

Infoletter

from the Desk of the Director General

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture



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Institutional Affairs

▪ Food crisis should be viewed as an opportunity for agriculture

Experts from international cooperation and funding organizations and academic institutions agreed that the crisis provoked by rising food prices should be viewed as an opportunity for agriculture in the Americas. Forty experts from organizations such as FAO, ECLAC, IDB, CATIE, the World Bank, the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI), USAID, EMBRAPA, the Regional Technical Assistance Unit (RUTA), IICA and the Universities of Missouri and Purdue and the Universidad Javeriana (Bogota) participated in the workshop *“The Contribution of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu to Sustainable Development and Food Security in the new International Context,”* held on July 8-10 at IICA Headquarters. The objective of the activity was to analyze different visions of the contribution of agriculture to food security and sustainable development. The results of the meeting will be used by the Institute to prepare a proposal to be submitted to the next Summit of the Americas, which will take place in Trinidad and Tobago in early 2009.

▪ 2008 IICA Executive Committee Meeting

From July 22-24, delegations from 17 countries will participate in the Twenty-eighth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee, whose members this year include Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Dominica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, St. Lucia, United States of America and Venezuela. For the first two days, the Committee will meet at IICA Headquarters. On the third day, participants will go to CATIE, in Turrialba, Costa Rica, where they will participate in the fourth plenary session and the closing ceremony, which will be followed by the meeting of the CATIE Governing Council. This is the first time an Executive Committee meeting has been conducted in this manner, and reflects the importance of interinstitutional work.

▪ IICA renders accounts

The Institute, in fulfillment of its commitment to be accountable, published its 2007 Annual Report *“IICA’s contribution to the development of rural communities in the Americas.”* The report presents the most important results achieved in the Member States in pursuit of its mission to provide innovative technical cooperation for agricultural and rural development.

▪ Twenty-three projects presented at international forum on agricultural technology

The Regional Fund for Agricultural Technology (FONTAGRO) held a workshop at IICA Headquarters on June 25-27 to follow up on its projects in the Andean region, the Southern Cone, Central America and the Caribbean. During the three-day event, 50 representatives of 20 countries analyzed 23 projects financed by the Fund and approved in last year’s call for proposals.

Regions and countries

▪ Argentina, Canada and Haiti join forces to improve food security

Thanks to a contribution of over US\$7 million from the government of Argentina, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and IICA, community food production is being promoted in Haiti through an initiative known as Pro-Huerta, which the Argentine Horizontal Cooperation Fund (Fondo Argentino de Cooperación Horizontal – FO-AR) has been promoting for more than three years with the support of IICA. This assistance program is benefiting 22,000 Haitians in five different geographical departments and is intended to promote and provide technical support and inputs for the organic production of fresh food for self consumption, grown in fruit and vegetable gardens for the use of families,

schools, communities and institutions in rural, periurban and urban areas. The project is part of the Programa Nacional Argentino de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutrición (Argentine National Food Security and Nutrition Program) which has been successfully carried out for the past 16 years in Argentina.

▪ **IICA and FOMILENIO reach agreement on pilot production project in El Salvador**

On June 16, the Millennium Fund signed an agreement with IICA to execute the production project “*Strengthening the supply chain for fruit and related products in the northern zone (FRUNORTE)*” in El Salvador. This project, valued at almost US\$1.3 million and scheduled to last a year and a half, is aimed at strengthening, expanding and improving the fruit chains in seven territories in northern El Salvador. The ultimate goal is to increase the income and employment opportunities for more than 400 people who will receive technical assistance and training in fruit production, post-harvest handling, business management and marketing. Also, 148 hectares will be planted in fruit trees and seven farmer organizations will benefit from advisory services on how to market fruit and fruit by-products and manage investment funds. The agreement was signed by the Executive Director of FOMILENIO, Juan Jose Llort, and the IICA Representative in El Salvador, Keith L. Andrews.

▪ **IICA taught courses on Codex Alimentarius**

Together with FAO, and with funding from the USDA, IICA organized four orientation and refresher courses on the preparatory process of the Codex Alimentarius Program. The Codex Alimentarius is the most important international reference body in the area of food quality. The courses were transmitted over the Internet through the facilities of the Institute’s Distance Training Center (CECADI), in Costa Rica, for 16 countries of the hemisphere. It is estimated that some 500 people received training.

▪ **SPS Initiative for the Americas**

Delegations from 26 countries of the Americas had the opportunity to participate in the 42nd meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva, Switzerland. Their participation was possible thanks to the SPS Initiative for the Americas, which has facilitated the involvement of 250 Capital-based experts from 32 countries in the deliberations of the Committee since it was launched in 2002. IICA implements the Initiative in collaboration with the six countries that sit on its Steering Committee (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico and the United States of America).

▪ **IICA and IFAP to work together**

IICA and IFAP (International Federation of Agricultural Producers) renewed their interest in working together in five thematic areas: science and technology, agribusiness, trade and negotiations, agricultural policies and institutional modernization, and agricultural health and food safety. The agreement was reached at the 38th World Farmer’s Congress, held in Poland from May 30 – June 6, which was attended by the Directors of Institutional Modernization, Rafael Trejos, and Policies and Trade, Julio Paz. IICA also participated in the meeting of the IFAP Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, at which the food crisis was the main theme.

▪ **IICA analyzes the impact of agricultural commodity prices**

The Policies and Trade Unit of IICA recently presented the document “Higher food prices and their possible impact on agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean,” written by the Director of Policies and Trade, Julio Paz, and IICA Trade Policies and Negotiations Specialist, Henry Benavides. It is available at: <http://www.iica.int/esp/conocimiento/actualidad/Paginas/seguridadalimentaria.aspx>.

Coming events

- **July 22-24,** Twenty-eighth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee, IICA Headquarters, San Jose, Costa Rica.
- **August 8,** Fifth Series of Conferences: First Conference: State Policies, Agriculture in the future. MERCOSUR Building. Luis P. Piera 1992, Montevideo, Uruguay.

More information

- **Google to digitize IICA’s repository of documents**

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