, IICA and OLADE will help the countries of the Americas create or adapt their institutional frameworks so they can implement national biofuel programs and improve or set up national regulatory frameworks for the operation of the biofuels market.

The regional program will also include technical assistance with the preparation of feasibility studies on biofuel production in the member countries of the two organizations, focusing on the suitability of land for agricultural production, its use, possible areas where crops could be grown and the balance between the environment and food production.

Furthermore, the agreement calls for training for technical personnel in the countries of the region, and technical assistance in developing productive arrangements under which family and community units and small enterprises could be incorporated into biofuel production.

Technical support will be also provided with the drafting of standards and procedures for quality control, including the control and supervision of fuel distribution.

Another objective of IICA and OLADE under the program will be to transfer technologies and share experiences among the countries of the Americas, to channel and optimize the agricultural production chain at the industrial level.

In the memorandum, the organizations also agreed to set up a working group to secure funding and execute the regional biofuels program.

The memorandum, which entered into effect on the day that it was signed, will be in effect for two years and may be renewed for similar periods if the parties wish.

Biofuels under the microscope

Representatives of 26 Latin America and Caribbean countries who took part in the seminar, held 27-28 May in the Dominican Republic, reached a tacit agreement that biofuels should be produced without affecting areas used for food production.

The President of the National Energy Commission of the Dominican Republic (CNE), Aristides Fernandez, said, "it is not a question of replacing crops but incorporating new land" for biofuel production and thereby "achieving food security and energy independence."

At the seminar, the participants examined public policies to promote the production, use and distribution of biofuels, Brazil's experience and the role of Latin America and the Caribbean in the biofuels market. They also discussed the tools used to determine whether land is suitable for energy production, experiences in managing land for biofuel production, the sustainability of agricultural crops used to produce energy and mechanisms for ensuring the financial sustainability of programs to encourage the use of biodiesel.

A fair took place during the seminar to enable companies involved in alternative energy production to present information about their activities.

For further information, contact

james.french@iica.int



The Executive Secretary of OLADE, Carlos Florez, and IICA's Director of Technical Leadership and Knowledge Management, James French, signed the memorandum of understanding during the Third Latin American and Caribbean Seminar on Biofuels.



IICA highlights agriculture's role in the efforts to attain the Millennium Goals

In his presentation to the 15th RIMSA Meeting, IICA Deputy Director General Christopher Hansen focused on agriculture's role in achieving three of the eight Millennium Development Goals and the status of the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreements.

The importance of agriculture to the efforts to eradicate extreme poverty, environmental sustainability and the world alliance for development - three of the eight Millennium Development Goals - was discussed during the 15th Inter-American Meeting at Ministerial Level on Health and Agriculture (RIMSA), held 11-12 June in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



IICA Deputy Director General Christopher Hansen headed the delegation that took part the 15th RIMSA.

The Deputy Director General of IICA, Christopher Hansen, gave a presentation entitled "Five years of economic growth in the Americas: the agricultural sector's contribution to the MDGs."

With reference to the Millennium Goal of reducing the poverty by 50% by 2015, he said that agriculture had contributed "by performing better in economic and social terms than it has done for the past 25 years." Agricultural production and trade were growing, agriculture was helping to reduce poverty and the distribution of wealth had improved in some countries. He also said that agriculture was an important source of employment and an attractive business for thousands of rural entrepreneurs.

However, he acknowledged that "rising prices are not good news for the Millennium Goals, because the average rates of hunger reduction in the region remain below the levels required to attain the goal set, and recent developments may undermine those levels even more."

The Institute's Deputy Director General said that "achieving more positive changes will depend on the amount of public resources allocated to the rural milieu in Latin America and the Caribbean." Although the growth of agricultural GDP was 2.7 times more effective in reducing poverty than growth in other sectors of the economy, the amounts allocated to the sector had "fallen substantially" over the last 20 years.

Turning to the goal of environmental sustainability, he explained that natural resources and sustainable agriculture both depended on the rational use of two vital elements: soil and water. Latin America was well endowed with both: it possessed 23.2% of the world's forests and 45% of its fresh water.

"The region has a responsibility to the world to protect, restore and conserve these resources, and to promote practices that will reduce desertification and the degradation and loss of soil, prevent alterations in the water cycle and halt deforestation," he said.

It was even more important to do all that given the impact of climate change. It was "imperative" to prioritize actions that would make rural inhabitants less vulnerable.

Finally, in relation to the goal of further international integration for development he highlighted agriculture's contribution to world trade. Specifically, he said that the Americas exported more agricultural products than any other region of the world, and exports were growing at an annual rate of 7.1%.

Hansen also noted that tropical products were recording the biggest percentage increases, so the outlook for agriculture and the demand for food was very positive.

He then referred to the efforts being made in the hemisphere to maintain its sanitary status, since the negative impact of zoonotic diseases on markets was well known.

He also mentioned the new trends in agribusiness that were spurring the consolidation of agrifood chains, the participation of supermarkets and direct purchasing from producers, "guaranteeing them a better and fairer income."

Hansen emphasized that the links between agriculture, and development were evident. For that reason, "we should think about the asymmetry that exists between what we invest in agriculture and its institutions - be it our own resources or cooperation received - versus what the sector contributes to social, economic and cultural development."

He called upon technical institutions like IICA and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to continue adding value to the solutions that governments were expected to provide.

Status of the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreements

During the RIMSA meeting, IICA's Deputy Director General also gave details of the status of the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreements.

He reported that the ministerial process was focusing on the preparations for the Fifth Ministerial Meeting, due to take place in Jamaica next year.

"The new stage of the Ministerial Process (the 2008-2009 biennium) has begun and the main tasks are the implementation of the Guatemala 2007 Agreement and the updating of the AGRO Plan for the 2010-2011 biennium," he said.

There were also plans to present a proposal on agriculture and rural life to the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), as input for the development of the mandates of the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

In his presentation, Hansen reaffirmed the commitment to promoting a new institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu, and said it was essential to consolidate agriculture and rural life as important issues on the inter-American agenda.

To reposition the sector, it was necessary to reassess the value of rural areas and national strategies, form alliances and reach consensus. "These are the main political elements of the frame of reference for the work of the countries and the Secretariat in the run up to Jamaica 2009," he remarked.

In his opinion, the Institute was continuing to provide a rapid, committed response as part of its dual role in the Ministerial Process - as an international technical cooperation agency and as the Secretariat. "IICA has been supporting the implementation of the Presidential Mandates and the Hemispheric Ministerial Agreements, thereby facilitating the continuity of the ministerial process. We are very pleased with the progress made. At the last three summits, the heads of state have unequivocally endorsed the process of improving agriculture and rural life."

Animal health in South America

The strengths and weaknesses of animal health and production in South America, and the opportunities available, were another of the topics addressed during the RIMSA meeting.

Specifically, the participants discussed proposals for improving the availability and quality of animal-based foods and people's access to them. The delegates also focused on ways of better integrating such products into the international market. Addressing the ministers and representatives of the ministries of agriculture and health of 35 nations, Brazil's Secretary for the Defense of Agriculture, Inacio Kroetz, stressed the importance of agricultural production, one of the South American countries' main sources of foreign exchange.

He also underscored the need to improve the situation regarding foot-and-mouth disease, one of the biggest challenges facing the region. The countries invest US\$700 million every year in a South American program to eradicate the disease and improve veterinary health systems.

Other topics discussed during the RIMSA meeting were climate change, food safety, nutrition, ecotourism and social integration in the rural milieu.

For further information, contact

carolina.pelaez@iica.int

tomas.krotsch@iica.int



Call for local action to prevent zoonoses

According to experts, the responses of individuals, communities and grassroots organizations can have a global impact.

During an address delivered at IICA Headquarters on June 3, Dr. Kevin Walker, from the National Food Safety and Toxicology Center of Michigan State University, said “Economic interdependence being what it is today, what happens on a farm in Vietnam can have a profound impact on a community in Brazil.”

He was addressing participants in a technical forum entitled “Community-based Leadership: A new approach to combating zoonotic diseases,” one in a series of such fora organized by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) to discuss topics of key importance for the modernization of agriculture in the hemisphere.



Kevin Walker, a professor from Michigan State University, pictured during his presentation at the forum, entitled “Community-based leadership: A new approach to combating zoonotic diseases.”

Zoonotic diseases, those that can be transmitted from animals to humans, are becoming increasingly important in today’s globalized world. And although their economic impact is only one aspect of the problem, some examples referring to 2000 onwards, underscore their importance.

In Great Britain, Foot and Mouth Disease caused losses estimated to be between US\$25-30 billion. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) was the cause of some US\$30-50 billion in losses in China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Canada. And losses due to Avian Influenza already total some US\$800 billion.

When explaining the relationship between animal and human diseases and the environment, Richard Bawden, from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources of Michigan State University, said “We need a shared vision, from the local all the way to the global level. In order to do things differently (in the prevention of diseases and even in other areas) we must view the world differently.”

Also participating in the forum were IICA’s Director of Agricultural Health and Food Safety, Ricardo Molins, and IICA Agricultural Health Specialist Ana Marisa Cordero.

The experts agreed that factors such as globalization, trade, the transboundary movement of people and goods, the environment, climate change and technology have triggered the appearance of new diseases that affect animal and human populations, and stated “A better understanding of the relationship between those factors may lead to the development of tools for prevention and change; something that is not being done now.”



Richard Bawden and Kevin Walker, professors from Michigan State University, both gave presentations at the third technical forum held so far in 2008, the theme of which was “Community-based leadership: A new approach to combating zoonotic diseases.”



According to Walker, the connection between public health and the environment is at the root of thirteen of the last fourteen outbreaks of zoonoses in the world. “Even so, most people on the planet are unaware of this connection,” he added.

“Of 1400 pathogens known to exist in the world, some 60% are transmitted from animals to human and 80% can spread from one species to another,” he noted.

Since 1980, 87 new diseases of this type have appeared and scientists estimate that by 2015 between 8 and 34 new diseases can be expected to appear. It is for this reason that the processes of producing, processing and shipping animal products intended for human consumption have undergone changes, which, according to the experts, are aimed at promoting prevention at all levels.

Ana Marisa Cordero said “To provide the world population with healthy food is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. As a result, it is necessary to improve the sanitary status of the countries, developing new methodologies that will make their agrifood sectors more competitive.”

In closing the Forum, Ricardo Molins underscored the important role to be played by leaders in promoting prevention at the community level. “We must create shared visions, empower people and promote change,” he stated.

One of IICA’s strategic areas of concentration is Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS), which carries out activities aimed at promoting and supporting the development of capabilities and the modernization of the sector.

The forum was preceded by another held the week before at EARTH University, in Costa Rica, on how communities can assume leadership in preventing zoonoses, sponsored by Michigan State University.

That event was attended by more than 40 guests from the public and private sectors and civil society, as well as scientists and farmers from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Dr. Walker concluded his remarks by quoting the famous anthropologist Margaret Mead, who said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

For further information:

www.iica.int

www.localactionglobalhealth.org

ana.cordero@iica.int



Workshop held on community involvement in the prevention of zoonotic diseases

The objective was to train leaders to prevent and deal with diseases transmitted from animals to humans.

Over 40 people, including representatives of the public and private sectors and civil society, scientists and producers from all parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, were invited to take part in a workshop on the importance of preparing communities to prevent and deal with zoonotic diseases.

The event, which took place 27-31 May at the EARTH University, in Costa Rica, was entitled “Prepared communities: assuming leadership and acting innovatively in the prevention of diseases transmitted from animals to humans.”

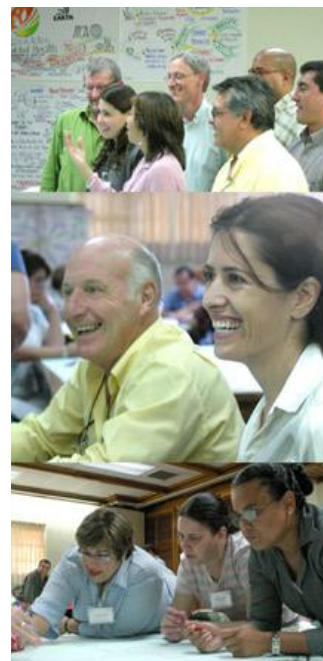
Michigan State University, IICA and EARTH hosted the event, designed to encourage interaction and dialogue.

During the workshop, the participants focused on key issues such as globalization, trade, people trafficking, smuggling, the environment, climate change and technological innovations. It was said that all these developments had increased the risk of new diseases among animal and human populations.

The main facilitator of the workshop was an assistant professor from Michigan State University, Richard Bawden, a specialist in rural community development who is currently developing learning methodologies intended to promote creative thinking.

“I see you as a movement that can help people effect change. Agriculture is not an end, it is a process, our end is rural development,” Bawden said.

Another professor from Michigan State University, Kevin Walker, helped organize the activity. “We live in a world where the level of economic interdependence among countries has reached its zenith,” he said. As a result, the interrelationship between humans, the environment and animals was the key to generating tools that would bring about change on the planet.



Some of the participants and the practical exercises carried out during the event that took place at the EARTH University, entitled “Prepared communities: assuming leadership and acting innovatively in the prevention of diseases transmitted from animals to humans.”

For further information, contact

ana.cordero@iica.int



Training for Jamaicans was “educational and inspirational”

Under an agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture of Jamaica and IICA, 13 interns from that country received training in new agricultural techniques.



1. Hernan Chiriboga, Coordinator of the Center for Leadership in Agriculture, pictured during the closing ceremony. Seated to his left is Jamaica's Consul in Costa Rica, Gene Robinson Davis.

2. Laura Perez, President of the National Green Heart Gardening Center, presented an attendance certificate to Webster McPherson.

3. Some of the 13 Jamaicans who received training in Costa Rica in May

According to team leader Webster McPherson, a workshop-course on new agricultural techniques attended by 13 Jamaican interns in Costa Rica was an “educational and inspirational experience.”

The training sessions, held from May 5-June 3, were organized by the Center for Leadership in Agriculture of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), as part of the agenda for cooperation between the Institute and Jamaica.

The participating specialists, agricultural engineers and biologists updated and expanded their knowledge of organic agriculture, hydroponics and agriculture in protected environments. The training was requested by the Minister of Agriculture of Jamaica, Christopher Tufton, while in Costa Rica in February of this year to participate in the forum organized by IICA for new ministers of agriculture in the Hemisphere.

According to McPherson, “It was a valuable and enriching experiences. We learned about agriculture from an ecological perspective. Not everything that was presented can be applied in Jamaica, but we will select the most important lessons learned and be creative in adapting them to conditions in Jamaica.”

When asked which topics would be most useful Jamaica, he underscored the agroecological approach to pest control, which calls for taking preventive measures only when necessary, rather than applying chemical pesticides as a first resort.

He also referred to the preparation of solutions with nutrients for plants, to the use of plants that repel and attract pests, to “fertigation” (application of fertilizers through irrigation systems) and to the use of local substrates for production rather than imported inputs.

McPherson said that the group had hoped to actually work on farms while in Costa Rica, which was not possible. Nonetheless, “As we have different levels of experience in these areas, we worked with what we were given and made the most of each experience. Also, the field trips compensated for this.”

Laura Perez, President of the Green Heart National Gardening Center, which facilitated the training, explained that the group traveled more than 2000 km in Costa Rica, visiting horticulturists who have adopted different approaches to agriculture, given the challenges posed by food security.

At the closing ceremony of the activity, she said “We set the table for you and invited you to pick out what would be most useful to you in your work in Jamaica. What you do next is your responsibility.”

In this regard, McPherson assured that they will begin the process of systematizing the information compiled in a few weeks and then share it, through training workshops, with the agricultural community in Jamaica.

The Director of Performance Management and Evaluation of IICA, Dowlat Budhram, also present at the ceremony, stated that this type of training helps narrow the gap between Latin America and the Caribbean, where agriculture is part of the rural culture.

For further information, contact

hernan.chiriboga@iica.int



Canada donates US\$151,000 to farmers in Saint Kitts and Nevis

IICA helped secure the donation from the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives.

The Nevis Growers Cooperative received US\$58,139.33 from the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives Sites (CFLI) on 6 June.

IICA worked with the Fund to help secure the donation.

“The Institute is delighted to be associated with this effort. Although our contribution was small, it was useful. I congratulate President Thompson and her advisor, Arthurton, who did most of the work and secured the donation,” Augustine Merchant, IICA’s Coordinator in Saint Kitts and Nevis, said.

He added that the donation was a significant contribution to the Ministry of Agriculture’s Food Security Program and would benefit food production and consumption, since the islanders would be able to obtain food more cheaply and in the amounts and of the quality they desired.

Merchant also highlighted the cooperative’s work in strengthening the links between tourism and agriculture, a pioneering effort that had made an invaluable contribution to the country’s agricultural development.

The Minister of Agriculture, Robelto Hector, urged the farmers to work together to achieve food security, not only for Nevis but for the entire Caribbean - “may that be our contribution to the world.”

Other participants in the activity included Pearlivan Wilkin, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, Muriel Emontine Thompson, President of the Nevis Growers Cooperative, and other Ministry officials.

For further information, contact

augustine.merchant@iica.int



IICA’s Coordinator in Saint Kitts and Nevis, Augustine Merchant, spoke during the ceremony in which Nevis Growers Cooperative was presented with a check for US\$151,394.64.



IICA and Uruguay’s Meat Institute sign letter of understanding

IICA and the INAC will work together to improve information systems and knowledge management in the trade negotiations involving Uruguay’s meat sector.



IICA’s Representative in Uruguay, Manuel Otero, and the President of the INAC, Alfredo Fratti, signed the letter of understanding to formalize the support for the country’s meat sector in the trade negotiations.

IICA and the National Meat Institute (INAC) signed a letter of understanding on 29 May, during the activities held to commemorate Meat Day. The agreement is intended to formalize the support for the trade negotiations involving Uruguay’s meat sector.

“The meat sector’s Trade Negotiations Committee began operating on an informal basis in December 2007. After verifying that it was functioning and achieving the objectives for which it was set up, a letter of understanding was drawn up to create a joint unit to follow and analyze the negotiations,” explained Alejandra Bentancur, Agribusiness Specialist at the IICA Office in Uruguay.

Under the agreement, the two institutes will work together to improve information systems and knowledge management in the trade negotiations involving the meat sector, consolidate the country’s technical capabilities for negotiating and implementing trade agreements, and meet specific needs in that field.

The unit will be providing information about the progress of the different bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations and preparing reports to support Uruguay’s meat negotiations with its different trading partners.

Bentancur said the reports on the negotiations in the meat sector would be published on an extranet that was being constructed as part of the INAC's website. The negotiators of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the staff of Uruguay's embassies around the world would have access to the reports.

A second group of (purely informational) documents will be published on the INAC's website, which has been redesigned.

The unit's team comprises Bentancur and two INAC specialists, Raul Duvos (of the Information and Strategic Analysis Area) and Raquel Pol (Foreign Markets Area). Consultant Cristina Zurbriggen will coordinate the work.

Two members of INAC's Board of Directors - one representing producers (Roald Rivoir) and another representing processors (Rodrigo Goñi) - will also be involved.

For further information, contact
alejandra.bentancur@iica.org.uy