Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2016!

fresh

News from AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center

31 December 2015

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Kids put the bounce in a day of family fun at AVRDC Eastern and Southern Africa, Tanzania

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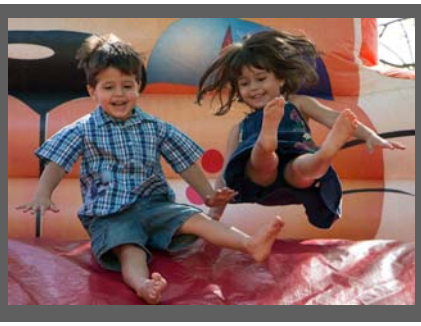

Three-country training course to diagnose pests and diseases in Southeast Asia

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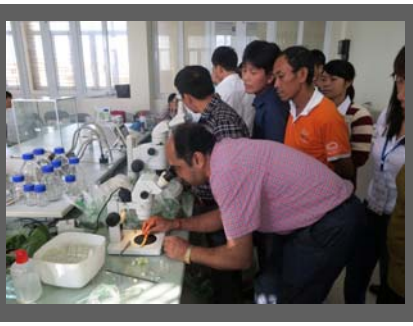


Traditional crops bring a new perspective to Uganda

Nalongo and Agnes were like most farmers in their villages: they regarded traditional vegetables as weeds. Not anymore. They are now convinced of the nutritional benefits of traditional leafy vegetables—even plant them to beautify their homes—and are influencing other women to do the same.

Vegetables have been grown in Uganda since time immemorial, but in some parts, especially the central region where Mukono district is located, they have been less important than other foods. In many homes, traditional vegetables like amaranth and nightshade are considered to be weeds, and are usually fed to pigs, goats and other livestock.

Undernutrition is widespread in Uganda with 38% of children being chronically undernourished or stunted. Many lack micronutrients in their diets; 28% of the children suffer from vitamin A deficiency and 73% from iron deficiency, both of which increase the risk of blindness, disease, and death. African traditional vegetables hold the key to improving nutrition for young children because they are rich in minerals and vitamins. These crops are easy to grow and require few or no expensive inputs such as fertilizer or chemicals.

The Home Garden Scaling project was initiated in Uganda to increase the availability of quality seeds of tested nutritious vegetables, including a range of traditional leafy vegetables. Women are taught agronomic skills to improve vegetable production and thus increase availability of vegetables throughout the year. They also learn how to prepare nutritious recipes, and earn income from selling surplus vegetables from their home gardens.

Nalongo Sekinkuse *(top);* Agnes Kyambadde

(...continued on page 2)

(...continued from page 1)

I used to refer to people who feed on vegetables, especially amaranth, as poor people. I thought that to be a well-to-do person one had to feed on chicken or beef. However, VEDCO and AVRDC changed my perception towards vegetables. I was trained as a Community Trainer and I am now a change agent in this community. My 3-year-old granddaughter enjoys eating amaranth more than banana or cassava and she normally cries if we do not prepare it. Having known the nutritional benefits accrued from amaranth, I am very sure that I will not have challenges of nutritional deficiency diseases among my grandchildren.

— Nalongo Sekinkuse

AVRDC, together with Voluntary Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO), embarked on an initiative to sensitize farm households about the dangers of micronutrient deficiencies, and the benefits of balancing diets by consuming more vegetables. Interested farmers, particularly young mothers, were then trained to raise vegetable seedlings for their home gardens and to produce vegetables throughout the year. Extension workers and other influential people in the villages were also trained to amplify the message of growing vegetables for healthy diets.

The farmers have now turned their courtyards into home gardens to optimize the small spaces at their disposal. **Nalongo Sekinkuse**, a 67-year-old widow in Nakisunga Sub County, Katente village, Mukono district used to think vegetables were a poor man's food, the traditional types in particular. After participating in the training, Nalongo's opinion of vegetables improved—especially when she realized how these foods can provide nutrients for her seven dependents (four of them under the age of 5). This attitudinal change is not only apparent with Nalongo, but also among her grandchildren, who have started to consider vegetables as a delicacy. Well-respected in her community, Nalongo's enthusiasm for gardening prompted her group members to select her to become a Community Trainer. She received three days of training on nutrition and agronomy from the National Agricultural Research Organisation, and then she started training other group members and fellow farmers.

Agnes Kyambadde of Nama village in Mukono district is another farmer who has wholeheartedly embraced the home garden scaling project. Her experience with gardening was focused on beauty—she mostly grew flowers of different types around her courtyard. However, with the advent of the home garden scaling project, she decided to try growing vegetables as well.

Agnes has improved her farming skills, such as mulching her vegetable beds to keep moisture in the soil longer. She plans to expand her vegetable garden all around her plot, a 200 x 100 foot space, to serve as a demonstration garden for other women in the community.

She also likes that more visitors are attracted to her homestead to find out how she grows nice vegetables on such a small piece of land. This has led to home improvements, especially improvements in home hygiene and sanitary structures (for example, the construction of a tippy tap at the latrine for visitors to wash their hands). Improved family hygiene has another beneficial effect: small children that do not suffer from diarrhea and other diseases can better utilize nutrients when they consume vegetables. Healthy growth is the result.

Both Community Trainers, Nalongo and Agnes now have the confidence to speak in public, even to large groups, and they are training other farmers on their own.

I used to plant flowers for beauty around my compound but after the training in vegetable production this has changed, and now I have substituted flowers with vegetables. They even look more beautiful than flowers. I have also learned better farming practices to help my vegetables grow well; they are rarely attacked by pests. I intend to do this as a business, since we are near the town market.

— Agnes Kyambadde

34th IVTC creates new crop of experts

On 4 December 2015 the **34th International Vegetable Training Course (IVTC)** was successfully concluded at AVRDC's Research and Training Station, Kamphaeng Saen campus, Kasetsart University (KU-KPS), Thailand. The course is academically certified by KU and equips participants with skills and knowledge in vegetable production, value webs, and sustainable development. The course, spanning three one-month modules, provides theoretical and practical sessions with demonstrations, field and industry visits. Module 1, *Seed to Harvest*, covered Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and technologies on seed production, plant health, agronomy and extension, Module 2, *Harvest to Table*, covered Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and technologies for harvesting, postharvest, nutrition, consumption and marketing. Module 3, *Sustainable Development*, examined conceptualization and monitoring of research and development projects; and activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts for issues including climate change, disaster risk reduction, and gender. Resource experts are sourced from AVRDC staff, past and present; Kasetsart University and other universities from Thailand, the region, and around the world; Thailand's Department of Agriculture; globally relevant research-for-development organizations; and private companies.

A total of 40 participants from 21 countries from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific Islands participated in the 34thIVTC.

Each module culminated with every participant presenting a Development Action Plan to harness their newly acquired knowledge and adapt it to the specific demands and opportunities found in their countries. Participants were empowered to contribute to sustainable development through the increased production and consumption of nutritious and health-promoting vegetables.

During the closing ceremony of Module 3, **Oussama Jubraeil Atallah** *(above)* of Lebanon paid his sincere thanks to AVRDC and claimed that, having previously participated in other international training courses, that the IVTC was the most informative. Oussama proudly claimed IVTC was his favorite because of the varied training techniques and active engagement of all participants. **Ms. D. Dissanayake** *(left)* from Sri Lanka followed by praising Kasetsart University and the generous people of Thailand for making the stay of the participants so enjoyable.

The 34th crop of trainees now joins the **IVTC Alumni Network**, which consists of 854 (31% female) individual researchers and extensionists from national and international agricultural research institutes, universities, nongovernmental organizations, policymakers, and the private sector.

The IVTC Alumni Network

Past IVTC participants originated from the following regions and countries:

East Asia: Brunei, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Timor Leste, Thailand, Vietnam

South Asia: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

Africa: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Zambia

Middle East: Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon

Europe: Netherlands, UK

Oceania: Nauru, Pulau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Kiribati, Sao Tome, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu

South America: Venezuela

(from left) Vice President of KU-KPS **Bunchop Piromkom**; IVTC graduate **Nethone Samba**, Burkina Faso; Regional Director AVRDC East and Southeast Asia **Fenton Beed.**

AIRCA leaders discuss restoring landscapes, climate-smart agriculture at Global Landscapes Forum

As world leaders gathered in 2015 to agree on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and a new climate deal, the **Global Landscapes Forum** used this historic opportunity to bring together more than 3000 stakeholders from forestry, agriculture, water, energy, law and finance, among others, with the aim of shaping the world's development agenda for decades to come.

For the first time, the **Association of International Research and Development Centers for Agriculture** (AIRCA), of which AVRDC is a founding member, participated in the event as an Implementing Partner, and organized a discussion forum with the title "Restoring Landscapes through Climate Smart Agriculture."

Dyno Keatinge, AIRCA Chair and Director General, AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center; **Ismahane Elouafi**, Deputy AIRCA Chair and DG, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA); **Trevor Nicholls**, CEO, CABI; **José Joaquín Campos**, DG, Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE); **Hans Friederich**, DG, International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) and **Eklabya Sharma**, Director of Programme Operations, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) presented examples of how AIRCA members have developed different aspects of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and how this has contributed to healthy landscapes and improved livelihoods in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

All agreed that climate-smart agriculture is an essential component of rural landscapes, aimed at sustainable rural development under changing conditions and with low carbon emissions. The two approaches (CSA and landscapes) complement each other where the landscape approaches proposed are helping to create the enabling conditions for CSA implementation. Success and scaling out of these approaches, however, depends on the degree to which collective intelligence is being identified, applied, and linked to appropriate technologies. This poses many challenges that can be addressed only through collaborative partnerships.

The combination of centers involved in the AIRCA initiative ensures combined expertise that directly addresses at least 10 of the 17 SDG. This allows for a holistic approach to rural development, aiming to achieve food security under changing conditions and with low carbon emissions while seeking inclusiveness, maintaining life on lands, reducing poverty, increasing access to clean water and sanitation, providing decent work, and promoting economic growth, clean energy and responsible production and consumption.

Recommendations made during the session include the need to work within and across sectors and institutions, and to develop partnerships that support CSA. Any strategies or approaches taken should be affordable and replicable as well as acceptable by people, and seek a balance between development, mitigation and adaptation. Agricultural diversification is an essential element of sustainable, healthy landscapes and for this to be achieved cooperation is vital with educational institutions, consumers and other sectors of the economy. Policies and strategies should focus on healthy lifestyles while supporting farmers to meet the diversified demand for food.

AIRCA
Association of International Research and Development Centers for Agriculture

Although much is already known regarding the implementation of CSA and landscape approaches, successful actions will require adjustment to be affordable, effective and responsive to local conditions. It is vital to have a good understanding of the decision-making mechanisms and to analyze the consequences of these decisions for future livelihoods.

AIRCA members also organized and participated in a number of other events around the GLF and the Paris Climate Conference (COP21), for example the Launch of the Paris Declaration on Agricultural Diversification, and the Regional Declaration to promote Climate-Smart Agriculture in Latin America.

More info: http://www.airca.org/index.php/airca-resources/highlights/28-airca-members-organized-and-participated-in-a-variety-of-events-around-the-cop21-in-paris

Welcome

Home gardeners in Cambodia will benefit from the knowledge of **Stuart Brown**, who has joined AVRDC East and Southeast Asia to manage the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded "Deploying Vegetable Seed Kits to Tackle Malnutrition in Cambodia" project. The project aims to improve nutrition of small children and incomes of smallholder women farmers of child-bearing age through seed kit distribution and growing nutrient-rich vegetables. Stuart has worked in Southeast Asia with a focus on Cambodia for more than six years and previously was a research scientist with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) in Australia for 12 years. He holds a master's degree in Sustainable Agriculture from the University of Sydney, Australia.

Alaik Laizer is now a Field Officer - Agribusiness with AVRDC Eastern and Southern Africa. Alaik is 2014 graduate of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania. He began working at AVRDC in May 2015 as a consultant, assisting with data collection, entry and cleaning for the germplasm impact assessment survey (May-June 2015) and the smallholder participation in high value markets in Arusha survey (July to September 2015). He also coordinated studies and provided tutoring in agribusiness and entrepreneurship at Kilacha Agriculture and Livestock Training Institute in Tanzania's Kilimanjaro region. He plans to specialize in value chain development.

Suu Mon Khaing and **Khin Myat Thu,** research interns from the Department of Agricultural Research (DAR), Myanmar, are at AVRDC headquarters for an eight-week internship (15 December 2015 to 5 February 2016) funded by the Center's project to harness and enrich germplasm held by DAR. They are working on germplasm regeneration, characterization and genebank management at the Genetic Resources and Seed Unit under the supervision of Andreas Ebert and Svein Solberg.

Jin-Nam Kim from Korea, a Ph.D candidate, and **Kristin Widyasari** from Indonesia, a graduate student, both at Kyungsung University, Busan, South Korea, had brief 10-day internships in December at AVRDC headquarters. Funded by Kyungsung University and the Rural Development Administration (RDA), Republic of Korea, the interns worked on the identification of thrips species under the supervision of Srinivasan Ramasamy in Entomology.

(top, from left) **Suu Mon Khaing, Khin Myat Thu**
(bottom, from left) **Jin-Nam Kim, Kristin Widyasari**

Transitions

The following are moving on from AVRDC to new careers. We wish them all the best in their new endeavors!

Thuweba Diwani, Project Manager, "Deploying Improved Vegetable Technologies to Overcome Malnutrition and Poverty in Mali," AVRDC West and Central Africa, Mali.

Martin Yeboah, Vegetable Breeder and Liaison Officer, AVRDC West and Central Africa, Cameroon.

Farewell

After seven years of service, **Andreas Ebert**, Genebank Manager and Global Theme Leader - Germplasm, will retire from the Center at the end of December. In 2008, Dr. Ebert took over the leadership of the Genetic Resources and Seed Unit, building a strong team to handle the Center's expanding germplasm holdings. He emphasized the collection of vegetables of regional importance in Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, with special attention on traditional vegetables.

Andreas Ebert *(left)* accepts a parting gift and good wishes from AVRDC Director General **Dyno Keatinge**.

Through his ongoing efforts to collect and characterize vegetable germplasm, AVRDC now conserves seed of 61,811 accessions of vegetable species from 156 countries. In 2010 he planned and oversaw the construction of an addition to the genebank building, which doubled the storage space and will allow plenty of room for future growth. He also made arrangements with the Svalbard Global Seed Vault and other partners to duplicate portions of the AVRDC Genebank collection as safety backups.

As a participant in numerous research and development projects, Dr. Ebert created many opportunities to share his extensive knowledge about genebank management and seed saving with partners and students from across the globe. "Training others has always been a fulfilling and rewarding aspect of my job," he said. His wholehearted dedication to the field of plant genetic resource management is reflected in the attitudes of the many people he has trained to carry on this vital work.

***(from left)* Ingrid** and **Andreas Ebert.** The couple planted three trees—a Surinam cherry, a Barbados cherry and a Jaboticaba—on the AVRDC campus.

He authored and co-authored 48 scientific papers during his tenure (11 Thomson /Reuters ISI papers, 10 book chapters, and 27 articles in peer-reviewed journals), disseminating research on improved genebank practices, saving seed of traditional crops, production of microgreens, and much more. He coordinated several symposia, the most recent being the First International Symposium on Moringa held in November 2015 in the Philippines.

"Dr. Ebert's intense dedication and scope of knowledge have brought a wealth of benefits to small-scale farmers and their families worldwide," said Dyno Keatinge, AVRDC Director General.

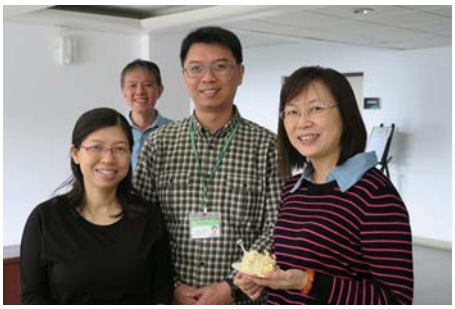
"The extensive collection he has so ably managed holds the genes for future crop improvement. The Center, and global horticulture, is stronger for his service."

Andreas's professional attitude, quiet demeanor, and wry sense of humor will be much missed by his colleagues. Although he is retiring from AVRDC, Andreas plans to continue working in the plant genetic resources field as a freelance consultant. To Andreas and his wife, Ingrid, best wishes for a future that's both relaxing and invigorating!

Farewell

Hu Yu-hsueh, Field Helper in Pepper Breeding and Biotechnology, retired from the Center after 40 years of service. Although she has been with AVRDC almost from the very start, for the past four years, Ms. Hu has worked specifically with the pepper breeding team on field and greenhouse activities. The passage of 40 years deserves a lot of feasting: After a special cake-and-coffee party with AVRDC staff, her pepper breeding colleagues took her to a tasty lunch at the New 1000 Flavors Restaurant in Shanhua, Taiwan. We wish her a very happy retirement and healthy years ahead!

(top left, from left) Pepper researcher **Shieh Sheue-chin** shared stories about **Hu Yu-Hsueh's** experiences at AVRDC. ***(bottom left, from left)*** Pepper breeder **Sanjeet Kumar, Ms. Hu** and pepper researcher **Susan Lin**. ***(right)*** Ms. Hu and colleagues after a goodbye lunch.



After 32 years of setting up network links, chasing down computer viruses and helping colleagues with hard drive meltdowns, Information Technology Officer **Shirley Chen Yi-ching** is ready for new challenges. Shirley's calm attitude and competence will be greatly missed. Staff wished her well on 29 December, and she told them about her plans to seek happiness in new pursuits. Best of luck, Shirley!

(from left) **Mandy Lin, Vincent Lu, Willie Chen** and **Shirley Chen**.

Visitors

- *1 December:* Eleven visitors led by **Xueyuan Wu**, Manager, Guangzhou Fruit Business Group, Guangdong Province, People's Republic of China
- *3 December:* Eleven key officials and staff from the **Philippine Department of Agriculture** Regional Field Offices and Bureau of Agricultural Research, and **World Fish**
- *7 December:* Two professors and 14 students from the Department of Horticulture, **Hankyong National University**, Korea
- *8 December:* A delegation from the **Philippine Department of Agriculture**, headed by Regional Executive Director **Angel C. Enriquez**
- *9 December:* Thirty-five students from the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, **Singapore Management University**, led by **Dr. Patrick H.M. Loh**
- *10 December:* Fourteen natural science teachers from **Sinying High School**, Tainan, Taiwan
- *16 December:* **Dr. Nguyen Thi Hoai Tram**, Research Institute for Oil and Oil Plants, Vietnam; 25 members of The **4-H Teen Board of South Gyeongsand Province Agricultural Research Institute**, Korea; **Professor Michael Delsney**, Fellow of The Academy of Europe, France.
- *21 December:* **National Assembly Secretariat**, Korea
- *22 December:* **Korea Hyundai Seed Company**, Korea

(center) Hankyong National University students; ***(above)*** Singapore Management University students; ***(below)*** Representatives from the Philippine Department of Agriculture in the Demonstration Garden.

Flourishing partnership: East-West Seed Company and AVRDC

Participants in the 34th International Vegetable Training Course benefited from exposure to **East-West Seed Company (EWS)** Research and Development activities at EWS centers in Suphanburi, Kamphaeng Saen during Module 1, and LertPhan Farm in Chiang Mai during Module 3. The Suphanburi visit focused on understanding the benefit of quality assurance to ensure commercial sustainability in the seed value chain from production, protection, packaging, distribution and sale. At LertPhan Farm, the emphasis was on supporting extension needs and the company's strategy to build the capacity of farmers to benefit from improved agricultural technologies.

IVTC participants, who originated from different countries and represented extension, research and regulatory authorities, benefited from the discussions on seed production, quality control, and issues of adoption of new varieties in their respective countries.

EWS has a long-standing relationship with AVRDC in Thailand and across southeast Asia. This partnership offers opportunities to promote traditional and global vegetables by testing the suitability (environmental, taste, nutritional content and marketability) of diverse lines and by making the most promising available through access to high quality seed. AVRDC has launched a five-country USAID-funded project, "Deploying vegetable seed kits to tackle malnutrition," and as part of this initiative, EWS will supply packs of high quality seed of hardy, nutrient-dense traditional and global vegetable varieties to Cambodia. The aim is to empower women farmers through home garden production of vegetables to enhance family nutrition. EWS also will provide quality assured seed for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)-funded project "Cambodian Horticulture Project for Advancing Income and Nutrition" being implemented by the SNV Netherlands Development Organisation in partnership with AVRDC.

(above) At East-West Seed in Suphanburi, plant breeder **Pin Lohawithayakun** *(right)* explains how cucumbers are selected for various qualities such as fruit shape and color. ***(below)*** IVTC participants tour the company's breeding screenhouses.

The IVTC team (**Shriniwas Gautam, Somchit Pruangwitayakun**, **Sorawit Limsiriwat and Panalee Pooworakulchai**) and AVRDC East and Southeast Asia Regional Director **Fenton Beed** appreciated the full support of **Robert de la Peña** (General Manager, Director Vegetable Breeding and Product Development of EWS), **Pornchai Chanprasit** (Seed Technology Manager), **Wichai Laocharoenpornkul** (General Manager), **Stuart Morris** (Agricultural Extension Manager) and all other EWS members who provided information in presentations, lab and field visits.

Diagnosing pests and diseases

(left): **Srinivasan Ramasamy** opened the training course in Vietnam.

(right, clockwise): Scouting a field for pests in Lao PDR; **Jaw-Fen Wang** with participants from Vietnam; Srini and Cambodian participants; examining leaves for disease symptoms in Cambodia; identifyng pests under the microscope in Vietnam; Jaw-Fen explains the "disease triangle" in Lao PDR.

A training workshop on "Diagnosis of Pests and Diseases on Vegetable Legumes and Leafy Brassicas" was held from 30 November to 8 December 2015 in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam. In each country, the workshop was conducted for two days. The first day was devoted to lectures. On the second day, participants headed to the fields to collect pest and disease samples in the morning and join in practical classes in the afternoon. A total of 80 extension staff from public and private extension systems in these countries were trained. About 39% of the participants were women (6 in Cambodia, 14 in Lao PDR, and 11 in Vietnam).

AVRDC's **Srinivasan Ramasamy** (Entomology), **Jaw-Fen Wang** and **Jaw-rong Chen** (Bacteriology & Mycology), **Yuan-li (Sophia) Chan** and **Yi-Chieh (Jennifer) Lii** (Virology) provided the training. **Vu Manh Hai, Chhunhy Heng** and **Soukhavong Khodsimouang** coordinated the workshop in Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao PDR, respectively. The training was part of an ongoing project, *Attraction in Action*, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany via Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

(right) The training event was featured on Hanoi TV in Vietnam on 1 December 2015. The *Vientiane Times* in Lao PDR covered the course on 11 December 2015 ("Experts discuss pest management strategies"). Cambodia's *Rasmei Kampuchea Daily* and *Kampuchea They Daily* ran stories about the training on 9 December 2015.

Tomato hybrids doubling yields in Katha Saghral, Pakistan

The cultivation of high yielding tomato hybrids is gaining traction among farmers of Katha Saghral in Pakistan. Twice the yields and higher profits have helped boost confidence in the hybrids throughout the community.

"Over the past year, I have been growing tomato hybrids 'Sahel' and 'Savera,'" said Raja Arshad, a farmer. "I can report that the yields have almost doubled when compared to that of our local varieties like T-1359. With hybrids we could achieve yields up to 11.4 tons per acre."

Katha Saghral is a natural off-season area for tomato production. More than 3000 acres have been under tomato cultivation since 1970. The mountainous range on one side protects the area from frost, thus providing ideal conditions for farmers to start picking the crop from mid-December until the end of March. Markets across Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces also offer better prices for the produce in these months.

'Sahel'—a hybrid tomato that's found favor among Pakistan's farmers.

AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center in collaboration with the Horticulture Research Institute, National Agricultural Research Center, Islamabad, introduced new high-yielding tomato hybrids including 'Sahel,' 'Kimia,' and 'Savera' along with improved production technologies. The yield and phenotypic characteristics of these hybrids have enhanced the market value of crop in Katha and nearby markets.

"The high quality fruit fetched me good returns," said M. Hafeez, a tomato farmer, adding that he was particularly impressed with the regular shape and size of the newly introduced hybrids.

Under the Agricultural Innovation Program (AIP) for Pakistan project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and supported by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), AVRDC South Asia is implementing specific solutions to technological challenges farmers face across the country.

Family Day

Children, spouses, parents, siblings, and partners got a closer look at where their loved ones spend the working day during **AVRDC Eastern and Southern Africa's Family Day** on 11 December 2015—the first such event held since the office opened in 1992. Family members of the 60 AVRDC staff were invited to the farm in Arusha, Tanzania, where they toured the labs, fields and greenhouses to learn about the Center's work. Staff enthusiastically explained their activities to the children, hoping to inspire a new generation of scientists and vegetable producers.

Afterwards, everyone relaxed with lunch in the gardens and the children stormed a giant jumping castle. The day was a great opportunity for staff and their families to socialize and celebrate the end of a successful year. Organizers **Thomas Dubois, Nadine Kwazi** and **Srinivasulu Rajendran** received so much positive feedback that Family Day is sure to be repeated in the future.

(from left) Family Day fun: Master of Ceremonies **Thomas Dubois**; **Fides** and a young friend; inspecting the latest in postharvest processing methods; storming the ramparts of the giant jumping castle.

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Seminars

- *30 November:* From the Institute of Plant Physiology and Genetics, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences—Assistant Professor **Elena Balacheva**, ("Tomato Grafting in Bulgaria") and Associate Professor **Rossitza Rodeva** ("Vegetable Grafting to Improve Yield and Fruit Quality under Biotic and Abiotic Stress Conditions")
- *1 December:* **Hanumantha Rao Bindumadhava**, Plant Physiologist, AVRDC South Asia ("Current Mungbean Physiology Work in India")
- *3 December:* **Daranrat 'Ploy' Jaitiang**, Humidtropics Program, ("Stakeholder Priorities and Goals during Initiation of an Agricultural Innovation Platform in Nan Province, Thailand")
- *11 December:* **Marti Potorff**, Postdoctoral Fellow, Plant Pathology & Mycology, AVRDC Headquarters ("Chili Anthracnose Work")

(clockwise from right) Elena Balacheva, Daranrat Jaitiang, Marti Potorff, Hanumantha Rao Bindumadhava, Rossitza Rodeva

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P.O. Box 42, Shanhua, Tainan 74199
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avrdc.org

Comments, ask a question, add a name to our mailing list: info@worldveg.org

AVRDC
The World Vegetable Center

Editor: Maureen Mecozzi
Graphic design: Kathy Chen
Photographic guidance: Amy Chen and Vanna Liu

Contributors: Mansab Ali, Sreeram Banda, Fenton Beed, Jean-Claude Bidogeza, Andreas Ebert, Shernabi Khan, Sanjeet Kumar, Nadine Kwazi, Sorawat Limsiriwat, Emerencia Mbounda, Geraldine Njumbe, Rhiannon O'Sullivan, Somchit Pruangwitayakun, Srinivasan Ramasamy, Ralph Roothaert, Lydia Wu

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