



Australian Government

Australian Centre for
International Agricultural Research

John Allwright Alumni Association Newsletter – August 2007

Welcome to the second 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 as you will read below. 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.

ACIAR Annual Operational Plan 2007-08

The ACIAR Annual Operational Plan (AOP) for 2007-08 is now available. The AOP is our key communications document on operational issues with partners and stakeholders. It is presented on a region/country basis, with priorities for each grouped into research program areas along with detailed project listings. The AOP provides a focal point for project development around these priorities. The AOP is the result of detailed consultations with partner countries, Australian organisations and government agencies. The appendices provide a range of detailed information including material on the benefits from ACIAR-funded research to Australia, engagement with NGOs and community-based organisations and various development indicators.

The AOP may be downloaded from the ACIAR website (www.aciar.gov.au) or alternatively a hard copy can be requested from the ACIAR Communications program (comms@aciarc.gov.au).

ACIAR Amendment Act 2007

The amendment Act, promulgated by Royal Assent on 28 June 2007, provides for changes to the governance arrangements of ACIAR as part of the implementation of the Government's response to the *Review of Corporate Governance of Statutory Authorities and Office Holders* undertaken by Mr John Uhrig. The Government has assessed ACIAR's existing governance arrangements against the principles and recommendations of the Uhrig Review, together with a range of other statutory authorities in the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio, to achieve the most effective accountability and governance structures across the whole of Government.

The principal purpose of the amendments is to change the governance arrangements of ACIAR from a Board of Management to an Executive Management structure involving a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and a seven member Commission.

Feedback from the field

Since the last Newsletter, a number of recently-returned John Allwright Fellows have gotten in touch with ACIAR about current events in their professional lives.

Joachim Lummani (Papua New Guinea Cocoa & Coconut Institute Ltd, Kerevat, East New Britain Province) completed a Master of Social Sciences by Research at the Curtin University of Technology in Perth in 2006. He says that the qualitative analytical skills, he has acquired in the social sciences, has greatly enriched his quantitative background knowledge as an economist and since returning, he has been heading the Economics Section at the Institute. He uses his socioeconomic hindsight and combines qualitative and quantitative skills in the design of appropriate questionnaires and analysis of cocoa and coconut smallholder problems and, usually contributes to useful suggestions in the design of appropriate extension delivery approaches in the context of smallholder farmers.

He will be the PNG Project Leader of a new ACIAR funded project: ASEM/2006/127: “Private Sector/ Smallholder Partnerships for Improving Incomes in the Cocoa and Oil Palm Industries in Papua New Guinea”, a collaborative project involving the Curtin University of Technology, University of Western Sydney, PNG Oil Palm Research Association and the PNG Cocoa and Coconut Institute Ltd. Joachim envisages an establishment of a “social and economic research unit” at the Institute. Mr. Lummani also says that his stay in Australia has enabled him to gain very good advice from his supervisors along with good knowledge on research methodologies and useful research writing skills. Since coming home, his input into discussions and conferences has been recognised and appreciated by some of the institute’s key partners.

Through **Dr. Akhmad Mustafa’s** involvement in FIS/1997/022 “Remediation and management of degraded earthen shrimp ponds in Indonesia and Australia”, he was awarded with a John Allwright Fellowship in 2001. He was the first recipient of this fellowship from the Research Institute for Coastal Aquaculture, Maros in Sulawesi, Eastern Indonesia. Under the supervision of Dr. Jesmond Sammut of the University of New South Wales, he completed his thesis on low technical approaches to remediating smallholder brackishwater shrimp ponds (“tambaks”) that had been severely degraded by acid sulfate soils. Following his graduation, Dr. Mustafa has returned to Indonesia and is currently leading ACIAR project FIS/2002/076 “Land capability assessment and classification for sustainable pond-based aquaculture systems”.

Judhi Rachmat, a LIPI Biotechnology scientist who was involved in ACIAR project AS1/2000/029 “Production of a vaccine for the control of Jembrana disease in Indonesia” was awarded a John Allwright Fellowship in 2002. Judhi pursued his PhD degree at the Murdoch University in Perth, under the supervision of Prof. Graham Wilcox. Besides the scientific knowledge that he achieved through the program, Dr. Rachmat, like most other non-English speaking scientists, has benefited a lot from this program by improving his

language proficiency. His thesis has been submitted and he is optimistic of a positive result in the near future.

Dr. Le Xuan Sinh received a John Allwright Fellowship for his PhD program in the University of Sydney in 1999. Dr. Le is now a senior lecturer and researcher of the College of Aquaculture and Fisheries, Cantho University in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. Sinh has just completed an ACIAR-funded John Allwright Fellow Returnee project “A bio-economic model of Giant Freshwater Prawn (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*) hatcheries in the Mekong River delta, Vietnam”. Some of results of this project were presented in two regional workshops, and one article was published in 2006. Earlier this month a major international fisheries conference, the Asian-Pacific Aquaculture symposium was held in Hanoi and Dr Sinh presented the major (modelling) part of the work at that conference.

Dr Chanda Nimbkar leads the Animal Husbandry Division of a technical NGO in Maharashtra, Western India, the Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute. She completed a John Allwright Fellowship at the University of New England, Armidale in late 2005. Earlier this year, FAO selected Dr Nimbkar as the lead author of one of four papers to be prepared for the Scientific Forum to be held at a major international Animal Genetics Conference to be held in Interlaken, Switzerland in September 2007. She is preparing a major paper on 'Breeding and sustainable use of animal genetic resources', and comments that “It's almost like writing another smaller PhD thesis”. In early June she attended a coordination meeting with all the authors at FAO Headquarters in Rome.

Feature: Australian Alumni in Indonesia

There are over 30,000 alumni of Australian educational institutions living and working in Indonesia, and many maintain personal and professional linkages with Australia. About one third of alumni were scholarship holders from the Australian aid program.

As of August 2007, just under 50 Indonesians have been involved in the John Allwright Fellowship program – including 22 who have completed their studies, 22 who are currently studying in Australia and 7 people who have had in-principle acceptance for awards, subject to their language skills being met. Another selection round for John Allwright Fellowships closes late this month.

Over 10,000 Australian alumni of these have returned to Indonesia in the last five years. Many are in business, but for areas such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries and more generally in research, many also work in Universities and government. A number of senior Indonesian Ministers are also Australian alumni, including the Minister for Trade (Mari Pangestu), Minister for Research and Technology (Kusmayanto Kadiman) and the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs (Dr Boediono). There is a society for Australian alumni, IKAMA (Ikatan Alumni Australia). IKAMA can be contacted through email: ikama@indo.net.id, Website: www.ikama.or.id, phone: +62 21 521 3317 and fax: +62 21 521 3318.

A new website called “OzMate” www.ozmate.org, which is an on-line networking site has over 2000 members. This site has a jobs board that takes positions from companies keen to employ Indonesians who have studied in Australia. The Australian embassy in Jakarta,

through the Department of Education Science and Technology has recently employed an Australian Alumni Relations Manager as a contact point for Indonesian alumni.

Other Alumni Networks

Australian alumni networks can:

- assist you to maintain the personal, business, institutional and educational links and friendships you have made while studying in Australia
- help you with business and job opportunities back home and around the world
- provide a matrix of understanding and support within a community of graduates who have shared your experience of leaving home to study in Australia, and returned home as alumni.

The **Vietnamese Graduates from Australia Club (VGAC)** is an extensive network of Vietnamese professionals, who have studied or trained in education institutions in Australia. VGAC is currently under the Vietnam-Australian Friendship Association (VAFA), and is supported by AEI - International Education Network, Australian Embassy and Australian Consulate General in Vietnam. The Club has chapters in five major cities with nearly two thousand members, many of whom are working in government agencies, businesses, academic institutions, NGOs and other organisations across Vietnam. Each year, hundreds of more new graduates from Australia join the VGAC. Contact phone: +84 4 831 7726, fax: +84 4 831 7709, Website www.vgac.org and email duhoc-uc@hn.vnn.vn

The **China federation of Australian Alumni Associations** coordinates its activities with the many chapters of institutional alumni associations in Hong Kong. They organise and participate in a number of education exhibitions, alumni events and other Australian-themed activities. Contact: Phone +86 10 6532 2331, fax +86 10 6532 5585.

The **Australian Alumni Association of Pakistan** is a cross institutional network of Australian alumni based in Islamabad. It produces a newsletter entitled "The Bridge". Contact phone: +92 51 279 223, fax: +92 51 279 222.

The Education Adviser at the Australian High Commission in Pretoria promotes **Australian Alumni networking in South Africa**. Plans include facilitating alumni activities and gatherings. Contact phone: +27 12 342 8100, fax: +27 12 342 4201

Returnee small project awards

Just a reminder that small grants of up to \$10,000 are available for successful John Allwright Fellows, who have completed postgraduate studies and returned to relevant employment in their home country. The follow-on funding scheme provides for an activity which continues, or is related to, the research done within an ACIAR project associated with postgraduate work. These grants for former John Allwright Fellows are primarily aimed at developing small-scale research projects in the returnee's institution, which may catalyse longer-term support. Since 2000, a total of 40 of these awards have been made.

Building Postgraduate training and research capacity in Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific

Since 2004, ACIAR has collaborated with the University of Technology, Lae, Papua New Guinea in supporting selected final year and postgraduate diploma students (and their supervising lecturers) to undertake research projects linked to active ACIAR projects in the country. Over a dozen students have completed their studies and found work in industry, teaching and research. In addition, the physical infrastructure for conducting research at the University has been improved through funding of key equipment items. ACIAR has found challenges in increasing the size the postgraduate program in the Pacific Islands and has been keen to explore new modalities for cooperation in research and postgraduate training. In mid-2007 a scoping study was conducted on potential new collaboration program with the University of the South Pacific, and it is planned that the first postgraduate students commence in the program in 2008.

2007 In-country training courses

Several cross-program training courses are under development for the period September to December 2007. JAF Alumni have been invited to assist in course delivery. Please feel free to contact Stephanie Bennett on bennett@aci-ar.gov.au for further information on any of the courses, if you are interested in taking part.

Communicating Science (Scientific writing in English)

Course 1: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam for Vietnamese Participants

Session 1 – 24–29 September 2007, Session 2 – 22–27 October 2007

Each course will be taught in two sessions. The first session will involve lectures and built in tasks. The second session will involve group and individual tutoring. Each participant will use their own material to write a paper or thesis chapter that will be substantially completed by the end of the workshop. Each participant will also use their own material and pictures to prepare a PowerPoint presentation that will be ready for presentation during the second session of the workshop. By the end of the course it is anticipated that each participant would have their material ready for publication in an international journal.

Course 2: Lae, PNG for participants from PNG and Solomon Islands

Session 1 – 7–12 January 2008, Session 2 – 11–16 February 2008

Genetically Modified Crops – Pest Resistance Management and Monitoring *Australia (Nov-Dec 2006) then Vietnam (late 2007) for Vietnamese participants*

An intensive hands-on training program for four participants in Vietnam timed to coincide with Vietnam establishing a resistance monitoring program for Bt resistance to commence collection of baseline information on Bt resistance, establishing laboratory cultures of insects, refining their laboratory techniques etc

Research and development business management and commercialisation *Jakarta, Indonesia for Indonesian participants, 26-30 November 2007*

This five day course covers research project management and commercialisation of the results of research.

ATSE Crawford Fund Fellowships, Training Courses and Master Classes

The ATSE Crawford Fund was established in 1987 by The Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. It was named in honour of the late Sir John Crawford and commemorates his outstanding services to international agricultural research. The Fund depends on grants and donations from governments, private companies, corporations, charitable trusts and individual Australians. It also welcomes partnerships with agencies and organisations in Australia and overseas.

The Fund promotes and supports international R&D activities in which Australian research organisations and companies are active participants. It supports the work of ACIAR, AusAID and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

ACIAR provides some of the funding to the Crawford Fund, including management of an Australian Government allocation, for joint training activities. Funding is also provided from State Governments and the private sector. The ATSE Crawford Fund conducts short-term training activities associated with ACIAR projects. They also run training courses and related capacity-enhancing activities. The ATSE Crawford Fund Fellowship 2008 offers an opportunity for further training of an agricultural scientist, below the age of 35, from a selected group of developing countries whose work has shown potential. The training will take place at an Australian institution and will emphasize the application of knowledge to increase agricultural production in the Fellow's home country. To view up-coming courses and awards run by the Crawford Fund, visit www.crawfordfund.org

New ACIAR publications (May-August 2007)

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

Impact Assessment Series 45: Development of sustainable forestry plantations in China: a review

The forestry sector in China is a major contributor to economic growth. The development of fast-growing, high-yielding plantations for wood production has made a significant contribution to this sector. This report documents the story of Chinese forestry development.

Technical Report 65: A review of animal health research opportunities in Nusa Tenggara Timur and Nusa Tenggara Barat provinces, Eastern Indonesia

This report looks into livestock production and health issues in Indonesia to determine future research directions.

Technical report 66: Modelling minimum residue thresholds for soil conservation benefits in tropical, semi-arid cropping systems

Developing and promoting farming systems that make use of conservation tillage practices (minimum tillage, zero tillage) in combination with the retention of crop residues is a strategy being pursued by many national and international research organisations. This report describes a targeted modelling study that was implemented to explore the extent to which partial retention of residues might provide a way forward. The results of the study will contribute to the debate on the potential and limitations of the conservation agriculture concept in semi-arid tropical environments, particularly in drier, lower productivity areas.

Monograph 125: Aquaculture in Papua New Guinea: status of freshwater fish farming

This publication provides the reader with a comprehensive account of the history of aquaculture and fish stock enhancement programs in PNG.

Monograph 127: Postlarval fish capture and grow-out

This manual describes a new method for Pacific Islanders to catch valuable fish and crustaceans for the aquarium trade. It explains the stages involved in setting up a 'capture and grow-out' operation and will help readers decide if this business is right for them and their community

Partners Magazine: July - October 2007 features articles on biosecurity, including research addressing Avian Influenza, pig viruses, eucalypt rust, and potato and banana diseases.

New projects under development April – August 2007

A number of projects are currently under development at ACIAR or have recently been approved for commencement. 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	
ASEM/2006/127	Commercial sector/smallholder partnerships for improving incomes in oil palm and cocoa industries 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
FIS/2003/059	Sea ranching and restocking sandfish (<i>Holothuria scabra</i>) in Asia-Pacific
FIS/2006/138	Developing aquaculture based livelihoods in the Pacific Islands region and tropical Australia
FST/2005/089	Improved silvicultural management of <i>Endospermum medullosum</i> (whitewood) for enhanced plantation forestry outcomes in Vanuatu

FST/2006/118	Sandalwood inventory
FST/2007/020	Improving silvicultural and economic outcomes for community teak and rosewood plantations in the Solomon Islands by inter-planting with <i>Flueggea flexuosa</i> and other Pacific agroforestry species.
HORT/2005/077	Integrated crop management package for sustainable smallholder gardens in Solomon Islands
HORT/2006/106	Screening and field trials of high-carotenoid sweet potatoes in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea to improve human vitamin A status
SMCN/2004/067	Soil fertility management in the PNG highlands for sweet potato based cropping systems
SMCN/2006/031	Analysis of nutritional constraints to cocoa production in PNG
South East Asia	
AGB/2006/115	Linking vegetable farmers with markets in West and Central Java, Indonesia
AH/2005/086	Best practice health and husbandry of cattle, Cambodia
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
AH/2006/166	Improving veterinary service delivery in Indonesia
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
CP/2006/066	Improving productivity and fruit quality of sweet persimmon in Vietnam and Australia
CP/2006/113	Scoping study to review the role of women and assess constraints in the production of indigenous Vietnamese vegetables
CP/2006/147	Integrated pest management of stem borers and insect vectors of virus diseases in sugarcane in Indonesia
CP/2007/187	Technical support facility for commercialisation of protein bait production in north Vietnam
CP/2007/211	Scoping study to identify research and implementation issues related to management of the Brown planthopper/ virus problem in rice in Vietnam
FIS/2003/059	Sea ranching and restocking sandfish (<i>Holothuria scabra</i>) in Asia-Pacific
FIS/2006/142	New assessment and policy frameworks for Indonesia's marine fisheries, including the control and management of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing.
FIS/2006/098	Mud crab feeds and feeding strategies for industry growth in Vietnam and Australia
HORT/2006/093	Development of a protected cropping system to enhance year-round production of high-value horticultural crops in the Philippines using high quality vegetables as a model
HORT/2006/111	Managing trade risks arising from the use of crop protection chemicals in horticultural crops in the Philippines and Australia
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	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	Scaling-up herd management strategies in crop-livestock systems in Lombok, Indonesia
SMAR/2007/013	Opportunities to use cocoa pods and forages to address feed gaps in the dry season in Southeast Sulawesi
SMAR/2007/197	Scoping horticulture projects in Eastern Indonesia (passionfruit, cashews and tropical tree crops)
SMAR/2007/200	Securing the profitability of the Toraja and Flores coffee industries
South Asia	
CIM/2006/094	Enhancing farm profitability in northwest 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
LWR/2005/144	Optimising canal and groundwater management to assist water user associations in maximising crop production and managing salinisation
LWR/2006/124	Fine-tuning the Happy Seeder technology for adoption in northwest India
North Asia	
ADP/2007/055	Improving the efficiency of land use change policy in China
Republic of South Africa	
LPS/2005/128	Developing supply chain partnerships for the emerging beef sector in South Africa

Do we have your contact details correct ?

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