



**Australian Government**

**Australian Centre for  
International Agricultural Research**

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## **John Allwright and John Dillon Fellowship Alumni Association Newsletter – May 2008**

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Welcome to the second edition of the John Allwright Alumni Association Newsletter for 2008. 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. There are also an increasing number of former participants in the John Dillon (research management) program, and we also include them in the newsletter mailing list.

Alumni keep involved with ACIAR in other ways. Some have a leadership role in projects while others have been invited to assist in the delivery of short ACIAR-sponsored training courses. 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.

### **John Allwright Fellowship Follow-up survey**

You should have recently been contacted regarding a follow-up survey of JAF Alumni. As some of the earlier Alumni may recall, in 2004 we carried out a follow-up study of all former John Allwright Fellows who successfully completed their degrees and have returned to their home countries. The study evaluated the impact of the JAF scheme on the awardees and their institutions in terms of employment, career paths, and the impact of the JAFs on the research institutions to which the JAFs return (the main rationale for the JAF scheme) and wider national impacts/ leadership by the students.

The information gathered in this survey was tremendously useful, not only for improving how ACIAR manages its John Allwright Fellowships but in presenting a successful case to the Australian Government invest in the doubling of the size of the scheme from approximately 50-60 JAFs to the 120-130 JAFs we currently have. As part of this expansion, we undertook to continue to monitor the impacts of the scheme. We will be contacting both former Fellows and their supervisors or directors of the institutes in which they currently work for the survey. It's critical that we get as complete a response as possible by the end of June, so I do thank you for time.

## **ACIAR's Budget for 2008-09**

The Commonwealth Budget for 2008-09 was presented on 13 May 2008, and allocated \$52.3 million to ACIAR. An additional \$ 13.8 million is provided through joint programs with AusAID. Full details of country priorities and budgeted allocations for ACIAR in 2008-09 are available through the Centre's Annual Operational Plan (to be released in June).

ACIAR's appropriation from the Australian Parliament is allocated as part of Australia's official development assistance program. Each year ACIAR budgets planned expenditure, based on that appropriation, along with amounts from AusAID and other sources. In consultation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and relevant partners, we seek to ensure the geographic spread of bilateral projects reflects the priorities of the Aid program and Australia's areas of comparative advantage, by allocating expenditure by region within agreed parameters:

- PNG and Pacific Islands: around 20%
- Southeast Asia: > 45%
- South Asia: around 15%
- North Asia: < 15%
- Southern Africa: < 5%

Bilateral research receives the largest single allocation of funds followed by multilateral research carried out through international agricultural research centres. This allocation has an Asia-Pacific focus. Education and training, impact assessment and communicating research results complete expenditure on research.

Key features of ACIAR's operations for 2008-09 include:

- a targeted program on avian influenza to implement effective control programs in Indonesia and more broadly in South East Asia
- the first phase of the Smallholder Agribusiness Development Initiative (SADI) in Eastern Indonesia
- two major multidisciplinary horticultural initiatives in the southern Philippines
- the first year of the new ACIAR-University of the South Pacific scholarship scheme
- new agricultural research for development programs in South Central Coast and the North West Highlands of Vietnam
- a new program addressing adaptation of rainfed farming systems in Mekong and South Asian countries to climate change and climate variability
- a joint Indian-Australian funded program, on application of molecular markers as a selection tool in wheat breeding
- completion of the Agriculture Sector Linkages Program in Pakistan
- assisting in post-conflict agricultural reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan.

## **Papua New Guinea Country consultations**

Priorities for collaborative agricultural research for development between Australia and PNG were discussed in Lae, Goroka and Port Moresby at a series of meetings during May 2008

between ACIAR and representatives of relevant PNG national and provincial government departments, statutory authorities, research organisations, the Rural Industries Council, NGOs, the private sector and AusAID. Over 100 PNG counterparts took part in a series of meetings, including several former John Allwright and John Dillon Fellows. The final synthesis meeting was opened by the PNG Minister for National Planning, The Hon. Paul Tiensten, and the ACIAR delegation was led by Deputy CEO John Skerritt.

ACIAR's program recognises the many challenges to agricultural development in PNG, including poorly developed infrastructure, weak market signals and services, pressure on land and renewable resources as a result of population increases and new pest and disease threats, and poor product quality. Future impacts of population pressure and of HIV/AIDS and other human diseases on the farming sector, including effects on labour availability and productivity, will be addressed and gender issues will be mainstreamed into the program.

The ACIAR program aims through applied technical, social, economic and policy research to achieve practical impacts for PNG smallholders, consumers, industry and government. At the consultations, consensus was achieved on several over-arching issues. These include the importance of engagement with the private sector, industry bodies and NGOs along with government in both research and implementation of research results; the importance of research that assists the engagement of smallholders in the cash economy; and the importance of understanding social and economic issues affecting farmer decision making and factors influencing adoption of new technologies. Research is urgently needed into more effective ways of up-scaling the adoption of R&D results from pilot level involvement of communities to enable broader implementation. ACIAR will work with counterparts to assist in communication and extension of the results of research. As well as making a greater commitment to the implementation of the results of research, the need for on-going development of agricultural technologies remains strong.

There are requirements for capacity building at the individual and institutional level in all areas, but particularly to support analyses of social and economic constraints and opportunities, marketing and value addition of agricultural products and in agricultural education. There is particular need to develop the informal sector (including those involved in village level production and marketing of root and horticultural crops, small livestock), improve the productivity of major tree crops (increase production and exports, lower production costs), and to support research and development that assists in diversification of the agricultural export product base.

Agreed priority areas for 2008-2012 are organised under five programs:

- Addressing social, cultural and policy constraints to the adoption of agricultural technologies
- Enhancement of smallholder incomes from horticulture and root crops
- Improving smallholder returns from export tree crop production and marketing
- New livelihoods from smallholder fisheries, aquaculture and forestry
- Agricultural biosecurity and sustainable management of forestry and fisheries resources

The full statement of agreed priorities is on ACIAR's website, [www.aciar.gov.au](http://www.aciar.gov.au)

## **John Allwright Fellowship Selection round for 2009 awards**

We are calling for applications for John Allwright Fellowships for study at Australian universities, commencing in 2009. The primary aim of the fellowship scheme is to enhance research capacity in ACIAR's partner country institutions. Through the fellowship award, funding is provided for research staff engaged on ACIAR projects to obtain postgraduate qualifications in Australian tertiary institutions. Although applications are welcome from participants in both bilateral and multilateral (IARC) projects, applicants must be working in the following ACIAR bilateral partner priority countries. Currently these are:

- Papua-New Guinea, and in the Pacific - Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu,
- in SE Asia - East Timor, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Philippines
- in S and N Asia - India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan and Western China
- and Republic of South Africa

Please note that new students selected from the 31 July 2008 selection round for study in 2009 will now be under the same conditions for payment of stipend as AusAID students. Payment of the stipend and Overseas Health cover for these students will be at the single rate. New students may still choose to have their family accompany them but additional funding will not be provided by ACIAR. Up to two return airfares for a Masters student and up to three for a PhD student are permitted for fieldwork in the home country on the advice of the university supervisor and ACIAR. If fieldwork travel is considered necessary, it should be included in the study program submitted with the application for a fellowship.

The closing date for applications to reach ACIAR is **31 July 2008**. The Training Committee will meet during August to consider these applications

## **ACIAR Annual Operational Plan 2008-09**

The ACIAR Annual Report for 2008-09 has been completed and will be available in mid-June. It describes the agreed priorities for ACIAR's programs in each country and discipline area for the 2008/09 period. Copies will be able to be downloaded from the ACIAR website or hard copies can be requested by emailing [comms@aciar.gov.au](mailto:comms@aciar.gov.au)

## **Cross-program training activities March-May 2008**

### *Delivering Quality Extension Services, Thailand*

Eleven Indonesian researchers and extensionists associated with ACIAR-SADI projects took part in this training course delivered by the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand from 28 April to 10 May 2008.

### *Rural Agribusiness Development and Management, Thailand*

Eleven Indonesian researchers and extensionists associated with ACIAR-SADI projects took part in this training course delivered by the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand from 28 April to 10 May, 2008. .

*Leadership Course for Asian Women in Agriculture R&D and Extension, Philippines*

Six mid-career research and extension professionals involved in ACIAR projects in China, India, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea took part in this course run by the International Rice Research Institute in February 2008.

*Experimental design, data analysis and interpretation, PNG, Laos and Indonesia*

Three courses on data management and analysis have been conducted by the University of Queensland. The second course was held in Vientiane, Laos in June 2008, while the third course was held in Makassar, Indonesia, in June 2008.

*Other training courses provided under the Smallholder Agribusiness Development Initiative for project leaders and project staff in Indonesia, include:*

- English language training.
- Information technology training.
- Communicating science using the Indonesian language.
- Human resource management.

## **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, over 40 of these awards have been made.

## **New ACIAR publications (February-May 2008)**

ACIAR technical publications are also listed on our website at [www.aciar.gov.au](http://www.aciar.gov.au). Alumni can receive complimentary copies of our publications at any time by emailing [comms@aciarc.gov.au](mailto:comms@aciarc.gov.au)

## **Final Reports for the following projects are now available:**

- HORT/2007/032 and HORT/2007/210- Detection surveys for mango seed and pulp weevils in Sarangani, Davao del Sur and Samal Island, Mindanao, Philippines
- HORT/2006/108- The potential for tropical fruits production in Tonga: a feasibility and constraints analysis
- LWR/2007/212 - Opportunities to improve land and water management practices in Bhutan

- AH/2002/042 - Control of Newcastle disease and identification of major constraints in village chicken production systems in Myanmar
- AH/2006/038 - Feeding papaya fruits and betel nuts to reduce parasite burdens and increase growth rate in pigs
- CIM/1999/094 - Improving the productivity and sustainability of rainfed farming systems for the western loess plateau of Gansu province, China

**Other publications include:**

- *Field crop manual: Maize - a guide to upland production in Cambodia* (CP10, January 2008), by Stephanie Belfield and Christine Brown.

In Cambodia maize is widely adapted to soils in the higher rainfall upland area. This production manual is a guide on how to grow maize successfully in upland areas of Cambodia in a rain fed system not under irrigation; however, many principles are relevant to both irrigated and rainfed farming systems. This manual outlines important maize-crop agronomy and provides information on the methodology and technology that farmers may be able to utilise to grow maize in Cambodia.

- *Diagnostic manual for plant diseases in Vietnam* (MN129, May 2008) by Lester W. Burgess, Timothy E. Knight, Len Tesoriero, Hien Thuy Phan

Plant diseases continue to cause significant crop losses in Vietnam and other regions of tropical South-East Asia. Outbreaks of disease of valuable cash crops can have a major impact on small farmers, particularly in localised areas where there are few suitable alternative crops. The accurate diagnosis of the cause of a disease is essential to the success of control measures and for the development of a scientifically sound national database on plant diseases. This manual is designed to help plant pathologists develop basic skills in the diagnosis of the cause of diseases, focusing on fungal diseases of the roots and stems.

- *Permanent beds and rice-residue management for rice–wheat systems in the Indo-Gangetic Plain* (PR127, 2008) by Humphreys, E., Roth, C.H. (Eds)

Rice–wheat cropping systems are critical for food security and livelihoods in South Asia, particularly in India where 10 million hectares of rice and wheat are grown in sequence, providing 85% of the total cereal production. The sustainability of these systems is now in question, as evidenced by many factors including yield stagnation, soil degradation, declining groundwater levels, severe air pollution from rice stubble burning, and declining terms of trade. This proceedings provides a comprehensive compilation of the experience in permanent raised beds and direct drilling into rice residues in the Indo-Gangetic Plain of South Asia.

- *Economic potential of land-use change and forestry for carbon sequestration and poverty reduction* (TR68, 2008) by Cacho, O., Hean, R., Ginoga, K., Wise, R.,

Djaenudin, D., Lugina, M., Wulan, Y., Subarudi, Lusiana, B., van Noordwijk, M. and Khasanah, N.

Concerns over global warming have led to the establishment of markets for greenhouse gas emissions, in particular for carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Tree-based systems are a convenient way of reducing net emissions by sequestering CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. Carbon credits do not require transport to markets, and are thus appealing as a commodity for rural smallholders in developing countries. However, as for any other commodity, profitability is related to prices received, costs of production (greenhouse gas abatement), and transaction costs, which remain largely unknown for smallholders in developing countries. This research focused on several agroforestry systems that have been adopted by smallholders in three regions of Indonesia, looking at how smallholders compare with other landholders in terms of efficiency in sequestering carbon, whether smallholders will want to adopt carbon-sequestering activities, and what sorts of policies and projects will underpin smallholder involvement.

- *Breeding and feeding pigs in Vietnam: assessment of capacity building and an update on impacts* (IAS52, May 2008) by Hayden Fisher and Jenny Gordon
- **Partners magazine March - June 2008** is focused on the role of women in agriculture, looking at various ACIAR projects that have worked with rural women.

## **New projects under development February–May 2008**

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](http://www.aciar.gov.au) for contact details).

### ***Papua New Guinea***

- AH/2006/157 Animal health surveillance systems for Papua New Guinea
- ASEM/2006/035 Improving marketing efficiency, postharvest management and value addition of sweet potato in Papua New Guinea
- ASEM/2006/127 Commercial sector/smallholder partnerships for improving incomes in the 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
- FST/2006/088 Promoting diverse fuelwood production systems in Papua New Guinea
- FST/2006/120 Increasing downstream value adding in PNG's forest and wood products industry

### ***Pacific Islands***

- FST/2006/048 Processing of *Canarium indicum* nuts: adapting and refining techniques to benefit farmers in the South Pacific

HORT/2006/173 Tongan tropical fruit production: improving genetic diversity and production capacity building

***South-East Asia – Indonesia***

AGB/2006/115 Linking vegetable farmers with markets in West and Central Java, Indonesia  
AH/2006/166 Improving veterinary service delivery in a decentralised Indonesia  
AH/2006/169 Cost-effective bio-security for non-industrial commercial poultry operations in Indonesia  
FIS/2006/142 Developing new assessment and policy frameworks for Indonesia's marine fisheries, including the control and management of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing  
FST/2007/052 Improving governance, policy and institutional arrangements to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD)  
SMAR/2007/063 Enhancing farmer engagement with specialty coffee chains in eastern Indonesia  
SMAR/2007/068 Productivity and profitability enhancement of tropical pulses in Indonesia and Australia  
SMAR/2007/193 Quality management to enhance effective supply chains for mangoes and rambutans in Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia and Australia  
SMAR/2007/196 Market development for citrus from eastern Indonesia  
SMAR/2007/202 Benchmarking the beef supply chain in eastern Indonesia  
SMAR/2007/203 Integrated tropical passionfruit production systems in South Sulawesi  
SMAR/2007/216 Improving rice productivity in South and Southeast Sulawesi

***South-East Asia – Philippines***

HORT/2007/066 Enhanced profitability of selected vegetable value chains in the southern Philippines and Australia  
HORT/2007/067 Improved domestic profitability and export competitiveness of selected fruit value chains in the southern Philippines and Australia

***South-East Asia – Mekong countries***

AGB/2005/113 Structural adjustment implications of trade liberalisation in Vietnam  
AH/2003/008 Improved feeding systems for more efficient beef cattle production in Cambodia  
AH/2006/159 Best practice health and husbandry of cattle and buffalo in Lao PDR  
ASEM/2006/130 Enhancing production and marketing of maize and soybean in north-western Cambodia and production of summer crops in north-eastern Australia  
CP/2006/066 Improving productivity and fruit quality of sweet persimmon in Vietnam and Australia  
CP/2006/112 Increasing the safe production, promotion and utilisation of indigenous vegetables by women in Vietnam and Australia  
FST/2004/057 Enhancing on-farm incomes through improved silvicultural management of teak and paper mulberry plantations in Luang Prabang Province of Lao PDR

***South Asia***

- ADP/2007/062 Facilitating efficient agricultural markets in India: An assessment of competition and regulatory reform requirements
- CIM/2007/065 Sustainable wheat and maize production in Afghanistan

***North Asia***

- ADP/2007/055 Improving the efficiency of land use change policy in China
- CIM/2005/111 More effective water use by rainfed wheat in China and Australia
- LPS/2006/119 Integrated crop and dairy systems in Tibet Autonomous Region, PR China
- LWR/2007/191 Improving farmer livelihoods through efficient use of resources in crop-livestock farming systems in western China

**Do we have your contact details correct ?**

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