

Iowa State Seed Science Center and IICA Sign Agreement

Promoting Agricultural Research and Development in the Region



Left to Right: Manjit K. Misra, Dean's Chair for Distinction in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Director of the Seed Science Center and BIGMAP, Iowa State Univ.; Dr. Chelston Brathwaite, Director General, IICA; Burnham "Bud" Philbrook, Deputy Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services and Dr. Joseph Colletti, Senior Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Iowa State Univ.

Iowa, October 15, 2009 - Against the backdrop of the World Food Prize, 'Food Agriculture and National Security in a Globalized World,' in Des Moines, Iowa, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and Iowa State University's (ISU), Seed Science Center, (SSC) (ISUSSC) today signed a General Agreement to contribute to promote joint actions for the sustainable development of the agricultural sector and rural communities. The two institutions plan on implementing research, training and technical assistance programs that will strengthen the actions of both institutions and their effect on society. The national security theme of the symposium is a tribute to World Food Prize Founder and "Father of the Green Revolution," Norman Borlaug, who passed away earlier this year. The Agreement marks the first accord between the two institutions. The two institutions aim to develop and implement projects for regions and/or countries of the Americas for further expansion of their seed and biosafety sectors.

Specifically, the Agreement seeks to: seek proactively funding for development of seed sectors in regions or countries of the Americas with emphasis on technical assistance and training; to cooperate in the preparation and implementation of seed projects in conjunction with donor agencies and related organizations; to provide a legal framework and basis for future cooperation agreements or letters of understanding stemming from mutual interests or collaboration proposed by either of the Parties and; to develop innovative projects and initiatives in order to respond new challenges facing by farmers and rural communities.

Iowa State University's Seed Science Center (SSC) is recognized in the U.S. as a national center of excellence in seed research, education and technology transfer, as well as in global seed programs. The Center's seed laboratory is the largest and busiest public seed laboratory in the United States, testing more than 40,000 samples from 300 species annually.

For IICA's Director General, Dr. Chelston Brathwaite, the collaboration, is timely. "Iowa State University is recognized as a leading research university." He added, "We believe that this partnership could encourage us to build on Dr. Borlaug's achievements and pursue a new development model where agriculture and rural life are central to development and where poverty, hunger and food insecurity will be eradicated from our world."

According to Dr. Manjit Misra, Director, Seed Science Center, Iowa State University, the IICA-ISUSSC partnership is a unique opportunity, "The Seed Science Center is very pleased to team with IICA in this important initiative." He said, "The seed center's mission of improving access to quality seed to feed the world fits nicely with IICA's unique position to address agriculture in the hemisphere." He continued, "With offices in 34 countries in the Americas, IICA is in a one of a kind position to understand the needs of the small farmer to feed himself and his family."

The cooperation between IICA and ISUSSC will also foster cooperation and linkages with hemispheric institutions and organizations. In addition, the collaboration will facilitate activities and the promotion of agricultural health and food safety, food security, the development of biosafety guidelines, the promotion of the harmonization of seed policies and regulations at regional level, the expansion of quality seed utilization and national seed industry development, the development of a permanent institution on seed science and technology in Latin American countries and the promotion of technology and innovation for the modernization of agriculture and the rural communities.

Echoing the sentiment of Dr. Borlaug, "You cannot build peace on empty stomachs," said IICA's Deputy Director General, Christopher Hansen. He said, "A life of dignity for the rural poor can be achieved in our time, if we provide the education, the infrastructure, and the appropriate policies to unleash the creativity and enterprise of the peoples of the Americas." He reiterated, "Both institutions recognize the existence of areas of mutual interest, in which joint work could help achieve their respective objectives and strengthen cooperation."

The 2009 World Food Prize will be awarded to Dr. Gebisa Ejeta of Ethiopia, whose sorghum hybrids resistant to drought and the devastating Striga weed have dramatically increased the production and availability of one of the world's five principal grains and enhanced the food supply of hundreds of millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa.

ABOUT IICA

Established in 1942, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture is the specialized agency for agriculture and the rural milieu of the Inter-American System, whose purpose is to provide innovative technical cooperation to the Member States, with a view to achieving their sustainable development in aid of the peoples of the Americas. Today, 34 IICA offices the length and breadth of the hemisphere are working to meet the needs of the countries in areas such as: trade and agribusiness development; sustainable rural development; agricultural health and food safety; technology and innovation; education and training; and information and communication.

For additional information on IICA, please go to: www.iica.int

For additional information on the World Food Prize, please to go: <http://www.worldfoodprize.org/index.htm>

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