

Infoletter

from the Desk of the Director General

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture



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Institutional Affairs

▪ IICA strengthens partnerships with academic centers of excellence

IICA Director General Chelston W. D. Brathwaite will travel to the United States and Canada in the second half of September for visits to Cornell University and the University of Ottawa. The visits are part of the Institute's strategy aimed at strengthening relations with academic centers of excellence. Brathwaite will visit Cornell University (his alma mater, from which he graduated in September 1970) from 15-19 September. One of the most prestigious educational institutions in the world, the university is located in Ithaca, New York State. There Brathwaite will acquaint himself with the institution's view of Latin America and the Caribbean and new academic research and development programs, and sign an agreement of understanding for joint activities. On Wednesday, 17 September, he will give a lecture at the science building entitled "Promoting modern agriculture and the effective use of natural resources for sustainable development in the 21st century." During his visit to the University of Ottawa, on 23 September, he will give a presentation entitled "Organizational renewal at IICA: Adapting the Institute to a constantly changing world." IICA also has partnerships with other top educational centers, such as Texas A&M University (agreement signed in 1997), Florida International University (2004), the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and London University (2007).

▪ IICA Representatives plan work for 2009

The Institute's Representatives in its 34 Member States will hold their annual meeting from 23-29 October, in San Jose, Costa Rica. The activity will focus on two main topics - "Food security in the Americas" and "Good Institutional Practices and their Importance." IICA's Directors of Regional Operations will give an overview of the food situation in the hemisphere, region by region. Chelston Brathwaite will inaugurate the dialogues on the good practices that have been implemented during his administration to encourage institutional development and thereby improve the quality of the cooperation provided in the countries. Representatives' Week will mark the culmination of the planning process for 2009 in which the Institute has been engaged since July of this year. High-level speakers and special guests will also take part in the meeting. In addition, the International Food Fair organized by the Association of Spouses of IICA Officials (ADIICA) will take place on Saturday, 25 October.

▪ COMUNIICA magazine focuses on food security

The latest issue of IICA's technical journal, COMUNIICA, was published this week. A series of articles explain the opportunities presented and challenges posed by soaring international food prices. In an article entitled "IICA's response to rising food prices," the Director General explains the main reasons why agriculture and food security should be top priorities on national development agendas. Other articles in the publication include an analysis of the trends in food prices and the impact on specific countries and segments of society; a description of the "Pro-Huerta" fresh food self-sufficiency program in Haiti; the opportunities presented and threats posed by nanotechnology in regard to health, food, agriculture and the environment; and strategy management in government agencies. The publication is available at www.iica.int/comuniica

Ministerial changes

The Director General congratulated the new Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Paraguay, Candido Vera Bejarano, and offered the Institute's support to tackle the main agricultural challenges faced by the country. Brathwaite also congratulated the Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic, Salvador Jimenez, who will continue to head up the ministry in the government of President Leonel Fernandez Reina, who was elected for a second term this year.

Regions and countries

▪ **Activities of the Andean Alliance get under way**

IICA supported the coordination and implementation of the first meeting of the Andean Alliance for Dialogue on Agriculture and Rural Life, held 7-8 August in Ecuador. The aim of the Andean Alliance is to create a mechanism for reaching consensus on common objectives and improving the well-being of the inhabitants of territories in the region. During the meeting, representatives of the member countries (Colombia, Bolivia, Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador) and IICA established the strategic framework of the Alliance, which will be based in Quito, Ecuador. The Institute will operate the Alliance's Secretariat, in a joint effort involving the Director of Operations and Integration for the Andean Region, the Regional Rural Development Specialist and the IICA Representative in Ecuador.

▪ **Initiative to develop the competitive advantages of Salvadorian MSMEs**

Ten micro and medium-sized tropical fruit processing companies in El Salvador are the beneficiaries of the project "Development of Competitive Advantages of Fruit Processing MSMEs in El Salvador," which got under way in June and will conclude in March 2009. The project is being executed by IICA with financial resources from the Inter-American Council for Integral Development of the Organization of American States (CIDI/OAS). The objective of the initiative is to enhance the companies' entrepreneurship and production activities and thereby improve their access to markets. The project will provide equipment, advice and training in areas such as the standardization of production, the implementation of good manufacturing practices, technical and financial assistance for the formal creation of companies and registration of their products, the promotion of the supply in national and international markets and support for marketing.

▪ **Training in project management for agricultural officials**

The IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago recently provided training in the design and management of agricultural projects to 36 officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Land and Marine Resources in the Victoria and San Patricia regions, in the south of the largest island, Trinidad, which also has the largest population. The participants learned how to prepare project documents for presentation to the public sector, financial institutions and cooperation agencies. The activities included the development of real projects to improve production in several regions of the country, such as Platanite, Debe, Princess Town and Barrackpore.

▪ **Price update system to be implemented in Ecuador**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries of Ecuador (MAGAP) and IICA signed an agreement on 21 August aimed at setting up a computerized system that will update price lists in real time. The project, which is a response by the Ecuadorian Government to the rising prices of consumer products, is entitled "Information System on Agricultural Production Markets (SIMA-E). It has a budget of US\$120,000 for 2008.

Coming events

- **1 October.** IICA Day, Organization of American States (OAS), Washington D.C.
- **23-29 October.** Meeting of IICA Representatives in the countries. IICA Headquarters, San Jose, Costa Rica.

More information

- **Agriculture must take the initiative to attract investment**

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