

Infoletter

from the Desk of the Director General

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture



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Institutional Affairs

▪ A hemispheric process of accountability

Within the next few weeks, the Institute will complete a hemispheric process of accountability during which it has reported on its activities in 2008. The Director General reported to the Permanent Council of the OAS in Washington and will do so in Jamaica in October coming at the meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA). Each Representative must also be involved in the same accountability process in the 34 Member States. The actions in which IICA is engaged are based on a technical cooperation model characterized by participation, accountability and transparency. In recent months, 21 Offices in the countries have presented reports, and the other 13 are about to report to a range of stakeholders in the community of agriculture and rural life in the respective countries, including government officials, the highest echelons of the academic community, colleagues from other organizations and representatives of civil society. These activities also provide an opportunity to update the national cooperation agenda and give feedback to Institute officials. For example, at the workshop-seminar held in Jamaica, the Minister of Agriculture, Christopher Tufton, confirmed that working more closely with IICA had helped him to “appreciate the fundamentals of the agriculture sector at the macro and micro level and to learn about the true contribution of agriculture”, which goes beyond primary production. Minister Tufton, who will be host to his peers in the Hemisphere in October, was referring to his participation in the Forum for Leaders in Agriculture, which the Institute organized in Costa Rica especially for a high-level delegation from his country.

▪ Minister of Agriculture of Haiti announces commitment to expanded vision of agriculture

During a visit to Costa Rica to participate, from May 5 through 7, in the Forum for Leaders, organized by IICA, the Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development of Haiti, Joanas Gué, called for increased investment in the agricultural and rural sector of Haiti, notably by promoting an expanded vision of agriculture. The Minister visited the Central American country accompanied by Colette Blanchet, Deputy Director of the External Cooperation Division, Laurence Charleston Elisée, Head of the Department of Agricultural Economy and Planning, Alfredo Mena, IICA Representative in Haiti, and Emmanuela Charles, the Representative's Assistant. The visit provided an opportunity to discuss global challenges and, especially, challenges facing Haitian agriculture, as well as activities to be carried out by IICA in this area. In his meeting with IICA's Director General, Chelston Brathwaite, the Minister called on the Institute for support in facilitating a better understanding in his country of the importance of agriculture. The delegation went on a field trip to EARTH University and visited a Costa Rican project in organic production.

▪ In the face of the H1N1 outbreak IICA calls for strengthening of veterinary services

The General Directorate of IICA has issued instructions to all its Offices to lend support to the 34 Member States in the face of the current outbreak of human influenza, type A. While this is a human health problem, as an organization that specializes in agriculture, IICA recognizes the importance of developing measures to prevent transboundary diseases and making a sustained effort to strengthen veterinary services. The area of Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) is supporting Member States with the following, inter alia: improving biosafety systems and establishing good stock-breeding practices. It is felt that these are the best tools for preventing and managing diseases or sanitary emergencies. In addition, IICA recommended making consumers aware that it is safe to eat pork and he called for balance between protecting sanitary status, public health and trade. The Institute feels that the countries must base decisions and action on international regulatory frameworks defined by competent organizations such as the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO). IICA also published at www.iica.int highly valuable information relating to the H1N1 influenza.

▪ Google, IICA and CATIE: partners in promoting agricultural knowledge

Thanks to new agreements among Google, IICA and the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), the world population can now have free access to some 9,000 books on agriculture with just one click. This number is expected to increase to over 20,000. The texts are from

IICA's Venezuela Library at Headquarters and the Orton Memorial Library, located on the CATIE campus, both in Costa Rica. Google and IICA, in partnership, one in which CATIE is now involved, wish to share with the world knowledge and information about agriculture, an area which, in their estimation, needs to be recognized for its true value. The collection represents a major reservoir of knowledge about topics relating to agricultural and forest policy, agricultural marketing, agricultural health and food safety, agricultural and agro-forestry technology and innovation, environmental promotion and natural resource management, which are some of the topics that are of paramount importance worldwide. IICA is the first Latin American partner of Google's to digitize its archives, one of the biggest in the region.

Regions and countries

▪ Program for leadership in food safety reactivated

The so-called Executive Food Safety Leadership Program (2009- 2010) is in progress. The Program is being carried out by IICA's Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) Area and the Center for Leadership in Agriculture, in partnership with the University of Minnesota's Global Initiative for Food System Leadership. Thirty professionals from the public, private and academic sectors from across the hemisphere will receive training in food safety.

▪ PROCIANDINO and PROCITRÓPICOS hold annual meetings

The annual meetings of the Steering Committees of the Cooperative Program for Agricultural Technology Research and Transfer in the Andean Region (PROCIANDINO) and the Cooperative Program on Research and Technology Transfer for the South American Tropics (PROCITRÓPICOS) were held in Quito, Ecuador, during the first week of May. Staff members of the "PROCIS" and IICA and the National Agricultural Institutes (INTA) participated in these meetings.

▪ Guide on biofuels soon to be published

A Biofuels Guide documenting best practices in implementing programs on the use of biofuels, based on experience gained, difficulties perceived and successes countries in the region have had, is about to be published jointly by the Regional Association of Oil and Gas Companies in Latin America and the Caribbean and IICA, through the Cooperative Program for the Technological Development of the Agro-food and Agro-industry in the Southern Cone (PROCISUR). This guide includes information ranging from the agricultural stage to distribution of the product.

▪ Young leaders receive training in institutional strengthening in Uruguay

Some forty young leaders met in Uruguay from April 20 through 25 to receive training in dealing with processes of change and strengthening their organizations. The First National Forum for Young Leaders in Agriculture in Uruguay, coordinated by the IICA Office there, enabled participants to outline personal projects and develop activities to help improve the quality of life of their families and communities. Participating in the forum were representatives from the Federated Agricultural Cooperatives (CAF), the National Association of Milk Producers, the Rural Association of Young People of Uruguay, the "El Tejar" Group, and the Rural Federation of Young People, among others. Participants went on field trips as part of the activities and visited the Ministry of Agriculture of Uruguay.

Coming events

- **4- 5 June, 2009.** Workshop-Seminary on Climate Risk Management and Agricultural Insurance, Uruguay
- **14 - 16 July, 2009.** Nineteenth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee of IICA, Costa Rica.
- **18 - 21 August, 2009.** Representatives' Week, 2009, IICA, Costa Rica.
- **25 - 30 October, 2009.** Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture and Fifth Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life, Jamaica.

More information

- **Google, IICA and CATIE: partners in promoting agricultural knowledge**

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

Tel. (506) 2216-0222 • Fax (506) 2216-0233
Headquarters P.O.Box. 55-2200 Coronado, Costa Rica
www.iica.int