

March 2009

This email newsletter highlights the latest additions to the site Knowledge for Development.

Developments**GM crops report examines the facts**

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8779>

Genetically modified crops often create quite a stir. For some they are disdained, while others see them as the way of the future for food, health and medicine.

Industrialization is changing the dynamics of the global seeds industry. The agriculture land is not going to increase over a period of time; in fact, it is decreasing owing to the growing industrialization world over. The agricultural land is increasingly being used for setting up of industries. This is putting pressure on agricultural sector as the increasing population is driving food demand. (Source: Check Biotech, 4 February 2009)

In Brief: Climate change hits fishing economies

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8787>

Eight countries - four in Africa and four in Asia - have been identified as those most economically vulnerable to the effects of climate change on fisheries in the first ever detailed study of the subject. The most badly hit countries are those where fish play a large role in diet, income and trade, and also lack the capacity to adapt to the impact of climate change such as the loss of coral reef habitats to the bleaching effect of warmer waters, and lakes parched by an increase in heat and a decrease in rainfall. To find out more about the most vulnerable countries go to www.worldfishcenter.org (Source: IRIN, 6 February 2009)

New science could defeat food crises

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8792>

A controversial scientific revolution that could give packaged foods a dramatically longer shelf life and boost crop growth has "real potential" to help feed a fast-growing world, according to environment secretary Hilary Benn. New developments in nanotechnology, engineering carried out at a microscopic level, could lead to plastic packaging designed to stop food and drink spoiling by killing bacteria or preventing oxygen getting through the container. (Source: Gaby Hinsliff, Guardian, 9 February 2009)

Innovation alone is not enough to secure food supplies

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8794>

Technical innovation must be matched by political will and social justice to ensure food security in the twenty first century, says Alex Evans. Policymakers should use the recent fall in food prices as an opportunity to create a long-term, global strategy, argues Evans. We need a twenty first century Green Revolution, he says — one that can shift agriculture from being input-intensive to become knowledge-intensive. Genetically modified crops may help, but so will more equitable approaches like soil fertility management. (Source: SciDev, 10 February 2009)

Cuban biotechnology products in 58 countries of the world

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8796>

Cuban biotechnology has taken its scientific results to some 58 countries of the world, said the director of the Molecular Immunology Center, Doctor Agustin Lage in a key lecture in this eastern province. The expansion of the sector reveals the potential of the Cuban scientific community, in its effort to increase its contribution to the search for more effective formulas in the field of medicine, both in the country and at international level, said the expert. (Source: Caribbean Net News, 10 February 2009)

South Africa: R9 million boost to UJs masters, PhD bursaries

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8798>

PetroSA has injected R9 million into the University of Johannesburg (UJ) to establish a scholarship programme to fund black women post-graduate candidates in the levels of

Masters and PhD studies. PetroSA's Vice-President Operations Dan Marokane said the Next Generation Scholars programme aims to change the face of postgraduate studies in the country by focusing on the value of research outputs in universities. The donation was aimed at ensuring the university was able to retain skilled black graduates as academics. (Source: BuaNews, 10 February 2009)

Tanzania: 'Stone-Age' Tribe Going for Honey

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8821>

The hunter-gatherer Hadzabe tribe, who subsist on honey and other foodstuffs from the wild, will be assisted in the production of honey. The project will be implemented by the Small Industries Development Organisation (Sido) in Arusha, one of the four regions inhabited by the tiny tribe. Mr. Kiyenze said the project aims at sensitising and training the Hadzabe people on modern methods of beekeeping and honey production and processing. "We have planned to train them in collaboration with the local authorities" he said after brief discussions with the visiting EU head of mission in the country. (Source: Arusha Times, 15 February 2009)

Ethiopia: Climate Change Taking Toll On Livestock in Southern Lowlands

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8823>

Climate change-induced livestock diseases are causing more illness and death of livestock in southern lowlands of the country, a study conducted to assess the local level of impacts of climate change said. The study entitled: Climate Change-Induced Hazards, Impacts and Responses in Southern Ethiopia, carried out in the southern lowlands of Ethiopia's three selected zones- Borena, Guji and Omo Zones- in the Oromia SNNP regions said climatic change impacts on livelihoods particularly increased vulnerability to poverty and food insecurity as livestock possession of households during the past 20 years shows an overall decline. (Source: Binyam Tamene, Daily Monitor, 15 February 2009)

World Bank, AGRA join to provide credit to African farming

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8825>

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, is joining forces with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) to unlock credit and financing for small-scale farmers and agribusinesses across Sub-Saharan Africa. "AGRA's partnership with IFC will harness the strengths of both organizations to scale up AGRA's innovative programs across the agricultural value chain. We will improve the livelihoods of many more small-scale farmers and be able to do it sooner," said Namanga Ngongi, AGRA's President. "The growth of the agricultural sector will strengthen the continent's food security as well as create employment and raise living standards for millions of smallholder African farmers. (Source: African Agriculture, 15 February 2009)

Kenyan President Signs Biosafety bill into law

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8809>

Kenya's President Mwai Kibaki has on February signed into law the Biosafety Bill which has been pending since last December when Parliament passed it after years of discussions. The President action now allows regulatory authorities to draw up regulations that would be used to facilitate implementation of the Biosafety Act. The eight government agencies, namely National Environment Management Authority, the Kenya Bureau of Standards, the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service, the Public Health, The Kenya Industrial Property Institute, the Directorate of Veterinary Service, the National Council for Science and Technology have been meeting since when the Bill was passed by Parliament in anticipation of the signing it into law. (Source: Henry Neondo, ASNS News, 12 February 2009)

Selected publications

Global engagements with global assessments: The case of the international assessment of agricultural knowledge, science and technology for development (IAASTD)

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8827>

By Ian Scoones, IDS Working Paper 313, November 2008

The IAASTD, which ran between 2003 and 2008, involving over 400 scientists worldwide, was an ambitious attempt to encourage local and global debate on the future of agricultural science and technology. Responding to critiques of top-down, northern-dominated expert assessments of the past, the IAASTD aimed to be more inclusive and participatory in both design and process. But how far did it meet these objectives? Did it genuinely allow alternative voices to be heard? Did it create a new mode of engagement in global arenas? And what were the power relations involved, creating what processes of inclusion and exclusion? These questions are probed in an examination of the IAASTD process over five years, involving a combination of interviews with key participants and review of available documents.

Environment for African development: a sustainable future through science and technology - Can science and technology improve Africa's future?

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8833>

By C. Webersik; C. Wilson, Environment and Sustainable Development Programme, United Nations University, 2008.

Focusing on sustainability through science and technology, this paper looks at the key environmental challenges for Africa in the near future. It also identifies environmental best practices and addresses the need for action before looking at ways forward. It is predicted that Africa will be particularly vulnerable to climate change and associated problems. African economies are closely linked to natural resources and rely heavily on agriculture. Although agricultural development is central to African economies, it has a long history of being considered of secondary importance in economic development. As the current food crisis shows, it is important to rethink not only agricultural policies, but also agricultural practices and particularly the role that science and innovation can play to address development and sustainability challenges.

Fuel and food trade-offs: a preliminary analysis of South African food consumption patterns

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8845>

By D. Weatherspoon; A. Mabiso, AgEcon Search, July 2008.

There are growing concerns that food-fuel tradeoffs are beginning to present serious challenges for food security. Understanding the nature of food-fuels tradeoffs is imperative for effective policy making and safeguarding consumers' welfare. This preliminary study aims to explain that nature in South Africa, which is conducting a biofuel expansion strategy. The increased use of crops in South Africa to produce biofuel implies that more of scarce resources are being re-allocated away from the provisioning of food. Related to this, the paper asks to what extent biofuel is gross substitute or complement of oil in the South African fuel mix.

Events

2009 International conference on horticulture

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8860>

Dates: 9-12 November 2009

Location: Karnataka, India

With the theme, Horticulture for Livelihood Security and Economic Growth, the 2009 International Conference on Horticulture, will be conducted on 9-12 November in Bangalore, Karnataka, India. The conference is organized by Prem Nath Agricultural Science Foundation (PNASF) and Vegetable Science International Network (VEGINET), in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The international conference is designed to provide a common forum for all stakeholders to share their experience and expertise so as to suggest much needed technology-institution-policy package for sustainable production and marketing of horticultural products.

Call for proposals for the Poster Exhibition at Science Forum 2009

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8894>

Theme: ICTs: Enabling Agricultural Science to be a Social Endeavor. GFAR and its partners will be organizing a poster competition as part of the Science Forum 2009 Wageningen, The Netherlands on 16-17 June 2009. We are interested in presenting how Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) are enabling agricultural science to be a social endeavor by communities rather something done in laboratories by professional scientists. GFAR invites submissions from all ARD stakeholders for the Poster Competition. A panel of judges will select the top posters for display, presentation and sponsorship for one presenter to participate in the Science Forum 2009. The top 10 poster submissions will be displayed at the Science Forum and authors will be invited to participate in the Science Forum 2009. All Posters judged representing the theme ICTs enabling Agricultural Science to be a Social Endeavor with their abstracts and handouts may be published through GFAR, either in print and/or electronically. One presenter from the top poster will be sponsored to participate in the Science Forum. Poster submissions selected for display at the Science Forum will be supported for their preparation (up to an amount of USD 100) and delivery to the Science Forum 2009 at Wageningen. If you would like to propose a poster, the abstract of 400 words should reach the GFAR Secretariat by 30 March 2009.

Jobs for ACP scientists

Cassava geneticist / molecular breeder

The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) is seeking to appoint a Senior Geneticist in the cassava research project. The position requires a person with a Ph.D. in breeding/molecular genetics. The position offers an outstanding career opportunity for an experienced Senior Researcher interested in international agricultural and the integration of molecular tools with breeding. The scientist will be part of the cassava multidisciplinary team and collaborate with breeders in broadening the genetic base of CIAT cassava breeding populations and developing molecular tools for improved efficiency in the genetic enhancement of cassava. Enquiries and applications, including an application letter, a curriculum vitae, and the names and contact details of three professional references (including telephone, fax numbers, and e-mail address), should be sent to Olga Lucia Cruz (o.l.cruz@cgiar.org). Screening of CVs for this position will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. Closing date for applications: March 15, 2009.

Project manager, Climate Change Network, L4

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8864>

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the United Nations systems designated entity for addressing environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action. UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) works with international and non-governmental organizations, national and local governments, business and industry to develop and implement policies, strategies and practices that are cleaner and safer, incorporate environmental costs, use natural resources efficiently, reduce pollution and risks for humans and the environment, and enable the implementation of conventions and international agreements. The position is within the Energy Branch's Technology Transfer Unit, which contributes to the organization's climate change programme by promoting the deployment and finance of energy efficient and low greenhouse gas technologies in developing countries. Closing date: 13 Mar 2009.

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) - Project manager

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8866>

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), with headquarters in Ibadan, Nigeria, is seeking applicants for the position of Project Manager to manage the pilot project for "Increasing Plantain Productivity to Enhance Food Security and Market Opportunities in Cameroon" within the framework of the "Programme de Reconversion Economique de la Filière Banane Plantain (PREBAP)" to be based in Cameroon. Applications: Applications including curriculum vitae, names and addresses of three referees should be addressed to the Human Resources Manager. Closing date: 30th March 2009. IITA is an equal opportunity employer and particularly welcomes applications from women candidates.

Fellowships and Grants

AWARD 2009 Fellowship announcement (Round Two)

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8896>

Available to women agricultural scientists from: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia. I am pleased to inform you that AWARD is now accepting applications for Round Two AWARD Fellowships! The CGIAR Gender & Diversity Program warmly invites applications from qualified African agricultural women scientists for this innovative and exciting fellowship program. AWARD offers specially tailored two-year career development fellowships, available at three levels: post-Bachelors, post- Masters and post-doctorate. African women from qualifying countries and conducting research in the following disciplines are strongly encouraged to apply: Crop sciences (including horticulture), soil sciences, animal and livestock sciences, plant and animal virology, agroforestry, agricultural economics, aquatic resources and fisheries, food sciences and nutrition, natural resource management and ecology, biodiversity conservation, entomology, agricultural extension education, molecular biology (applied to plant/animal breeding), and water and irrigation management. The deadline for all applications: Monday March 30, 2009

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