

Infoletter

from the Desk of the Director General

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

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Institutional Affairs

▪ Young leaders committed to new vision of agriculture

The First Forum for Young Leaders Involved in the Sustainable Development of Agriculture in the Americas in the 21st Century concluded on 29 March. Held in Costa Rica, the roughly 90 young people from 34 countries who took part pledged to strengthen and promote the equitable and sustainable growth of agriculture and rural life in the hemisphere. Following six days of intensive training in topics such as value-based leadership, teamwork, negotiations, the use of the AgroMatrix and rural development, the young people made a commitment to a new vision of agriculture. This activity was the first undertaken by the innovative Center for Leadership in Agriculture, which was inaugurated on 24 March during a ceremony attended by senior Costa Rican government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, the OAS Representative in Costa Rica and the Chairman of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture, IICA's highest governing body. The young leaders approved the "2008 Declaration of Young Leaders of the Americas" in which they pledged to promote, among other things, the formulation of State policies that take into account social inclusion and gender, environmental sustainability, competitiveness and participation.

▪ IICA and FAO presented report on joint work

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and IICA presented, in Brazil, their report "Working together for agriculture and rural life," which details the main actions they undertook together in 2006 and 2007. The document is intended to disseminate information about the technical cooperation that the two organizations provide to their Member States with a view to improving food security and agriculture and rural life. In the same spirit of interagency collaboration, IICA Director General Chelston Brathwaite took part in the 30th FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, that was held 14-18 April in Brasilia, Brazil.

▪ IICA presents Annual Report to the OAS

On 26 March, IICA Deputy Director General Christopher Hansen presented the Institute's 2007 Annual Report to the General Committee of the Organization of American States (OAS). In his presentation, Hansen summed up the Institute's achievements and the challenges it faces. He also said that the message that IICA had been trying to get across for years had been boosted by the World Bank's "World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for development." For the first time in 25 years, the report focuses on exclusively on agriculture.

▪ IICA Director General to meet with his most senior advisers

The Special Advisory Commission on Management Issues (SACMI) met 22-23 April at IICA Headquarters. The meeting will involve Director General Chelston Brathwaite's most senior advisers. This year, the Commission comprises representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, the USA and Venezuela. One of the key issues that will be addressed is the ongoing effort to enhance the technical expertise at IICA. The participants will also study the 2007 Annual Report, the status of the 2006-2010 Medium Term Plan and the Institute's financial situation. The Commission will make recommendations regarding these matters to enhance the Brathwaite administration's directives and actions. These contributions are designed to facilitate decision-making at the meetings of IICA's governing bodies during the rest of 2008.

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- **IICA becomes an observer member of the Inter-American Group for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease**

IICA has become an observer member of the Inter-American Group for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (GIEFA). Created to serve as a regional and interagency working group, GIEFA involves a large number of public and private sector actors. It has been responsible for preparing, supervising and implementing a regional project for the final phase of the effort to eradicate foot-and-mouth disease in the Americas, as part of the Hemispheric Plan for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PHEFA) of the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA). The group also provides support to national foot-and-mouth disease prevention and eradication programs. IICA has joined GIEFA as part its IICA's strategic partnership with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The Institute's agricultural health and food safety unit has also entered into partnerships with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and FAO for the implementation of induction and updating courses on the regulatory processes of the OIE and Codex Alimentarius, scheduled to be held in May and June of this year.

Regions and countries

- **Plan to increase staple grain production in Central America**

In March, as part of the execution of the 2008-2017 Central American Agricultural Policy, IICA helped draft the "Emergency Plan to increase staple grain production in Central America during the 2008-2009 agricultural cycle." Prepared by the Central American Livestock Council (CAC), the plan analyzes the international staple grain situation and its impact on countries in the region. It also addresses the challenges and needs for joint action, the goals set and urgent national and regional measures. Moreover, it identifies the role of each country and quantifies the investment needed to implement the plan. At the request of the Central American ministers of agriculture, the CAC Secretariat organized earlier working meetings in El Salvador to assess the situation and formulate the Emergency Plan.

- **IICA Representatives and specialists discuss lines of action in the Southern Region**

A meeting of IICA Representatives and specialists in the Southern Region took place 6-7 March in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The senior Institute officials discussed the technical cooperation agenda and evaluated IICA's participation in the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS), as a way to improve its support for the countries. They also discussed the process of strengthening the institutional fabric of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and a variety of other issues related to the work of strengthening agriculture in the Member States.

- **Paraguay develops State Policy for the agricultural sector**

The formulation of a State Policy for Paraguay's agricultural sector is well under way following a meeting held 31 March at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG). Involved in the activity were Minister Alfredo Molinas, the Deputy Ministers and the directors of different ministry units. IICA was represented by the Coordinator of the Technical Cooperation Action Plan and Education and Training Specialist, Luis Zarza, and consultant Celso Gimenez, who provided technical assistance. Minister Molinas thanked the Institute for its useful work on a matter that he regards as key to his country's development.

Coming events

- **22-23 April 2008.** Special Meeting of the Special Advisory Commission on Management Issues (SACMI). IICA Headquarters, San Jose, Costa Rica.

More information

- **IICA leadership training center commences operations**
- **Leadership and agriculture, Chelston W. D. Brathwaite**
- **Central American bean producers carry out field trip**

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