

4 July 2008

A common market for Africa



A simple declaration with the potential to have a positive affect on the health and lives of 944 million Africans was submerged by the media tsunami surrounding Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe at the 11th Assembly of the African Union, 30 June in Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt.

The controversial leader's every word and gesture made global headlines, while the Union's proposal to create a common African market for agricultural goods by 2009 slipped by relatively unnoticed.

Inter-African agricultural trade has been on the rise since the mid-1990s, and the proposed common market would serve to accelerate this trend.

A common market could prove to be a way out of poverty for Africa's small-scale farmers. Strong regional or domestic markets offer the best opportunity for smallholders to sell their fresh produce: The distances for postharvest transport are reduced; the producers are closer to customers and have better knowledge of their specific needs; and profits circulate closer to home.

One of the stated aims of the proposed market is to provide better nutrition across the continent. To that end, the Union has suggested creating a free trade area for food products including rice, legumes, maize, dairy products, beef, poultry, and palm oil. Curiously, vegetables – the best, most affordable source of essential nutrients with the potential to raise incomes for smallholders – were noticeably absent from the list.

A feasibility study analyzed the legal, economic and political issues a common continental market would entail, such as eliminating duty on all strategic agricultural products, adopting a uniform customs system, setting uniform sanitary standards, and fostering better coordination of the

continent's transportation infrastructure. Sub-Saharan Africa, which currently imports a significant percentage of food yet has a land base and climate suitable for growing many types of crops, fruits and vegetables, could benefit if its farmers are prepared for the opportunities a common market will bring.

The World Vegetable Center's periodic regional training courses in managing vegetable production and marketing help smallholders learn to operate and thrive under a spectrum of changing market conditions. If domestic and regional markets in Africa do become more integrated, these farmers will be ready to participate – and prosper.

"African Union to Create a Common Agricultural Market by 2009," *Les Afriques*, 20 June 2008

www.lesafriques.com/en/

"Exploring market opportunities for African Smallholders," IFPRI,

www.ifpri.org/pubs/ib/ib22.pdf

The LIBRARY

New publications

... from Center staff

Hughes, J.d'A., Bandyopadhyay, R., Makinde, K., Olembo, S. (2008). Institutional aspects of sanitary and phytosanitary issues in ECOWAS trade. In: Mycotoxins: detection methods, management, public health and agricultural trade. Ed. by Leslie, J.F.; Bandyopadhyay, R.; Visconti, A.; Wallingford : CAB International. p.335-348.

Juroszek, P., Tsai, H.H. (2008). Research needs in organic vegetable production systems in tropical countries with a focus on Asia. In: Cultivating the future based on science: volume 1 - organic crop production. Ed. by Neuhooff, D.; Halberg, N.; Alfoldi, T.; Lockeretz, W.; Thomen, A.; Rasmussen, I.A.; Hermansen, J.; Vaarst, M.; Lueck, L.; Caporali, F.; Jensen, H.H.; Migliorini, P.; Willer, H.; Bonn : ISOFAR. p.635-638.

Hughes, J.d'A. (2007). Leadership in agricultural research management. In: Agricultural research management. Ed. by Loebenstein, G.; Thottappilly, G.; Dordrecht : Springer. p.101-120.

New book available



Cultivating the Future Based on Science, a two-volume proceedings from the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research (ISOFAR), features articles on organic crop production, organic livestock husbandry, and socioeconomic and cross-disciplinary research in organic

agriculture. Articles of interest include "Possibilities for breeding to improve responsiveness to arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi in onion," "Weed control in organic onion," "Use of Tharu ethnobotanical knowledge for organic insect pest management of *Cucurbita pepo* L. cv. 'zucchini'," and "Efficacy of indigenous botanical and bio-rationals in the management of cabbage pests in an organic farming system."

The Library recommends...



"The Power and the Glory" – a special report on the future of energy published in 21-27 June 2008 issue of *The Economist*. Read it at the Library or on the web at www.economist.com – click on "Special Reports."

– Fang-chin Chen, Communications

PEOPLE

Welcome



Ms. Jennifer M. Clifford, a graduate student from the Department of Plant Pathology, University of

Wisconsin-Madison, USA arrived at the Center on 27 June 2008 for two months of training. Through a National Science Foundation East Asia and Pacific Summer Institutes

Fellowship, Jennifer will work on "Determining the bacterial community in soil that has been amended with Indian mustard, and its impact on *Ralstonia solanacearum* and tomato bacterial wilt" in the Bacteriology Unit under the supervision of Dr. Jaw-Fen Wang. Contact Jennifer at 452 (office) and 872 (dormitory). E-mail: jmc@plantpath.wisc.edu

– Lydia Wu, Communications



The Center extends a warm welcome to **Ms. Hou Shu-hua** 侯淑華, Field Laborer in the Cucurbit Unit. Ms. Hou reported for duty on 1 July 2008. She can be contacted at ext. 523 or 392.

– Felisa Wang, HR

CORNUCOPIA

Conference Calendar

Tropentag 2008
7-9 October 2008
Stuttgart, Germany

Discuss international research in food security, development, and natural resource management under the theme "Competition for Resources in A Changing World: New Drive for Rural Development" at the University of Hohenheim. Visit www.tropentag.de

International Forum on Water and Food
10-14 November 2008
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food invites agricultural researchers, development professionals, and policy experts to discuss and debate wise water management strategies, innovative technologies, and effective institutional arrangements. Visit forum.waterandfood.org

Can better nutrition save the world?



Mark L. Wahlqvist, Visiting Scientist and Principal Investigator, Center for Health Policy Research and Development, National Health Research Institute, Taiwan, gave a presentation on "Food and Nutrition in Development" on 27 June at Center headquarters. Dr. Wahlqvist touched on the biomedical, societal and environmental dimensions of nutrition and encouraged researchers to adopt a more

comprehensive view of nutritional needs in agricultural development projects.

Dr. Wahlqvist is a board member of HarvestPlus (A CGIAR Global Challenge Program) and a member of the World Health Organization's Nutrition Advisory Panel. View his presentation on the AVRDC Intranet: Click on *Presentations* in the navigation bar, then select the *Seminars* link.

PEOPLE

Welcome



Dr. Ravindra Chandra Joshi has been appointed as Site Coordinator

of the project "Integrated Crop Management Package for

Sustainable Smallholder Gardens in the Solomon Islands" effective 14 July 2008 till 13 July 2009. He will report to Project Leader Manny Palada. Ravi received his PhD in Entomology in 1988 from University of the Philippines Los Baños. He has extensive operational experience in managing invasive alien species, including

vegetable leafminers, golden apple snails, rice black bugs, rats, and other non-insect pests affecting rice. Reach Ravi by mail: Rm 3-4, SIDP Bldg., P.O. Box 147, Honiara Islands.

– Lilia Tan-Habacon/HR

FOCUS: Central Asia and the Caucasus

A 'Universal' success



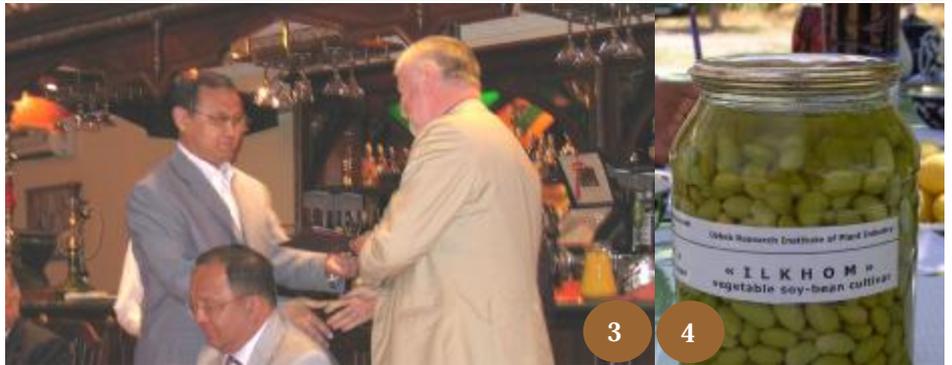
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DG Dyno Keatinge and Ravza Mavlyanova, the Center's regional coordinator for Central Asia and Caucasus, recently attended the 11th Steering Committee Meeting of the CGIAR Ecoregional Program in Astana, the new capital of Kazakhstan.

During the meeting, the country's Minister of Agriculture, Mr. A. Kurishbaev, presented DG Keatinge with a certificate of appreciation for the Center's efforts and Dr. Mavlyanova's work in improving horticultural production in Kazakhstan, and for introducing high-quality, adaptable germplasm to the CAC.



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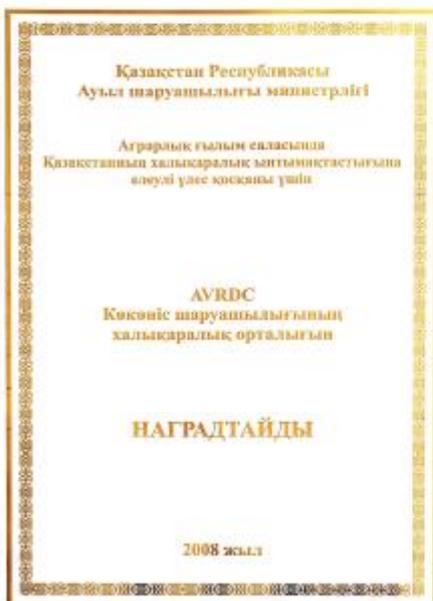
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(1) Ravza Mavlyanova examines produce at a local market. (2) Participants discussing germplasm transfer and other issues. (3) DG Keatinge accepts a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Center from the Kazakh Minister of Agriculture His Excellency Mr. A. Kurishbaev. (4) One of several vegetable soybean cultivars tested in trials throughout the CAC.

The introduction and spread of the Center's germplasm throughout Central Asia will continue. One notable release is 'Universal' – a

vegetable soybean variety that has proven to be highly effective in regional field trials.

The Center's activities in the CAC will expand significantly in the next two years in close collaboration with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the CGIAR'S Program Facilitation Unit in Tashkent.



Certificate of appreciation presented to DG Keatinge during the 11th Steering Committee Meeting of the CGIAR Program for CAC, 20-23 June in Astana, Kazakhstan.

SKETCH



Name: Zhanyong Sun

Home: I grew up in Shandong, the biggest vegetable production state in China. I currently live in Taiwan. My home is in Madison, Wisconsin.

Position: Cucurbit breeder

Why you do what you do:

I grew up in a small farming family in the northeast part of China, so learning how to grow healthy plants comes naturally to me. I went to China Agricultural University (CAU) to find answers to improve my family's life on the farm. I worked as a cucumber breeder at the Institute of Vegetables and Flowers (IVF) in the Chinese Academy of Agriculture Science after I received my master's degree from CAU.

At IVF, I saw the direct impact plant breeders have on the lives of small-scale farmers. I left IVF to take my PhD at the University of Wisconsin – Madison in the United States. Before I joined AVRDC, I was the product development manager for Seminis Inc. in China.

Why you do it at AVRDC:

I love cucumber and have a passion for plant breeding, so I was really excited that I would have an opportunity to use my experience and knowledge to start the Center's new cucurbit program. I am the first scientist from mainland China working at AVRDC. My way to AVRDC hasn't been easy, though. My interview took place at a small restaurant in Hong Kong's International Airport instead of at headquarters. And when I return from home leave, I sometimes have been sent to the Deportation Center at Taiwan's Taoyuan International Airport. I have so much unexpected fun working at AVRDC!

Research: I currently work on two crops, cucumber and pumpkin. Cucumber is one of most important vegetables worldwide. We're aiming to develop cucumber lines

with improved disease resistance, higher yield, and better horticultural traits for target regions. Pumpkin is a nutrient-rich crop. Viruses are the main production constraint for the three cultivated pumpkin species. I focus on developing multiple virus resistance in pumpkin lines with better eating quality and horticultural traits.

What's next:

My big challenge is to make AVRDC's cucurbit breeding program well known around the world.

Most unusual experience in Taiwan:

I bicycled 1000 km around Taiwan in 6 days...it's my best memory of Taiwan.

Favorite vegetable:

Cucumber, of course!

PEOPLE

Welcome



Dr. Andreas Ebert has been appointed as Genebank Manager effective 1 October 2008 till 30

September 2010. He will report to

Jackie Hughes, DDG-R. Andreas received his PhD in Horticulture with distinction (*magna cum laude*) in 1980 from the University of Hohenheim, Germany. He has six years of experience in genetic resources conservation gained at the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center in Costa Rica (CATIE). In addition, he

brings 25 years of professional and managerial experience in horticultural research and development from Southeast Asia, West Africa and Latin America.

— Lilia Tan-Habacon/HR