

At the Fifth Summit of the Americas

Heads endorse agriculture as a priority in country strategies



The Director General of IICA met with United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton.

The 5th Summit of the Americas successfully concluded in Port of Spain, Trinidad on April 17th, with the leaders of the Americas agreeing to move forward towards change and a new, brighter future for the people of the Americas.

The deliberations and agreements of the 5th Summit of the Americas provide a strong mandate for the Fifth Hemispheric Ministerial Meeting of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas – which [will take place in Montego Bay, Jamaica in October 2009](#).

That meeting is the most important fora for agriculture and rural life in the hemisphere, will carry forward the agreements reached in Port of Spain at the 5th Summit, particularly as they relate to enhancing food security, under the theme “Building Capacity for Enhancing Food Security and Rural Life in the Americas”.

The role of IICA in the process of the Summit of the Americas remains clear, as a commitment to working with the leaders in the hemisphere to reposition agriculture and rural life in the development agendas of the member states.

The Institute’s position on its role in and presence at the Summit was clearly presented in a statement by the IICA’s Director General Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, to the Fifth Summit of the Americas and the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago published in the press. The statement reinforced the importance of a new holistic approach to agriculture and rural development and again stressed the contribution of the rural economy to integral development, based on its wider contribution to energy supply, nutritious food, the reduction of climate change, employment and the reduction of poverty.

Three paragraphs of the [Declaration](#) are related to the food and agriculture sector.

Paragraph 23 states:

Providing our people with adequate and timely access to safe and nutritious food is among the most immediate challenges confronting our Hemisphere and the world. We recognise the negative impact on our people of food crises when they occur, and commit to taking urgent and coordinated action, working in partnership with the relevant international and regional organisations, as appropriate, to develop and implement comprehensive policies and programmes in order to confront the challenges of food security. We reaffirm our commitment to the objective of the

Millennium Declaration to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger; and we recognise United Nations General Assembly Resolution 63/235, which calls for addressing these challenges.

Paragraph 24 indicates:

We call on our Agriculture Ministers to develop activities aimed at addressing issues affecting access to and availability of food in order to combat chronic malnutrition and to promote adequate nutritional policies for our populations. We support the promotion of investment in agriculture, as well as the strengthening of our States' institutional capacity, with a view to increasing and intensifying productive activities, particularly in the countries most affected by hunger.

Paragraph 25 expresses:

We believe that a multidimensional and multisectoral approach to agriculture and rural life is a key factor for sustainable development and food security. In this context and within the framework of the Agro Plan 2003–2015 of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas held in Guatemala in 2007, we support the efforts in the repositioning of agriculture and rural issues and priorities in our national strategies and we commit to strengthening national, sub-regional, regional and hemispheric approaches and strategic actions, as applicable, with the support of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and other relevant organisations.

The Summit also provided a space for Brathwaite to meet with the other heads of the Joint Summit Working Group institutions and together, on Sunday 19th, in a closed meeting with Senator Hillary Rodham-Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State, as well as with other distinguished personalities from the hemisphere.

In other events, Chris Hansen, Deputy Director General of the Institute made a presentation to the Private Sector Forum and Melania Portilla, Rural Development Specialist Made a presentation to the Civil Society Forum.

IICA also took the opportunity to distribute to all delegations, members of the JSWG and the international press, a package of information containing copies of the document on IICA's contribution to the Summit of the Americas Process 2002-2009; the [newsletter highlighting agriculture as an engine of growth in the hemisphere](#) and the document "[On the Road to Jamaica 2009](#)", providing general information on the upcoming Ministerial meeting, its theme and goals and theme.

The Director General of IICA, Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, led the delegation from the Institute at the 5th Summit of the Americas. He was accompanied by IICA's Director of the Office for Follow-up of the Summit of the Americas Process, Bernardo Badani; Director of Operations and Integration for the Caribbean, Trevor Murray and IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago, Gregg C.E. Rawlins.

For further information

Bernardo.badani@iica.int



Peru

La Molina National Agrarian University confers Doctor Honoris Causa degree on Director General of IICA

During his visit to Peru, the Director General of IICA met with the President Alan Garcia and several Cabinet Ministers.

During a visit to Peru from April 6-8, the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, met with President Alan Garcia and several members of his cabinet, received a Doctor Honoris Causa degree from the La Molina National Agrarian University and was honored by the government of the province of Huaura.



With Presidente Alan Garcia.

This prestigious institution of higher learning, which has been in existence since 1902, bestows this honor on people known “for their moral fiber, academic excellence and significant scientific and cultural contributions.”

During the acceptance ceremony, attention was called to the administrative, technical and institutional leadership Brathwaite has exercised in the field of international agricultural development.



Director General of IICA received Doctor Honoris Causa degree.

Reference was also made to the vision he has implemented in IICA, thanks to which it is now known as an agency that “promotes sustainable agricultural development, food security and prosperity in the rural communities of the Americas.”

The ceremony was attended by the Rector of the University, Luis Maezono Yamashita, the Vice Rectors, the deans, the Director of the Graduate School, student representatives on the University Council and the General Secretariat.

In his address, Brathwaite acknowledged the role the University has played, from its beginnings, in developing in its students a comprehensive approach to agriculture, as a means of contributing to the sustainable development of their country.

“Faithful to its motto: “Hominem et Agrum Colere Cupio” (Let me cultivate men and the land), this university is right to focus its efforts on the promotion and development of the most important resource a country has: its people,” he said.

Strategic meetings

As part of his official visit to Peru, the Director General and the IICA Representative in Peru, Freddy Rojas, met with Peruvian president Alan Garcia to go over the technical activities of the Institute in the country.

The Director General highlighted the results presented in the 2008 IICA Annual Report for Peru, as well as information on the different projects being carried out in the country.

He called particular attention to the creation of the national biotechnology center, the development of the Observatory for Agricultural Production Chains and Rural Territories and a number of other actions.

After meeting with President Garcia, Brathwaite met with Prime Minister Yehude Simon, and the Minister of Agriculture, Carlos Leyton, to identify new opportunities for technical cooperation and renew the Institute’s commitment to continue supporting the development of agriculture and rural life in Peru.

He later met with the Representative of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Peru, Ambassador Bertha Santoscotoy, to discuss the possibility of carrying out joint actions aimed at providing education and training for young people in rural areas.

The Director General also participated in the Annual Accountability Seminar of the IICA Office in Peru, at which a report on the results achieved during 2008 was delivered to the Minister of Agriculture, ambassadors, representatives of international organizations, educational authorities and other stakeholders in the sector.

At the close of the event, the head of the government of the province of Huaura, Pedro Zurita, presented the DG with a certificate in recognition of IICA's "important contributions in promoting agricultural development" in the region, especially through the Network of Villages project.

"It is the practice of the government of the province of Huaura to value, recognize and honor those distinguished persons and/or institutions of excellence that write the history of peoples with wisdom, commitment and integrity," it reads.

Other honors

The Director General has received other awards in recent years. In 2008, he was honored by the people and government of Ecuador as part of the celebration of IICA's 40 years of service in that country. Among other honors, he received the highest award granted by the Confederation of Schools of Agricultural Sciences of Ecuador: the Medal of Agricultural Merit.

In 2006, the Governor of the State of Rio Grande del Sur, Brazil, presented him with a medal in recognition of the work of the Institute in promoting agricultural development in that State.

In 2004, Brathwaite was honored by one of the oldest universities of the Americas, the National University of Asuncion, Paraguay, where he received a Doctor Honoris Causa degree.

In 2003, he received the Companion of Honour of Barbados award, one of the highest awards granted to citizens of Barbados. When announcing the award, on behalf of Queen Elizabeth II, the Governor General congratulated Brathwaite for "this well- deserved honour in recognition of his dedication and many contributions to agriculture."

For further information:

freddy.rojas@iica.int



IICA opens regional office in Valdivia, Chile

During the inauguration, IICA, FAO and ECLAC discussed the challenges and opportunities for agriculture in the current global crisis.



IICA's Director General met with the Minister of Agriculture, Marigen Hornkhol.

The city of Valdivia, in southern Chile, provided the backdrop for the inauguration of the first regional office of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in the hemisphere, and for the Institute, ECLAC and FAO to renew their commitment to work together to reposition agriculture and rural development in the region.

Meeting in Valdivia to inaugurate the new iica regional office, representatives of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and IICA agreed that, in a context of global crisis and high levels of rural poverty, public authorities and financial institutions should pay greater attention to the sector.

For the Director General of IICA, Chelston Brathwaite, “The meeting was an opportunity for the three institutions to identify areas in which their efforts coincide and that are of interest to the countries, such as viewing agriculture seen from a multidimensional perspective.” They also plan to work together to mitigate the effects of climate change and to reduce the chances of a food crisis occurring.

The three organizations, which have been working together since 2005, are preparing a report entitled “The outlook for agriculture and rural development in the Americas. A look at Latin America and the Caribbean,” which will be presented at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas.” (si ya existe título en inglés, úsenlo)

The Ministerial Meeting, which is the most important hemispheric meeting on agriculture, will be held in Jamaica in October of this year.

New regional office

Brathwaite visited Chile from March 23-27 to participate in the inauguration of the center that IICA opened at the Universidad Austral in Valdivia, within the framework of a cooperation agreement signed by both institutions. Valdivia is located 840 kilometers south of Santiago.

The objective of the center is to strengthen work in agriculture and rural development in that region. In Brathwaite’s judgment, this undertaking is in line with the key objective of the Institute: to promote rural prosperity in the Americas through technical cooperation in agriculture, rural life and food security.



The Director General of IICA, Chelston Brathwaite, the Rector of the Universidad Austral, Victor Cubillos, and the Under Secretary of Agriculture, Reinaldo Ruiz, during the inauguration.

Present at the inauguration of the office, held on March 25, were the Under Secretary of Agriculture, Reinaldo Ruiz, the Rector of the University, Victor Cubillos, national and regional authorities and representatives of the public and private sectors and civil society.

In a letter read to the audience, the President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet, praised the work being done by IICA: “To decentralize technical cooperation, promoting the development of capabilities in the agroforestry sector, will enable the region to play a key role in positioning Chile as an agrifood power.”

The Under Secretary of Agriculture stated that the wish of the Ministry was to deepen and strengthen ties with IICA in order to make horizontal cooperation more effective. “In this way, we can contribute to the development of our agricultural sector and to the well-being of the rural population of the hemisphere,” he said.

The Rector of the University viewed the presence of the Institute as a real opportunity for contributing within the framework of the Regional Development Strategy, primarily in the areas of modernization of the public administration, comprehensive development of rural communities, promotion of the regional economy and productivity and employment.

The next day, the International Forum “Expanded Agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean in the Context of the Global Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities” was held. This was one of the first actions carried out by the regional office in Valdivia.



Martin Dirven, ECLAC, Chelston Brathwaite, IICA, Jose Graciano Da Silva, FAO, Alicia Barcena,



Presentations were made by experts from IICA, ECLAC, FAO, and the Agricultural Economics

During the Forum, presentations were made by Martin Dirven, who is the Head of the Agricultural Development Unit and in charge of the Production and Business Development Division of ECLAC; Rafael Trejos, Director of the IICA Institutional Modernization Unit; and Margarita Flores, Deputy Regional Representative of FAO for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Representative in Chile.

Dirven spoke on the implications of the global crisis for agrifood chains and the policies countries should adopt in response to same. She also referred to climate change and the role of universities in this context.

Trejos described the outlook for agriculture in Latin America in the context of the global crisis. In his opinion, it is necessary to invest more in science and technology to increase agricultural yields because, by 2050, the world population will require twice as much food.

Flores addressed the outlook for the forestry sector in the context of the global crisis.

Later, the National Director of the Studies and Agricultural Policies Office of the Ministry of Agriculture (ODEPA), Ivan Nazif, commented that “In understanding the crisis, the contribution of an agency such as IICA is fundamental.”

The Director General of IICA referred to food security as not only a technical, but also a political, issue because it can have serious consequences for countries. Brathwaite called on the audience to reassess the contribution of the rural economy to the comprehensive development of countries, stating that “agriculture is a strategic issue” and that it is necessary to invest in the rural sector of countries.

Visit with the Minister of Agriculture

Brathwaite took advantage of his visit to Chile to meet with the Minister of Agriculture, Marigen Hornkhol, and discuss the current relationship between IICA and the ministry and the projects they are carrying out jointly.

The Director General applauded that fact the Ministry of Agriculture is concerned about both producers and consumers.

“That is the new context in which a Ministry of Agriculture of the 21st century must operate. Ministries have a dual responsibility with regard to food: they must focus not only on food production, but also on consumption, markets, prices, nutrition and all related issues,” he said.

For further information

GPagani@iica.cl



Future of Caribbean Agrotourism bright- thanks to IICA and OAS

“Strengthening of the Tourism Sector through Development of Linkages with the Agricultural Sector in the Caribbean” was the name of the three-year project.



www.caribbeanagrotourism.com

The completion of a three year Agrotourism Linkages project, funded by the OAS and executed by IICA, has resulted in new business for farmers and hoteliers, investment opportunities for entrepreneurs, and a clear strategy for repositioning of the agricultural sector by maximizing the integration of indigenous food, culture, wellness and the rural environment into sustainable tourism experiences.

Under the three-year project “Strengthening of the Tourism Sector through Development of Linkages with the Agricultural Sector in the Caribbean” the OAS provided grant funds totaling US\$440,000 with the overall

objective of “promoting increased linkages between tourism and agriculture that would create economic opportunities, build resilience in rural communities and enhance the sustainable development of both the tourism and agriculture industries.”

Ena Harvey, Project Manager and Hemispheric Agrotourism Specialist with IICA was happy to report that the project objectives have been met and that the project also resulted in institutional partnerships with the Caribbean Tourism Organization, the Caribbean Hotel Association, Caribbean Development Bank, and several international agencies.

Francis MacBarnett, OAS Representative in Barbados also expressed his immense satisfaction with the execution and outputs of the project and is looking forward to having more opportunities for even greater inter-American collaboration in this area.

Project Accountability Meeting

The results of the project were shared with stakeholders at a Project Accountability meeting held at Golden Grove Plantation House on March 24.

Through the seven IICA Offices in Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana and Suriname, the OAS supported the hosting of twenty-eight national workshops and meetings and four regional workshops; the conduct of fifteen studies, contracting of Caribbean consultants for some forty-one consultancies; the preparation of fourteen Investment Profiles for new agrotourism projects in the Caribbean, and the generation of six new Knowledge Products.

These include an excellent 20-minute video documentary showcasing rural tourism; a training manual on how to establish an agrotourism attraction; a training manual on developing partnerships between farmers and buyers in the hotel sector, a trade platform for e-commerce; and a new Caribbean Agrotourism website, linked to “MicroMaps”, a website with interactive maps showing unique agrotourism sites and attractions of each country.

The new website www.caribbeanagrotourism.com was also officially launched on Tuesday with exciting information, reports, photographs and videos from the seven countries, and plans are already in the pipeline for the inclusion of information from the entire Caribbean region.

Real Benefits for Farming Community

As a result of the project, farmers in Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and St. Kitts & Nevis have been able to access new markets in tourism. A mushroom producer, for example, is now supplying first class restaurants in Suriname, while members of a community in Upper Suriname basin are now enjoying additional income from supplying vegetables to tourist camps.

In the case of Guyana, the fledging tourist industry is already benefitting from the work of the IICA Office with the upgrading of tours in the Tri-Lakes community, the production of organic “Semenana” pineapples in Mainstay, and the promotion of organic cassava products produced by the Amerindian tribes of the Northwest Region.

In Nevis, Mansa’s Last Stop Farm was provided with upscale promotional and packaging materials while in St. Kitts’ after intense discussions, farmers now have contractual arrangements with the internationally renowned Marriott Hotel and with supermarkets. The St. Kitts Farmers’ Cooperative was also able to procure a walk-in chiller.

In Trinidad, the farmers were invited to discuss supply contracts over dinner at the new Hyatt Hotel after the national workshop on agrotourism.

Maurice Fahey, Food & Beverage Manager of the new Hyatt is thrilled with what he calls his “inter-relationship” with Arthur Guerero of L.E.A.F. He stated “We benefitted from this intervention! Our guests are impressed at Guerrero’s products and the fact that they get totally local products from the Hyatt. It has given the Hyatt a competitive edge.”

Policy and Investment in Agrotourism taking off

For the IICA Office in Jamaica, the OAS project reaped rewards not only through the project activities, but it positioned the Office to win a substantial EU-funded project to develop community-based agrotourism attractions in the Buff Bay area, home to the indigenous Maroons and an area rich in cultural heritage and amazing landscapes.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has shown its commitment by including several strategies related to agrotourism development in its new Transformation Plan for the Sector. Similarly, in St. Kitts, the national agrotourism strategy developed under the OAS project is now being used as the blueprint for agro-tourism development in this twin-island nation.

Perhaps the views of some of the stakeholders in Trinidad best represent the excitement which this project has created:

“The benefits are tremendous – you get to meet a lot of people and to expose others to the things you enjoy...It is something you have to have a passion for. People are always looking for opportunities to experience new things... culture, food nature trails,” Arthur Guerero.

“Agro-Tourism means showing people my lifestyle. The benefits include seeing the joy people have when they come on my land and when they go back there is hope for something better to do,” Erle Rahaman-Noronha, Permaculture Expert, Director, Wa Samaki Ecosystems

“Agro-Tourism is a great way to harness the natural resources and indigenous culture of any country... not just being able to come in and consume a resource – but being able to say “I had a part in it, I understand how it’s done and I see the value....,” Stacey Antoine, Matura Agro-Tourism Project.

For more information, contact

ena.harvey@iica.int

roxanne.waithe@iica.int



IICA supports the development of supply and distribution chains in Barbados

The objective is to link small- and medium-scale producers to local markets.

The Office of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Barbados will provide the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (BADMC) with technical assistance to promote the development of supply and distribution chains in that country, with a view to linking small- and medium-scale producers to local markets.

A first step in this effort was a meeting involving IICA specialists in the areas of agrotourism and agribusiness and senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture of Barbados, including Minister Haynesley Benn, representatives of the BADMC, the Barbados Agricultural Society (BAS), supermarkets and the media.

One of the conclusions of the meeting, held on March 11, was the need to strengthen existing supply chains by building capabilities, providing resources and creating networks to make local products more competitive than imports.

They also concluded that it was necessary to determine the true size and makeup of the production sector and calculate the true cost of producing commodities.

Another action they recommended was the reactivation of the agricultural information system, in order to forecast available supplies and study successful supply and distribution chains in the hope of identifying good practices that can be implemented in Barbados.

A multisectoral task force, presided by the Minister of Agriculture and comprising representatives of IICA, the BADMC, the BAS and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, has been set up to monitor these actions.

For further information:

trevor.murray@iica.int



Capacity building in agribusiness for rural women in Saint Lucia

The UNDP supported the initiative, implemented in the Community of Babonneau

The IICA Office in Saint Lucia recently assisted a group of women in the Babonneau community with training in agro processing. As a follow up to this training course, that was held on December 2008, the IICA Office, through the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) in Barbados, was able to secure funding to continue training these women in agro processing.

On January 22, 2009 a second workshop “Building Entrepreneurship” was conducted for thirty (30) women from the newly formed Babonneau Cluster of the St Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers.

The session was facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries and St Lucia Bureau of Standards.

Participants were exposed to various topics including:

- Determining Product Standards
- Documenting the Standards for Products
- Identifying Characteristics - appearance, texture, aroma, flavor
- Quality Control
- Sanitation
- Labelling Requirements
- Marketing (locally, regionally and internationally)
- Advertising

The sessions were very well received by all the participants. There was a lot of interaction and participants are now eagerly awaiting further opportunity to continue their business ventures with assistance from the revolving fund.

More information

deborah.biscombe@iica.int



IICA strengthens partnerships with academic institutions

Strategic partnerships strengthen cooperation with countries of the hemisphere.

Several agreements already signed by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) with academic institutions, and others still to be ratified, are part of efforts by the Institute to enhance its contribution to agriculture in the Americas.

In October 2004, IICA and the University of Florida signed an agreement calling for them to work together to improve agriculture in the hemisphere, focusing on the Caribbean Region.

In May 2007, the University of Minnesota signed an agreement with the Institute in which both agreed to coordinate efforts and work together to strengthen the development of agriculture in the Americas. This

agreement focuses on the relationship with the Center for Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) of that university, with which a number of activities are being carried out in the area of leadership in food safety.

In August 2007, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) to coordinate efforts and facilitate the transfer of timely information and the exchange of technological capabilities.

In December of 2007, the Director General of the Institute, Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, visited the University of London, where he initiated talks that will enable IICA professionals to upgrade their knowledge through distance education programs in the areas of agribusiness, environment and sustainable development.

Last year, the Institute continued its efforts to establish relations with other universities. As a result of contacts between Cornell University and the Institute, a new cooperation agreement is currently under study.

These contacts with Cornell have been possible thanks the active collaboration of the Director of Technical Leadership and Knowledge Management, James French; the Director of Technology and Innovation, Enrique Alarcon; and the Head of the Documentation and Publications Unit, Federico Sancho.

Lastly, also in September 2008, IICA approved a cooperation agreement with the University of California at Berkeley to work together in areas of common interest.

Concrete Results

As a result of the agreement with UC-Berkeley, and together with other strategic partners, IICA has published the book “Ecoagriculture: Strategies for feeding the world and saving wild biodiversity,” and a number of international courses on “Leadership for the Development of Ecoagriculture” have been held.

Even though it has yet to be ratified, the agreement with Cornell has also yielded positive results. In January of this year, senior IICA staff and from Cornell shared their experiences in distance education, communities of practice and knowledge management during a meeting at IICA Headquarters.

Under the terms of the agreement with the University of Nebraska, Amy Boren, a researcher and leadership specialist, will join IICA to contribute to the development of the IICA Center for Leadership in Agriculture.

Boren, a professor at UNL, will transfer knowledge and information to the Institute that will enable it to provide more and better leadership, especially in the area of agricultural health and food safety.

The UNL agreement focuses on topics related to agricultural health and food safety because it was through the university’s Department of Food Science and Technology (DFST), under the leadership of Rolando Brenes, that talks began to forge a close relationship with IICA.

The DFST, along with its Food Processing Center and IICA’s AHFS Directorate, held a number of training courses for Institute specialists from the hemisphere.

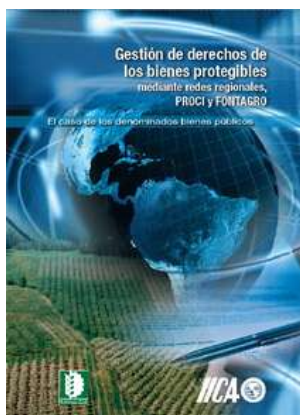
From May 12-19, 2008, ten professors conducted a series of training courses at UNL on food safety and the evaluation of microbiological and chemical risks in foods. It is expected that new courses for specialists from the Member State will begin in mid-2009.

IICA firmly believes in the practice of strengthening relations with academic institutions. The Director General of the Institute, Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, has said “the problems affecting agricultural and rural development in the Americas are so vast and complex that they are beyond the capabilities and resources not only of national governments, but also of any single development agency or international organization.”

For further information:
james.french@iica.int

Publication addresses the issue of intellectual property of regional public goods

“Management of the rights to protectable goods through regional networks, PROCIs and FONTAGRO. The case of public goods” is the title of the publication.



The book, available in Spanish only, addresses conceptual, legal and management-related aspects of the protection of the outputs from regional agricultural technology research and innovation projects

The book [“Management of the rights to protectable goods through regional networks, PROCIs and FONTAGRO. The case of public goods”](#) aims to make it easier to understand and improve the protection of the outputs from regional agricultural technology research and innovation projects.

Technical coordination for the publication was provided by the Technology and Innovation Area of the Directorate of Technical Leadership and Knowledge Management of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), with the collaboration of the Technical-Administrative Secretariat of the Regional Agricultural Technology Fund (FONTAGRO).

It has six chapters, followed by a set of conclusions and recommendations:

1. The current situation vis-à-vis intellectual property
2. What is public and what is private as it relates to intellectual property
3. Intellectual property and trade
4. What can and cannot be appropriated
5. What can and cannot be protected
6. Management of what can be appropriated and protected

From cover to cover

According to the authors, in the area of intellectual property, the definition of what is appropriable vis-à-vis the products generated by regional agricultural research and technology innovation projects is becoming less of an internal legal issue and more a matter for international regulation.

The generation, by two or more countries, of regional public goods is the result of increased awareness on the part of international agencies of the fact that “problems and opportunities that are global in scope must be addressed jointly rather than individually,” says the document.

In Latin America specifically, reciprocal cooperation between countries in research and agricultural technology development goes back almost three decades, when the institutions of the countries began to work together via cooperative agriculture technology development programs (PROCIs) and other mechanisms such as FONTAGRO.

“While these cooperative programs, other similar mechanisms and FONTAGRO focus on the generation of public goods, it is also true that cooperative research activities yield new intermediate or finished products, innovations or processes that can be appropriated or protected by the participating public and private institutions,” it goes on to explain.

What is not clear, however, is under what circumstances such appropriation and protection can take place, who determines when it is possible, and what type of protection system is most appropriate.

Indeed, the document states “from a legal standpoint, the concepts of public, semi-public and private goods are highly imprecise.”

The document also calls attention to the need to determine how benefits are obtained and distributed, the use of the results of collaborative research vis-à-vis the rights of the participating institutions, and the systems for protecting regional products.

In light of existing international norms, the publication proposes that a clear distinction be made between what can be appropriated and what cannot from the perspective of intellectual property rights, and more broadly,

between what can and cannot be protected, with special reference to the PROCIs, equivalent networks and FONTAGRO.

It also recommends developing strategies to raise awareness and build capabilities among researchers and innovators because “researchers and public-sector stakeholders, especially small- and medium-scale enterprises, require more information.”

It further recommends that, in the early stages of negotiating a regional agreement or a public-private partnership, what is protectable and the eventual distribution of results be clearly defined, and that at least two types of contracts be prepared: one for research and another for the commercial development of products or processes.

For further information
enrique.alarcon@iica.int