

ROUNDUP

BOARD TOUCHES BASE WITH MEKONG PARTNERS

During a recent visit to Thailand, Laos and Cambodia in late July, ACIAR's Board of Management met key research partners, senior government and Australian Embassy officials, NGOs and farmers. This was a valuable opportunity to discuss policy and also to examine the progress of field research in each country and to see farm-level adoption in action.

Each year the Board holds one meeting in a partner country. This allows the Board to promote ACIAR and its key relationships and also obtain a first-hand understanding of the agricultural research and development framework, policy directions and priorities of key partner countries. This was the Board's first visit to Laos and Cambodia and its second to Thailand.

The Board visited the ACIAR–World Vision project on low-cost aquaculture in north-east Thailand and was warmly welcomed by the Governor of Udon Thani province, government officials and local farmers. The project has introduced low-cost fish feeds based on locally available ingredients to aquaculture farmers in Udon Thani and Surin provinces. The Board saw first-hand the project's impact on food security and incomes of smallholder farmers and the strength of World Vision as a facilitator of community development.

In Laos the Board met with the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry and a range of senior officials and research providers. It was clear from discussions that ACIAR's strategic priorities (as outlined in the Annual Operating Plan) are regarded as well targeted: alternatives to shifting cultivation in upland areas and agricultural diversification to improve productivity of lowland farming systems.

The Cambodian leg of the program included discussions with high-level officials and research institutions and provided the opportunity to learn more about the Cambodian government's strategy for



The chair of ACIAR's Board of Management, Dr Meryl Williams, plants a tree outside the research facilities at the National Agricultural Research Centre (part of the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute) to mark the Board's visit to Laos.

national development and agricultural priorities. Visits to research institutions highlighted the success of projects with partners including the Vegetable Research Station, the Cambodian Development Resource Institute, the Royal University of Agriculture and the Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI). The visit covered much of the Cambodian Agricultural Research Fund (CARF) project work and highlighted the capacity-building value of the recently expanded John Allwright Fellowship program.

Board members also met with two Australian Volunteers International (AVI) staff working at the Animal Health Laboratory in Vientiane, Laos, and at the small-scale fish-farming project at the Royal University of Agriculture in Cambodia. They saw the added benefits to project teams and often long-term commitment by AVI to the development program in the region.

Given the close operational links between

(Below, left to right) ACIAR Board of Management chair Dr Meryl Williams and the Governor of Udon Thani province, Thailand, inspect the frogs reared by the ACIAR–World Vision aquaculture project.



ACIAR and the Crawford Fund, the Board was accompanied by the chair of the fund, the Hon. Neil Andrew. The Crawford Fund was able to identify a range of opportunities for establishing and enhancing extension work, and targeted areas for training and masterclasses.

Board members noted the importance of linking ACIAR work with donor project work in the Mekong region and complementing other larger donor programs. The visit will help future programs meet the needs and priorities of Mekong partner countries, in which agriculture is a significant proportion of both GDP and employment. ◀

EXPANSION OF THE JOHN ALLWRIGHT FELLOWSHIP SCHEME

In 2006–07 ACIAR, with co-investment from AusAID, will significantly increase the size of the John Allwright Fellowship scheme, with the aim of maintaining more than 60 active fellowships during the year. In the 2005–06 financial year, A\$1.54 million was spent on the JAF scheme, with 57 active fellowships representing 14 countries.

During this time 13 fellows successfully completed their studies and 15 new candidates—from Fiji, India, Indonesia, Laos, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Vietnam—commenced at eight universities in Australia.

Fellowships in 2006–07 will be open to scientists and economists from Papua New Guinea, ACIAR's six Pacific island partners, East Timor, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, western China and the Republic of South Africa. For information regarding the selection and application information visit www.aciar.gov.au.

John Allwright Fellowships are awarded to developing-country project scientists actively involved in an ACIAR project. The fellowships are undertaken at Australian universities for postgraduate diplomas, Masters or PhD training, and research topics



ACIAR John Allwright postgraduate students visiting the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Bruce Billson MP, at Parliament House, Canberra, in December 2005.

are related to, but not part of, the existing ACIAR project. The fellowship scheme is designed to benefit both the individual awarded a place and the partner country institution involved in the ACIAR project.

A meeting of new fellows held annually

at ACIAR headquarters provides training in science communication, writing research papers and an opportunity for networking, while the John Allwright Alumni Association works to ensure fellows remain an important part of the ACIAR network. ◀

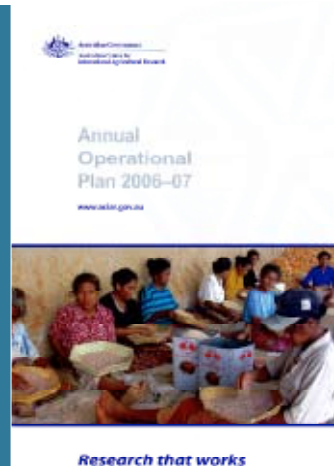
New Annual Operational Plan

ACIAR's 2006–07 Annual Operational Plan (AOP) has been released and is now available on the ACIAR website. The AOP is our key communication document on operational issues with Australian and overseas partners and stakeholders. It provides transparency about our program and priorities at the country level, along with detailed project listings.

The AOP is a result of detailed consultations with partner countries; we like to think of it as the hard-copy 'roadmap' with all the nitty-gritty detail provided at www.aciar.gov.au. Hard copies can also

be obtained from the ACIAR Communications Unit (email: comms@aciarc.gov.au).

Two new appendixes have been added to the document this year: 'ACIAR's sectoral/industry strategies for 2006–07' and 'Cross-cutting issues to be addressed in 2006–07'. These new features were added in response to valuable feedback from our Australian stakeholders on the need to identify a clear statement of ACIAR's priorities in individual industry sectors (for example, tropical fruits) or cross-cutting issues (for example, biosecurity or agricultural policy).



Research that works

ROUNDUP

Dr Peter Horne



NEW APPOINTMENTS

Dr Peter Horne

Dr Peter Horne, an Australian citizen, has worked for 10 years as a team leader with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture and CSIRO, leading adaptive research for smallholder crop-livestock systems in South-East Asia. For most of this time he was working as an AusAID team leader, with significant experience in management and reporting roles. Prior to this he worked on a US Department of Agriculture field agricultural project in North Sumatra, and before that on an ACIAR project with the University of New England in southern China for four years. He has also worked recently as a consultant on animal health to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and to World Vision Australia. Peter will take up the position of manager of the Support for Market-Driven Adaptive Research (SMAR) subprogram of the Indonesian Smallholder Agribusiness Development Initiative, which is a major joint initiative of AusAID, the World Bank, International Finance Corporation and ACIAR. Peter will be based in Makassar, Sulawesi, where ACIAR will also establish a subprogram office.

Dr Rob Caudwell



Dr Rob Caudwell

Dr Rob Caudwell is a British national with a first-class honours degree in agriculture, a PhD in tropical agriculture and an MBA from the UK's Open University. He is currently agriculture sector senior adviser with the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) in Bangladesh, managing a US\$7 million annual program encompassing research, institutional development and extension across a range of areas of crops, agribusiness and aquaculture. He has worked as a consultant in Sumatra and Java on estate crop and agribusiness research, development and extension involving private-public sector partnerships. He was also officer in charge of research stations for the Oil Palm Research Association in Papua New Guinea (establishing their pest-management programs), which involved managing three research stations and establishing workable management systems. Rob takes up the position of international institutional development adviser for the Support for Market-Driven Adaptive Research (SMAR) subprogram, and will be located within the Agency for Agricultural Research and Development facilities based in Bogor, West Java.

Georgina Hickey



Georgina Hickey

Georgina Hickey joins ACIAR from the Australian Museum Publishing Unit where she was editor of *Nature Australia* magazine. Georgie holds a Bachelor of Science (Zoology and Mathematics) from the University of New South Wales. During her 22 years as editor, *Nature Australia* won 13 Whitley Awards for best zoological periodical and two Australian Heritage Awards for excellence in scientific publications. Georgie was awarded a Special Commendation from the Royal Zoological Society of NSW in recognition of outstanding services to the promotion of Australasian zoology. Georgie has edited a number of books, and developed and edited websites. She has taken up the position of publications manager at ACIAR.

Catriona Murray



Catriona Murray

Catriona Murray joins ACIAR as country manager for China, based in Beijing. Cat has a Bachelor of Environmental Design from the University of South Australia and a Diploma of Events Management from Flinders University. She has worked as industry liaison officer for the Agri-Food Industry Skills Council, as a senior project officer for the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and as managing director of Australian Certified Organic Pty Ltd. During the past 12 months Cat was a participant in the Australian Rural Leadership Program, sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. She has a wide range of experience in international liaison with government and NGOs, project management, planning and administration.

NEW PROJECTS

- ADP/2004/028 Social capital and rural development in eastern Indonesia
- ADP/2004/032 Identification of policy responses to minimise negative socioeconomic impacts of an avian influenza epidemic in Indonesia
- AH/2004/020 The development of a national surveillance system for classical swine fever, avian influenza and foot-and-mouth disease in Indonesia
- AH/2004/040 The epidemiology, pathogenesis and control of highly pathogenic avian influenza in ducks in Indonesia and Vietnam
- AH/2004/074 Large-scale production of a vaccine and diagnostic reagents for Jembrana disease in Indonesia
- ASEM/2004/017 Assessment and improvement of quality management during postharvest processing and storage of coffee in Papua New Guinea
- ASEM/2004/047 Sustainable management of coffee green scales in PNG
- CP/2003/042 Fruit fly management in Papua New Guinea
- CP/2004/048 Integrated disease management (IDM) for anthracnose, *Phytophthora* blight and whitefly transmitted geminiviruses in chilli pepper in Indonesia
- CP/2004/064 Biological control of 'mile-a-minute' (*Mikania micrantha*) in Papua New Guinea and Fiji
- CP/2004/071 Reducing pest and disease impact on yield in selected Papua New Guinea sweet potato production systems
- CP/2005/136 Mitigating the threat of banana Fusarium wilt: understanding the agro-ecological distribution of pathogenic forms and developing disease management strategies
- FIS/2004/065 Culture of promising indigenous fish species and bioremediation for barramundi aquaculture in northern Australia and Papua New Guinea
- FIS/2005/096 Assessment of the impact of the Papua New Guinea purse seine fishery on tuna stocks, with special focus on the impact of fish aggregation devices (FADs)
- FIS/2006/001 Increasing capacity for regional fish feed manufacture in Papua New Guinea
- FST/2003/048 Management of fungal root rot in plantation acacias in Indonesia
- FST/2004/055 Domestication and commercialisation of *Canarium indicum* in Papua New Guinea
- FST/2004/058 Realising genetic gains in Indonesian and Australian plantations through water and nutrient management
- HORT/2004/049 Improved farming systems for managing soil-borne pathogens of ginger in Fiji and Australia
- HORT/2006/006 Development of an embryo culture manual and an embryo transplantation technique for coconut germplasm movement and seedling production of elite coconut types
- LPS/2005/052 The development of cattle and buffalo breeding strategies and activities based on BREEDPLAN in Thailand

- LWR/2004/069 Minimising agricultural pollution to enhance water quality in Laguna de Bay (the Philippines) and Mt Lofty Ranges (Australia)
- SFS/2003/060 Implementation of rodent management in intensive irrigated rice production systems in Indonesia and Vietnam
- SMCN/2006/045 Modelling minimum residue thresholds for soil conservation benefits in tropical, semi-arid cropping systems

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Monographs

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND POLICY IN VIETNAM

Until 1980 most agricultural land in Vietnam was cooperatively used, with farm decisions being made by the central government. This system resulted in a fall in rice production below that needed to sustain the population, leading to serious food shortages. Since 1981, new policies to decollectivise agriculture have had considerable effect, with Vietnam now self-sufficient in rice and a large exporter. However, the impacts of these policies at the farm level have been little investigated. This monograph synthesises the results of an ACIAR-funded project that assessed the impact of Vietnam's new government policies on agricultural land use during the transformation to a market-based economy. In the process, the project also provided opportunities for Vietnamese researchers to develop their skills in agricultural policy research, formulation and analysis.

Sally P. Marsh, T. Gordon MacAulay and Pham Van Hung (eds). ACIAR Monograph 123, \$24.00 GST inclusive (plus postage and handling).

Proceedings

AGRICULTURAL WATER MANAGEMENT IN CHINA

The papers in these proceedings bring together the results of research on agricultural water use arising from ACIAR-supported projects over the past decade. The research ranges in scale from studies made in farmers' fields through to consideration of water allocation in the entire Yellow River Basin, northern China. Originally presented at a workshop in Beijing in September 2005, the papers reinforce the need for improvement in agricultural water use in China. Studies have shown that reduced water use by agriculture is possible while simultaneously maintaining crop yields and maintaining farmers' incomes. However, adoption and implementation of research findings are still limited and require fundamental reform in terms of legislation, institutions and regulatory frameworks. Future research needs to steadily build the case for reforms, while equipping farmers and water resource managers with the means to respond to the reforms.

Ian R. Willett and Zhanyi Gao (eds). ACIAR Proceedings 123, \$24.00 GST inclusive (plus postage and handling).