

Infoletter

from the Desk of the Director General

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture



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Institutional Affairs

▪ Director General strengthens IICA's ties with Haiti and Jamaica

Leaders of the hemisphere to discuss food security in Jamaica

Jamaica's Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries held a ceremony to mark the official launch of the Week of Agriculture and Rural Life, which the country will be hosting from 25-31 October. Senior public officials, leaders of the private sector and representatives of civil society took part in the activity, including the Permanent Secretary of Jamaica's Ministry of Agriculture, Donovan Stanberry, and IICA Director General Chelston Brathwaite. At the meeting in Jamaica, the ministers are expected to adopt a hemispheric agreement aimed at implementing actions in the countries that will promote agricultural development and improve rural life. Stanberry announced that during the meeting the ministers would be discussing the current and potential contribution of the private sector in relation to issues such as food security, food production and trade, the injection of capital, agribusiness and technological innovation. The General Manager of the National Building Society, Earl Jarrett, who will chair the discussions of the private sector, said that this correlation of forces would spur production and provide major opportunities for multiplying positive effects for the sector. During his visit to Jamaica, the Director General also met with Jamaica's Prime Minister, Bruce Golding, the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Christopher Tufton, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Kenneth Baugh, with whom he discussed the status of the preparations for the upcoming hemispheric event.

Review of technical cooperation in Haiti

During his visit to Haiti from August 3-7, the Director General of IICA met with the Minister of Agriculture, Joanas Gué, to discuss the technical support that the Institute provides to the country's agricultural sector. The topics discussed included food security, income generation, the conservation of natural resources and watersheds, as well as matters related to environmental development. The country wishes to invest in those areas in order to boost production, rehabilitate the irrigation infrastructure and improve the storage and marketing of agricultural products. Brathwaite said the aim of the technical assistance that the IICA Office provides on the island is to increase national production and the food security of the Haitian population. During his visit, the Director General and representatives of Argentina, Canada, and Brazil reviewed the ProHuerta initiative in Haiti that is promoting the organic production of fresh foodstuffs for personal consumption, grown in family, school, community and institutional vegetable gardens. Brathwaite also visited rural areas of the country to see projects involving food security and income generation in the rural milieu, and others that focus on women, young people and rural communities. During the visit, the honorary president of the International Women's Association of IICA (ADIICA), Rosanna Brathwaite, opened a preschool building funded by the Association in the community of Arreguy, Jacmel. Thanks to this donation, 70 children have begun to receive an education and adults receive evening classes from the Hermanas Lauritas. Mr. Brathwaite also met with representatives of diplomatic missions, international organizations, members of the sector and IICA staff members. During his visit to the country, the Director General was accompanied by the IICA Representative in Haiti, Alfredo Mena, the Director of Regional Operations and Integration for the Caribbean Region, Trevor Murray, and the Director of External Financing and Investment Projects, François Dagenais.

Regions and countries

▪ First forum for young leaders of agriculture in the Southern Region

Thirty young leaders from Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile came together from August 4-7 in Asuncion, Paraguay to participate in the First Forum for the Southern Region, organized by IICA, its Center for Leadership in Agriculture and the Federation of Rural Associations of MERCOSUR (FARM). The objective was to strengthen the participants' value-based leadership skills so they can influence the

repositioning of the agricultural sector in their respective countries. This forum provided follow-up to the First Forum for Young Leaders of the 21st Century, held in March 2008, and was used to promote the creation of a Network of Young Leaders for Agriculture and the Rural Milieu in the Southern Region, to enable young people to share their experiences and take advantage of employment, commercial and educational opportunities. The context of agricultural and rural development in the Southern Region was discussed during the activity, to give the participants a global vision of agriculture and trends in the sector.

▪ **International Center for Tropical Agriculture seeks to strengthen its links with IICA**

Three months after taking over as Director General of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Ruben Echeverria shared with IICA's technical directors the strategy that he plans to implement and the possible areas of work that his organization could undertake with the Institute. According to Echeverria, the aim is to achieve results that will benefit rural producers and inhabitants, something that calls for interagency work and strategic partnerships. The potential areas of synergy include work on topics such as food security, environmental sustainability and climate change, rural development with a territorial approach, knowledge management and the development of young leaders for agricultural research. CIAT has 200 researchers and over 200 research and development projects.

▪ **Poor producers in Guatemala look to a future free from hunger**

A group of Guatemalan small-scale agricultural entrepreneurs implemented technical improvements that enabled them to produce more food and sell their surpluses at more reasonable prices. The farmers are beneficiaries of the Purchase for Progress (P4P) project, an initiative implemented by IICA, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The WFP reports that in Guatemala 3800 small-scale producers are enjoying the benefits of the P4P, which is being implemented in 21 countries around the world to help small farmers increase their production, improve links with markets and climb out of the poverty trap. Over one third of the participants in this program are women. In Guatemala, the poor farmers are learning about environmentally friendly techniques for increasing their acreage, working the land, growing crops, applying fertilizers and managing their harvests. They are motivated to innovate because they know that the WFP will purchase their surpluses from them for use in its activities to combat hunger and malnutrition around the world. So far, 37 farmers' associations in Guatemala have learned the new techniques on demonstration plots. Under this initiative, the WFP has purchased over 830 metric tons of corn for US\$327,000. Given the world economic crisis, the income is good news for Guatemala's poorest producers.

▪ **Course on food chemical and microbiological risk assessment**

Between July 13 and 24, IICA's Area of Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) and the Food Processing Center of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln gave regional courses on food chemical risk assessment and food microbiological risk assessment. The facilities of the Distance Education Center (CECADI) and its video conference system were used to give the courses. The objective was to train technical personnel of institutions involved in the subject in the general principles of the assessment of chemical and microbiological risks in food.

Coming events

- **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

- **Jamaica 2009: Leaders of the hemisphere to discuss food security**

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