

IICA's work in topics of strategic importance to agriculture in the hemisphere highlighted



Staff members from the Institute's 34 Member States shared the accomplishments achieved and the good practices and lessons learned during the current Administration.

To have in place a hemispheric team with a global vision in topics of strategic importance to agriculture in the 21st century is one of the principal accomplishments of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) over the last eight years.

This was one of the conclusions of a dialogue involving the Directors of the Institute's Technical Areas and Programs, the Directors of Regional Operations, the Representatives in the Member States and the Regional Specialists, who discussed the actions undertaken during the current administration, which took office in 2002 and will leave in January of next year.

According to the Director General of IICA, Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, "We have developed a team of professionals who are working well at all levels and in all dimensions throughout the hemisphere. This is one of the success stories of this Administration."

The existence of effective work teams who coordinate their actions with the Directors of Region Operations and who have the support of the IICA Representatives in the countries was judged not only a success, but also one of the good practices adopted by the Institute.

Director of Biotechnology and Biosafety, Ramon Lastra, and Miguel Garcia, Director of the Inter-American Program on Trade, Agribusiness and Food Safety, agreed that "The ability to work as a team strengthens the Institute's position in the hemisphere."

Under this Administration, in order to meet the current needs of countries of the Americas, the Institute opened up two new strategic areas: Agribusiness and Biotechnology. Other new strategic areas include: rural agroindustry, organic agriculture, agricultural insurance, agroenergy, agrotourism, agricultural health and food safety, rural development from a territorial approach, sustainable management of natural resources, and technology and innovation in agriculture.

Meeting at IICA Headquarters in what is known as “Representatives’ Week,” more than 100 professional in all these fields will be analyzing, from August 18-21, the accomplishments achieved and the good practices and lessons learned from 2002-2008 and, based on this analysis, attempt to reach agreement on future strategic actions.

Another accomplishment achieved is the development of capabilities in the member countries and the generation of knowledge. Proof of this is the methodologies and instruments developed and tested to strengthen, for example, the public and private institutional framework in the different technical areas, training workshops and publications.

For the Director General, training and the generation and dissemination of knowledge in topics of key importance for the modernization of agriculture is the core business of the Institute. “Only in this way will we be able to influence the formulation of public policies, which are the ones that will make it possible to reposition agriculture,” he stated.

The formation of strategic partnerships with the private sector, academia, governments and the donor community was another accomplishment highlighted by the directors, which will continue to be a challenge in the future.

IICA’s Director of Biotechnology and Biosafety said “The sustainability of the projects in biotechnology (and other areas) has benefited from the active participation of the different sectors. Therefore, it is necessary to diversify and expand our strategic partnerships.”

A similar opinion was expressed by Director of the Inter-American Program on Trade, Agribusiness and Food Safety, who said “While it is true that we are now working more closely with a sector that was unknown to us in the past, our relationship with private sector should continue to be strengthened. IICA can provide this sector with services.”

The Director General added that further steps in this direction would make it possible for the Institute to become an intermediary between countries and investment opportunities, “especially in areas such as agrotourism, agribusiness, agroenergy and others where income can be generated with the private sector.”

The new model for technical cooperation

During the meeting, Brathwaite recalled the vision he had promoted in 2001, when he was a candidate, and he reviewed one by one the elements of the new model for technical cooperation, which is currently being implemented throughout the hemisphere. In his opinion, these should be the basis for the actions of the Institute.

“The model has been tested and verified and the results of its implementation, which, among other things, made it possible to increase the credibility of the Institute, are evident,” he said. He added that other institutions in the international community have been adapting the model to their cooperation efforts.

For Brathwaite, the success of the model can be attributed to the principles on which it is based: participation, accountability, consultation and transparency. “Some ministers have told me that we are an international organization that listens,” he added.

Representatives’ Week is the most important annual strategic planning meeting of the Institute.

More information

james.french@iica.int



Jamaica 2009: Hemispheric leaders to analyze food security

During his visit to Jamaica, the Director General of IICA met with the Prime Minister, Bruce Golding.

In the presence of high-level public officials, private-sector leaders and representatives of civil society, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Jamaica officially launched the Week of Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas, which will be held there in October.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Donovan Stanberry, said Jamaica was very proud to be hosting the Week, which will involve 34 Ministers of Agriculture and important stakeholders of agriculture and rural life from throughout the hemisphere.

The participating delegations will attend two meetings: The Fifth Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life in the context of the Summit of the Americas process, and the Fifteenth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), the highest governing body of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

Speaking with members of the press in Jamaica, the Director General of IICA, Chelston W.D. Brathwaite, said “The discussions at the Ministerial Meeting will focus on the challenges that countries face in promoting the development of agriculture, improving the standard of living in the rural population and achieving food security.”

The meeting is expected to conclude with the adoption of a Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement, to be implemented by the countries of the region with the support of IICA and other pertinent organizations, he explained.

For its part, the IABA will elect the next Director General, who will take the helm of the Institute from 2010 to 2014, replacing Brathwaite, from Barbados, who has held the position since 2002 (re-elected for a second term).

The theme of the Week is “Building Capacity for Enhancing Food Security and Rural Life in the Americas.”

In Stanberry’s opinion the theme is a timely one, as last year’s food crisis had shown that countries like Jamaica could not just depend on imported cheap foods.

“Countries like Jamaica were tutored to focus on primary production of crops such as sugarcane, cocoa and coffee, while importing cheap food from abroad,” he added.

This, in his opinion, had encouraged the neglect of the agricultural sector and favored primary production. “We now have an opportunity to really build capacity and undo all the years of under-investment in the sector” he said.

At the hemispheric meeting, the current and potential contribution of the private sector to food security, food imports, food production, injection of capital, value-added production, agro-industry and technological developments will also be discussed.

Managing Director of the Jamaica National Building Society, Mr. Earl Jarrett, who has agreed to lead the ‘private sector dialogue’, considered that this kind of intervention will not only stimulate production, but will also provide significant opportunities for a multiplier effect across many sectors.



The Chief Technical Director in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, the Director General of IICA and the General Manager of the Jamaica National Building Society.

“In addition to primary production per se, agriculture has historically provided opportunities in terms of job creation, foreign exchange earnings, sustaining rural life and impacting on the building of social capital in the country,” he declared.

During his visit to Jamaica, the Director General of IICA also met with the Prime Minister, Bruce Golding, the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Christopher Tufton, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Kenneth Baugh. They discussed the preparations for the upcoming hemispheric meeting.

More information

cynthia.currie@iica.int



IICA strengthens ties with Ministry of Agriculture of Haiti

During an official visit, the Director General went over the technical cooperation the Institute provides in this Caribbean nation.

The objective of an official visit to Haiti by the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), from August 3-7, was to review with the Ministry of Agriculture the technical support that IICA provides to the Haitian agricultural sector.

In a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, Joanas Gue, members of the cabinet and other ministry officials, Brathwaite made it clear that his visit was not merely a protocolary visit, but rather a sign of solidarity and of his interest in working more closely with the ministry.



The Director General of IICA and his delegation met with the Minister of Agriculture of Haiti, Joanas Gué.

His purpose, he added, was also to support the technical assistance that the IICA Office is providing in support of government efforts to increase national production and food security for the population.

At the meeting, topics were discussed that form part of the technical cooperation of IICA and the priorities of the Ministry of Agriculture, such as food security, income generation and conservation of natural resources and the principal river basins of the country.

For his part, Minister Gue focused on matters related to environmental development and others in which he wishes to invest in order to increase production and improve infrastructure related to irrigation infrastructure and the storage and marketing of agricultural products. In all areas, he hopes to receive assistance from IICA, which is considered a strategic partner.

Brathwaite pledged to help in the search for resources for these initiatives, working with financial institutions and horizontal cooperation mechanisms. All these initiatives are aimed at combating poverty, and must necessarily be accompanied by greater investment in the agricultural sector, “if not, we risk repeating the mistakes of the past and achieving no concrete results.”

Brathwaite was accompanied by the IICA Representative in Haiti, Alfredo Mena, the Director of Regional Operations and Integration for the Caribbean Region, Trevor Murray, and the Director of External Financing and Investment Projects, Francois Dagenais.

During his official visit, the Director General also met with representatives of diplomatic missions and international organizations, members of the sector and officials who work for IICA and the Organization of American States (OAS).

Brathwaite discussed the ProHuerta Haiti initiative with representatives of Argentina, Canada and Brazil. This project is promoting the organic production of fresh foods for personal consumption grown in family, school, community and institutional vegetable gardens located in rural, peri-urban and urban areas.

The Director General of IICA also visited some rural areas of the country to observe the implementation of projects involving food security and income generation, and learn about others that work with women, young people and rural communities.

During this visit, the honorary president of the International Women's Association of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (ADIICA), Rosanna Brathwaite, opened a preschool building in Arreguy, Jacmel, whose construction was funded by the association.

Thanks to this donation, 70 children from the local community have begun to receive an education. Adults also receive evening classes at the center, which is run by the Hermanas Lauritas.

More information
alfredo.mena@iica.int



The Saint Lucian women received training in techniques for the processing and preservation of food.

Saint Lucia Rural women continue to be empowered

The trainings intend to create a new industry by the women.

Thirty women of the Micoud Cluster of the St Lucia Network of Rural Women Producers (SLNRWP), an organisation supported by IICA, received training in the Preservation and Processing of Fruits and Vegetables over a fourday period (April 14-17).

Every year large quantities of fruits and vegetables are lost through loss of quality, edibility and nutritional value. The workshop sought to empower women with skills in processing fruits and vegetables so that these foods can be available all year round. The acquisition of such skills and knowledge could be far reaching, thus creating a new industry by the women.

The training was conducted by Carmen Nurse and Philomene Augustine with funding provided by the Banana Commercialization and Agricultural Diversification in St Lucia (AGIL) Project. The practical sessions were conducted at the Micoud Secondary School.

Participants were exposed to a number of techniques in food processing and preservation including the process of drying and candying of fruits and preparation of jams and jellies.

More information
una.may.gordon@iica.int

Trinidad and Tobago holds Mango Festival

The Network of Rural Women Producers organized the activity, assisted by IICA and FAO.



Trinidad and Tobago held its first Mango Festival on August 15.

Trinidad and Tobago held its first Mango Festival on August 15, on the premises of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The purpose of the activity was to celebrate the short mango season, when the fruit is abundant, and to allow members of the public to sample mango products.

The event included activities for all age groups, storytelling, “smell and name the mango” best mango chow, best mango display, best mango products and mango-eating competition. Also on display were tasty products made from mangos: sweet jellies, pastries, drinks, ice cream; spicy chows, pickles, marinades, and exotic beauty products and culinary innovations.

The Network of Rural Women Producers hosted the festival, which was endorsed by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). The Network of Rural Women Producers is the national chapter of the Caribbean Network of Rural Women (CANROP), launched in July 1999 with IICA’s support.

The Network’s objective is to enable rural women to obtain access to loans that they can invest in microenterprises, and give them training and technical and marketing support.

It also contributes to the creation of government policies related to the special needs of rural women producers and the elimination of the bias in land ownership, ensuring women and men equal access.

For more information, contact

kduncan@iicacarc.org

Biogas: a viable alternative fuel for rural farmers in Belize

The biodigester units were installed in three districts of Belize.

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), along with other stakeholders, has recently embarked in promoting the use of biogas for cooking, lighting and even refrigeration in the rural areas of Belize, where the deterrents to economic development often makes farmers deforest to provide firewood for this kind of chores.

The initiative began on recent March, when IICA, along with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) and the Belize Audubon Society (BAS), initiated a national biodigester project with the objective of training local technical staff and farmers in the installation and operation of a low-cost biodigester.



Eight biodigesters were installed in three districts of Belize.

A biodigester is an enclosed structure that permits the decomposition of organic materials, mainly manure, for the production of biogas that can be used in cooking, lighting and as fuel for the operation of some generators and combustion engines.

In the early 80's, other projects of this nature started, but they used expensive units (with a cost of US\$8.000) that required a lot of labor and materials and some level of engineering skills for the installation.

Today, a new type of biodigester is being promoted: a unit made of polythene plastic and installed within a day at 1/8 of the cost of the earlier models.

These kinds of units were installed in three districts of Belize. The Cayo district received three units, the Orange Walk district two and the Belize district received three units. Four of these are currently in production, and three of them have been installed to stoves for use in cooking.

The rural farmers selected for the training sessions had a minimum number of either swine or cattle. Local extension agents and other farmers assisted the sessions.

Useful biogas

Biogas or Methane (CH₄) is a natural gas produced by the decomposition of organic matter (biomass) such as manure, plant material and other animal and plant waste produced mainly in swamps and in cattle producing areas. Its controlled production can be done with a biodigester.

One of the benefits of using a biodigester is that, once installed and properly maintained, this units have the capacity to produce biogas for eight hours of continuous cooking daily, thus providing the household with an inexpensive and clean alternative for preparing their daily meals.

Another advantage of a biodigester unit is that the high methane environment naturally sterilizes the manure being decomposed, resulting in a high quality effluent that can be used as fertilizer safely on food crops.

It also provides a clean way of disposing of manure that would otherwise pose health problems to the farmer and his family.

By using a biodigester, deforestation is not only reduced, but the health risks associated with inhalation of smoke from burning firewood are eliminated.

For all these reasons, biodigesters should be an "essential unit on livestock farms", assures IICA's national specialist in innovation and technology, Maximiliano Ortega.

More information

maximiliano.ortega@iica.int



Ministers of agriculture in the Southern Region discuss outlook for the sector and climate change

The Seventeenth Regular Meeting of the Southern Agricultural Council in La Paz, Bolivia.



The CAS, created in 2003, comprises the ministers of agriculture of Bolivia, Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay.

During the Seventeenth Regular Meeting of the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS), the discussions focused on two issues: the short-term outlook for the agricultural sector in the countries represented on the Southern Agricultural Council and the impact of climate change on agriculture.

The two-day meeting concluded on August 12 in La Paz, Bolivia, where the host country's Minister of Rural Development and Land, Julia Ramos, and the Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay and pro tempore Chair of CAS, Ernesto Agazzi, welcomed their counterparts from Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay.

Each minister spoke about the situation in his/her country in the wake of the global financial crisis, which has resulted in some developed countries adopting protectionist measures for agriculture and agroindustry.

The group also discussed the problems of liquidity, the contraction in consumption and trade and the rising unemployment in the countries sparked by the crisis, with a view to establishing common ground for the implementation of public policies.

The ministers, representatives and specialists then focused on climate change, which was also discussed at the Sixteenth Meeting of the CAS. On that occasion, an ad hoc group was set up to study the issue comprising one specialist from each country.

The document they produced was presented at the latest meeting. It addresses the main problems posed by climatic variability in the region, the policies implemented by the governments to deal with them and the state of the international negotiations. It also contains a series of proposals.

Other organizations represented at the meeting included the Standing Veterinary Committee (CVP), the Plant Health Committee (COSAVE), the Southern Cone Cooperative Program for Technological Development in Agrifood and Agroindustry (PROCISUR), the Federation of Rural Associations of MERCOSUR (FARM) and the Office for the Coordination of Family Farmers' Organizations of MERCOSUR (COPROFAM).

Created in 2003, the CAS comprises the ministers of agriculture of the region. According to its information unit, the Council has so far held 16 regular and eight special meetings to coordinate joint actions aimed at addressing the difficulties facing the sector.

For more information, contact

cas.comunicacion@iica.org.uy

[Declaration on the short-term outlook for the sector](#) (in Spanish)

[Declaration on climate change](#)(in Spanish)



First forum for young leaders of agriculture in the Southern Region

The objective of the meeting was to strengthen the participants' value-based leadership skills.



Young people from Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile took part.

Thirty young leaders from Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile came together from August 4-7 in Asuncion, Paraguay, to participate in the First Southern Region Forum, organized by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and its Center for Leadership in Agriculture and the Federation of Rural Associations of MERCOSUR (FARM).

The objective of the meeting was to strengthen the participants' value-based leadership skills so they can influence the repositioning of the agricultural sector in their respective countries.

The forum followed on from the First Forum for Young Leaders of the 21st Century, held in March 2008, and was used to promote the creation of a Network of Young Leaders for Agriculture and the Rural Milieu in the Southern Region, to enable young people to share their experiences and take advantage of employment, commercial and educational opportunities.

The context of agricultural and rural development in the Southern Region was discussed during the activity, to give the participants a global vision of agriculture and trends in the sector.

During the workshop, IICA specialists presented a number of concepts, including value-based agricultural leadership, effective leadership, teamwork, styles of leadership, the integrated profile of trust and coaching as a leadership tool.

They also spoke about rural development with a territorial approach and the importance of food safety in trade in agricultural products.

Lawmaker Sebastian Acha, who is a member of the Association of Rural Young People of Paraguay, shared the experiences of young leaders in his country. The Director / Secretary of the Sociedad Rural Argentina, Daniel Pelegrina, and the Vice President of that country's Rural Confederations, Ricardo Buryaile, highlighted successful rural enterprises.

Alberto Oka, Professor Emeritus of the School of Veterinary Sciences of the National University of Asuncion also took part in the event.

For more information, contact
hernan.chiriboga@iica.int



International Center for Tropical Agriculture seeks to strengthen its links with IICA

Food security, environmental sustainability, territorial rural development, knowledge management and the development of young leaders are potential areas for joint work.

Three months after taking office as Director General of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Ruben Echeverria shared with IICA's technical directors the strategy that his organization will be implementing and possible areas of joint work it could undertake with the inter-American agency.

According to Echeverria, the aim is to achieve results that will benefit rural producers and inhabitants, which calls for interagency work and strategic partnerships.

Mindful of that, and the fact that the organization has decided to focus its work on Latin America and the Caribbean, IICA is "a key partner for the new CIAT," he said.

Specifically, Echeverria identified the following as some of the potential areas of synergy: food security, environmental sustainability and climate change, rural development with a territorial approach, knowledge management and the development of young leaders for agricultural research.



Director General of the CIAT, Ruben Echeverria.

"We have programs and research that complement the technical cooperation that you provide," he observed.

The agronomist spoke about CIAT's new mission, geared toward eco-efficient agriculture and the three new strategic areas of work: genetically improved crops, the integrated management of soil fertility and work in the hemisphere.

CIAT has 200 researchers and over 200 research and development projects.

For more information, contact

james.french@iica.int



IICA establishes closer ties with European partners

Institute officials have been involved in discussions with the University of Lleida, the Federation of Agrarian Cooperatives of Catalonia and the Balearic Government.

Universities, cooperatives and local governments are some of the strategic partners with which the Permanent Office in Europe (OPE) of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has been talking in recent weeks with an eye to promoting joint work.

Specifically, the Institute signed a collaboration agreement with the University of Lleida (UdL) under which students of the master's program in Development and International Cooperation will be carrying out practical training at IICA's Offices in Ecuador and Colombia.

The aim is to enhance the competencies of individuals dedicated to research and the implementation and/or evaluation of intervention projects in rural areas of Southern Cone countries.

The university's School of Agronomy also reaffirmed its interest in collaborating with IICA on future projects.

Another effort that the Institute undertook to strengthen its alliances with strategic partners was the meeting with the Federation of Agrarian Cooperatives of Catalonia (FCAC), made up of more than 250 agrifood cooperatives that provide services to some 75,000 small farmers and 200,000 inhabitants of rural districts.

The objective of the meeting was to secure the FCAC's collaboration in a business partnership program being promoted by the Center for Cooperation for Rural Development, the OPE and IICA's Hemispheric Rural Agroindustry Program, to develop mechanisms that would link small producers in Latin America with international markets.

IICA also held a strategic meeting with the Balearic Government, to formalize the technical cooperation that has been ongoing since 2006, through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Government of the Balearic Islands and the Balearic Council for Ecological Agrarian Production (CBPAE), related to organic agriculture and ecological agriculture.

For more information, contact

soraya.villarroya@iica.es



Virtual Classroom to provide training in agro-ecotourism for third time

The course that begins on August 25 is entitled "Agro-ecotourism: key elements for implementing an innovative tourism project."

A virtual course on agro-ecotourism will be held for the third time from August 25 - December 1, thanks to a joint effort by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Organization of American States (OAS).

Entitled "Agro-ecotourism: key elements for implementing an innovative tourism project," the course was developed by the Human Development Department (HDD) of the OAS and IICA's Distance Education Center (CECADI) and Hemispheric Agrotourism Program (HAP). The HAP is taking part in the initiative for the first time.

The activity will provide basic theoretical and practical knowledge related to rural tourism and the planning, coordination and implementation of agro-ecotourism projects designed to provide small farmers and their communities with a source of complementary income, as well as a means of diversifying the national tourism industry.

The course will take place on line via the Virtual Classroom of the Educational Portal of the Americas and calls for a minimum weekly commitment of 12 hours of study. It is targeted at owners of small or medium-sized farms, technical personnel and other people interested in agro-ecotourism.

After 14 weeks of study, the participants will have a grasp of the technical terms related to agro-ecotourism and be able to conduct feasibility and quality assessment studies for projects, implement initiatives taking into account social, economic, technological and environmental factors, and apply best practices to market studies and the marketing of agrotourism products.

More information

iica.cecadi@iica.int



More than 25,000 rural inhabitants to benefit from rural development in Argentina

IICA and the Provincial Agricultural Services Program are working on the “Formosa 2015 Strategic Plan.”

Over 25,000 rural inhabitants of the province of Formosa, Argentina, will benefit from the “Formosa 2015 Strategic Plan,” an initiative being promoted by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Provincial Agricultural Services Program (PROSAP).

The Argentine press reports that a mission visited the country in March of this year to work out the details of the plan, which was presented to the Government of Formosa recently. It is PROSAP’s “road map for managing cooperation and technical assistance” and forms part of the IICA-PROSAP cooperation agreement already in place.

Formosa is located in northwest Argentina, along the border with Paraguay. The province has a surface area of 72,000 km² and a population of nearly half a million.

The key objective of the Formosa 2015 Strategic Plan is to diversify production and create job opportunities in the countryside, based on the development of the capabilities of Formosa’s human and social capital.

The plan focuses on four main areas of action: fruit and meat production chains, the sustainable development of natural resources, rural development with a territorial approach and the sustainable development of production.

Specifically, the program for the development of tropical and subtropical fruits will focus on modern methods of growing commercially innovative fruits such as mangoes, papaya and pineapple along with other, more traditional ones like bananas and grapefruit. It will also seek to strengthen organizations related to the fruit subsector. The aim is to benefit 2100 small and medium-sized producers.



One of the components of the Formosa 2015 Strategic Plan is the sustainable development of natural resources.

The objective of the project for the sustainable development of production in the western region of Formosa is to obtain legal title for some 2000 squatter families and generate employment for over 500 producers in the area.

The initiative will be undertaken in four departments, where the traditional form of cattle ranching is the main activity. One of its components involves training in technological aspects of production with a view to generating environmentally adapted and profitable production systems.

The project will also create 21 producers’ organizations, construct 450 kilometers of rural roads and plant 100,000 hectares of pastureland. As many as 9000 inhabitants will benefit from 2100 watering places and 8000 kilometers of wire perimeter fences.

To help make the beef value chain more competitive, the Formosa 2015 Strategic Plan aims to assist 14,000 small, medium-sized and commercial stock raisers and companies that supply inputs and services for the activity.



Working meeting for the Formosa 2015 Strategic Plan. The participants included the Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Argentina, Carlos Cheppi (in the background), and the local IICA Representative, Victor Arrua (in the foreground).

The ultimate goal of this initiative is to enhance the efficiency of production and the organization of the different groups of actors in the chain, and increase value added so that beef chains develop the capacity to continue competing in the marketplace.

In the area of the sustainable use of natural resources, the plan will promote the design and effective implementation of the corresponding regulations and of measures, instruments and mechanisms that promote and value the goods generated by the province's ecosystems.

It is estimated that this component of the project will benefit some 200 small and medium-sized producers and owners of land suited to, or with potential for, forestry activities. The aim is to plant, or reforest, 10,000 hectares of land with trees.

More information

victor.arrua@iica.int



IICA publishes guide to participatory development

It is targeted at rural leaders, facilitators, promoters and researchers.

It is neither a manual nor a recipe, but rather a set of tools that are presented with examples and in simple language, to make it easier to apply and adapt them to the actual conditions and experiences of rural communities.

The eighth edition of the book “*80 herramientas para el desarrollo participativo*” has just been published. This guide for rural leaders and professionals involved in rural development is designed to facilitate participatory processes for collective actions and solutions to rural problems.

During the activity held to launch the book, Byron Miranda, the Representative of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Costa Rica, said, “Few documents in recent years have offered a set of tools in a simple format like this one. Easy to use and presented in the form of a toolbox, people can dip into the guide whenever they have a specific need.”

Miranda added that the eight editions published so far and the more than 15,000 copies sold show how well this publication has been received, including an English-language version.

The publication was produced by the regional project “Sustainable Agricultural Production on Hillsides in Central America, IICA-Holanda/LADERAS,” implemented by IICA in Honduras and El Salvador from 1995-2002 with support from the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands. The book was one of the tools produced to promote the social management of selected territories.

The book begins with an introduction on the concept of participation: its definition, the general characteristics of participatory methods and the changes in work practices needed to achieve true dialogue with the community.

Its ten chapters deal with dialogue, observation and group dynamic techniques; participatory assessments (social aspects, natural resource management, production systems, animal production, gender aspects and aspects of communication and extension); analyses of problems and solutions; and, participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Miranda believes that participatory processes make it possible for different social actors in a given rural territory to undertake joint activities that harmonize their various interests (economic, social, environmental) and achieve the integrated vision necessary for the sustainable development of their communities.

The book costs US\$10 and is available for purchase from the IICA Office in Costa Rica. It can also be downloaded at <http://webiica.iica.ac.cr/bibliotecas/RepIICA/B1013I/B1013I.pdf>

For more information, contact

byron.miranda@iica.int