

Australian team leader Rob Williams and UNTL lecturer Adao Barbosa introduce Janette Howard to the new peanut variety Utumua during her visit to the 'Seeds of Life' project in Timor-Leste.



Prime Minister's wife visits Dili projects

DILI: On 26 July, Mrs Janette Howard, the wife of Australian Prime Minister John Howard, had an opportunity to view some ACIAR-associated projects during an official visit to East Timor. Staff from the Australian Embassy invited Mrs Howard to visit a 'Seeds of Life' (SOL) trial site in Hera, near the East Timor capital of Dili. Seeds of Life, which receives support from both ACIAR and AusAID, is a program within East Timor's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) that addresses the country's food-security issues.

Mrs Howard learnt of the program's ongoing research and on-farm trials with farmers in their fields. In addition, she met students and staff working at the University of Timor Loro Sa'e Laboratories (UNTL). The laboratory building and experimental farm had been restored, and university researchers and lecturers

trained, under a second ACIAR project that ran from 2001 to 2005. Mrs Howard then had the opportunity to taste the SOL-tested peanut variety Utumua, comparing for herself its larger, sweeter properties with those of the local variety.

The visitors later checked out the university's sweet potato testing site, where three high-performing sweet potato varieties recently released by MAFF were awaiting harvest.

Tony Fischer wins 2007 Farrer Memorial Medal

CANBERRA: Former ACIAR research program manager Dr Tony Fischer has won the 2007 Farrer Memorial Medal, an annual award established in 1911 to perpetuate the memory of famous Australian wheat rust researcher William Farrer and to encourage and inspire agricultural scientists.

In announcing the award, Farrer Memorial Trust Chairman Barry Buffier described Tony as the pre-

eminent Australian crop physiologist of his generation. Tony's main interest throughout his career has been wheat yield under both dry and well-watered conditions, with the goal of applying physiological knowledge to wheat improvement through breeding and agronomy. He has published more than 120 scientific publications, including several papers drawing on data from his own property in southern NSW where he kept crop, soil and climatic records

for more than 40 years.

Tony received his medal in August at a ceremony in Canberra held to coincide with the Crawford Fund 2007 Conference.

He then delivered the 2007 Farrer Memorial Oration.

Fisheries leaders meet in Townsville

TOWNSVILLE: The biennial ACIAR Fisheries Program meeting was held at James Cook University, in Townsville, Queensland, on 28 and 29 August 2007. It was coordinated by the Fisheries Program team—Barney Smith, Geoff Allan, Leonie Jenkins and Helena Heasman—with ACIAR deputy CEO John Skerritt, and Liz Clarke and Georgina Hickey from the ACIAR Communications Unit also participating. More than 30 Australian project leaders attended, along with representatives from key collaborating organisations such as the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA), the WorldFish



Dr Tony Fischer



ACIAR Fisheries program manager Barney Smith talks with project leader Dr Stephen Blaber of CSIRO at the Fisheries program meeting in Townsville, August 2007.

Center and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

The meeting provided a chance for all project leaders to become better acquainted with the broader work of ACIAR, to exchange ideas and, in some cases, to examine opportunities for linking projects to capture synergies. An important focus of the gathering was the exchange of lessons learnt in project implementation and management with a view to coming up with new solutions to common problems.

A large part of managing a project is the socio-cultural element. Individual project leaders repeatedly affirmed that ACIAR projects are not just about delivering scientific results, but involve the development of close friendships and a new understanding of life in developing countries.

The end point for ACIAR research is not research outcomes alone, it is making a difference in the community, and that spirit of intent was alive and well at the meeting.

ACIAR hosts Cambodian VIP

CANBERRA: In June 2007 ACIAR hosted a visit by His Excellency, Mr Chan Tong Yves, Secretary of State for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Cambodia. Dr Men Sarom, the director of the Cambodian Agriculture Research and Development Institute (CARDI),

accompanied Mr Chan.

After an initial briefing from ACIAR staff in Canberra, where he gained an overview of ACIAR's program in Cambodia, Mr Yves met representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and AusAID. Then he and Dr Men travelled to Tamworth to visit a zero-till farm. While in Tamworth they also met with Barry Buffier, the Director-General of the NSW Department of Primary Industries, and other representatives, before travelling on to Western Australia.

Farewell Ken and Bill

CANBERRA: Two long-time research program managers were farewelled recently when they retired from ACIAR.

Dr Ken Menz led the Agricultural Systems Economics and Management Program from July 1987. The program recognises the need for



(Left to right) Chan Tong Yves of MAFF Cambodia, ACIAR project leader Dr Bob Martin and Dr Men Sarom of CARDI meet farmer Neil Barwick on his zero-till farm in Tamworth, NSW.

researchers drawn from both the social and biophysical sciences to work with each other—and with research users—to develop effective agricultural production and marketing practices and resource management strategies. Ken had a particular focus on Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, Laos and the Philippines, and for one year during the 1990s took a 'sabbatical' from ACIAR to work at the Australian National University as a project leader for an ACIAR project in the Philippines.

Dr Bill Winter led the

Livestock Production Systems Program from January 2000. He encouraged research to improve the welfare of smallholders owning pigs or cattle, helping them to move from being 'keepers' to being 'producers', more engaged with markets, through research that increased livestock growth, reproductive performance and work capacity through better nutrition and management. In this regard he focused on projects in Indonesia and Vietnam, as well as East Timor and parts of China. He also took particular pride in the outcomes of project work in South Africa, where emerging African cattle farmers were learning to set their own priorities to develop and manage business enterprises that competed favourably with larger commercial undertakings.

Current and former colleagues were able to wish Ken and Bill all the best for their futures beyond ACIAR at a function held at The Old Canberra Inn on 12 July 2007.



Bill Winter and Ken Menz cut their farewell cake at a function held in their honour.

Crawford Fund seminar considers the future of biofuels

CANBERRA: The Crawford Fund held its annual agricultural development conference at Parliament House, Canberra, on 15 August 2007. Entitled ‘Biofuels, Energy and Agriculture: Powering Towards or Away from Food Security?’, it was opened by The Hon. Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Keynote speaker Dr Joachim von Braun, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), declared that world agriculture is at a turning point, with energy and climate change redefining the global food situation. In this new world, biofuels could help supply the rapidly growing market for liquid transport fuel, while at the same time moderating greenhouse gas emissions and creating employment opportunities and income growth for farmers. However, biofuels also pose challenges, especially for the poor in developing countries.

Current plans for biofuel production could divert land and water away from the production of food for humans and feed for livestock and increase food prices by 5–15% for various crops.



PHOTO: COURTESY CRAWFORD FUND

Above: IFPRI's Dr Joachim von Braun was the keynote speaker at this year's Crawford Fund conference, held in August 2007 in Canberra. Below: Biodiesel made from canola oil.

Other speakers picked up these themes. Lord Ron Oxburgh (Chairman of D1 Oils, a UK-based biodiesel producer, and a former Chairman of Shell Transport and Trading) believes that in the longer term biofuels have a crucial—and sustainable—role to play. Mr Michael Taylor (Secretary, Department of Transport and Regional Services) summarised the public policy instruments

and interventions that could be used to guide the development of biofuel industries nationally or globally. Dr Steve Schuck (Manager, Bioenergy Australia) outlined the processes used to produce so-called ‘first

generation’ biofuels (mainly ethanol derived from sugar, molasses or grain, and biodiesel derived from vegetable oils and animal fat).

Three speakers described the biofuel industries in Brazil, India and Australia. His Excellency Fernando de Mello Barreto (Brazilian Ambassador to Australia) described the biofuel industry in Brazil—a country that already derives almost half its total energy requirements from renewable sources. In contrast, Dr Alok Adolheya (The Energy and Resources Institute, India) described an embryonic biofuel industry in India—a country committed to producing biodiesel from non-edible oilseed crops such as jatropha to supply a significant share of rural energy needs. In the case of Australia, Dr John Wright (Director, CSIRO Energy Transformed Flagship Program) described a highly industrialised nation with a biofuel industry growing from a small base towards a modest initial target

(350 megalitres by 2010), using a diversity of mainly ‘first-generation’ feedstocks, and with a range of future options for transport fuels.

ACIAR Chief Executive Officer Peter Core identified some future priorities for research focused on the needs of developing countries. He named four research areas: improving the productivity of crops used in ‘first-generation’ technologies (including, for example, sweet sorghum, which can grow on marginal cropping land); better quality public policy to guide the development of biofuel industries; unlocking ‘second-generation’ technologies; and demonstrating the production of ‘second-generation’ biofuels. He cautioned against excessive diversion of scarce international agricultural research resources away from food production. “From a development perspective, more productive food crops and better quality public policy will provide a platform for biofuels,” he said.

NEW APPOINTMENTS



DR CAROLINE LEMERLE

Dr Caroline Lemerle has commenced as research program manager, Agricultural Systems and Economic Management. She brings to the position a wealth of experience and expertise with a multidisciplinary, extension-oriented and management background. Since early 2004 she has been a general manager of the National Rural Issues Portfolio (and before that the Sustainable Systems Program) at the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.

Before that she worked for 11 years as a senior executive within the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and a senior manager in NSW Agriculture. In the 1980s Caroline worked as a researcher with what is now the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, and in the late 1970s worked in Papua New Guinea in agricultural extension and teaching.

Budi has worked for 10 years throughout Indonesia, and gained field experience with NGOs to implement integrated pest management programs with farmers in central Java. She will implement Component 2 of ACIAR–SADI, evaluating ways to improve approaches to agricultural technology assessment and approaches to knowledge exchange between researchers and extensionists.

NGUYEN THI THANH AN

Nguyen Thi Thanh An is ACIAR's new Assistant Country Manager in Vietnam. An joins ACIAR from the Public Diplomacy Unit of the Embassy in Hanoi. An has been the Public Affairs and Media Liaison Officer since 2004, and has been involved in the area of public affairs for over six years. She has a degree in English and also held jobs as an office manager and an earlier career teaching English. An has particular skills in understanding different audiences, and appropriate methods to convey key messages to each group of audience. An's skills will help the Vietnam office communicate ACIAR's work and research results more effectively.



BUDI CHRISTIANA

Ms Budi Christiana joined the ACIAR–SADI office in Makassar in July. SADI, the Smallholder Agribusiness Development Initiative, aims to improve rural sector productivity and growth in four eastern Indonesian provinces—East Nusa Tenggara, West Nusa Tenggara, South-East Sulawesi and South Sulawesi.



ROBYN DOUGLAS

Robyn Douglas is the new program assistant for the Crop Improvement and Management research program area, assisting research program manager Dr Paul Fox. Robyn has just returned to the workforce after raising her four boys. Her interests and skills are diverse, ranging from flying light aircraft (she is the winner of three air races) to coordinating ACT Junior Squash.

JANET WILLIAMS

Janet Williams is the new program assistant for the Agricultural Systems Economics and Management program area, assisting Dr Caroline Lemerle. Janet has a Masters degree in communications from Deakin University, which included cultural and policy studies. Before coming to ACIAR, Janet worked as an administrative assistant in Aboriginal Health Services in Vancouver, Canada.



NEW PROJECTS

ADP/2007/044	Scoping study on impacts and policy implication of plausible futures for Indonesia and Australia
AH/2005/086	Best practice health and husbandry of cattle, Cambodia
ASEM/2006/060	Lao Agricultural Research Fund (LARF)
ASEM/2006/091	Enhancing tree seedling supply via economic and policy changes in the Philippines nursery sector
CIM/2006/040	Diversification and intensification of rainfed lowland cropping systems in Cambodia
CIM/2006/176	Developing molecular markers to enable selection against chalk in rice
FIS/2003/059	Sea ranching and restocking sandfish (<i>Holothuria scabra</i>) in Asia–Pacific
FIS/2005/078	Culture-based fisheries development in Lao PDR
FIS/2006/099	Capacity building and technology transfer in applied population genetics of aquatic species in the south of Vietnam
FIS/2006/144	Strengthening regional mechanisms to maximise benefits to smallholder shrimp farmer groups adopting better management practices (BMPs)
FIS/2006/172	Winged oyster pearl industry development in Tonga
FIS/2007/029	Support for antibiotic residue testing in fisheries products
FIS/2007/045	Evaluation of production technology, product quality and market potential for the development of bivalve mollusc aquaculture in the Philippines
FST/2004/054	Improving value and marketability of coconut wood
HORT/2004/030	Control of Asian honeybees in the Solomon Islands
HORT/2005/077	Integrated crop management package for sustainable smallholder gardens in the Solomon Islands
HORT/2006/053	Evaluation of the impact of Dasheen mosaic virus and other viruses on taro yield
HORT/2007/032	Detection surveys for mango seed and pulp weevils in Sarangani and Davao del Sur, Mindanao, the Philippines—Phase 2
LPS/2005/094	Improving the profitability of village broiler production in Papua New Guinea
LPS/2005/129	Mineral response in Tibetan livestock
LPS/2005/132	Improving dairy production in Pakistan through improved extension services
LPS/2006/149	Using local feeds to reduce the cost of pig and poultry production in Tonga
PLIA/2006/136	Economic and policy constraints affecting the development of small-scale dairy farmers in Pakistan
PLIA/2006/153	Evaluation of catchment filter pilot study in Shanxi, China
SMAR/2005/074	Improving cocoa production through farmer involvement in demonstration trials of potentially superior and pest/disease-resistant genotypes and integrated management practices
SMAR/2006/011	Enterprise development, value chains and evaluation of non-timber forest products for agroforestry systems in West Timor, Flores, Sumba and Savu, eastern Indonesia

SMAR/2006/061	LPS: Building capacity in the knowledge and adoption of Bali cattle improvement technology in South Sulawesi
SMAR/2006/080	West Timor integrated timber–forage–livestock agroforestry (scoping study)
SMAR/2006/096	LPS: Scaling-up herd management strategies in crop–livestock systems in Lombok, Indonesia
SMCN/2003/035	Improving the utilisation of water and soil resources for tree crop production in coastal areas of Vietnam and New South Wales
SMCN/2004/067	Soil fertility management in the Papua New Guinea highlands for sweet potato-based cropping systems

NEW PUBLICATIONS

MONOGRAPHS



Quality management of fresh produce from the highlands of Papua New Guinea: a postharvest manual

This spiral-bound postharvest manual is a valuable reference for farmers, marketers and extension personnel as they seek to improve the management and marketing of highlands-based fresh produce. *By Vincent Haguluha and Ernest Natera, edited by John Spriggs, 2007, ACIAR Monograph 128, \$40.00 GST inclusive (plus postage and handling).*

PROCEEDINGS

Integrated rural development in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

These proceedings report on an international workshop held in Kupang, in April 2006, to identify opportunities and constraints to improving livelihoods in East Nusa Tenggara using an integrated rural development approach, and to discuss directions for future activities. *Edited by S. Djoeroemana, B. Myers, J. Russell-Smith, M. Blyth and E.I.T. Salean, 2007, ACIAR Proceedings 126, \$45.00 GST inclusive (plus postage and handling).*



IMPACT ASSESSMENT SERIES

Mite pests of honey bees in the Asia-Pacific region

Mite pests of bees are one of the major production constraints facing the apiary industry throughout the world. In most countries, the mites are present and have a significant impact on productivity and production costs. In Australia, the only country in the world without these mites, the maintenance of effective quarantine strategies against them is a major aim. ACIAR has funded research on these pests for about 15 years, which has made a significant contribution internationally to a better understanding of the mites, especially *Varroa* species, and their host conditions. *By Michael Monck and David Pearce, 2007, ACIAR Impact Assessment Series 46.*

Improved Australian tree species for Vietnam

Australian tree species are being used extensively throughout the world because of their rapid growth and adaptability to many (harsh) environments. This study looks at the impact on Vietnam of some past ACIAR research activities. It shows that, through adaptation, significant improvements in productivity can be achieved by selecting tree provenances that are best suited to specific environments. *By Hayden Fisher and Jenny Gordon, 2007, ACIAR Impact Assessment Series 47.*



Assessment of capacity building: overcoming production constraints to sorghum in rainfed environments in India and Australia

This project uncovered new sorghum plant material with characteristics of considerable potential benefit to Australia. Through other Australian funding, this was subsequently developed into a new variety. Although no new sorghum varieties were developed in India, it markedly enhanced the capacity of the Indian collaborators in some new biotechnology research techniques. This enhanced capacity aided successful application for funding from other sources. *By Chloë Longmore, Jenny Gordon and M. Cynthia Bantilan, 2007, ACIAR Impact Assessment Series 48.*

Minimising impacts of fungal disease of eucalypts in South-East Asia

Eucalypt species are relatively free of pests and diseases when introduced into new environments, which has led to large areas under plantation throughout the world. However as the plantation areas increase so does the threat of pest and disease introduction. This ACIAR project found new genetic material with enhanced disease resistance. It also used climatic modelling to identify high disease-risk regions. *By Hayden Fisher and Jenny Gordon, 2007, ACIAR Impact Assessment Series 49.*

Improved trade in mangoes from the Philippines, Thailand and Australia

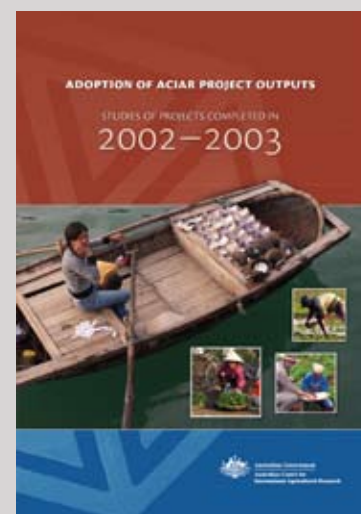
This impact assessment focused on two ACIAR mango projects, looking at production cycles and quarantine requirements in export markets. The production cycle project was a high-risk project in a very complex area and it did not have direct impacts, but it did initiate further research. The quarantine requirement project was a lower-risk project and it generated significant returns on investment. *By Michael Monck and David Pearce, 2007, ACIAR Impact Assessment Series 50.*

Growing trees on salt-affected land

Salinity and waterlogging are significant problems in a wide range of agricultural areas throughout the world. It has been found that some Australian species, including species in the genera *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia*, have adapted to thrive in these conditions. Bioremediation using such trees has often been suggested as a potentially lower-cost alternative to physical methods, however adoption has not been high. This is probably due to the development costs and relatively long investment periods before seeing a return. *By James Corbishley and David Pearce, 2007, ACIAR Impact Assessment Series 51.*

Adoption of ACIAR project outputs: studies of projects completed in 2002–2003

Adoption studies are undertaken three to four years after a large project is completed to assess the level of uptake and the legacy of the project. They provide valuable insights into the uptake of project results and the impact on local communities. This adoption study looks at projects completed in 2002–03. *Edited by Jenny Gordon and Jeff Davis, 2007.*



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