



## **Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States and OAS to Participate in Hemispheric Conference on Food Security**

*"Without a doubt, this joint IICA OAS meeting reiterates the critical need for achieving food security for peace and prosperity in the Americas."*—Ambassador Anthony Johnson

"There is an urgent call for the region to build capacity in the agricultural sector as an important first step to enhancing production and productivity in order to increase food security and incomes in the rural areas," said OAS Ambassador to the United States of America and Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States (OAS), Ambassador Anthony Johnson. He continued, "Increased investment in the sector must happen now in order for us to achieve these goals."

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Organization of American States (OAS) are organizing a high level Food Security Conference scheduled for October 1, 2009 in Washington D.C. The theme of the conference is entitled 'Agriculture for Development and Food Security in the Americas.'

The conference aims to:

- 1) Create a leadership platform for IICA and the OAS to bring attention to the needs and opportunities to invest in agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- 2) Position the topic of Food Security at 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) to be held in Montego Bay, Jamaica later this year in October and;
- 3) Raise the visibility of the importance of food security and agriculture for the region and to seek agreement to hold hemispheric workshops throughout 2010, thus leading to the creation of National Food Security Plans in the Member States.

Of the two panels to be chaired, Ambassador Johnson will moderate the panel 1 entitled, 'Creating an Enabling Environment for Investment in Agriculture.' Participants will include representatives from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); the Latin American Agribusiness Development Corporation (LAAD); and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Food security has long been considered a primary goal of sustainable agricultural development and is one of the most urgent issues of our times. Earlier this year, the global community increased its commitment to ending food insecurity. At the G-8 Summit, leaders of the eight largest countries agreed that food security is an international problem and they are committed to increase international assistance for agricultural development to \$20 billion over the next three years. Furthermore, President Obama recently asked Congress to double its commitment to global agricultural production in 2010.

Other confirmed participating organizations include, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture; The World Food Program (WFP); the International Markets Bureau-Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO); the University of California-Davis and Texas A&M University.

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<http://www.iica.int/Eng/regiones/norte/USA/Pages/FoodSecurityConference.aspx>

## Social networking sites to facilitate contact between young agricultural leaders in the America



*Young people from 34 countries in Costa Rica attended Hemispheric Forum on Leadership in Agriculture.*

Some 70 young people from throughout the Americas will use popular social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to share information on leadership in agriculture and other topics of interest to the region, which, they assured, will enable them to work together in addressing problems shared by the countries.

From September 7-11, these young people, from 34 countries, participated in the “Forum for Young Leaders Involved in the Sustainable Development of Agriculture in the Americas in the 21st Century,” an initiative launched by IICA Center for Leadership in Agriculture in 2008.

People interested in joining the groups and participating may visit [twitter.com/centroliderazgo](https://twitter.com/centroliderazgo) or on Facebook search for “Leadership in Agriculture.”

“We want to promote new means of communication focused on creating community and, by doing so, encourage learning,” said Hernan Chiriboga, Coordinator of the Center for Leadership in Agriculture.

In addition to Twitter and Facebook, the young people joined the Virtual Community of Practice of the Center for Leadership, which helps share information of importance to the agricultural sector.

Chiriboga explained that the Community of Practice is another network that can be used to strengthen relationships and address important problems of common interest over the Internet.

He added that “This community of practice may give rise to work, business and education opportunities that will improve the quality of life for rural youths and enable them to continue working in agriculture in their countries. We have to make life in rural areas more attractive so that young people will stay closer to home.”

The Forum was held at IICA Headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica, and addressed topics such as value-based leadership, teamwork, systemic thinking, dispute resolution, agroenergy, entrepreneurship and project design and preparation.

On Wednesday, Sept. 9, the young leaders took a field trip to EARTH University, where they engaged in activities aimed at promoting teamwork and visited organic agriculture farms and sustainable agriculture projects operated by EARTH.

On the last day of the event, IICA's Director General, Chelston Brathwaite, addressed the participants and told them "great accomplishments, efforts and undertakings are not accomplished all at once; rather, they are the sum of many small accomplishments."

According to Brathwaite, "a leader must have a vision and share it with his/her team, have values and inspire confidence, seek efficiency, unleash the talent of others, building a working team and balance his/her health, well-being and family life."

Upon receiving their certificates of participation, the young people reaffirmed their commitment to agriculture and pledged that they would return to their countries and share the knowledge they had acquired, empower young people and work to benefit the sector.

By sponsoring the Forum, IICA promotes the development of leaders with a global vision and affords young people whose work is associated with agriculture and rural life in the Americas an opportunity to enhance their understanding of global issues.

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### **IICA's Forum for Young Leaders An Investment in our young human capital**

*Two young leaders from Trinidad and Tobago participated in the Forum.*



*IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago, Gregg C.E. Rawlins, and the young leaders Lorraine Waldropt-Ferguson and Jean-Robert Richard.*

Lorraine Waldropt-Ferguson, an Assistant-Manager, who hails from the private sector in Trinidad and Jean-Robert Richard, a Food Technologist in the public sector in Tobago, provided a perfect mix as representatives of this country at the Forum for Young Leaders involved in the Sustainable Development of Agriculture in the Americas in the 21st Century, held earlier this month in San José, Costa Rica.

The week-long forum is organized annually by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in an effort to promote the development of leaders with a global vision.

In this the second staging of the forum, 70 young people from 34 countries across the hemisphere participated and received training in areas such as value-based leadership, teamwork, systemic thinking, conflict resolution, agro-energy, project design and preparation.

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They also had the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences and engage in rich interchange on visions for the future of agriculture and rural life in the context of the global environment.

Both Lorraine and Jean-Robert were particularly inspired by the overall experience, the activities and new contacts they met while in Costa Rica.

Lorraine described the week as "unforgettably life-changing" adding that the forum was more than timely and that the lessons learned in Costa Rica will go far beyond the farm. The forum opened her eyes to many realities and she was brightened to return to Trinidad and continue to work harder for the sector in which she firmly believes.

Both young leaders expressed a sense of pride at having represented Trinidad and Tobago and indeed did the country proud. They have returned with a renewed sense of their own involvement in the development of the agriculture sector in Trinidad and Tobago and the belief that their efforts can make a difference in helping to propel the sector forward. They will subsequently play a role to encourage greater youth involvement in agriculture – and will share their experiences at a national level to achieve this.

This annual programme of the Institute continues to attract young people from across the hemisphere. Last year's representatives from Trinidad and Tobago have continued to shine in their areas of work.

Abidemi Smenkh-Ka-Ra, is currently fulfilling a one-year internship with the IICA Office in Panama, where she is working in the area of agribusiness development, an opportunity she gained through her participation in the forum in 2008.

Richard Rampersaud continues to work with the Caribbean Regional Agricultural Policy Network (CaRAPN), at the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago. After attending the forum in Costa Rica in 2008, he was motivated to become bilingual and has since completed one year of Spanish language training.

IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago, Gregg C.E. Rawlins, agrees that the forum is an excellent cooperation activity to enhance opportunities for our young people. Further, it is an investment for the agriculture sector of Trinidad and Tobago, as it seeks to awaken in these young minds a broad vision for the future of the agriculture sector, which they can share and implement with other young people.

In his opinion, opportunities like these ensure that our future does not fall short of its exciting potential.

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**Director General honors IICA staff**



*Awards recognize the outstanding work of individual staff members and teams.*

The Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Chelston Brathwaite, presented awards to more than 40 members of the organization's staff for their contributions, as individuals and as members of teams, to efforts to improve the Institute's efficiency, image and operations.

The award ceremony took place on 21 August at the Institute's Headquarters in Costa Rica. In addition to the Director General's Awards for Excellence for 2009, Brathwaite presented three special awards. Other staff members were honored for years of service and tribute was paid to international personnel retiring from the Institute.

The presentation of the awards - held annually for the last six years - took place during the closing ceremony of IICA's most important in-house meeting, Representatives' Week, during which senior management, the Representatives in the 34 Member States and regional specialists came together to discuss their achievements, good practices and lessons learned between 2002 and 2008.

"I am pleased that at IICA we have a culture of recognition, a culture that we could not have built without the support and commitment of the entire personnel," the Director General said.

Since 2007, awards have been given out in only two categories, with no distinction made between Headquarters and the IICA Offices in the countries. One category recognizes individual contributions and the other, teamwork.

This year, Brathwaite decided to present a third award for excellence (which is his prerogative, as Director General) - "a special award to a particular group" that has become his "right hand."

The Awards Selection Committee was made up of Suzanne Dancourt, Eduardo Salvado and Jorge Ardila, "former IICA officials with extensive knowledge of the Institute," explained Linda Landry, the Director of Human Resources, who served as the Committee's Technical Secretary.

Landry also said it was the first time that the Selection Committee had met via videoconference, using the equipment available in three of the Institute's Offices.

Brathwaite presented the awards accompanied by the CEO of the Credit Union of the Organization of American States (OAS), Carlos Calderon, and the Vice President of Rutherford International Inc., Philippe de Dreuzy. Other IICA officials on hand were the Deputy Director General, Christopher Hansen, the Assistant Deputy Director General, David Hatch, the Director of Technical Leadership and Knowledge Management, James French, and the Director of Human Resources.

### **Individual contributions**

This year, five IICA officials were honored for their individual contributions. In addition to a statuette, each staff member received the sum of US\$1000, to be used to finance training activities and/or professional development linked to their duties and responsibilities.

In this category **Ena Harvey, Hemispheric Agrotourism Specialist**, was honored for her pioneering contribution to the activity's development, for which IICA has been recognized not only in the Caribbean but throughout the hemisphere.

Her work has created opportunities for rural tourism in seven Caribbean, seven Central American and two South American countries. Her contributions have led to the development of strategies, workshops, training courses, databases, catalogues, videos, manuals, reports, websites and other tools for agrotourism.

**Federico Sancho, Head of the Documentation and Publications Unit**, was another of the winners in this category.

"Under his leadership, the team managed to integrate the Institute's knowledge into the digital world and promote a new culture of agricultural information management in the Member States," the members of the Selection Committee said. Working with partners like FAO and Google, he was involved in the digitization of over 24,000 documents.

**Luis Paulino Fernandez, a programmer of the Informatics and Information Systems Unit** at Headquarters, received an award for excellence for creating a system that electronically transmits and manages requests for editing, translation and interpretation services.

"A great sense of responsibility, professionalism, integrity, flexibility, creativity and initiative were essential to meet this priority need of the Institute's Language Services Unit," the members of the Selection Committee said.

**Una May Gordon, IICA Representative in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)** was another official honored.

Gordon received the award for the key role she played in the design and establishment of the Caribbean Week of Agriculture, a regional event that has been held every year since 2002, and for her leadership in ensuring that “the technical cooperation that IICA provides to the Eastern Caribbean is well received and supported by the national authorities.”

**Miguel Angel Arvelo Sanchez, IICA Representative** in Ecuador, received an award for injecting “new life” and introducing a fresh approach to the IICA Office, and improving the dialogue and interaction among the personnel.

The work carried out with his team and his commitment to the problems of Ecuador’s agriculture and rural life have given IICA in Ecuador a image that differentiates it from other technical cooperation agencies in the country, a positioning that is underpinned by the Office’s recognized technical capacity, which it has developed with a corporate institutional vision.

### **Teamwork**

Five teams received awards for their work in this category. Each member of the winning teams received a statuette and each group received a check for US\$1000, with the money to be used to organize a separate ceremony.

**The team of the project Peruvian Observatory of Agricultural Production Chains and Rural Territories** was one of the winners of this award, having implemented this model in four regions of Peru.

The staff members involved in this project are Maria Febres Huaman (in charge of technical aspects and adviser on rural development with a territorial and chains approach, Luis Moran Cavero (technical support for training and project dissemination) and Veronika Villar Biffi (technical and administrative coordinator).

**Another of the teams honored developed a strategy for information and communication technologies in Uruguay.** Under the strategy, the six team members created a Web page, the distance learning platform *Uruguay Alimentario al Mundo*, electronic forums and videoconferences, online information systems and registration for activities via the Intranet. They also empowered 160 livestock SMEs and their families by equipping them with digital tools.

The members of this team, all based at the IICA Office in Uruguay, were Yoselin Gallaztegui (Secretary and Assistant to the Technical Sector), Rosa Waldman (Principal Secretary), Bernardo Perez (Office Assistant), Marcelo Sastre (Accountant), Denise Chifflet (Administrator) and Santiago Cayota (Technical Coordinator).

The results achieved by **the partnership comprising the team of the Distance Training Center (CECADI) and the Directorate of Agricultural Health and Food Safety** earned the staff members concerned an award for excellence in this category.

The joint effort provided distance training to public and private sector officials in the Central, Southern, Caribbean and Andean regions with regard to the regulatory processes of the international standard-setting organizations and enabled national and regional AHFS specialists to interact with informatics personnel of the IICA Offices in the countries.

The members of this team were Ana Marisa Cordero (AHFS Specialist), Ericka Calderon (AHFS Specialist), Lilliana Chang (in charge of distance training processes), Olman Vargas (multimedia specialist), Mariela Madrigal (administrative assistant of the AHFS Directorate), Ninive Zuñiga (AHFS secretary), Leticia Gimenez (administrative assistant of CECADI), Ricardo Molins (Director of AHFS) and Jose Ramirez (Coordinator of the CECADI).

The **PROMECAFE team was also honored** for incorporating a series of new improvements, part of the continuous improvement that this project has undergone since it was first implemented nearly 20 years ago.

The team's work has helped strengthen the coffee sector and make it more competitive, based on a strategy of differentiation, positioning and the protection of coffee quality linked to its origin. Actors in the chain say that developing gourmet coffees has empowered them and is a great opportunity for coffee growers in the region.

The following members of this initiative were honored: Guillermo Canet Brenes (Executive Secretary), Armando Garcia (Technical Assistant), Dulce Obin (Secretary), Omar Funez (National Coordinator of the Coffee Quality Linked to its Origin Project) and Johana Lam (Accountant).

**A team of staff members from the areas of Programming and Budget and Administration and Accounting** received an award for developing indicators to measure the performance of each process carried out by the IICA Office in Brazil.

Their work resulted in greater administrative and operational transparency and flexibility. The 13 officials who systematized the information and standardized the institutional language were: Adriano Rocha (Coordinator of Accounting), Claudio De Lima (Records Management Assistant), Fernanda Meireles (Administrative Assistant), Fernanda Rocha (Coordinator of Finance), Janete Gomes (Treasury Assistant), Luciana Mattei (Specialist in Accounting), Mauro Sergio De Oliveira (Technician), Maximiliano Saudades (Coordinator of Administrative Services), Reginaldo Dos Santos (General Services Assistant), Rodrigo Pedrosa (Specialist in Planning and Organization), Severino Noel Da Silva (Specialist in Human Resources), Tereza Cristina do Menino Jesus Nepomuceno (Accounting Assistant) and Braulio Cezar Lassance Britto Heinze (Administrator of the IICA Office in Brazil).

The Director General also presented an award for excellence to Pamela Stroude, Maureen Obando, Lidy Astorga, Blanca Ramirez, Michel Chartier, Ronald Hidalgo, Marlon Rodriguez, Sonia Gonzalez, Marianela Rivera and Allan Brenes.

"Honest, responsible and committed staff are essential for efficient and effective work. Therefore, this year I have decided to present a special award to the **team of my office**, who have never given a thought to the hours they have had to work or the day of the week, and who have always offered me support and understanding," Brathwaite said.

### **Special acknowledgements**

During the ceremony, the IICA Director General also presented two other awards in recognition of **outstanding leadership and management**.

One of the recipients was the **IICA Representative in Haiti, Alfredo Mena**, for his "significant contribution to technical cooperation services, in extremely difficult conditions over many years ... demonstrating courage, vision, effort and, in particular, commitment to carrying out the mission entrusted to him."

The Director General also paid tribute to the commitment and leadership of the **Director of Trade and Agribusiness, Miguel Garcia**, who in 2003 took charge of the Inter-American Program for the Promotion of Trade, Agribusiness and Food Safety, based in Miami.

### **Staff members honored for years of service**

During the award ceremony, several officials were honored for their years of service to the Institute, including **Carmen Sonnia Mazzoti**, Chief Secretary of the IICA Office in Peru, who has worked for IICA for 45 years.

She visited Headquarters as part of the policy implemented in 2007 to honor local staff of IICA Offices in the countries with over 30 years of distinguished service who have never visited the Institute's Headquarters.

Other officials who received pins and certificates were the IICA Representative in Honduras, **Salvador Monge**, and the Executive Secretary of the Cooperative Program for the Development of Agrifood and Agroindustry Technology in the Southern Cone, **Emilio Ruz**, both of whom have worked for the Institute for five years.

The IICA Representative in the Dominican Republic, **Victor Del Angel**, was honored for completing 10 years of service, while the Regional Specialist in Project Preparation, **Rodolfo Teruel**, has worked for the Institute for 15 years.

The Regional Specialist in Projects for the Central Region, **Hector Medina**, the IICA Representative in Suriname, **Cromwell Crawford**, and the coordinator of the IICA Office in Guyana, **Vincent Little**, were also honored for completing 20 years of service to the Institute.

Finally, members of the international personnel who will soon be retiring were honored: **Marguerite Groves**, Coordinator of Language Services, **Enrique Alarcon**, Director of Technology and Innovation, **Francois Dagenais**, Director of External Financing and Investment Projects, **Ricardo Caceres**, a Specialist of the Directorate of Performance Management and Evaluation, and **Arnaldo Chibbaro**, Hemispheric Specialist in Policies and Trade Negotiations.

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## Tribute to the personnel



IICA Director General Chelston Brathwaite paid tribute to the Institute's personnel, "who in the last eight years have contributed to the renewal of IICA."

"As this Administration comes to an end, I want to thank each and every one of you personally for your loyalty, dedication, commitment and teamwork, which have contributed to our success," he said.

As a mark of gratitude, he inaugurated the fountain and garden at IICA Headquarters, symbols of responsibility and hope that the institution will continue to improve.

"Just as the water flows from the fountain, there will be a continuous flow of knowledge, information and ideas from this Institute that will contribute to the development and modernization of the rural sector in the Americas (...) But this fountain and garden will not flourish, survive even, unless we look after them properly, so the plants grow and the water flows," he said.



## Biotechnology increases both yields and profits in agriculture in the Americas

*Ten Latin American countries grow biotechnological crops.*



*Clive James, Chairman of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA).*

After being applied for 13 years in different parts of the world, the new agrobiotechnologies are living up to the promise of growing more food on less land while lowering economic and environmental costs, this according to Clive James, Chairman of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA).

This world-renowned expert participated on September 9 in the forum "Biotechnological/Genetically Modified Crops Today and the Outlook for the Future," organized by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

Research conducted by the ISAAA, said James, revealed that the economic benefit obtained from the application of agrobiotechnology from 1996 to 2007 totaled US\$44 billion. Of that amount, 44% was generated by increased yields and 56% derived from lower production costs.

According to James, agrobiotechnology makes it possible to produce more food on less land, which protects soils and water and reduces environmental costs thanks to the use of less pesticide.

While recognizing that it is not a panacea, he believes that in a context characterized by greater demand for food, less land available for producing it and uncertainty as to effects of climate change, the use of agrobiotechnologies could help meet these challenges.

Enrique Alarcon, Director of IICA's Area of Technology and Innovation, who opened the forum, stated "Agrobiotechnology can have a positive impact on agricultural production, agricultural yields, the use of genetic resources and, in general, on rural prosperity."

For both men, biotechnology can contribute to reducing levels of hunger, but it is not the THE solution. Alarcon insisted that biotechnology is an important technology, but not the only one.

### **In figures**

As of 2008, 25 countries had decided to grow biotechnological crops, ten of which are in the Americas: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, United States of America and Uruguay. James is confident that by 2015 there will be 40 countries.

In hectares, the total surface area planted in biotechnological crops worldwide in 2008 was 125 million hectares, 10.7 million more than in 2007, which is an increase of 9.4%. By 2015, it is estimated that this figure will rise to 200 million hectares.

James reported that in 2008, the number of farmers growing biotechnological crops increased by 1.3 million to 13.3 million, 90% of which (12.3 million) are poor small-scale farmers in developing countries. He estimates that by 2015 there will be more than 20 million.

### **Work ahead**

For James, one of the major challenges facing agrobiotechnology is to develop effective, efficient and applicable regulatory frameworks in all countries, but especially in the developing countries.

In his judgment, the global challenges faced by the agricultural sector have reduced resistance to biotechnological crops, and "the more complicated the challenges become, the more that resistance wanes."

A similar sentiment was expressed by Alarcon, who noted that even though Latin America has a well-established research infrastructure, it is necessary to invest more in this area and incorporate it more effectively into national and regional policies. He also feels it is necessary for the private sector to become more involved in the development of agrobiotechnologies.

James also called attention to the importance of encouraging South-South cooperation. He mentioned that there are five leading countries in the area of biotechnological crops: China, India, Brazil, Argentina and South Africa. "They are the countries of the south that can take the lead in providing such cooperation," he said.

In his opinion, another task ahead is to generate, compile and share scientifically verifiable information as inputs for decision makers in the countries.

On this topic, Bryan Munoz, IICA Biotechnology and Biosafety Specialist, noted that through activities such as the forum the Institute's Biotechnology and Biosafety Program promotes discussion, provides information and fosters dialogue among its 34 Member States.

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## IICA Promotes Food Security in Grenada

*Based on a request from members of the Grenada chapter of Caribbean Agri Business Association, IICA initiated activities in support of Grenada's cassava industry.*



*The training seminar covered all aspects of cassava production.*

Food Security is being given high priority by the Grenada Ministry of Agriculture (MoA); and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has been providing support to this priority area. Recently, based on a request from members of the Grenada chapter of Caribbean Agri Business Association (CABA), IICA initiated activities in support of Grenada's cassava industry.

With support from two Agronomists from the MoA, IICA conducted a training seminar and practical session on "Cassava Production and Processing". The seminar was held at the IICA Office; the field and the agro-processing sessions were held at the Mirabeau Agricultural Station and a privately owned cassava processing facility, respectively, in St. Andrew's parish.

Participants included CABA members as well as Agriculture Science teachers and selected Agriculture Science students from two primary schools in St. Andrew's parish.

The training seminar covered all aspects of cassava production: from pre-production to post harvest handling. It also included the theoretical aspects of cassava processing, highlighting twenty-one different recipes which included cassava as the main ingredient.

During the field session, participants were taken to a prepared site and given a practical appreciation of site selection and preparation (especially in relation to land tillage and formation) for planting cassava. They were also shown, and allowed to be involved in the correct method of preparing planting material, and planting of same.

Additionally, a 3-month old cassava plot was visited, and participants were able to identify some of the pests associated with cassava production.

They were also able to comment on the plant spacing used, and identify some basic characteristics of the cassava variety planted.

At the cassava processing facility, participants were intrigued by the apparently primitive (but rather ingenious) method used for manufacturing cassava bread and farine.

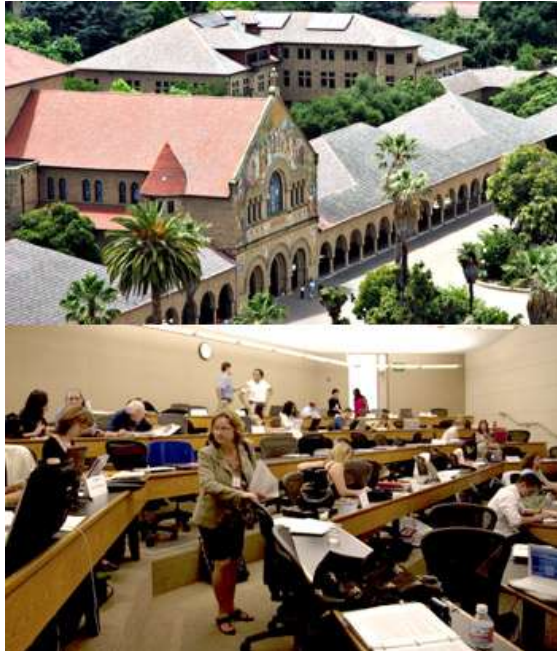
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## IICA to develop business plan for books on agriculture

*The Institute is receiving assistance from professionals in publications based in Silicon Valley.*



*The University of Stanford in California offers the Professional Publishing Program.*

To acquire the expertise they need to develop a business plan for books on agriculture and reactivate the AGROAMERICA imprint, IICA officials took part in the weeklong Professional Publishing Program of the prestigious University of Stanford in California, USA.

Other participants in the intensive program included booksellers, editors, compilers, traders and writers from all over the world. All have a professional link with the production of printed and digital books, magazines and other publications. “After participating in this program, we shall be developing a business plan for books on agriculture and are working on the reactivation of the AGROAMERICA imprint, to better manage the knowledge we are producing,” said Federico Sancho, IICA’s Head of Documentation and Publications.

Sancho announced that improvements would also be made to the Institute’s technical journal, COMUNIICA, for which input and recommendations were received from experts in content and design who work in the famous industrial district of Silicon Valley, and scientific researchers in various parts of the USA. The course also focused on the inclusion and use of social networks and new media like Twitter, Ning, Facebook, YouTube and Qik to promote and manage agricultural knowledge.

“We were able to interact with the leaders of the Ning social networking platform, study the processes for collaborating with Wikipedia and the production of journals in Wired, and assess the new techniques of printing on demand (POD), the effective use of Twitter and its links with the publishing industry, trends in digital video production, the creation of titles and covers that sell books, and many others,” Sancho said.

IICA’s Head of Documentation added, “The logical conclusion is that the world of publishing has changed. It is not the end of printed books, but we know that the digital era is the perfect complement to activate deeper, more intense processes in the construction of knowledge.”

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## Agricultural technology and innovation

### Taking advantage of the current situation to make improvements

Research published entitled “*Situación y desempeño de la agricultura en ALC desde la perspectiva tecnológica.*”



Download the report in Spanish [here](#).

If any good came from the crisis in food prices that shook the world in 2008, it was the fact that it food security and agriculture took center stage, after governments in the hemisphere had neglected the issues for years and largely dismantled the sector.

Today, agriculture’s renewed position of prominence could make politicians in some countries more willing to invest in the sector, including public institutions dedicated to technology research and development.

This is one of the conclusions of the book “[Situación y desempeño de la agricultura en ALC desde la perspectiva tecnológica](#),” published recently In Spanish only by the Area of Technology and Innovation of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

The researchers and authors of the publication were the Director of IICA’s Area of Science and Technology, Enrique Alarcon, and specialists Viviana Palmieri and David Rodriguez (who passed away recently).

After presenting an overview of the trends in agricultural production and the institutional framework for technology (policies, strategies, rules and organizations) that exists in Latin America and the Caribbean, the book analyzes the investment in agricultural technology research and development, and the human resources working in this field.

In general, the conclusion is that, although a national, regional and international technological institutional framework exists, “support for capacity building for innovation has not matched the needs or the challenge.”

“The region lags far behind the technologically advanced countries as far as key indicators of capabilities in science and technology (S&T) and innovation are concerned” and there are significant differences between countries in the region.

These weaknesses are reflected in the “chronic underinvestment in research and development” in several countries for many years and in the absence of the “critical mass needed to promote technological innovation effectively.”

“Not enough resources are invested and unsatisfactory use is made of those that are. We must invest more and more wisely, so the results of the investment has a more significant impact on technological innovation, that is, on the producer’s knowledge, to improve the way in which he or she produces,” explained Viviana Palmieri, IICA specialist in technology and innovation.

According to data compiled by the Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators (ASTI) initiative and quoted in the document, investment in agricultural science and technology in 15 countries of the region has experienced a moderate increase in real terms, equivalent to average annual growth of 1.1% between 1981 and 2006.

This growing trend for the region as a whole masks the major differences that exist between countries in the hemisphere (just five countries account for over 90% of all investment).

Furthermore, the same ASTI study shows that the intensity of investment, i.e., the ratio of investment to agricultural GDP, is around one percent on average, with the figure for 2006 lower than the percentage in 2001.

There are also big differences between countries with regard to this indicator, with figures of over 1.5% in Brazil and Uruguay, but less than 0.3% in the Dominican Republic, Paraguay and Guatemala.

With regard to researchers, the report points to the existence of 18,650 professionals devoted to agricultural research in Latin America and the Caribbean, an increase in the number of professionals with doctoral studies and a very small decline in the number of professionals without graduate-level qualifications.

Nevertheless, the region still needs to increase the critical mass of researchers, extension workers, technical assistants and innovation agents in general.

In Palmieri's opinion, the current renewed political interest in agriculture could create an enabling environment for raising awareness and attracting young people to this area of specialization.

### **Institutional outlook**

At the national level, the study revealed the existence of implicit (non-formal) national agricultural research systems (NARS) in most countries. Within these systems, the National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARI) "continue to be the chief source of knowledge and technologies as public goods."

Some universities play another very important role by not only training agricultural science professionals but also carrying out agricultural research and innovation.

The book identifies a phenomenon that began to be observed two years ago within the NARS, designed to fill the gap left - especially for small-scale agriculture - when the technology transfer and extension systems of several countries were dismantled. It involves renewed attempts to strengthen or redesign the systems and, in some cases, link them more closely with research.

It is in this context that social networks of technological innovation and programs for family agriculture have emerged. In Palmieri's opinion, the ultimate goal of these changes is "to adapt the institutions so they respond to the challenges and achieve their ultimate objective of improving technological decision-making in the countryside."

In this regard, the publication recommends promoting more explicit inclusion of policies and institutional frameworks to promote the development of national technological innovation systems, making them more inclusive of the actors, the different productive systems and the various sources of knowledge, and ensuring they have better links with society in general.

The book also takes the view that technology research and innovation policies and programs should explicitly include a poverty alleviation component, because the biggest challenge as far as technological innovation is concerned is "to contribute to food security - especially the availability of, and access to, food."

With regard to the regional mechanisms, the report looks at the cooperative agricultural technology research and transfer programs (PROCI), regional research centers like the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Forum for the Americas on Agricultural Research and Technology Development (FORAGRO), the Regional Fund for Agricultural Technology (FONTAGRO), the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR).

The purpose of an institutional system of this kind is to share information, implement regional research projects and provide non-formal training. In the authors' opinion, efforts must be made to continue strengthening and fostering these and new types of partnerships.

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## Meager investment in research and development is the biggest handicap to the efforts to harness biotechnology in Latin America

Report is published prepared by experts working with IICA.



Download the document in Spanish [here](#)

“Investment in research and development (R&D) is the biggest handicap that the Latin American countries face in tapping the opportunities offered by the bioeconomy,” says the most recent report on agricultural biotechnology in the region published in Spanish only by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

Experts Eduardo Trigo and Federico Villareal, of the Grupo CEO, prepared the publication in coordination with the Institute’s Hemispheric Biotechnology and Biosafety Program. The report is entitled *La Agrobiotecnología en las Américas. Una mirada a la situación actual y las tendencias futuras*.

According to the report, during 2005 the Latin American countries invested US\$13.5 billion - barely US\$800 million more than Spain and less than five percent of the amount that the United States invests. According to data provided by the (Ibero-American and Inter-American) Network of Science and Technology Indicators (RICYT), the region as a whole invests only 0.54% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and no country invests more than one percent - i.e., less than half of what Spain invests (1.13%) and one third of what Canada invested in 2005 (1.98%).

The report analyzes the situation of countries in the region with regard to the adoption of agro-biotechnologies and the possible impact at the national and regional levels. The analysis draws on different sources of information, such as country studies, international data and news, and direct consultations with key actors.

The authors affirm that, over the last three decades and taken as a group, developing country spending on agricultural research has risen constantly and at a rate higher than that of developed countries.

“But the growth has not been the same in all countries and regions. Spending has increased rapidly in some of the large countries, while in some of the small ones it has failed to keep up with the rate of inflation,” the report states.

In India, China and Brazil, spending grew at an average annual rate of 8% between 1981 and 2000, in comparison with a rate of 2% in other developing countries. In short, “Latin America was the region with least growth and the slowest growth in the rate of investment” as far as agricultural research was concerned.

Since the introduction in 1996 of the first commercial living modified organism (LMO) - the herbicide-tolerant soybean -, agrobiotechnology has experienced constant growth, both with respect to the surface area under cultivation and the type of crops and the countries that they have adopted the technology.

By 2007, transgenic crops were being grown on 14.3 million hectares of land, 12% more than the previous year. Since this type of crop first appeared, nearly 700 million hectares have been planted and 55% of the world’s population currently use transgenic crops (3.6 billion people).

The publication is available from IICA Offices throughout the hemisphere free of charge. It is also posted on the Web page of the Inter-American Biotechnology and Biosafety Program.

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## **Mexico: Experts quantify the benefits of the Integrated Strategy to Control the Mediterranean Fruit Fly**

*During the 31 years it has been in operation, the program has generated direct benefits worth US\$66,421,000,000.*

The benefits for Mexico of the Moscamed Program include increased production and exports of fruits and vegetables, the creation of new jobs and continued employment and the prevention of environmental damage.

The program's objective is to prevent, control and eradicate outbreaks of the Mediterranean fruit fly in Mexico and cooperate with neighboring countries to create barriers that will contain any outbreaks.

These are the findings of an economic impact evaluation of the program carried out by the Office of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Mexico.



*Presentation of the evaluation to government and international officials.*

The findings were recently presented to representatives of the National Service for Agrifood Health, Safety and Quality, the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food of Mexico, the Inter-American Development Bank and other stakeholders.

The study analyzed the program's cost structure for the last 31 years and the direct and indirect benefits for Mexico and Chiapas, the state where the Moscamed-Mexico Program works to eradicate and control the pest.

According to the analysis, the total direct benefits of the program for Mexico are worth US\$66,421,000,000 (the net value of the production and exports of economically important fruits and vegetables susceptible to attack by the pest).

The indirect benefits of the program are put at US\$19,593,000,000, including savings in insecticides and the creation of new jobs and continued employment in the production and packing of fruits and vegetables (508,000,000 day's wages and the 510 permanent jobs generated by the Moscamed Program).

Based on the programs' cost (US\$352 million in the case of Moscamed-Mexico, and US\$767 million for the Regional Moscamed Program) and the aforementioned benefits, the benefit/cost ratio is 112 for the Mexican program and 57 for the regional program.

“For each million dollars invested in the Moscamed Program, the benefits generated increased: the net value of production and exports rose by US\$53 million and US\$30 million, respectively, and of employment by nearly US\$3 million. The authors of the study put the savings due to the survival of the natural enemies of the Mediterranean Fruit Fly at US\$811,000.”

Without the program, possible infestations of the pest and the amounts of insecticide that would have been required would have resulted in potential losses to Mexican fruit and vegetable production of the order of US\$4,237,000,000.

Furthermore, the net value of the exports that would have been lost during the period is put at nearly US\$25,866,000,000.

The absence of an integrated pest control strategy like the one implemented under the program would have resulted in US\$17,527,000,000 in indirect costs (e.g., the cost of health care for rural inhabitants suffering from insecticide poisoning, unemployment in the fruit and vegetable industry and environmental damage).

Over a 30-year period, the program has generated direct benefits for Chiapas worth US\$1,075,000,000, reflected in the growing net value of the production and exports of fruits and vegetables selected and grown in the state.

The evaluation also estimates the indirect benefits for Chiapas (the health of the rural population, the creation of new jobs and continued employment in the production of fruits and vegetables and under the Moscamed Program, and environmental protection) at US\$729 million.

If the Program had not been implemented, it is calculated that Chiapas might have lost US\$97 million worth of fruit production and exports. Furthermore, the Program's indirect benefits would have become US\$519 million in costs.

The Moscamed Program has achieved worldwide recognition as one of the first programs in the Americas to use the sterile insect technique to control the Mediterranean fruit fly.

The IICA Office in Mexico is presently collaborating with the Moscamed Program activities aimed at monitoring, identifying and, if necessary, controlling outbreaks along the Mexico-Guatemala border and thereby preventing the Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*) from becoming established in the country.

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## **Ministry of Agriculture of Peru and IICA conclude improvements to irrigation infrastructure in the north of the country**

*IICA and Peru's Ministry of Agriculture signed a cooperation agreement for the joint work.*



*The infrastructure improvements to irrigation canals in the north area of Peru are designed to increase agricultural yields.*

On 3 August, the Minister of Agriculture of Peru, Adolfo De Cordova, inaugurated the Collique-Popan and Tepo irrigation canals, which are expected to benefit nearly 1000 farmers and their families in the Chancay Lambayeque Valley in the north of the country.

Costing five million new soles (roughly US\$170,000), the infrastructure improvements are part of Peru's efforts to modernize the nation's agricultural sector.

"We provided administrative and technical assistance to Peru's Ministry of Agriculture for the lining of these important irrigation channels," said IICA's Representative in Peru, Freddy Rojas. The canals, which supply water for crops in the area, had not received proper maintenance for nearly 30 years.

The project was executed and co-financed with community support, through the Chongoyape Irrigation Committee and the Board of Users of the Chancay Lambayeque Irrigation District (JUDRCHL).

According to Rojas, 80% of Peru's agricultural activity takes place in coastal areas that produce only 5% of the nation's water. "There is a great deal of farming activity but water is scarce," he said.

Each of the new irrigation canals is three kilometers long. They are expected to increase agricultural yields in the area by supplying more water and reducing losses from seepage.

The improvements were carried out by the firm CVJ Contratistas Generales SRL, following a public bidding process managed by IICA in which representatives of the beneficiary communities participated as observers.

The Department of Lambayeque is the second most densely populated regional district in Peru.

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## IICA mourns the death of father of the Green Revolution, Norman Borlaug

*Following the death of this renowned agronomist and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, IICA has called for a development model that goes beyond the green revolution.*

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) joined with the international community in mourning the passing of the renowned agronomist and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Norman Borlaug, on September 12.

Borlaug was the father of the Green Revolution, which transformed agriculture worldwide in the 1960s and 1970s. “His discoveries contributed greatly to efforts to combat hunger and poverty in the world,” stated IICA’s Director General, Chelston Brathwaite.



*The Director General of IICA, Chelston Brathwaite, and his wife Rosanna, with Dr. Norman Borlaug, at Texas A&M University in 2003.*

“His work laid the foundation for encouraging the adoption of a new model for development,” one that IICA has been promoting in recent years which goes beyond the green revolution and places agriculture and rural life at the center of the countries development agendas.

“We want to work with our partners and our Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and cut extreme poverty in half by 2015,” said Brathwaite.

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