



GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
FORUM MONDIAL DE LA RECHERCHE AGRICOLE
FORO GLOBAL DE INVESTIGACION AGROPEDUARIA

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In This Issue

This is the second issue of the newsletter this year, and as in the recent past issues this one contains a feature article as well as a profile article on a civil society organization. The feature article titled north-south collaboration based on ARD agenda of southern regional forums, was presented during the recent EFARD conference in Zurich, and makes the case that south-north collaboration should be built on the identified priorities when there is a congruence of concerns and priorities between the two parties. The CSO profile article is on the Sociedad Rural Argentina, a private non-for profit organization that seeks to foster and promote the development of farming activities in the country. It boasts of well over 7000 members comprised of large, medium and small sized farmers, and appears to be well organized, structured and equipped to cater to the needs of its members.

Interesting news from the Secretariat include an announcement on a forthcoming workshop on high value products for smallholder farmers, information on projects selected to receive grants from the DURAS competitive fund, the output of an on-going effort to explore avenues for collaboration between the SSA-CP and the Global Post Harvest Initiative, and brief reports on the FARA General Assembly last June and efforts being made by a very active GPP (PROLINNOVA) to harmonize Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation approaches that could be used across its country programmes. Our regional forums answered the call to provide some update on current and near future planned activities and you will find such updates from AARINENA, APAARI, FARA and FORAGRO. Finally you will find some information on a recent initiative to establish a platform for young stakeholders in ARD with the objective of stimulating, encouraging and motivating young people to become more active in ARD. This variety of topics and issues makes interesting reading and constitutes a source of valuable information.

Bonne lecture.

O.S.

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North-South collaboration based on the Agricultural Research for Development agenda of Southern Regional Forums

Introduction

Food insecurity, poverty and natural resources degradation are three scourges that continue to plague developing countries, and which often seem intractable. The global community continues, however, to confront these problems, monitor progress made and set targets that need to be achieved in order to bring them under control.

With regards to overcoming food insecurity for example, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) sponsored World Food Summit in 1996, and a further one five years later in 2002, set a goal of reducing the number of hungry people in the world by half, from the base line number of 800 million set in 1990-92, to 400 million by 2015. Although recent information from FAO (FAO, 2004: The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2004) indicate that some 30 countries appear to be on track, in general the reduction by 2015 would only be about 25%, and the original target of a 50% reduction will not be met several decades later unless drastic steps are taken and the 'business as usual' approach is discarded. According to the same source, the number of hungry people in developing countries actually appears to have increased over the last 5 years, and it was only in Latin America and the Caribbean region that a modest reduction in the number of hungry people was observed. Table 1 on the incidence of under nourishment confirms this prediction and trend, showing that although the percentage of under-nourished people would have dropped to 11% from the original 17%, by 2015, some 610 million people will still be under nourished, that is about 50 % higher than the target of 419 million.

The poverty issue was addressed by the Millennium Development Goals to which the global community committed itself in 2000. The community collectively agreed to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (goal number 1), and set a target of

halving between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day, a target that appears to be slipping away beyond reach, and which like food insecurity to which it is inextricably linked, will continue to plague us well beyond the 2015 deadline. The prediction is that the number of poor people will actually increase from the 240 million in 1990 to about 345 million in 2015.

With regards to natural resources degradation, the community committed itself to ensuring environmental sustainability, with a target of reversing environmental resources losses such as forest cover. Available evidence (Table 2) suggests that we are drifting away from achieving the target of increasing the proportion of land area covered by forests.

These negative trends have to be reversed, and we believe that scientific research in congruence with traditional knowledge can contribute significantly to their reversal.

Contribution of National Agricultural Research Systems

The primary responsibility of finding sustainable solutions to these problems through research is that of the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) of developing countries, albeit with support from developing countries in keeping with MDG goal number 8 of developing a global partnership for development. With the exception of a few NARS, such as those of Brazil, India and China, many others are not sufficiently endowed to tackle these complex issues alone, and necessarily have to team up with others to form a critical mass of researchers, hence the current grouping of NARS into sub-regional and regional fora, within which countries with similar ecosystems, socio-economic situations work together to tackle common problems.

Following this rationale and within the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) context, NARS are now grouped into 5 Regional Forums (RF) (Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutes, Association of Research Institutions of Near East and North Africa, Central Asia and the Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutes, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa and

Forum for Agricultural Research in Latin America and the Caribbean). Some of these RF like FARA are further sub-divided into sub-regional forums (ASARECA, CORAF and SADC)

In 2001, the GFAR Secretariat and the Secretariat of the then Technical Advisory Committee of the CGIAR facilitated priority setting exercises in all of the five RF, so that problems common to many of the countries within each region could be identified and a limited number of them could be prioritized and addressed collectively, especially for those issues where the required skills and human resources are not available in any one particular country. The outputs of such joint research efforts could then be shared across and even beyond the regional fora.

The results of the 2001 priority setting exercises were widely disseminated and were used by other international organizations as the basis of collaborative efforts with the RF or its member countries. For example, a synthesis of the results was made available to the European Initiative on Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD) as it prepared to respond to the calls for expression of interest for the European Commission 6th Framework Programme. Also, the CGIAR took cognisance of these priorities as it developed its own programme priorities.

Given the dynamic nature of the agricultural sector, the apparently intractable nature of the problems confronting it, and the emergence of new events and issues, RF periodically review these priorities. Examples of such new issues and events which have had some impact on the redefinition of priorities include: globalization and its market dimensions, recent progress in science and biotechnologies, the renewed focus on rural development and the need to provide policy and technical support to subsistence or family producers, the new agri-food research paradigm from the farm to the fork, and the sweeping information technology revolution.

The Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) recently carried out such an update and research priority gap analysis for the South and West Asia sub-region. Participants, who included representatives of GFAR stakeholders,

examined emerging research priorities required in four agro-ecosystems: irrigated agro-ecological systems, rainfed including semi-arid and arid agro-ecosystems, mountain and hills and the coastal eco-region. Some new areas of research deserving additional emphasis identified were: agro-enterprise development with a focus on legumes, post harvest technology for value adding products; integrated watershed management, soil fertility and water quality. Policy and institutional reforms were also flagged for continued attention with a special emphasis on strategies to encourage higher investments in infrastructure, and enabling policies on marketing, credit and commodity pricing.

During the preparation of the FARA challenge programme, the RF undertook an extensive consultation of its stakeholders and a review of past priorities. New priorities emerged and were crystallized in the new Integrated Agricultural Research for Development paradigm which constituted the core of the challenge programme, and featured such new priorities as intensified subsistence farming systems, development of more efficient markets, improved management of soil, water and agrobiodiversity under the general theme of natural resources management.

Agricultural Research agenda of Regional Forums

On the basis of recent and on-going analyses of regional fora research priorities the thematic areas shown on Table 3 would appear to constitute the core of an agricultural research agenda of RF fora. In addition to the thematic areas shown on the table, all of the RF and their constituent NARS identified capacity building/development as an important pillar of their research agenda. Such capacity building efforts it was noted should target not only researchers and their institutions, but also other stakeholder groups within the fora, such as farmers and their organizations. This would ensure that partnerships and alliances among the various stakeholder groups within the fora, stand on solid grounds and are cost-effective.

Two examples of on-going initiatives that respond to these criteria and which involve all of the RF, the Global

Post Harvest Initiative (GPHI) and Global Regional Agricultural Information Systems (Global.RAIS) Initiative.

The Global Post Harvest Initiative The post harvest sub-sector of the agricultural sector spans the continuum often referred to as the field to plate or farm to fork and covers an area of activity that goes beyond the traditional on farm activities occurring immediately after harvest such as crop grading, primary processing and storage, to include a long chain of other activities including secondary processing, packaging, transportation distribution into urban areas and local or international marketing. This offers a tremendous economic opportunity to farmers and other entrepreneurs including small and medium scale commercial concerns active in the sector. These opportunities have been further enhanced in recent time, thanks to a number emerging global trends such as urbanization, changing consumer demands, developments in information technologies, globalization, food safety and quality concerns of consumers. The same trends, however, also present challenges to these small and medium scale entrepreneurs in developing countries who are often unable to competitively meet emerging consumer needs even within their own local context because of their inability to meet quality, safety, volume and timeliness requirements of a demanding market. Many reasons account for this poor competitiveness including: a persistently high and unacceptable level of post harvest losses; limited or minimal value-adding activities; poor market organization and access; poor rural-urban infrastructure linkages; inadequate research and development support from both private and public sources; minimal access to timely and critical market information; inadequate policy support for an enabling environment. In an effort to address these diverse post harvest issues and concerns, GFAR in collaboration with the Agricultural Support Systems Division (AGS) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) embarked on the development of a Global Initiative on Post-Harvest Systems (GPHI) using a three-pronged approach

- Regional consultations carried out in the five GFAR RF to assess the status of the Post-Harvest System in the various regions and to identify the main issues, concerns and priorities to be tackled.
- Preparation of a Strategic framework built on the outputs of the regional consultations and which comprise eight concept notes representing discrete topics or issues such as trade policies, development of tool kits for market oriented decision making, post harvest technology development, food quality and safety issues, and infrastructure investment, around which concrete activities could be built for implementation.
- Implementation involving groups of countries within RF working on any of the issues they thought most appropriate for their circumstances. We are now at the beginning of this phase starting with two regional fora, AARINENA and APAARI., and we invite European participation and support as through the EFARD mechanism.

Global.RAIS Initiative

The Global Alliance of the Regional Agricultural Information Systems (GLOBAL RAIS) Initiative funded by the European Commission pursues the objective of contributing to the development of a knowledge management and information sharing capacity of NARS, through the development of Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS). The initiative started with regional consultations which included a diagnosis of the information communication services in the various regions (Table 4) and the development of regional strategies in the area of information communication management for ARD. The regional consultations were followed by an inter-regional workshop during which a Global Partnership Program on Information Communication Management for ARD was developed. The RF are now in the process of developing discrete proposals within this overall programme framework to tackle some of the issues linked to the development of knowledge management and information sharing.

Some of the expected outputs of the Global Partnership Program when fully implemented include:

- integration of, and equitable access to national, regional and global agricultural information through the GLOBAL RAIS web-ring
- improved capacity of ICT managers and staff of National Agricultural Information and Regional Agricultural Information Systems (NAIS and RAIS).

We also invite participation in this initiative within the context of Europe-Southern Fora collaboration

Conclusion

These in a nutshell are examples of the ARD agenda of Regional Fora, built on past and current priorities from which consensus has emerged around a number of major themes. We suggest that collaboration between Europe and Southern Forums be developed around programmes, projects and activities within the identified thematic areas, when there is a congruence between of concerns and priorities between the two parties. We invite you through the EFARD mechanism to work with and support the Southern Fora as they grapple with the many challenges confronting them.

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[Text of a presentation made at the European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) 2005 Conference, 27-29 April 2005]

TABLE 1: GLOBAL INCIDENCE OF UNDER NOURISHMENT

Geographic Entity	Incidence of under nourishment					
	% Population			Million People		
	1997-99	2015	2030	1997-99	2015	2030
Developing Countries	17	11	6	776	610	443
Sub-Saharan Africa	34	23	15	194	205	183
Near East & North Africa	9	7	5	32	37	34
Latin America & Caribbean	11	6	4	54	40	25
South Asia	24	12	6	303	195	119
East Asia	11	6	4	193	135	82

Source: FAO 2003, Agriculture Towards 2015/2030, FAO, Rome

TABLE 2: ESTIMATED FOREST COVER AND FOREST COVER CHANGE BETWEEN 1990 AND 2000

Region	Forest Area 2000		Area Change (1990-2000)
	Total forest	% of land area	
	000 ha	%	000 ha/yr
World	3,869,455	29.6	-9,391
Africa	649,866	21.8	-5,262
Asia	547,793	17.8	-364
Europe*	1,039,251	46.0	881
Southern America	885,618	50.5	-3,711

Source: FAO 2000. The global Forest Resources Assessment 2000, Rome: FAO

* Europe includes the former Soviet republics of Belarus, Moldova, Russian Federation, and Ukraine

[TABLE 3: see next page]

TABLE 4: CURRENT STATUS OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION SERVICES IN VARIOUS REGIONAL FORA

Information and Communication Services	AARINENA RAIS	APARIS	CAC RAIS	FARA RAIS	FORAGRO INFOTEC
Science and Technology Information	None	Full text search and retrieval	None	None	Full text search and retrieval, on line upload by users
Technical information	Nascent	Nascent (success stories)	Nascent (Agroweb)	None	Market place for technologies
Research data management	None	None	None	None	GIS
e-mail, e-discussion and related tools (directories, indexes)	None	None	None	None	e-discussion, weekly bulletin, directories available

Source: GFAR 2004. Proceedings of Global.RAIS Inte-regional workshop: Towards a global agenda for ICM for ARD

TABLE 3: AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AGENDA PRIORITIES OF RF

Areas	APAARI	AARINENA	FARA	FORAGRO	CAC
I. Genetic Resources Management and Biosafety/Biosecurity					
Agrobiodiversity management, conservation and utilization	X	X	X	X	X
Strengthening seed (policy) systems	X	X	X	X	
Collection and documentation of indigenous knowledge on conservation and use of plant and animal genetic resources	X	X	X	X	X
Characterisation (including molecular and phenotypic characterisation) and conservation	X	X	X	X	X
II. Biotechnology application in crop and animal improvement/protection					
Germplasm improvement/enrichment including development of new genetic material of high variability (crops and livestock)	X	X	X	X	X
Crop improvement (including characterisation and selection for tolerance to drought, resistance to prevalent diseases and pests)	X	X	X	X	
Grain legumes improvement programme	X	X	X	X	
III. Natural Resource Management					
Development of integrated soil and water management practices to improve the sustainability of tropical production systems	X	X	X	X	X
Land management (including land use, land use rights, etc)	X	X		X	
Integrated soil, water and land management systems	X	X	X	X	X
Water management and use efficiency		X	X	X	X
IV. Agribusiness Approaches and Development					
Increased productivity and competitiveness of farmers through rural innovation	X		X	X	
Support to the development of market commodity chains (e.g. datepalm, coconut, cocoa, cotton)		X	X	X	X
Value adding post-harvest technologies	X	X	X		X
V. Capacity building, Institutional and Policy Support					
Human resources development	X	X	X	X	X
Strengthening regional networks	X	X	X		X
Mapping of poverty as an important tool to focus research on poverty-eradication objectives	X	X	X	X	X
VI. Knowledge Management and Information Sharing					
Development of ICM capacities and MISs (e.g. RAIS)	X	X	X	X	X

International Workshop on High Value Products for Smallholder Farmers

The Secretariat of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and the Secretariat of the Science Council of the Consultative Group on Agricultural Research (CGIAR) is convening an action-oriented International Workshop on 'How Can the Poor Benefit from the Growing Markets for High Value Agricultural Products?' that will be held in Cali, Colombia from 3 to 5 October 2005.

Globalization of markets for high value agricultural products such as fruit, flowers, vegetables, and specialty or boutique products is creating dynamic markets for competitive producers at national, regional and international levels. At the same time the area devoted to and price of staple commodities is steadily declining, especially among farmers whose production systems are only marginally competitive or that have been protected historically from international competition. Among the latter are millions of rural people who traditionally struggle to meet their subsistence food needs by growing staples, working off-farm as laborers and selling a small surplus to generate income to meet their basic needs for healthcare, education, clothing and shelter. In the absence of a major redistribution of land and capital to the poor, one of the major challenges for the millennium development goals is to provide the market linkages, technology, organization and know-how that will enable a decent proportion of poor producers to participate in dynamic markets for higher value crops and livestock products in rapidly growing urban centres. This concern may be especially important for poor rural women involved in producing, processing or trading high-value crops and related products.

The goal of the workshop is to define future research and research links to development outputs and outcomes for GFAR stakeholders, including the CGIAR centers and their associated R&D partners, as they relate to higher value crop, livestock, fish and forestry products. The starting point for focusing on these opportunities is a clear common understanding of the research for development issues, and

their relative priority, together with a set of guidelines and principles for generating and sharing knowledge among many disparate research programs and development projects that could make up a critical mass of R&D capability and financing.

The Workshop preparation is being guided by a Steering Group made up of representatives from the GFAR and CGIAR SC Secretariats, the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center (AVRDC), the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI). The invited participants are drawn from a group of knowledgeable person in the area, who are renowned for their strategic thinking, gender perspective and/or field experience. They come from different backgrounds representing interested stakeholders along the supply chain related to the production, post-harvest handling, processing, wholesaling and retailing of high value products.

For more information about the workshop see www.egfar.org

DURAS

12 Projects to receive DURAS funding

Twelve (12) projects were selected for funding under the DURAS Competitive Grants.

These were selected from the 24 full proposals reviewed by the DURAS Selection and Scientific Partnership Committee (CSPS) and the DURAS Steering Committee last 15-16 June 2005 in Grande Motte, France.

Of the 12 projects, two (2) will address the theme agro-biodiversity and genetic resources management for food security; four (4) will tackle local knowledge in natural resources management; three (3) will deal with agro-ecology and other sustainable farming practices; and another three

(3) will address how to link farmers to market by supporting support to small and medium agro- enterprises (agri SMEs). Project implementation is expected to commence in September 2005. The award size varies from Euro 90,000 to Euro 150,000 over a period of two-years.

12 Projects selected for funding under the DURAS Project Competitive Grants:

1. Caractérisation morphologique, zootechnique et génétique des populations locales de volailles de genre *Gallus gallus* dans les pays cotiers de l'Afrique occidentale (Université d'Abomey-Calavi - Bénin)
2. Un réseau régional de plateformes d'échanges pour améliorer l'identification des besoins des agriculteurs et la diffusion de nouvelles variétés de bananier plantain (CARBAP-Cameroon)
3. Farmer Access to Innovation Resources. Action Research on Innovation Support Fund (Farmer Support Group-S.Africa)
4. Innovations et savoirs paysans dans les pratiques de gestion des écosystèmes forestiers humides d'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre : diversification des systèmes d'exploitation associant cultures pérennes et vivrières (IRAD-Cameroun)
5. The implication of local knowledge in the increasing integration of animal husbandry in the farming systems of disadvantaged communities (National Institute of Soil and Fertilizer- Vietnam)
6. Valoriser les savoirs paysans sur l'intégration agriculture élevage pour une gestion durable des écosystèmes des savanes subhumides de l'Afrique (CIRDES-Burkina Faso)
7. Approche intégrative de la gestion des nematodes phytoparasites en systèmes maraîchers méditerranéens et sahéliens (Société MARISSA Groupe AZURA - Maroc)
8. Appropriation par les Organisations de Producteurs d'Afrique de l'Ouest de la technologie d'inoculation avec des microorganismes améliorant la production végétale (CLCOP de Keur Momar Sarr- Cambodia)
9. Linking farmers to markets through valorisation of local

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resources: the case for intellectual property rights of indigenous resources (University of Pretoria - S. Africa)

10. Improving the pig and pig meat marketing chain to enable small producers to serve consumer needs in Vietnam and Cambodia (Vietnam Agricultural Science Institute)
11. Poverty and Pace Setters (POPS). From sector support for farm products marketing to targeting entrepreneurs by building networks among poverty struck (Centre for Rural Economic Development Research-Vietnam)
12. Production de malts de sorgho ou de mil de qualité pour la production alimentaire artisanale ou semi-industrielle en Afrique de l'Ouest (CERNA-Burkina Faso)

The projects were selected on the basis of the following criteria: (a) over-all project design and feasibility; (b) appropriateness and innovativeness; (c) socio-economic consideration; (d) environmental and sustainability considerations; and (e) partnership quality.

DURAS is a GFAR-Agropolis project supported by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its Priority Solidarity Fund (PSF). It aims to contribute to strengthening the involvement and enhancing the scientific potential of southern stakeholders in agricultural research for sustainable development (ARSD). This three-year project covers 49 countries from Africa, Near East and some parts of Asia that are listed in France's Priority Solidarity Zone (PSZ).

Two Calls for Proposal were made under the DURAS Project. The first Call was launched in July 2004 while the second call was made in February 2005. A total of 129 pre-proposals were submitted for the 1st Call while 173 were submitted for the 2nd Call. These pre-proposals were reviewed by the DURAS Selection and Scientific Partnership Committee (CSPS) in December 2004 and March 2005, respectively.

A workshop that will bring together all the coordinators of the 12 selected projects will be held in October 2005 in Montpellier, France. This activity aims to facilitate interaction among all the project coordinators, to come up with and agree on a common project

monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MRE) system; and to agree on a minimum set of progress and success indicators.

Oliver Oliveros
DURAS project coordinator

GPPs - Report from Entebbe

The Sub-Saharan Challenge Programme and the Global Post-harvest Initiative

GFAR, together with its partners in the Global Post Harvest Initiative (GPhI), PhAction and FAO, organised a pre-plenary session in the days preceding the FARA General Assembly, held in Entebbe, Uganda in June 2005. The workshop was attended by 45 participants representing a cross section of stakeholders. The main objective was to explore avenues for collaboration with the Sub-Saharan Challenge Programme (SSA-CP) that add value, avoid duplication and ensure mutual learning and sharing of experiences.

In the first part of the workshop Ralph Von Kaufmann, representing FARA, outlined the main characteristics of the SSA-CP, and Rupert Best from the GFAR Secretariat delivered a presentation on the GPhI. Their presentations were followed by a review of the Sub-Saharan priorities in the area of post harvest development by Andrew Temu from the Sokoine University in Tanzania. These priorities originally formed the basis of the first draft Strategic Framework for the GPhI. The objective was now to refine such priorities in a way to remain up to date with the latest opportunities and constraints that are affecting development in the Sub-Saharan Africa Region.

In the second part of the session three presentations were made by representatives of farmers, NGOs and the research communities. It gave participants the possibility to listen to different experiences and expectations on post harvest, marketing and enterprise development. The participants were then asked to respond to some critical questions such as how the SSA-Challenge

Program and the GPhI work can together, and what are the immediate next steps. Discussions went into a lively debate where participants actively contributed to draft concrete recommendations that were subsequently presented by Andrew Temu in the FARA General Assembly. These were:

- The Global Post-harvest Initiative mobilise the competencies, skills and experience of its partners to provide conceptual and technical support to the Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Programme.
- The Sub-Saharan Challenge Programme benefit from the accumulated experience of the partners involved in Global Post-harvest Initiative in the implementation of such processes that go beyond the farm-gate and involve actors and service providers along the production to consumption chain.
- The Global Post-harvest Initiative designate a resource person to participate in the planning and process validation steps at the Sub-Saharan Challenge Programme's three Pilot Learning Sites, who can contribute to the development of a common cross-site framework and action plan for strategic R&D along the production to consumption continuum.

The session successfully revised, refined and endorsed the priorities for post-harvest development in sub-Saharan Africa. The recommendations to the General Assembly were well accepted and discussions are on the way on how to develop a strategy for a stronger interaction between the GPhI and the SSA-CP.

For more information and a detailed report on the workshop please contact the GFAR Secretariat.

A.S.

PROLINNOVA Country Programme Coordinators share experiences and move towards the implementation of PM&E

The Global Partnership Programme PROLINNOVA (Promoting Local Innovation in Ecologically-Oriented Agriculture and Natural Resource Management) held its first annual meeting of Country Programme (CP) Coordinators in Entebbe, Uganda on 5-7 June 2005. The meeting coincided with the Third General Assembly of the Forum on Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).

PROLINNOVA takes a participatory approach to designing a Global Partnership Programme (GPP) from the bottom up, through joint planning by multiple stakeholder groups in different countries, who then define what activities are required at international level. Central to PROLINNOVA is learning from its experiences in establishing partnerships in agricultural research and development (ARD) at all levels from the farmer-extension-research partnerships in Participatory Innovation Development (PID) at the grassroots level to national partnerships within the National Steering Committee of each CP.

The meeting was designed to accomplish several objectives, the most important among them being to harmonise approaches to Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E). PM&E is key to strengthening the partnerships within the programme and improve their functioning - as well as to improving how the GPP itself functions. This face-to-face encounter provided the opportunity for a more intensive PM&E process and for mutual learning about farmer innovation, PID, PM&E and facilitating multi-stakeholder processes. During the meeting and based on the establishment of the Vision and Mission of PROLINNOVA, a list of indicators was drawn up. Each CP will identify M&E focal points that will be tasked to discuss, through an electronic forum, the M&E procedures and refine the M&E framework. They will prioritise and select the indicators that are most appropriate from their country's perspective. The challenge will be for the CPs to create space and

momentum for the M&E focal points to play their vital role.

Other important items discussed in the CP Coordinators' meeting included:

- The institutionalisation of participatory research in National Agricultural Research Institutes. The presentation by Ann Stroud, coordinator of the African Highlands Initiative (AHI) of the experience of AHI, with emphasis on two cases, Ethiopia and Uganda, illustrated the intensive nature of the change process that requires significant political will and support from management, as well as changes in the incentive structures for scientists, among other elements.
- Sharing experiences, using the World Café approach, around a number of important topics including: mutual support among countries, local innovation and its documentation, farmer mobilisation, mobilisation of other stakeholders, participatory programme management, etc.
- Linkages with the Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (PRGA) system-wide initiative of the CGIAR. Together with Hilary Sims Feldstein, the new facilitator of the Gender Working Group of the PRGA, initial ideas were developed for a) creating opportunities for people from both networks to meet and work together, b) examining how gender is incorporated into training of facilitators and c) using participatory video (PV) to promote local innovation by women.

Immediately before the meeting of CP coordinators, the co-Chairs of the PROLINNOVA Oversight Group (POG), a recently established body whose principal function is to provide overall guidance to PROLINNOVA on main issues and directions, and to develop programme strategy, policies and principles, held its second meeting. The purpose was to get to know the CP coordinators and gain a better understanding of how the PROLINNOVA programme is functioning and progressing.

The CP coordinators also used the opportunity to attend the FARA pre-plenary meeting of NGOs to set up a consortium on agricultural research for development. During the meeting

PROLINNOVA shared its values on local innovation in the process of building the vision, mission and objectives of the consortium.

The Steering Committee of the PROLINNOVA-Uganda programme, which is coordinated by the Ugandan NGO Environmental Alert, located in Kampala hosted both the CP coordinators meeting and the POG meeting. The full report of the meeting can be accessed at www.prolinnova.net.

R.B.

Sub-saharan Africa

Harmonizing investment in African agricultural research



For several decades, Africa received aids from donor countries to alleviate poverty. Several formulas were developed on how to sustain economic growth in the region, but the impact achieved is less than expected. The region's average per capita income is the lowest in the world; almost half of the continent's 700 million people live with less than one dollar per day. Africa's share of the world's absolute poor rose from 25 to 30% during the 1990s, and the number of malnourished children rose from 10% of the developing countries' total to 20% between 1970 and the mid-1990s.

In the recently held G8 summit in Gleneagles, England, world leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further increase aid in Africa based on reports by the United Nation's Millennium Project and Tony Blair's Commission for Africa. The theme was to 'make poverty history'.

But to 'make poverty history', Africa needs to be committed to make a change and make a difference. African leaders through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) are initiating several programs to make poverty history. Aside from several food security programs, it recognizes the importance of agriculture as an engine of economic growth in the region. Therefore, it invests in agricultural research for development.

NEPAD is working with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the sub-regional research organizations in coordinating and harmonizing the investment in African agricultural research for development. FARA has co-authored the framework for African agricultural productivity (FAAP).

FAAP overall goal is to dramatically increase productivity, competitiveness and incomes in African agriculture and the rural non-farm sector, by improving farmers' access to technologies well suited to their opportunities and constraints, with a specific emphasis on the needs of poor and vulnerable groups. MAPP's specific objectives are to:

- strengthen capacities of African agricultural technology systems and increase investments by African governments in technology development and dissemination;
- foster and support needed reforms in African research and extension institutions, and in markets and the agricultural policy environment; and
- link national, subregional and regional programs/networks with strong international partnerships to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in technology generation, dissemination and adoption.

Achieving these objectives will require the commitment and support of a broad coalition of stakeholders (governments, end users and external partners) to provide adequate and sustainable funding. Mobilizing this support will require significantly increased efficiency and stakeholder accountability of technology generation and transfer systems, based on the following principles:

- stakeholder participation in the definition of research priorities and in the system governance to ensure that research programs and results are relevant to stakeholders' concerns, including social and environmental objectives;
- promotion of pluralistic, competitive systems open to multiple service providers (universities, NGOs, private sector) and based on competitive

contractual schemes for service delivery;

- increased accountability of technology generation and transfer institutions through improved internal management information and monitoring and evaluation systems; and
- promotion of cost sharing arrangements with end users according to their capacity to pay, to increase their stake in the efficiency of service provision and improve the financial sustainability of the system.

FARA together with NEPAD is organizing an investor's meeting in Accra, Ghana from the 27th to the 29th of September 2005. The meeting will define the role of investors for the effective implementation of FAAP and the plan of action for stakeholder's involvement.

Monty Jones

Sub-saharan Africa



12 June 2005

The Forum on Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA: www.fara-africa.org) held its 3rd General Assembly (GA) 06-12 June 2005 in Entebbe, Uganda. This year, the GA was hosted by the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), one of the founding members of FARA, under the auspices of the Government of Uganda. The theme of this FARA biennial event was "Innovation to transform agriculture for improved livelihoods and development in Africa". The novel feature of this 3rd FARA GA was to show case the emergence of African ownership of the agricultural research agenda. Among the high profile figures that participated in the event was the president of Uganda H.E Yoweri Museveni, who opened the plenary session of the GA.

The General Assembly gathers all FARA stakeholders, namely: sub-regional organizations (ASARECA, CORAF/WECARD and SADC/FANR); research institutions (NARSs, ARIs, IARCs, and Universities); civil society organizations (farmer organizations, NGOs and private sector); donors; and other development partners. It's during the GA that FARA Business Plan is approved by the stakeholders. To read or download the highlights of the GA go to: <http://www.fara-africa.org/FARA%20GA.htm>.

N.A.

West Asia & North Africa

AARINENA's major achievements



1. AARINENA RAIS

- The Arabic Version of AARINENA RAIS-Web Site has been completed and the English Version was enhanced.
- AARINENA cosponsored with GFAR the Second Inter-Regional ICT Workshop in Cairo 10-11 May 2005 which was attended by participants from AARINENA, APAARI, FARA and FORAGRO. The main output of this meeting was the adoption of AARINENA-RAIS INFOSYS proposal to initiate inter-regional sharing and Exchange of Experiences, skills and tools leading to the development of National agricultural Information system (NAIS)

2. Networks

- Date-Palm Global Network (DPGN) held an International Workshop on true-to -type of date palm tissue culture in morocco 23-25 May, 2005 and recommended to provide updates on tissue culture abnormalities electronically to DPGN web site.
- Inter-regional Cotton Network (INCANA) plans to hold an Inter-regional traveling workshop on hybrid and BT cotton in India in October 2005
- Olive Network cosponsored the Second International Conference on "Olive Productivity, Quality and

Partnership" in Sfax_Tunisia ,May, 2005.

- Medicinal & Herbal Plants Network: The focal points in Egypt and Jordan have established Medicinal and Herbal Plants local teams to prepare working plans for the network.

Planned Activities

- Workshop on the Assessment of plant Genetic Diversity for Water-Use Efficiency, INRA-Marrakech, Morocco, 10-12 Oct. 2005.
- INCANA Hybrid & Bt Cotton Workshop in India, 16-22 OCT. 2005.
- Workshop on Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Industry: The Link between Producer and European Consumer, Malta, 7-9 Nov. 2005.
- Network Coordinators meeting to finalize project ideas, Al-Ain, UAE, 15-17 November 2005
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Guidelines for Olive, Cyprus, 19-21 December 2005

Ibrahim Hamdan

Latin America & the Caribbean

FORAGRO's main activities: 2005, second semester



In a previous newsletter an article on the 4th FORAGRO General Assembly held in Panama in April 2005 was published. The assembly endorsed an action plan which will be implemented by the sub-regional forums and facilitated by FORAGRO. In the second half of the year, FORAGRO plans to facilitate the implementation of the following four activities identified in the Panama action plan:

1. To enhance hemispheric cooperation in:
 - Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Genetic Resources: The 4th FORAGRO assembly gave high priority to promoting the efforts of the regional ex situ conservation of plant genetic resources initiative through the active cooperation of the Global Trust Diversity Crop and the six regional plant genetic

- resources networks under the Sub regional Fora (PROCIS) of the Americas;
- Development of new biotechnology initiatives: by promoting hemispheric efforts and joint actions in close collaboration with the recently initiated Hemispheric Biotechnology and Biosafety Program supported by IICA;
- Agribusiness and Innovation: defining priority lines of action for intra-regional cooperation; and
- Natural Resources Management: defining priority lines of action for hemispheric cooperation.

2. To formulate a proposal to initiate a hemispheric horizontal reciprocal cooperation between FORAGRO and the other Regional Forums under GFAR in the field of institutional innovations, in order to enhance and increase the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of agricultural research and innovation. Worldwide, agriculture and the rural milieu face a number of highly visible challenges in a global context in which a true scientific and technological revolution is under way, giving rise to the rebirth of societies of knowledge and the need to redouble efforts to develop agriculture with knowledge. These challenges imply developing a new vision and clearly defining the important roles that R&D and the public sector can play in contributing to the global efforts, as well as reforming the traditional R&D institutional framework. In this context, in order to achieve goals associated with food security, competitive agriculture, poverty reduction, sound utilization of natural resources and the mitigation of climate change, countries must innovate not only technologically, but also institutionally.

3. To continue FORAGRO activities related to its Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS), known as INFOTEC, in four main areas:
 - Promoting information access and sharing, through FORAGRO online platform that includes various databases and which

allows remote uploading by users, searches and subscription to weekly bulletins.

- Providing sub-regional organizations, such as PROCISUR and Red-SICTA, with independently managed information systems according to their needs, based on the Infotec platform.
 - Capacity building and advocacy for information management through participation in the AECI-INIA-IICA-FONTAGRO training course on preparation of competitive innovation projects (September, Bolivia) and participation as co-coordinators for the FAO Module D training for LAC managers through Fodepal.
 - Development of Agricultural R&D indicator and information policies in partnership with CYTED and other partners.
4. To continue the advocacy role of FORAGRO with key political players such as the legislators of the Agricultural Commission of the LAC countries implementing actions under a new agreement signed between FORAGRO and the Latin-American Parliament PARLATINO. As part of its advocacy activities, FORAGRO will ensure fair participation of regional family farmer groups in the ARD discussions and debates in the region in order to promote and develop innovations applicable to family agriculture.

Enrique Alarcón

Asia-Pacific

APAARI's Major Activities



Meetings

1. A "High Level Policy Dialogue on Biotechnology for Food security and Poverty Alleviation : Opportunities and Challenges" organized jointly by APAARI, FAO and GFAR will take place from the 7th to the 9th of November 2005 in Bangkok Thailand, to assess the current status of bio-

technologies and their application in the Asia-Pacific Region. The main objective of this policy dialogue is to facilitate appropriate policy decisions by developing countries in Asia and the Pacific region with respect to the application of biotechnologies in the food and agriculture sector, so that they can contribute towards meeting the World Food Summit and Millennium Development Goals on hunger and poverty. The policy dialogue is expected to promote greater understanding of the issues, sharing of knowledge on new developments and findings, and raise awareness of their potential benefits and risks and the implications in terms of needed regulatory framework, institutional capacity building and human resources development. Executives of the national agricultural research systems (NARS), heads of related regional and international CG institutions in the Asia-Pacific region have been invited to this important forum. Ministers of Agriculture from a number of countries in the region have been invited to participate in a round table discussion session during the forum.

2. APAARI Training Workshop on National Agricultural Information Systems (NAIS) A training workshop on agricultural information systems will take place at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok, Thailand from the 1st to the 5th of November 2005. The main objectives of this training workshop are to train appropriate officers on the principles of Information Communication Management (ICM) and in the identification and development of essential components of their respective National Agricultural Information Systems (NAIS). Participants will also be assisted to integrate developed NAIS into APARIS (Asia-Pacific Agricultural Research Information System) of APAARI, keeping in view different user groups and different application platforms. One to two participants from NARS of developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region and one resource person from each of the following organizations, APAARI, AIT, GFAR and FAO will participate in the workshop as

well as RAIS managers and representatives of regional ICT/ICM in ARD. During the workshop, the trainees will be assisted to develop prototype NAIS of their respective NARS as a delivery medium for national ARD information and databases. At the end of the workshop, these NAIS will be uploaded on APARIS. This collaborative effort of APAARI, GFAR, AIT and FAO will bring together complimentary resources to assist developing NARS of Asia-Pacific region.

3. The Third Steering Committee meeting of APCoAB was held in New Delhi on the 28th of June 2005. The proceedings have since been circulated to all members and other concerned partners and follow up actions initiated. The fourth Steering Committee of APCoAB has been scheduled for the 6th of November 2005 and will be held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Publications

1. Proceedings of Expert Consultation on Post-harvest Technologies for Ensuring Food Security and Value Addition for Enhanced Income and The Eighth General Assembly Meeting of APAARI, 1-3 December 2004, Bangkok, Thailand.
2. Success Story on Rainbow Trout Culture in the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal (APAARI Publication: 2005/1)
3. APAARI Newsletter Vol. 13, No. 2, December 2004 issue; and Vol. 14, No. 1, June 2005 issue.
4. Brainstorming Session on Public-Private-Partnership in Agricultural Biotechnology: highlights and recommendations. APCoAB, New Delhi, 14 p
5. On-line publications. All of the above publications and other quality information have been posted on the APAARI Web Site: www.apaari.org

P.K. Saha & R.K. Arora

CSOs – Report from Entebbe

A Sub-Saharan Africa NGO Consortium



About 35 NGO representatives from various NGOs in Sub-Saharan Africa as well as other regions met, on 6-7 June 2005, during the General Assembly of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) held in Entebbe Uganda 6-12 June 2005. The meeting was convened by the GFAR Secretariat in collaboration with FARA. This meeting was the final stage of a consultation process carried out by the Secretariat which started during the GFAR Statutory meetings in Mexico in October 2004. The main objective of the Entebbe meeting was to "put wheels on" the idea of Sub-Saharan Africa NGO Consortium which was born during the consultation process.

The meeting was organized by themes. The first day focused on sharing experiences and discussing background information on the concept of the consortium. The second day was devoted to discussions on modus operandi and structure of the consortium.

By the end of the meeting, the group successfully developed mission and vision statements; developed a procedures manual to guide the operations of the consortium and how it relates with stakeholders involved in ARD; and elected an eight-member Steering Committee headed by Chair and Vice-Chair. The full report of the meeting is available here: http://www.eqfar.org/tools/pdf/SSA_NGO_Proceedings.pdf.

The NGOs were asked to present the outcomes of their meeting at the FARA plenary session, which was held on 9 June. The elected vice-Chair of the consortium, Ms. Mbog, made the presentation on behalf of the NGOs. In her presentation, she reported that the NGOs in the region are strongly committed to working with FARA and the three Sub-regional Forums (ASARECA, CORAF, and SADC/FARN). She emphasized that the aim of the

new consortium is to ensure increased NGO involvement in ARD participation with other ARD stakeholders in decision making on agricultural research and development priorities, programs and projects at national, sub-regional and regional levels. She also highlighted a number of areas that the consortium identified as priorities for immediate collaboration with FARA, including the Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Program. To download her presentation go to http://www.eqfar.org/tools/pdf/SSA_NGO_Consortium_Present.ppt.

The NGOs by mapping out such a cohesive regional approach as to their involvement in the regional ARD agenda (i.e. establishing a regional consortium that coordinates NGOs participation in regional/sub-regional ARD activities) have won the support of FARA. The consortium is scheduled to meet with the other stakeholders of FARA, particularly the NARS, farmers' organizations, the private sector as well as representatives from the three Sub-Regional Forums and some CG Centers in the region in October 2005 in Accra Ghana under the auspices of FARA. This FARA multi-stakeholder workshop is to promote collaborative partnerships and strengthen and foster linkages amongst FARA stakeholders.

N.A.

CSOs – Profile article

Sociedad Rural Argentina



Introduction

Back in 1866 Argentina was at war with Paraguay and the local economy, which was based on framing activities, seemed to fall and stagnate. Drought, fires in the fields and continuous attacks by the indians discouraged the population and drove them away from the fertile plains.

In spite of the political confusion and tension, the progressive spirit of some pioneers did not fail. Individual efforts were not sufficient. The will of many had to be united to defend their interests and those of the whole country which urgently needed its basic economy to improve.

On July 10, 1866, the enthusiasm of a

group of real farmers, allowed the founding - after much going and coming - of the Sociedad Rural Argentina (SRA) with the purpose of "...promoting improvements, progress and order with more effective grazing methods than those currently used... and combining these with tilling practices..., stimulating the welfare and morality of farmers... studying livestock species... seeds and plants best adapted to the country ...and improving our tilling tools... establishing relations with the most important foreign markets and learning about their needs... creating a library for farmers... publishing a farming journal... stimulating scientists to investigate and publish their findings... organising trade shows for livestock, poultry and farm products..." (quote from the founding documents of our organisation). Since then to date, the Sociedad Rural Argentina has been faithful to its governing philosophy which states that freedom is a qualified tool to foster private initiatives that brings progress for everyone, benefiting the farming community and serving the country as whole.

Preferring proposals to protest, it continually promotes the analysis and study of general and specific problems that affect the sector. It supports its resourceful technical structure and belief in involving the farmers with a framework of pluralistic and federal representation of its members and associated institutions, to pursue its political and representative actions with an unflinching and updated impetus.

The Sociedad Rural Argentina, in addition to being present at national and international fora as a political and representative institution, represents farmers from all areas of the country. It is also a service institution which is always at the forefront with technology and accompanies the latest changes with modern structures for its Herd Books, Trade Show, Press and Publications, its Library, Training and Research Institutes, specialised Laboratory, Consulting Services, and its entire internal administration.

Institutional Profile

The Sociedad Rural Argentina is a private, non-profit organization that seeks to foster and promote the development of farming activities in the country.

Beyond its base of over 7,000 members that includes large,

medium-size and small farmers from all over the country, the Sociedad Rural Argentina represents all producers through an active and influential presence in all national, provincial and municipal decision-making levels. It also has a recognised and valued international presence.

Its continuous proposal to excel, its contributions with specific surveys to provide real solutions to sectorial problems, its intensive activity in technical services, its intermediate and high level training courses for managers, and its active involvement in promoting fairs and presenting the work of the farmers, are some aspects that - with their high level of excellence - have given national and international prestige to the Sociedad Rural Argentina as the most important organization of farm leaders in Argentina. The Sociedad Rural Argentina is managed by a Board of Directors that is elected at the Members' General Meeting.

Regional delegates

The Sociedad Rural Argentina's activities are based on the active participation of the Directors of the 14 districts in which the country is divided -and that are members of the Board of Directors-, of the twelve Regional Offices, and the over 220 Local Delegates who represent almost the entire country.

This nation-wide representation allows the SRA to learn about the farmers' concerns and their local problems, and at the same time convey messages that express the opinion of the whole farming community and of the nation to those who live in the Provinces.

Federal and Institutional Council

The Provinces have an important network of Farmers' Associations that participate in the Federal Council and as such are members of the Sociedad Rural Argentina. The Council holds monthly meetings and is a good opportunity for the leaders of the farming sector to express their position. It also serves to strengthen - at a national and international level - the collective actions that benefit the farming community. The counselling bodies of the SRA provide support and collect valuable information from the various regions. The Institutional Council has two Full Members that sit on the Board of Directors. It provides counselling and information about the

Sociedad Rural Argentina. The Council meets periodically, and its members are representatives of the most important Breeders' Associations in the country, production sectors, and the farming and agribusiness trade.

Young Farmers Council

This is a group of young farmers that analyses and discusses the problems that affect the sector. The members hold periodic meetings with expert scholars, and representatives of the production and social sectors of the country to learn about farming issues. The Young Farmers Council trains and educates future leaders.

Committee for Political and Economic Actions

This Committee discusses, analyses and formulates proposals to solve global or specific problems that affect the farming community. Its actions and studies are based on the work of over twenty specific Internal Committees whose members are farmers that are specialists in different fields. They act on the basis of their own initiative, or as a result of a request from the Committee for Political Actions.

The system expands the base to discuss the problems and generates the largest possible number of opinions. The proposals are always agreed by consensus and as such represent the ideas of the majority members of the SRA, as an organisation. This Committee analyses the direct and indirect impact of legal, economic, tax and administrative rules that may affect the sector, the incidence of global or specific market situations, and the effects of technological improvements. The analysis and discussion of the proposals are always based on the opinion of the SRA's technical departments or the expert opinions which are requested when necessary. Only then does the Committee present the case to the Executive Board or the Board of Directors, as applicable. As the Sociedad Rural Argentina only expresses its position after it has discussed the issue with the other Committees involved, its claims are well founded, its analyses are considered serious, and its opinion - as an institution that represents the farming sector - are respected.

Institute for Economic Studies

The Institute for Economic Studies

provides technical support and counselling to the Board of Directors and to other decision-making bodies. It is a multidisciplinary team that periodically assesses the Government's actions, and measures their impact on the farming sector. The Institute monitors the behaviour of the markets for grains, meat, fruits, vegetables, forestry, and industrial crops. It also keeps an updated data bank with information on prices and costs, and develops reliable indicators to continuously assess the farming sector's situation in absolute and comparative terms, at a national, regional and global level. Its technicians participate in official and private meetings, courses, seminars and conferences, actively representing the Sociedad Rural Argentina at all information and decision-making levels, both in the country and abroad. The Institute also responds to the questions of SRA members who request information on agrotechnical, economic, tax, retirement or general legal issues.

Herd Books

The purpose of the Herd Books is to preserve the integrity of breeds of domestic animals in the country. The Sociedad Rural Argentina began keeping these Books because there was a need to guarantee the pureness of the breeds that were imported at the turn of the century when we were just beginning with livestock breeding. The first entry in a Herd Book goes back to 1888. It was a careful annotation by Mr. Leonardo Pereyra for his breeding operation "San Juan". The Book was later transferred to the SRA. Since then, and with the Shorton breed being the first group to be entered, the Sociedad Rural Argentina has registered over 150 Argentine bovine, equine, ovine, porcine, caprine, vulpine and camelidae breeds. The Herd Books have gained importance as they facilitate genetic improvement based on production traits.

These powerful selection tools known as "Mixed Models" or BLUP are scoring techniques which allow a faster and more precise selection as they combine genealogical history and individual production traits. Beef cattle breeds and dairy herds have increased their individual productivity, partly as a result of these techniques. The new genetic techniques being developed - particularly those in the field of biotechnology - require the

identification of the best animals to isolate the trait-carrying genes, and to guarantee the origin of the genetic engineering products. The Herd Books provide the basis and guarantee that these improvements require.

The Herd Books are a service that the SRA provides to all those interested in registering pedigree animals. The Books are handled by one Committee per breed which includes representatives of each Breeders' Association and of the Sociedad Rural Argentina. The functioning of the system is based on internationally recognised routine criteria and has established reciprocity with the Herd Books of most countries. Today's technology has enabled the SRA to load all its Herd Books on a computer-based information system. Since 1960, computers have been used to manage the SRA's Herd Books which have active files with over 2,000,000 pedigree entries for all the listed species and breeds. With the large database, the files can instantaneously generate the genealogy of planned pedigrees that go back 5 generations. Since the Herd Books were opened over a century ago, now they have a total of 6 million entries.

The Traditional Palermo Trade Show

The Palermo Trade Shows is the major annual trade show of Argentina, which is also very important for a large region of the Americas. It is held at the site the SRA has in Palermo, in the centre of the city of Buenos Aires, and it is the oldest agriculture, livestock and industrial trade show which also has a significant international presence. In its almost 12 hectare site, leading national and foreign companies in the industrial, trade, banking and services sectors share a presence with those that provide a full spectrum of inputs for the farming sector. It is the leading event and a really colourful celebration which has style and has become a means of mass communication with the 1,500,000 people who, on average, visit the fair. Year after year, over 2,000 breeders of cattle, horses, sheep, pigs and goats present state-of-the-art genetics of one of the most prestigious livestock grazing systems of the world. The Palermo Trade Show is an annual highlight in Argentina, and Buenos Aires vibrates with the energy and enthusiasm of the major celebration of the farmers.

Inmunogenetics Laboratory

Since 1973 seeking to be continuously at the forefront of scientific and technical achievements with the tools available to the breeders, the SRA created the Inmunogenetics Laboratory. The Laboratory can confirm the genealogy of cattle and horses with the same techniques about that the SRA's Herd Books use: blood typing and protein identification in animals. It is an efficient method to confirm the genealogy of animals and verify the certainty of blood lines when the breeders wish to select breeding animals with a specific genetic trait.

Since 1990, it is the only laboratory that the Argentina Jockey Club has approved for blood typing thoroughbred race horses and Arab horses.

The Laboratory is internationally recognised for the quantity and quality of the serologic reagents it produces and the techniques it uses. It provides testing services and counselling to other organizations in Peru, Uruguay, Chile, Paraguay and Brazil.

Press Office

The Press Office coordinates the SRA's relationship with the media - printed press, and radio and TV broadcasting stations - and concentrates all the public information generated by the Sociedad Rural Argentina, to convey a consistent position about the issues that defend the sector's interests. It keeps a large updated database with farming-related information that is a helpful tool for the different areas of the SRA.

Education

Education is one of the basic cornerstones of progress and evolution in a society. Far beyond collecting information and incorporating knowledge, training centres - with the systems and goals that define their specific purposes - provide groups of people with the skills to analyse, based on a concept of solidarity, a spirit of progress and a vocation to serve.

The Sociedad Rural Argentina is aware of its responsibility in this field and makes significant contributions, because it strongly believes in the future.

The ISEA (Institute of Studies, Training and Farming Extension)

offers young people the possibility of having adequate and modern learning and training systems which are adapted to today's needs, and which foster the continuous evolution and transformation of the farming sector. The Institute offers short graduate courses with a high academic level: Production and Management Expert Technician (2 years) and Farm Manager (1 year).

Extending its reach, the SRA offers a significant and generous support to the CEIDA (Centre of Studies and Research in Rural Leadership) which provides training to future farm leaders.

Public Farming Library

The Library is almost as old as the SRA because its founding principles stated the need to create "a library for farmers which should have the best national and foreign publications..." The Library today has over 50.000 books, brochures and journals, some of which go back to the last century and are a part of the Reserved Collection. It also has a modern database, which can be queried for information on the field data.

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CSOs

Platform for Young People in Agricultural Research for Development (PYPARD)

The recent European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) 2005 conference (Zurich, 27-29 April 2005) focussed on ARD issues and how these could contribute to poverty eradication, rural improvement through development and cooperation between North-South, South-South and West-East.

It was observed that:

- the majority of participants were highly experienced, articulate, with extensive knowledge of their subjects but were quite advanced in age
- very few of the participants were young researchers and their presentations were limited in number
- there are no separate youth-centred / youth-oriented fora or platforms where the younger representatives of stakeholders of the North and South can meet to explore opportunities for collaboration, brainstorm for collective benefit and develop their own capacities do that they can make a distinctive contribution to ARD.

It is very essential that the younger generation, whether they are researchers, farmers, activists of NGOs or journalists, should come together, establish / create measurable norms of excellence in the various ARD fields, organise their thoughts and activities on the progress in their fields and periodically measure their achievements against norms established by themselves and chart out further course of action. For this purpose, youth-centred/youth-oriented platforms or fora should be made available to them.

Inspiration for the platform came from the EFARD 2005 Conference. Those youth members who were present expressed their views on the debate on various issues on agricultural research for development. But at the end of the congress many of the participants realized the urgent need for a collective global interconnecting youth platform which could deal with information dissemination of research and development on agriculture, funding programmes of the North, collaborative partnerships and active involvement of youth from both North and South in advocacy of grassroot innovation. Hence the birth to PYPARD.

Based on the above facts and initial electronic discussion between the young people and ARD experts, a brain-storming meeting hosted by GFAR Secretariat was held in Rome on 12 July 2005, to further discuss on how to better involve the PYPARD in the global ARD discussions and

debates. The initiative will be presented to the GFAR Steering Committee during its meeting in Marrakech on 03 December 2005.

What PYPARD aims to achieve?

"Attract, encourage, and motivate young people to take up and continue activities related to Agricultural Research for Development (ARD), and to further their attitudinal changes towards future responsibilities and to boost innovation"

Who will be the members of PYPARD?

The platform will involve youth members from all over the world. The platform will be a well organized structure with active participation of both developed and developing country members. Members will include young researchers, journalists, NGOs, farmers groups and those involved in ARD activities in general.

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certification; and field exposure to Philippine rural communities practicing SA.

This is the second module of a three-year series on "Building Capacities of Asian NGOs in Poverty Eradication through Community Action" organized with major funding support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The program will be held on 6-25 November 2005, in Quezon City, Philippines. Interested parties from non-government organizations, farmers' groups and government agencies may apply for this program. To find out more about the training course and eligibility, visit www.angoc.ngo.ph/tctp/tctp-sa.html.

We strongly advise those interested to apply early, since according to our experience, the endorsement procedure can take up a considerable amount of time.

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N.A.

NGOs

ANGOC invites SA practitioners to join Training Program

The Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) is pleased to invite interested applicants engaged in sustainable agriculture (SA) initiatives to a 3-week training program entitled Sustainable Agriculture: A Viable Alternative for Resource Poor Farmers. Topics will include issues and trends facing agriculture; SA concepts, principles, practices and models; policy issues and tools for mainstreaming SA; marketing and

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