

Fellowship winner begins sandalwood research

An ACIAR project working to stimulate the development of the emerging sandalwood oil industry through genetic improvement of sandalwood trees has been enhanced through the latest John Allwright Fellowship awards. One of the latest recipients is Hanington Tate, the leader of the ACIAR sandalwood project in Vanuatu.

In February 2006, Mr Tate began studying for a Masters degree in Tropical Plant Science at James Cook University under the supervision of ACIAR project leader Roger Leakey. The title of his thesis is 'Domestication of sandalwood (*Santalum austrocaledonicum*) for agroforestry in Vanuatu.'

"My proposed study will focus on biological investigations of sandalwood that will contribute valuable information for use in its domestication in Vanuatu, and will have wider implications for domestication of other sandalwood species," Mr Tate says.

Produced from the heartwood of sandalwood trees, sandalwood oil is a valuable commodity that is widely used in perfumes, medicines and incense. Sandalwood has been and will continue to be an important high-value product in many remote areas in Vanuatu, where it grows naturally.

"To ensure that investment is worthwhile, it is most important that the economic analysis of *S. austrocaledonicum*, which is the main sandalwood species grown in Vanuatu, is well undertaken," he says.

Mr Tate's Masters project will build on the domestication strategy for the ACIAR project through investigating current breeding systems of *Santalum* in Vanuatu and identifying optimum vegetative propagation.

Mr Tate has worked for the Vanuatu Department of Forests for the past 10 years, most recently as the acting Director of Forests (Policy and Planning).

The ACIAR Fellowships Scheme was introduced in 1986 to provide the opportunity for partner country scientists involved in ACIAR-supported collaborative research projects to obtain postgraduate qualifications at Australian tertiary institutions. The primary aim of the scheme is to enhance research capacity in ACIAR's partner country institutions. Postgraduate studies undertaken by each award recipient are based on the research work being carried out under the collaborative research project in which the award recipient is engaged prior to taking up the award.



Roger Leakey and Hanington Tate

Australia Day honour for John Copland

ACIAR research program manager Dr John Copland was recognised in the 2006 Australia Day honours. He has been made an Officer in the Order of Australia for service to veterinary science, particularly in the areas of veterinary parasitology and fish pathology, and the application of this research to agricultural programs in developing countries.

In recent years, Dr Copland's program has been responsible for animal health and production projects including major successful projects on rodent control in Southeast Asia, and developing a thermotolerant vaccine for Newcastle Disease for village and commercial poultry production systems. This vaccine has been widely adopted in Africa and Southeast Asia.

Dr Copland, who is taking pre-retirement leave from ACIAR, is well known among animal health and production researchers in Asia and Australia. He joined ACIAR in 1983 as the first research program coordinator for livestock and later established

Dr John Copland



the ACIAR fisheries program, which had a major emphasis on management of the giant clam and the management of coconut crabs and bait fish for the tuna fisheries in the South Pacific. In addition, he laid the foundations for the second livestock program in ACIAR. From 1990 to 1992 he took leave of absence and was based in Indonesia where he carried out an agricultural sector review for AIDAB and a variety of assignments, including a risk assessment on the introduction of exotic fish species in Papua New Guinea for FAO and lecturing on fish quarantine at the Universiti Pertanian, Malaysia.

Dr Copland has been actively involved in a number of Australian and international committees and societies and was a reviewer for several international journals. Among his awards and honours are the PNG Independence Medal in 1976, the AIDAB Award in 1988 for Excellence (jointly with Professor Peter Spradbrow from the University of Queensland), and the 1996 Kesteven Medal for International Animal Health Research and Development. He has a Bachelor of Veterinary Science and a PhD from the University of Sydney, as well as a Master of Science (Aquaculture) from the University of Stirling, UK. In 1979, he was awarded the Royal Highlands and Pastoral Society Medal and the Maudsley-Thomas Prize for fish pathology and was a Nuffield Scholar.

Before joining ACIAR, Dr Copland spent seven years in the livestock sector in PNG and returned to Australia in 1976 to set up the North East Regional Veterinary Laboratory in Victoria as the foundation director. In 1980 he established at Benalla, Victoria, the National Fish Health Reference Laboratory in Australia.

Participatory Agricultural Extension in the Pacific

An 'Extension Summit' held in Tonga in November 2005 brought together a wide array of policy and extension decision-makers in governments, regional organisations, tertiary institutions, NGOs and private sector organisations in Pacific Island countries and territories. The main purpose was to assess the successes of participatory approaches in the region and to contribute to generating support for participatory agricultural research and extension, recognising that, to be effective, extension agencies and officials need to adjust their management and methods of delivering services.

ACIAR senior adviser Dr Simon Hearn presented a paper on lessons learnt from the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in agricultural extension. The paper drew on Australian experience and looked at how the lessons learnt might be applied in a developing country context, examining both new and more traditional systems of ICT. Examples of work on ICT being undertaken in ACIAR projects were also provided.

The approach of the conference was to listen to the experiences of Pacific countries, examine the extension problems and limitations and develop recommendations for moving forward in this important area.

The essential element of participatory agricultural research and extension is the facilitation of learning processes in rural communities by empowering people to make decisions about improvements to their own livelihood, through activities such as farmer field schools, participatory technology development and participatory plant breeding.

The impact and utilisation of this approach in the Pacific has been limited. Most Pacific countries still rely on the traditional delivery systems of extension services on a linear or top-down transfer basis.

Conference proceedings illustrated that progress is unlikely to occur without significant intervention and partnerships between governments, NGOs and private sector organisations. The enthusiasm for improved extension (while not surprising among extension workers) was the main positive from the conference. The lack of funding and coordination, as well as unconstructive differences between government extension services and NGOs, were the main negatives, according to Dr Hearn.

A coordinating group has been established to follow up conference deliberations and design a plan for the future. ACIAR will maintain contact with this group, not least because the summit has underlined the critical importance for ACIAR and other research organisations of securing improved extension to maximise the scope for research adoption and effective project development in the future.

'Seeds of Life 2' project launched in Dili

"Australian assistance is going to make a real difference to agriculture in this country," said East Timor's Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Senhor Estanislau da Silva, at the launch of the new 'Seeds of Life 2' project in Dili recently. The new project, funded by the Australian Government, is a five-year, A\$7 million project that will work in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to improve food security in East Timor through the use of improved crop varieties and associated technologies to result in increased food production.

The focus of the project is on major food crops such as maize, sweet potato and cassava, and on upland and dryland agriculture in particular, which face the biggest food security challenges. These are major priorities in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Policy and Strategic Framework.

The project is jointly funded by AusAID and ACIAR in partnership with the Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture (CLIMA).

"The new seeds from this project will help the people of Timor-Leste feed themselves," said Ms Margaret Twomey, the Australian Ambassador in Timor-Leste.

"The project will ensure the new improved varieties are thoroughly tested against the standards that mean the most for the Timorese – such as reliability and taste. Everything will be tested in real farm conditions."

Stakeholder survey

ACIAR has recently published the results of a survey of its Australian stakeholders and the ACIAR response. The survey, carried out by Professor Tim Reeves and Professor Graeme Robertson, involved interviews with 61 stakeholders from the government, industry and research sectors, using a pre-designed questionnaire.

The questions and related discussion were based on six key strategic themes: ACIAR's role and performance; operating environment; developing and managing projects; prioritisation of R&D agenda; ACIAR's resource allocations; and research adoption and communication. The feedback generated from the survey,



The Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Estanislau da Silva, at the Seeds of Life 2 project launch in Dili.

ROUNDUP

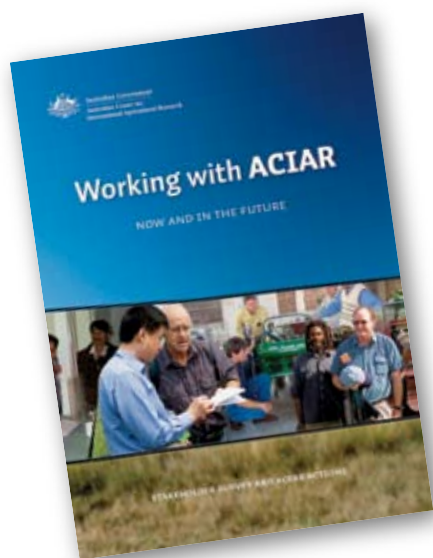
together with a range of recommendations for the improvement of future directions and operations, was delivered in November 2005. ACIAR has addressed the views and recommendations provided by the survey and designed an action plan in response.

According to the stakeholders interviewed, ACIAR has an impact in partner countries well in excess of resources applied and communicates very well with those overseas partners. Many Australian stakeholders benefited from their partnership with ACIAR, through development of an international perspective and associated staff development and science linkages.

While, overall, stakeholders believe that ACIAR has developed an outstanding reputation for achieving project outcomes that have made a positive impact in developing countries and contributed significantly to Australia's interests, some areas were identified where improvements could be made. These mainly focused on improving the transparency of the project selection process and communication with Australian stakeholders in setting strategic directions and priorities.

These suggestions and recommendations form the basis of the management action plan.

To see the report *Working with ACIAR now and in the future*, visit www.aciar.gov.au. For a printed copy of the report, contact comms@aciarc.gov.au



NEW APPOINTMENTS

Les Baxter

Research program manager for ACIAR's new horticulture program is Mr Les Baxter. Les has a Bachelors degree in horticulture with first-class honours, two Masters degrees (Research Masters in agriculture and a MBA), a Postgraduate Diploma in law and a Company Directors Diploma. He has wide experience across the total supply chain from production, crop protection, processing through to marketing and more than 20 years experience in horticulture and related industries, with 11 of those years working in research and development.

Mr Baxter began his career in industry as a research agronomist and has worked for both the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries as a researcher and research manager, rising to the position of manager of the horticulture branch. In mid-1997, Les was appointed program manager at the (then) Australian Horticultural R&D Corporation and from January 2000 to mid-2001 was its acting chief executive. Over the past five years, Les has worked in senior management roles with IDP Education Australia, AusIndustry and the Illawarra Technology Corporation.

The horticulture program is expected to have a primary geographic focus in South Asia (including the Pakistan Agriculture Sector Linkages Program), the Philippines, the Pacific, Laos and Cambodia.



Executive Assistant/ Training Project Officer

Mrs Cherree Webeck has also started working at ACIAR in a new position as executive assistant/ training project officer. As well as being executive assistant to the deputy director, Cherree is providing support in the training program.

Before joining ACIAR, Cherree worked as office manager for the ACT Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission, where she also had responsibility for improving records management and managed the website. Prior to that she had worked as an executive assistant for the Maltese High Commissioner to Canberra.

In the 1990s, she worked as office manager/correspondence specialist for the USDA counsellor at the American Embassy in Canberra, and in Western Australia provided administrative support for the Department of Conservation and Land Management.



ROUNDUP

NEW PROJECTS

ADP/2005/006	Scoping study on trade policy reform in Vietnam
ASEM/2004/041	Productivity and marketing enhancement for peanuts in Papua New Guinea and Australia
FIS/2002/076	Land capability assessment and classification for sustainable pond-based aquaculture systems
FST/2002/112	Domestication of <i>Meliaceae</i> species in Southeast Asia and Australia, particularly management of the problem of <i>Hypsipyla robusta</i> attack
HORT/2004/063	Integrated pest management in a sustainable production system for Brassica crops in Fiji and Samoa
HORT/2003/045	Improvement of vegetable production and post-harvest management systems in Cambodia and Australia
PLIA/2005/148	Papua New Guinea coffee and cocoa policy linkages scoping study
SMCN/2004/035	Technology for direct drilling into rice and other heavy stubbles in Pakistan and Australia

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Monographs

[Better-practice approaches for culture-based fisheries development in Asia](#)

Culture-based fisheries are an effective way of increasing supplies of fish in rural areas. Farmers with relatively little experience in fish culture can productively engage, manage and benefit from culture-based fisheries around lakes and reservoirs. This manual will provide guidance to development workers and program planners for integrating community based fisheries into rural development plans. The manual is being translated into Laotian by the Mekong River Commission. Sena De Silva, Upali Amarasinghe and Thuy Nguyen (eds). ACIAR Monograph 120, \$24 (plus postage and handling).

EXTRACT:

What is the 'better practice approach' and why is it needed?

It is important to outline the major factors causing some nations to fail in their attempts to popularise culture-based fisheries. These factors could be common to most nations planning to develop culture-based fisheries as a rural fish production strategy.

Some of the factors that contributed to previous failures:

- ▶ lack of sufficient and effective community consultations;
- ▶ lack of cooperation and/or consultation among multiple users of the water bodies, often leading to conflicts among the users and government authorities;
- ▶ unavailability of suitable seed stock, often a problem of timing to coincide

with periodic filling of the water bodies;

- ▶ lack of suitable preparation of the water bodies prior to stocking, for example, removal of unwanted fish, including carnivorous species;
- ▶ ineffective training of potential fish farmers;
- ▶ heavily subsidised developments;
- ▶ inadequate and inappropriate legislation; and
- ▶ poor marketing strategies

The better-practice approach takes these reasons into account, along with recently accumulated scientific, social, and economic knowledge on culture-based fisheries. This approach also provides a comprehensive and pragmatic strategy to successfully develop culture-based fisheries in rural Asia as an important and significant fish production strategy.

Proceedings

[Evaluation and performance of permanent raised-bed cropping systems in Asia, Australia and Mexico](#)

Permanent raised-bed cropping systems are being adopted under a wide range of irrigated and dryland farming conditions. ACIAR has supported research into permanent raised-bed systems in Asia and Australia. Results from these projects and other research were presented at a workshop in 2005. The papers in this proceedings bring together the work that was presented at the workshop and provide a valuable resource for researchers and practitioners of permanent raised-bed cropping systems. C H Roth, R A Fischer and C A Meisner (eds). ACIAR Proceedings 121, \$28 (plus postage and handling).

Impact Assessment Series

[Management of fruit flies in the Pacific](#)

Economic analysis of project benefits and costs suggests that the total investment in fruit fly research will deliver considerable benefits, mainly to Fiji, but also to Tonga, Samoa, the Cook Islands and Vanuatu. Ross McLeod. ACIAR Impact Assessment Series No. 37

Working papers

[Economics and marketing of the live reef fish trade in Asia-Pacific](#)

Papers from a workshop to examine the status of the live reef fish trade and the issues faced by the various countries involved. Brian Johnston and Being Yeeting (eds). ACIAR Working Paper 60.

The impact assessment series and working papers are freely available as pdf files at www.aciar.gov.au

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