



Australian Government

**Australian Centre for
International Agricultural Research**

John Allwright Alumni Association Newsletter – April 2007

Welcome to the first edition of the John Allwright Alumni Association Newsletter for 2007. Through this newsletter, ACIAR is maintaining linkages with all of the former students that we supported through the John Allwright (postgraduate) Fellowship program, and who have now returned to their home countries. Alumni keep involved with ACIAR in other ways. Some have a leadership role in projects. Others have been invited to assist in the delivery of short ACIAR-sponsored training courses in-country. In 2006 and 2007, Alumni have been involved in assisting as tutors in a number of short training courses. JAF Alumni are also invited to in-country functions – including country consultations, training activities and impact assessment meetings, among other functions.

What's news?

John Dillon Memorial Fellowship

Seven John Dillon Fellows recently completed five weeks training in research management in Australia. The primary aim of the award is to provide a leadership development opportunity in the area of agricultural research management, agricultural policy and/or extension technologies through exposure to Australian agriculture across a range of best-practice organisations involved in research, extension and/or policy making. The award is available to researchers from developing countries who are currently participating in, or have recently participated in one of ACIAR's research projects and who are demonstrating outstanding potential as future research managers and leaders. Since the inception of the award in 2003, a number of awardees have been former John Allwright Fellows. The awards have a value of approximately \$20,000 each, primarily covering airfares, training and living allowance.

Awardees for 2007 were:

- Dr Madonna Casimero, Chief Science Research Specialist, Philippine Rice Research Institute, Nueva Ecija, Philippines.
- Ms Ismayanti, Head, Bilateral Cooperation Unit, Bureau of Planning and Foreign Cooperation, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Jakarta, Indonesia.
- Mr Khamouane Khamphoukeo, Head of Planning Unit of Research and Management Division, National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute, Vientiane, Lao PDR.
- Mr Igusti Made Kusnarta, Director of the Research Centre for Water Resources and Agroclimate, the University of Mataram, Indonesia.
- Mr Jeff Mkhari, Manager, Agronomic Research and Evaluation, Limpopo Department of Agriculture, Polokwane, Republic of South Africa.

- Dr Nguyen Xuan Ba, Senior Lecturer, Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry, Hue, Vietnam.
- Mr Michael Poesi, Acting Program Leader, PNG Forest Research Institute, Lae, Papua New Guinea.

As with previous John Dillon Fellowship visits, this was a very successful activity with excellent support from host organisations such as University of Melbourne, Charles Sturt University, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, various Cooperative Research Centres, Rural Research and Development Corporations and CSIRO Divisions. The CRC model provided some stimulating ideas for the elusive 'best' institutional structure for their research systems. Feedback on the management course at Mt Eliza and formal training at Melbourne Business School on defining research project deliverables and research commercialisation was again most positive. All enjoyed the experience of attending Question Time at Parliament House ahead of the presentation of plaques by Minister Downer.

Call for 2008 John Dillon Fellowship awards

We will soon be calling for applications for John Dillon Memorial Fellowships to be awarded for 2008. The fellowship provides an opportunity for developing the leadership skills of some of the best younger agricultural scientists or economists from our partner countries. This is achieved through exposure to Australian agriculture across a range of best practice organisations involved in research, extension and/or policy-making. The fellowship is highly selective and since its inception in 2002, we have awarded 26 Fellowships from approximately 190 applications. About one quarter of the Fellowships have been awarded to JAF Alumni.

In general:

- Fellowships will normally be for a 5-6 week period in Australia
- The Fellowship is offered to 4-6 individuals annually
- Applicants should be under 45 at the time of application
- The applicants must be associated with ACIAR bilateral projects that are either active or completed in the last 24 months.
- The Fellow can be associated with either a NARS or a CGIAR centre (if the applicant is involved in an ACIAR bilateral project), but must be a citizen of an ACIAR partner country.

We stress that the visit program is not intended for project operations and that applications must clearly show how the applicant's leadership skills will be developed. For further information, please contact Sharon Harvey, Harvey@aciar.gov.au. Applications close 31 July 2007.

John Allwright Fellowships

As of the end of April 2007, ACIAR has 65 active John Allwright Fellows studying at Australian universities, 22 of whom are women and 43 are men. Since October 2006, 31 new Fellows have started and a further 19 awardees are due to commence in June/July 2007.

The Training Committee met on 19 April 2007 to consider the first round of applications for John Allwright Fellowships for the 2008 academic year. A record number (80) of applications was received, and between 35 and 45 will be offered scholarships – more information in the next Alumni newsletter.

New JAF Alumni

Since December 2006, three fellowships have been successfully completed and two have concluded without meeting the course requirement. The three successful students are:

- Mr Solomon Balagawi (Papua New Guinea) – PhD on fruit fly biology, principles of insect ecology and how these affect the practice of pest management.
- Mr Aisi Anas (Papua New Guinea) – PhD on “To develop a management plan for the barramundi fishery in Western Province and Fly River in Papua New Guinea”. He has returned to Papua New Guinea after completing the first draft of his thesis.
- Mr Peter Wai’in (Papua New Guinea) - PhD on “Epidemiology of *Leptospira* sp. infection in Papua New Guinea”.

Indonesia country consultations

Priorities for collaborative agricultural research between Australia and Indonesia were discussed on 19-23 February 2007 in Jakarta at a series of meetings between ACIAR and representatives of relevant Government Agencies, Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI), universities, the private sector, non-government organisations and farmers’ associations. Several JAF Alumni took part in the formal meetings and associated social functions, and contributed to the shaping of the priorities.

Overall, it was agreed to strengthen the emphasis on technical and policy research to support economic growth from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in Java and parts of Sumatra and Eastern Indonesia. The program will assist in increasing farmers’ incomes through shifting emphasis from factor-driven production agriculture to the development of integrated agribusinesses. ACIAR’s program will maintain a focus on high-value commodities for which there is strong market demand, that are identified as priorities by the Indonesian Government and for which major constraints require attention through research. In addition to supporting research on production and productivity enhancement, ACIAR will also address related pest and disease management (including shared biosecurity concerns), postharvest processing and market development issues. Protection of the resource base for agriculture will be assisted by research collaboration on aspects of crop and livestock biosecurity and sustainable forestry and fisheries management and through policy research on effective engagement in markets.

ACIAR and Indonesian partners will involve end-users such as extension groups, the private sector and non-government organisations during the development and implementation of projects. ACIAR will encourage linkages between research agencies in agriculture, forestry and fisheries and policy/ implementation directorate-generals, and will support cooperation between central institutes and provincially-based adaptive research agencies and planning authorities. The emphasis of capacity building activities is to support the Indonesian Government’s efforts in development of a demand-driven agricultural research system,

through training on research management (including research prioritisation, project evaluation and impact assessment); experimental design and analysis; economics/ social science for biophysical scientists; participatory agricultural research and extension skills training and agribusiness, including supply chain management.

The collaborative program will emphasise animal health and production, crop protection (especially integrated with horticultural crop production), forestry, fisheries and agricultural policy research. Agreed thematic areas for cooperation are:

1. Improved policies to underpin agribusiness development
2. Biosecurity cooperation and pest and disease management (including livestock and crop biosecurity)
3. Research to underpin development of competitive horticultural agribusinesses
4. Profitable smallholder aquaculture
5. Sustainable utilisation and management of fisheries and forestry resources
6. Profitable agribusiness systems for Eastern Indonesia
Some specific areas of emphasis within Eastern Indonesia are: crop-ruminant livestock systems; productive and profitable smallholder estate crops and improving productivity and profitability of field crop systems in seasonally dry areas
7. Technical cooperation to underpin post-tsunami rehabilitation of agriculture and fisheries

A full summary of the agreed priorities for cooperation is on the ACIAR website, www.aciar.gov.au

2007 In-country training courses

A number of cross-program training courses are under development for the period May to July 2007:

- Research Management for Foresters - to be held in Indonesia (May 2007)
- Social and Community Dimensions of ACIAR projects - to be held in Papua New Guinea (April 2007) and in Indonesia (May 2007)
- Experimental design, Data analysis and Interpretation - to be held in Indonesia (June 2007)
- Advanced Social and Community Dimensions of ACIAR projects - to be held in Indonesia, mainly for participants in the 2006 course (July 2007)
- Genetically Modified Crops – Pest Resistance Management and Monitoring - second session to be held in Vietnam (June/July 2007)
- Research and Development Business Management and Commercialisation - to be held in Philippines (June 2007).

Several JAF Alumni have been invited to assist in course delivery. Please feel free to contact Stephanie Bennett on bennett@aciarc.gov.au for further information on any of the course, if you are interested in taking part.

New ACIAR publications (December 2006-April 2007)

ACIAR technical publications are also listed on our website at www.aciarc.gov.au. Alumni can receive complimentary copies of our publications at any time by emailing comms@aciarc.gov.au

Country Profiles 2006 (CP 09)

The ACIAR country profiles are designed as a snapshot of the collaborative research being carried out between Australia and our various partner countries.

Agricultural development and land policy in Vietnam: policy briefs (MN 126)

A bilingual (English and Vietnamese back-to-back) version of chapter 12 of MN123: Agricultural development and land policy in Vietnam. These are the policy briefs developed through the ACIAR project 'Impacts of alternative policies on the agricultural sector in Vietnam'. The main aims of this project were to assess the impacts of the Vietnamese Government's new policies on agriculture and to provide economic models suitable for analysing policy reforms.

Impact Assessment of capacity building and training: assessment framework and two case studies (IAS 44)

Capacity building and training have long been recognised as an important component of most research-for-development activities. ACIAR and the ATSE Crawford Fund felt that it was time to undertake a detailed assessment of the options for more-rigorously estimating the returns to capacity building and training. This assessment draws on literature and methodology reviews to suggest a framework for analysing the benefits of capacity building and training. This is illustrated through two case studies.

Adoption of ACIAR project outputs: studies of projects completed in 2001-02 (CP08 November 2006)

Adoption studies provide valuable insights into the uptake of project results, and the impact on local communities. They also help ACIAR determine its research priorities and improve its capacity to select projects that will be scientifically successful and have a lasting benefit.

Improving yield and economic viability of peanut production in Papua New Guinea and Australia (PR122 2006)

Peanuts are an important cash crop for many smallholder farmers in Papua New Guinea. The area planted to peanuts is expanding at smallholder level and substantial areas of commercial production are also being planted which should lead to significant expansion of the industry over the next five years. This project kick-started the re-emergence of a peanut industry in the Markham Valley based on seed and product quality, private sector involvement, production at two levels (estate and smallholder) and indigenous leadership of a high calibre

Report on a review of ACIAR-funded projects on Rhizobium during 1983-2004 (WP 62 2006)

ACIAR has long been interested in Rhizobium science and inoculation as a means of facilitating nodulation and nitrogen-fixation of legumes. Using legumes rather than mineral fertiliser to supply nitrogen to agricultural production systems is low-cost, environmentally benign and can provide high returns to farmers and the community.

Pest and disease incursions: risks, threats and management in Papua New Guinea (TR 62 2006)

The papers in this report were presented at the 2nd PNG Plant Protection Conference and include information on crop pests, diseases and weeds and their management, pest incursions and quarantine, and pest and disease identification.

Controlled pollination methods for *Melaleuca alternifolia* (TR 63 2006)

The production of tea-tree oil from *Melaleuca* species in Australia began some 80 years ago, and the industry has grown steadily, if erratically, since then. This report is a practical guide to production of controlled-cross seed of *M. Alternifolia*. Some or all of the techniques is describes may be adaptable to related species cultivated for essential oils, and to other locations.

Agricultural Water Management in China (PR 123 2006)

ACIAR has supported collaborative research on water management in agriculture in China for more than 15 years. Our research started small but developed into a substantial body of work during a time when both countries assigned increased priority to water in response to predictions of worsening shortages for agricultural production

The seaweed industry in the Pacific Islands (WP 61 2006)

Pacific island governments and communities are constantly seeking to tap new and established international markets for their farm produce. This paper gives the results of a study, jointly undertaken by ACIAR and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, that paints a clearer picture of the constraints on seaweed production and marketing by Pacific island countries and the options available for overcoming them

Heart rot and root rot in tropical Acacia plantations (PR124 2006)

Fast-growing hardwood plantations are increasingly important to the economies of many countries around the Pacific rim, including Australia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Indonesia has been at the forefront of the domestication of Australian acacias, with an emphasis on fibre, pulp, paper and solid-wood products. However, fungal heart rot and root rot threaten plantations and could seriously impact on the industry.

Sandfish hatchery techniques (CoP 03 2006)

Sandfish is arguably the most commercially valuable of the tropical species of sea cucumber that are processed into bêche-de-mer. It is widely distributed throughout the Indo-Pacific, occurring in shallow inshore areas where it is easily accessible to coastal fishers. This makes it vulnerable to overexploitation, which has happened in most places that it occurs. This publication is available in French and English.

Rice in Laos (CoP 02 2006)

An IRRI publication documenting the long association of Laos and its people with rice in historical, cultural and agricultural contexts. It provides a record of the diversity of, and

biodiversity within, the rice ecosystems within the country, and summarises the more salient recent advances in rice-related research.

Australian Prawn Farming Manual (CoP 01 2006)

The Manual is an easy to read guide for running a low disease risk prawn farm in Australia. Using the combined knowledge of Australia's leading scientists, prawn farmers, extensionists and prawn health specialists, this manual captures what is known about the diseases that threaten the Australian prawn farming industry and how the of disease outbreak can be minimised. Funded by ACIAR and developed in collaboration with the Australian Prawn Farmers' Association, the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, the manual draws on five years of research conducted across the Australasia region. The contents reflect the knowledge of a wide array of internationally recognised researchers and the wisdom and research gained through the efforts of the Australian prawn farming industry.

New projects under development November 2006 - April 2007

A large number of projects are currently under development at ACIAR. If you would like further information on particular projects, please contact the relevant ACIAR Research Program Manager (see www.aciar.gov.au for contact details).

PNG and Pacific Islands	
CP/2006/065	Integrated pest management of pest coconut beetles in Papua New Guinea
CP/2006/114	Managing cocoa pod borer in PNG through improved risk incursion management capabilities, IPM strategies and stakeholder participatory training
HORT/2005/077	Integrated crop management package for sustainable smallholder gardens in Solomon Islands
HORT/2006/055	Developing the ornamentals industry in the Pacific: an opportunity for income generation
FIS/2002/110	Alternative management of the PNG sea cucumber fishery
FIS/2006/138	Developing aquaculture based livelihoods in the Pacific Islands region and northern Australia
FST/2004/050	Value-adding to PNG agroforestry systems
FST/2004/054	Improving value and marketability of coconut wood
FST/2004/061	Assessment, management and marketing of goods and services from cutover native forests in Papua New Guinea
FST/2005/089	Improved silvicultural management of <i>Endospermum medullosum</i> (whitewood) for enhanced plantation forestry outcomes in Vanuatu
FST/2006/120	Increasing downstream value adding in PNG,s forest and wood products industry
SMCN/2004/067	Soil fertility management in the PNG highlands for sweet potato based cropping systems
AH/2003/008	Improved feeding systems for more efficient beef and draught cattle

	production in Cambodia
AH/2005/086	Best practice health and husbandry of cattle, Cambodia
AH/2006/025	Understanding livestock movement and the risk of spread of transboundary animal diseases
AH/2006/050	Control and characterisation of highly pathogenic avian influenza strains in poultry in Indonesia
AH/2006/156	Risk assessment of livestock movements for disease transmission in Eastern Indonesia and Eastern Australia
AH/2006/161	Management of pig associated zoonosis in the Lao PDR
ASEM/2005/124	Extension approaches to scaling out livestock production in northern Lao PDR
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	Crop diversification in lowland rice cropping areas in Cambodia
CIM/2006/041	Increased productivity and profitability of rice-based lowland cropping systems in Lao PDR
CIM/2006/176	Developing molecular markers to enable selection against chalk in rice (IRRI)
CP/2006/147	Integrated pest management of stem borers and insect vectors of virus diseases in sugarcane in Indonesia
FIS/2005/078	Culture-based fisheries development in Lao PDR
FIS/2005/114	Building bivalve hatchery production capacity in Vietnam and Australia
FST/2006/087	Improved site management for fast-growing plantations in Vietnam
SMCN/2005/060	Sustaining livelihoods and the environment in upland Mindanao (Philippines) through irrigated horticulture
SMAR/2006/011	Evaluation of non-timber forest product species as potential elements of agroforestry systems in West Timor (Indonesia) farming communities
SMCN/2006/013	Increasing food security and farmer livelihoods through enhanced legume cultivation in the Central Dry Zone of Myanmar
SMAR/2006/061	Boosting beef production in South Sulawesi using a farming systems approach
SMAR/2006/096	Scaling-up herd management strategies in crop-livestock systems in Lombok, Indonesia
South Asia	
CIM/2005/020	Molecular marker technologies for faster wheat breeding (India)
CIM/2006/094	Enhancing farm profitability in North-West India and South Australia by improving grain quality of wheat
CIM/2006/177	Wheat improvement for waterlogging, salinity and microelement toxicities in acidic and sodic soils in India and Australia
CP/2006/063	Integrated pest management for Finschhafen disorder of oil palm in Papua New Guinea
CP/2006/066	Improving productivity and fruit quality of sweet persimmon in Vietnam and Australia
HORT/2005/142	Improving mandarin production in Bhutan and Australia through the implementation of on-farm best management practices

HORT/2005/160	Increasing citrus production in Pakistan and Australia through improved orchard management techniques
LPS/2005/063	Improving the competitiveness of pig producers in an adjusting Vietnam market
LPS/2005/132	Improving dairy production in Pakistan through improved extension services
LWR/2005/144	Optimising canal and groundwater management to assist water users associations in maximising crop productivity and managing salinisation in Pakistan and Australia
LWR/2005/146	Expanding the area for Rabi-season cropping in southern Bangladesh
LWR/2006/124	Fine-tuning the Happy Seeder technology for adoption in northwest India
North Asia	
LPS/2005/129	Mineral response in Tibetan livestock
LPS/2006/175	Analysis of agricultural development options for Tibet

Do we have your contact details correct?

If not, please contact Sharon Harvey, email harvey@aciar.gov.au fax +61 2 6217 0501