



The World Vegetable Center

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## Thinking big in China: Vegetables in the spotlight

The People's Republic of China is good for many superlatives. For instance, the country is the biggest producer of vegetables in the world. On 28-29 November 2008 the country hosted the **Conference on the International Exchange of Professionals** in the southern city of Shenzhen—the biggest conference for networking between Chinese scientific and commercial institutions with partners from the outside since 2000, when the first conference of this kind took place. AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center was there, too, by invitation from the conference's Organizing Committee.

The two-day event consisted of a high-level forum and an exhibition attracting professional visitors as well as the local public. A total of 253 institutes from more than 40 countries and representatives of 520 Chinese institutions came together to exhibit their technology and expertise. The target: To offer expert associations, and research, training, and higher education institutions opportunities to identify fields of cooperation, find like-minded partners, or simply recruit experts.

"This conference was a premiere for us, and I am happy we were here," said Dr. Tien-chen Wang, AVRDC mycologist and China expert. "More than 20 institutes from different regions of China are interested in cooperating with us."

The collaborative work between AVRDC – The World Vegetable



Center and the People's Republic of China has grown rapidly in recent years. Apart from training courses on specific subjects and the exchange of germplasm, there is also collaborative research on vegetable breeding and disease management.

At first glance, Shenzhen does not appear to be an ideal place for agricultural activities. Only 20 years old, the city is home to more than 10 million inhabitants, and represents very well the dynamic face of modern China. Steady growth is shaping the landscape into a bustling urban agglomerate. Driving past the never-ending avenues lined with apartment buildings or shopping centers, it's clear that Shenzhen's contribution to making the People's Republic the world's biggest producer of vegetables is not the highest. However, there are efforts to establish horticultural production in the region—with help from AVRDC. At the Shenzhen Center for Quality Crop Seed, 70 kilometers north of the city center, researchers rely on tomato germplasm and know-how provided by AVRDC. Local breeders



have developed hybrid tomatoes producing larger fruits and higher yields that are also resistant to *Tomato-yellow-leaf-curl virus* (TYLCV). The scientists in Shenzhen say the new tomatoes will soon be extended to farmers.

## THE LIBRARY

### New publications

### You asked for

#### ...from Center staff

- Shieh, S.C., Palada, M.C.**  
 (2008). Developing a horticulture therapy garden for vocational training in Taiwan. ACTA HORTICULTURAE. 775:23-30.
- Ebert, A.W.**, Astorga, C., Ebert, I.C.M., Mora, A., Umana, C. (2007). The *Cucurbitaceae* family: pumpkin, winter squash, musky squash – *Cucurbita moschata*; zucchini, pumpkin, scallop, summer, and spaghetti squash – *Cucurbita pepo*. p.77-90; The *Solanaceae* family: the genus *Capsicum*. p.91-100; The *Solanaceae* family: tomato - *Solanum lycopersicum*. p.101-106. In: Securing our future: CATIE's germplasm collections. Turrialba: CATIE.

#### ...recent articles requested by staff

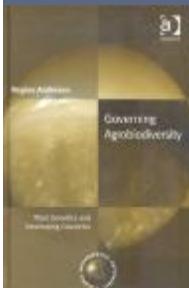
- Kumar, K.A., Naik, M.K., Allolli, T.B., Hosmani, R.M. (2005). Evaluation of genotypes, fungicides and plant extracts for the management of aflatoxin contamination in chilli caused by *Aspergillus flavus* Link. Fres. INDIAN JOURNAL OF PLANT PROTECTION. v.33(1):115-118.

- Tontisirin, K., Nantel, G., Bhattacharjee, L. (2002). Food-based strategies to meet the challenges of micronutrient malnutrition in the developing world. NUTRITION SOCIETY, PROCEEDINGS. v.61(2):243-250.



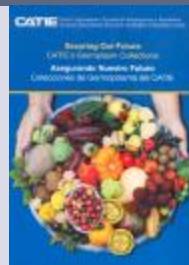
- Zhang, F., Shen, J., Li, L., Liu, X. (2004). An overview of rhizosphere processes related with plant nutrition in major cropping systems in China. PLANT AND SOIL. v.260 (1/2):89-99.

### New books available

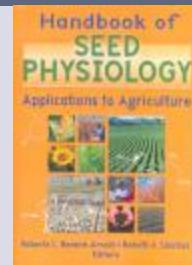


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Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited. vi, 420 pp.

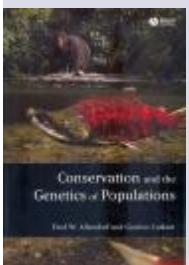


- Ebert, A.W.,  
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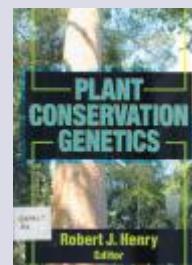


- Benech-Arnold,  
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— Fang-chin Chen, Editorial and Library



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## FOCUS: CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS

### Review and Planning Meeting on Vegetable Variety Selection and Adoption in CAC



Regional variety trials for vegetable crops are important for introducing better quality, higher yielding vegetable varieties into Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The Review and Planning Meeting on Vegetable Variety Selection and Adoption in Central Asia and the

Caucasus, held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from 25-27 November 2008, emphasized the need for regular trials.

Organized by AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center and the CAC Regional Office with help from the CGIAR Program Facilitation Unit

(PFU), the workshop drew more than 30 participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Drs. Peter Hansen and Ray-yu Yang, themes leaders from AVRDC HQ, participated in the workshop.

Variety trials held in each country were presented by national partners. All countries have identified promising AVRDC lines of various vegetable crops, and have plans to release them in the future. Existing problems and constraints and opportunities for further collaboration were discussed during this meeting. Participants would like Regional Variety Trials to be conducted again next year.

### The Second Steering Committee Meeting of the CAC Vegetable Research and Development Network

The Second Steering Committee Meeting for Central Asia and the Caucasus Vegetable Research and Development Network (CACVEG) was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on 27 November 2008.

The network, founded in 2006, aims to improve livelihoods and increase incomes in the CAC countries by enhancing synergistic partnerships between the public and private sectors to promote the development of sustainable vegetable production and marketing systems.

The meeting was organized by AVRDC – The World Vegetable



Center and its CAC Regional office with assistance from the Program Facilitation Unit (PFU) of the CGIAR. More than 20 participants, including national coordinators for R&D and specialists from the eight CAC countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan,

Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) met with AVRDC theme leaders Drs. Peter Hanson and Ray-yu Yang to discuss topics of interest.

National coordinators from each country submitted their reports during the meeting. Collaborative discussion was focused on existing activities, a status review, problem solving, and ways to further strengthen the capacity of NARS for vegetable R&D in the region.

*— Dr. Ravza Mavlyanova,  
Regional Coordinator for CAC*

## CORNUCOPIA

### Successful Field Demonstration of Organic Tomato and Vegetable Soybean Trials at Headquarters

In warm weather on 4 December, 74 participants including representatives from Taiwan's experimental stations, farmers' associations, organic certification organizations, and 34 local organic farmers attended a successful **field demonstration on organic cherry tomato and vegetable soybean trials** held in organic fields No. 82 and 83 at AVRDC headquarters.

The participants were given presentations on the "Effects of Six Fertilization Strategies on Quality and Safety of Soil and Vegetables in Organic Farming Systems." A follow-up presentation introduced "Integrated Production Technologies for Organic Vegetable Soybean," which included components of variety evaluation; organic fertilization; disease, pest and weed management; and quality evaluation.

Field guides and sample seeds of two vegetable soybean varieties were distributed to the participants



so they will be able to practice organic production technologies on their own farms. There were interesting and challenging discussions among participants about the production technologies in the fields. Organic vegetable production is expanding greatly year by year around the world. More inquiries on production technologies that address tropical climate conditions are being raised.



— Dr. Chin-hua Ma  
Crop & Ecosystem Management Unit

### International Volunteer Day Celebration in Solomon Islands

Solomon Star Friday 5 December 2008

★ VIEWPOINT

**THE SOLOMON STAR SAYS**

**Let's thank our volunteers**

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Volunteer Day, which falls today, provides the perfect opportunity to recognize the great work volunteers are doing here.

They have many of their partners in Government offices, non-governmental organizations, business sector, and civil society.

They care from abroad and within the country.

These are selfless people who give their time for free to help make life easier for others. Most of the members of their teams are from other countries and serve on contract basis.

They walk, live, eat, and sleep with the ordinary SIDs.

The many contingents charged up pages 8, 9, 10, 11 and 14 in today's Solomon Star article.

That is the very reason the United Nations designated December 5 as International Volunteer Day.

So if you're not too far today, spare an hour and make your way to the Central Market in Honiara.

This is where volunteers mark the occasion of "World Volunteer Day" with a special exhibition.

It is the extra-mural group of global citizens.

Full one cut from the crop and say thank you to him or her.

They deserve that, especially if you're not too far today.

★ INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

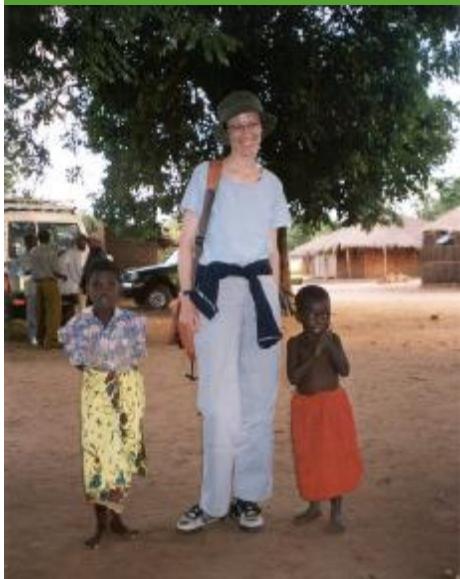
Solomon Star Friday 5 December 2008

**Ms. Nathalie Baxter**, working as an AVI Volunteer in the ACIAR-AVRDC Project, was recognized for her contributions in the *Solomon Star* newspaper on 5 December 2008. Her work was highlighted for the celebration of International Volunteer Day in the Solomon Islands.

— Dr. RC Joshi, Site Coordinator  
Smallholder Gardens Project,  
Solomon Islands

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## SKETCH



**Name:** Katinka Margit Weinberger

**Home:** A 360-year-old farm in a small village close to Marburg in Germany.

**Position:** Socioeconomist and Global Theme Leader

### Why do you do what you do?

After high school, I worked on a farm in Germany and later spent a year in Guatemala helping to establish school gardens in the Highlands as a volunteer. I then started to study agriculture mainly because it is such an interdisciplinary area of research, and because of the significance of the sector for the livelihoods of the

poor people in many parts of the world. Initially, I considered a degree in plant sciences, but after working for a seed company in Chile as an intern, I decided that it would be much more fascinating to understand why people—especially farmers—behave as they do rather than select wheat plants for their vigor. So that is why I majored in Agricultural Economics.

### Why do you do it at AVRDC?

AVRDC makes a meaningful contribution to improve the lives of poor people, and by working here I can be a part of that contribution. Overall, it has been a great opportunity to work at AVRDC for the past 8 years, to see the organization modernize and change, and to be part of that change process.

### Research

The research under the Marketing theme is aimed at helping small-scale farmers and market agents to take advantage of participation in markets for high-value crops. This is a new research area at AVRDC so over the past two years we have spent a lot of effort to describe how these markets work and what their main problems are. In the future we will be moving more into

identifying and promoting solutions, both in terms of postharvest technologies as well as institutional arrangements that make marketing of vegetables more beneficial to small-scale farmers and dealers in vegetables.

### What's next?

The Center is trying to improve on its processes for monitoring and evaluation as well as impact assessment and priority setting, so working on these issues is on my agenda for the next year.

### Your favorite AVRDC experience

What I have always enjoyed most about my work is to meet with, talk to, and laugh with farmers all over the world.

### Your favorite vegetable?

I like all vegetables, but what I like best are the old German landraces (German indigenous vegetables), such as Pastinak, Red Beet and Mangold.

## E-MAIL addresses for new nationally recruited vBSS staff

**Agatha Aloyce**, Research Assistant, vBSS Tanzania,  
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**Juma William**, Research Assistant, vBSS Tanzania,  
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**Patrice Billos Gilbert**, Field Officer, vBSS Tanzania,  
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**Fils Jean Marius Andriamainty**, Seed Multiplication Specialist, vBSS Madagascar,  
([marius.andriamainty@worldveg.org](mailto:marius.andriamainty@worldveg.org))

**Mamoutou Diarra**, Research Assistant, vBSS Mali,  
([mamoutou.diarra@worldveg.org](mailto:mamoutou.diarra@worldveg.org))

— Shirley Chen, Donor Support and Information Technology