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In this issue
ACP countries don’t lack resources, but the means — that is the message that filters through the pages of much of this issue. Take the research sector, there is no shortage of ideas and talent, but the problem lies in developing these without money and in safeguarding objectives while relying on funding from outside private sources. Our feature on fisheries surveillance highlights the difficulties faced by countries of the South to protect their halieutic resources effectively without properly equipped patrol vessels or well trained staff. As for the flowers, which flourish so well in tropical climates and brighten up the lives of customers in the North, they continue to bloom, despite limited investment in their cultivation. But money is not everything. Our Viewpoint defines the qualities of a good farmers’ leader, capable of getting things done by sheer will power. A lesson in courage and hope!

A
gricultural research in the South has not been spared the general cutback in public research spending that has hit most countries, including those in the North. According to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), average spending per researcher fell by half between 1971 and 2000 in Africa’s agricultural public research sector. Donor contributions have also dropped sharply. In 2000, they accounted for only 35% of budgets, compared with 50% 5 years earlier.

To bolster their resources, national research centres are looking for alliances with the private sector for joint projects. That is the idea behind Public Private Partnerships (PPP) — pooling the know-how of both sides, as well as sharing funding and physical research facilities (e.g. laboratories, field for trials) to achieve mutually beneficial results. One party must come from the public sector (research laboratory, university, regional or international research centre, NGO) while the other must be from the private sector (company, private research centre, producers’ organisation).

The stakes are high for ACP countries, keen to increase their agricultural output and to improve living standards for farmers, as well as for private firms, which are primarily concerned with their profitability. The major international agro-industrial groups have been working closely with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) for some time now, but to date they have invested...
little in the public research institutes of the South. In 2000, they contributed a mere 2% to agricultural research budgets in Africa.

**Working for a common cause**

Even so, PPPs have mainly developed in recent years due to pressure from international companies anxious to test their seeds and genetically modified crops. Thus, in an effort to promote its transgenic cotton — Bt cotton — Monsanto invested heavily in agricultural research in Burkina Faso and Mali.

The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) is, together with the Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), trying to develop a variety of genetically modified maize that is resistant to the stalk-borer. The programme is financed by the private company Syngenta, a world leader in crop protection.

The desire to develop new products is another factor driving firms to invest in research in the South. In Ghana, the Novella partnership has brought together the agro-alimentary colossal Unilever, the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), Switzerland’s State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana and several NGOs. The goal of the partnership is to set up a production chain, from cultivation to sustainable use for oil from *Allanblackia*, a tree which grows in the tropical forests of Central and West Africa, whose nuts produce an oil which has beneficial properties and holds considerable commercial promise.

Other types of partnership are supported by foundations whose main objective is to have an impact on local development. A case in point is an African project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to produce bio-fortified sorghum. It aims to produce a nutritionally enhanced variety of sorghum for African countries. The consortium, made up of African research centres, universities and a private company, has already developed a prototype variety.

**Fair PPPs**

In all cases, it is important that the roles of participants — who should all be involved in contributing to the planning, resources and activities needed to achieve the chosen goal — be clearly defined from the outset. Generally, PPPs are covered by a contract which stipulates the object of the research, methods to be used, the duration, costs, contractors, equipment and the allocation of any financial benefits which might ensue.

In the Fiji islands, one project is combining environmental conservation with drug research and economic development. Villagers immerse artificial corals into the sea. The artificial corals are quickly colonised by plants and other living organisms, and are then sold to specialist suppliers for aquaria. In this way, the villagers secure a source of revenue and are also able to conserve their natural corals and their tourism industry, while scientists at the Georgia Institute of Technology in the USA can continue with research into new medicines that may be derived from species colonising the coral reefs. If they find any, the villagers will be entitled to a share of profits from sales.

Access to genetic resources and benefit sharing (ABS) are generally regulated by international agreements such as the Bonn Guidelines. When disputes arise, it sometimes falls to the courts to resolve the matter. One judgement recognised the rights of the San community in Southern Africa to *hoodia*, a hunger-suppressing cactus (see Spore 99). The company which marketed the product will have to pay the San 6% of its after sale profits, which are estimated at between US$3 and 40 billion.

To avoid such measures, it is advisable to draw up prior informed consent agreements, even though these may take from several months to 2 years to prepare. Guyana, Malawi, South Africa and Vanuatu are the front-runners when it comes to closely regulating ABS. Many communities rich in traditional knowledge, interested in developing PPPs to earn revenue from their natural assets, are increasingly turning to monitoring committees, which represent their interests when it comes to examining partnership proposals, and ensure they get a fair deal.

**Taking account of local expectations**

When the initiative to form a partnership comes from private firms, national agricultural institutes in the South should be careful to preserve their independence. Indeed, research and funds tend to focus on crops destined for export or on products that are most interesting to the North. Crops that are less profitable but nonetheless crucial to local populations therefore risk being sidelined.

Other types of partnership involving local enterprises or producers’ organisations allow research to be better adapted to the needs of the country. For example, research linked to specific financially profitable sectors, generally commodity sectors (e.g. cotton and palm oil) are largely financed by the stakeholders.

In Côte d’Ivoire, the Inter-professional Agricultural Research and Advisory Fund (FIRCA), which acts on behalf of federations of producers, is represented on the board of the country’s national research council, le Centre national de recherche agronomique (CNRA) as well as on that of the national rural development agency, l’Agence nationale d’appui au développement rural (ANADER). It is therefore in a position to target research activities to the specific needs of farmers and to ensure that the results are disseminated. In this case, the link between research and national agricultural production is both strong and lasting.

The same is true in Madagascar, where the national agricultural research institute, Institut national de recherche agricole (FORIFA), works with exporters of organic vanilla. In the Dominican Republic, a PPP has paired off the national agricultural research body the Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Agropecuarias y Forestales (IDIADF), with a farmer’s organisation, the Cooperativa Frutícola del Rosario Sanchez (CFRS), to develop a technique for processing bananas produced by the cooperative that would enable them to earn its “organic” label.

In cases where research in ACP countries, especially in Africa, lack resources and depend increasingly on private funding, the expectations of small-scale farmers who produce for their own consumption and for local markets, are often ignored. With this challenge in mind, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) is trying to involve firms in programmes previously defined as being useful to agricultural development in the countries concerned. This forum, together with the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), urges greater global harmony between research efforts in the various sectors. It also makes efforts to involve local players (such as producers, distributors, extension agents) in decisions about future research.

See Links, page 10
Floriculture

Cut flower market blooms for ACP producers

In the past 2 decades, developing countries have expanded their export share to 24% of the global cut flower market. But although there are clear opportunities for ACP producers, small-scale flower farmers still need help if they are to compete with the major growers.

Three decades after the first forays by Southern producers into the global flower market, floriculture continues to hold out hope for ACP producers. In the North, demand for cut flowers has blossomed, especially in Europe, which imports more than 80% of world output. Kenya remains the clear leader. Between 2001 and 2003, it increased its already substantial market share of EU exports by 17%. But other ACP players have been quick to move into the field, including Cote d’Ivoire, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and, most spectacularly, in Ethiopia, which chalked up a massive growth of 230% in the same period.

The thorn on the rose

The most recent newcomers are producers in the Caribbean and the Pacific. In Jamaica, a fledgling flower industry is supplying local markets and selling anthurium, orchids, ginger lilies, and heliconias to cruise ship passengers and to US customers via the internet. In the Pacific, a floriculture workshop supported by CTA in collaboration with the Institute for Research, Extension and Training in Agriculture (IRETA) has enabled one smallholder from the Solomon Islands to set up a blooming business.

A number of ACP countries have comparative advantages for producing cut flowers, for reasons of land, labour, climate and preferential tariffs with the EU. But studies show that transport, storage, and distribution account for much of the value added, with production only netting 10% of the sale price. Though rewarding, the future may not be as bright as the past.

The growth of cut flower production now outstrips that of demand, and ACP countries face tough competition from Colombia and China. Prices of bulk cut flowers, such as carnations, alstroemeria and roses, are falling due to over-supply; those of exotic flowers are holding up better. Tropical flowers constitute a growing niche market and popular sellers include orchids, anthuriums, ginger, strelitzia (birds of paradise), heliconias and proteas.

Consumer concerns

Although it was only established in 1972, Kenya’s horticulture industry now ranks fourth in terms of export revenues — behind tea, coffee and tourism. But such rapid growth has hidden costs. Kenya has come under fire for poor labour conditions and high use of agrochemicals. Growing pressure from consumers in key importing countries such as Germany has forced the Kenya Flower Council to set up codes of conduct. FAO has sent integrated pest management experts to Nyeri, in central Kenya, to train the 5,500 women’s groups growing flowers there.

Producers in the South face a number of hurdles. Flower growing is highly capital intensive and the stringent regulations in the international market such as minimum residue levels (MRLs) and other sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regulations are often difficult to negotiate. With such a perishable product, packaging, cold storage and efficient transport links are crucial but costly pre-requisites, and Southern producers start from a disadvantage for reasons of distance. Dutch and German companies have moved into several ACP countries so they can have direct control over quality, distribution and marketing (see Spore 85). Most cut flower producers in the South are dependent on breeders in the North for their planting material, and have to pay royalties.

A future in floriculture

Given these constraints, it is not surprising that much of the flower industry is dominated by large concerns. According to Kenya’s Horticultural Crops Development Authority, smallholder production has declined in the past 5 years. But in spite of the obstacles, some ACP producers are forging ahead to show there can be a future in floriculture. Uganda is using hydroponics, a technique which limits pests and disease, to grow flowers. In Zambia, small-scale farmer Peter Mtumbe has switched from maize to roses and is planning to double his operation. In Ethiopia, a family firm has become a major international supplier, while in Fiji women have been helped to market flowers for export to Hawaii and New Zealand (see Spore 117). South Africa has found a profitable market producing chrysanthemums.

An export guide published by the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CIID) identifies summer flowers — blooms produced during Europe’s winter — as a promising sector. Sales to supermarkets are also increasing, a trend which opens up opportunities for ACP producers, but also poses challenges.

To take advantage of what most agree is still a flourishing market, more agricultural research is needed to develop local planting material and tackle pest and disease problems. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) is working to help Fiji flower growers deal with a fungus that is attacking red ginger (Alpinia purpurata). According to a recent CTA-supported study, producers need help with import requirements, distribution and marketing. One ingenious responses is a Flower Business Park, set up by a rose grower in Naivasha, Kenya, where flower growers pay rental fees for services ranging from land and water to on-site clearance for export documents.
Sea fishing

Under close surveillance

Marine resources, so crucial to the countries of the South, are being over-exploited. Regulatory measures have been put in place, but must be accompanied by close surveillance of fishing vessels to be effective. Positive examples do exist, and these should be developed.

June 11, 2005, saw a confrontation in Senegal between fishermen from Kayar and Guet-Ndar. The toll: one dead and several wounded. The cause of the dispute: rivalry over access to an increasingly scarce resource — fish. Incidents of this kind are symptomatic of a serious problem. In August 2003, Spore sounded a cautionary note, urging the introduction of extensive political and economic changes if fish stocks were to be maintained. In March 2005, FAO confirmed that 75% of fishery resources had been fished to their maximum yield, over-exploited or exhausted.

Encouragingly, there is growing awareness of the need to move towards sustainable fisheries management, which combines long-term viability with a strategy that satisfies the needs of fishers and ensures the economic development of resources. This has translated into a growing understanding, shared by all those involved, and in a range of measures, binding or otherwise, developed to regulate fishing. But there is still a long way to go before responsible and voluntary management of marine resources is adopted by all players in the fisheries sector. As long as stocks are over-exploited, and their profits diminished, fishers will continue to break the law. That was the clear message from several participants in an internet debate organised by CTA in 2004.

Crucial for ACP states

The problem of fisheries surveillance is gradually being perceived as a major issue. Experts are coming up with acronyms such as IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing), MCS (monitoring, control and surveillance) and VMS (vessel monitoring system). In June 2005, a conference on the impact of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing on developing countries was held in London. These developing nations are particularly badly affected, the meeting heard, because of a lack of funds, technical capacity, manpower, cooperation between states and, occasionally, of political will.

The countries of the South are not alone. Published last May, the European Commission’s annual report on serious breaches to the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy revealed that the number of infringements recorded rose from 6,756 in 2002 to 9,502 in 2003. Five EU member states detected nearly 90% of all breaches. Unauthorised fishing accounted for 22% of the cases, while the figure for unlicensed fishing was 17%. A fine was imposed in 84% of cases. In 4,720 cases, fishing gear was seized. The June 2005 bulletin of the Fisheries News Update section on CTAs Agritrade website concluded that the report offered interesting lessons for ACP countries, noting that greater transparency over infringements and sanctions will increase confidence in the fair and equitable enforcement of regulations.

Fisheries infringements come in many guises, they include: fishing with unlicensed boats; failing to land catches in local ports, in spite of the obligations of fisheries agreements and falsely reporting tonnage caught. Whatever the measures taken, whether they are aimed at getting fishing zones respected, at better regulating fishing gear, at limiting the size of catches, at ensuring a biological rest period or at developing the economic activity of ports by making it mandatory to land all or part of catches locally, the notion of self-regulation appears to be an illusory one, and control measures are certainly needed. Some of these
are already in place, and fall into two groups — so-called **hardware** and **software** measures.

**Means and human resources**

**Hardware** measures consist of advanced and often costly and cumbersome techniques, such as radar, onboard systems and satellite. To monitor an economic zone of 200 square miles, it takes several rapid intervention boats, surveillance vessels, radar stations and even airplanes. And, of course, a computer system capable of cross checking data, with permanent internet access. For ACP countries, it is hard to reconcile such demands with budgetary constraints. These systems are essential, but they are also inadequate unless they are backed by human resources.

The **software** techniques refer to onboard observers or the participation of fishing communities. Officially, any such observers go onboard to collect scientific data. But since they are equipped with communication tools, their information is “by default” used for surveillance. They run the risk therefore, if this aspect of their work were to be known, of no longer being allowed on board.

**Senegal’s fishing committees**

By limiting their catches and adopting good practices, the fishers of Kayar, in Senegal, have enabled fish stocks to be replenished. A local initiative, surveillance committees see to it that this “Kayar code” is respected. Fishing zones have been defined and a limit imposed of 45 kg of fish per canoe per day. Highly destructive techniques such as the use of explosives or drag nets have been banned. These days, catches are smaller, but they fetch a better price.

Not surprisingly, this initiative has quickly spread throughout Senegal’s main fishing zones — since 2001, around 50 local committees have been created. But the incidents of June 11 show that not all fishers are ready to take the idea on board.

The presence of onboard observers is crucial for providing independent information on fishing activities, both on a daily and a case-by-case basis, the CTA online debate concluded. But to be effective, such methods depend on the inspectors receiving adequate training and payment, as Ms Janet Uronu, joint president for fisheries at the Ministry for Natural Resources and Tourism in Tanzania pointed out, “The high levels of technology (and the principles on which it is based) to be found on modern fishing vessels were well beyond the comprehension of those fishery officers sent to inspect the vessels.” The job of these inspectors also carries risks: vulnerability to corruption, especially if they are poorly paid, violence and the risk of being taken hostage, to prevent them from reporting what they have seen.

A number of experiments closely linking fishing communities with surveillance operations have been carried out in West Africa. After all, the fishermen know the fishing grounds better than anyone. However, while these initiatives have produced positive results, they also raise the question of motivation — the fishers are simultaneously acting as inspectors and stakeholders. This approach effectively establishes that small-scale fishers are also responsible for the over-exploitation of resources.

**A culture of change**

None of these methods will work unless at least two conditions are met. First, there must be clear rules about what is and is not allowed, accompanied by sanctions which are properly enforced. Secondly, there needs to be regional cooperation between countries facing the same problem. That is true for the North: on March 14, 2005, the EU Fisheries Council finally agreed to establish a Community Fisheries Control Agency, based in Vigo, Spain which should coordinate fishing control systems within community waters, but also — an important point for ACP countries — within the framework of bilateral fisheries agreements.

It is also true for the South, where one of the most successful initiatives in this respect has been the MCS Programme set up by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Financed by the EU, it has, since 2003, allowed bilateral and trilateral surveillance operations to be carried out between the countries concerned, and strengthened the equipment, human resources and capacity to exchange information of member countries which needed support in these areas. Tanzania, for example, now has more than 30 trained observers. According to Ms Uronu, the first change needed to achieve such results involves overcoming inertia and bureaucracy. A culture of change is essential.

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, which numbers seven mainland or island East African countries among its members, is another example of regional cooperation. According to Mark Pearson, at the Secretariat of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), this cooperation has already enabled the number of refrigerated fishing vessels practising IUU fishing to be cut from 140 to 40. One method used is the exchange, between member countries and others, of lists of authorised vessels, together with their tonnage (known as the “positive list”).

Other regional groupings in the fisheries sector may lead to similar initiatives. That has already happened in the case of the Programme pêche, commerce et environnement en Afrique de l’Ouest (PCEAO), a programme set up to promote sustainable fishing in six West African states, which met in Dakar in early June 2005. The question of surveillance was not specifically on the agenda, but the West African sub-regional commission on West African fisheries, la Commission sous-régionale des pêches d’Afrique de l’Ouest (CSRPA), does have a project to address this issue, supported by the Luxembourg Development Forum Fisheries Agency among others. In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism lists the development of a monitoring, control and surveillance system as a priority. Finally, the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Unit of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), based in the Solomon Islands, has, since 1999, installed a satellite surveillance system to monitor fishing vessels on behalf of its member states. It has proved to be highly effective — the number of cases of illicit fishing recorded by the authorities is, and continues to be, very small.

Fisheries surveillance requires considerable means. How should available resources be best used, and what kind of support is needed? That is what future fisheries agreements being drawn up between ACP countries and the EU should try to clarify. Equally, they should encourage greater harmony between national fisheries legislation, as well as regional cooperation in various forms: data exchange, joint patrols, exchange of personnel and experiences between crews, and of surveillance systems in the EU and the ACP regions concerned. In the long run, it makes sense all round.

See Links page 10
Kenyan farmers turn to grain amaranth

Grain amaranth (*Amaranthus hybridus*) offers the prospect of substantially increasing food output in dryland areas of Kenya, according to a local NGO, Strategic Poverty Alleviation Systems (SPAS). Until recently, amaranth was regarded as a vegetable for the poor, but increasingly, the grain is being planted by Kenyan farmers. The Nairobi-based SPAS is promoting grain amaranth cultivation in partnership with churches and village committees. Grain amaranth produces higher yields than other grains; it grows in poor soil and is drought, pest and disease resistant, making it less time consuming, less costly and more environment-friendly than other grains which require pesticides.

Amaranth also has medicinal properties. It is exceptionally high in lysine, a critical amino acid and has proved beneficial in the management of HIV/AIDS and other debilitating diseases, helping patients to regain their energy. Grain amaranth has a gestation period of only 45 to 75 days and requires, on average, only one-third of the water used by other grains in similar growing conditions. Amaranth flour has a pleasant nutty taste, and has the advantage of being non-glutinous.

“Grain amaranth is a nutritional powerhouse”, says Linus Ndonga of SPAS. He believes that amaranth could “sustainably and efficiently” improve nutrition in dryland areas. SPAS has supplied certified seeds for planting to groups of women trained in grain amaranth production. In one drought-hit area, Maragwa, where other grains failed, amaranth yielded between 800-1,000 kg per acre. Ndonga claims grain amaranth could feed twice as many people from the same area of land. “It has proved to be a breakthrough in the fight against food insecurity. The challenge remains to incorporate it in the list of Kenyan staple foods.”

## Hammer mill offers affordable lime

As many farmers know, agricultural lime can be used to correct soil acidification, with the aluminium and manganese toxicity that goes with it, and the poor yields that result. Lime is an inexpensive mineral and in Zambia it is found throughout the country. The greatest expense for this important agricultural input is transportation, making localised lime production a promising avenue for cutting costs.

With this in mind, the Technology Development and Advisory Unit (TDAU) of the University of Zambia joined up with the British Geological Society on a project called Local Development of Affordable Lime in Southern Africa. The scheme has supplied certified seeds for planting to groups of women trained in grain amaranth production. In one drought-hit area, Maragwa, where other grains failed, amaranth yielded between 800-1,000 kg per acre. Ndonga claims grain amaranth could feed twice as many people from the same area of land. “It has proved to be a breakthrough in the fight against food insecurity. The challenge remains to incorporate it in the list of Kenyan staple foods.”

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**ACP nations sweep development awards**

ACP countries have chalked up an impressive string of successes in a new sustainable development award, the Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development (Seed) Initiative, launched by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). Three out of five winners are from ACP regions. The winning projects include an environmentally friendly way of growing rice in East Africa, a community-based marine protected area in Madagascar and a power plant based marine protected area in East Africa, a community-friendly way of growing rice projects include an environmental protection award, the Supporting partnerships every chance of success.

One winning project being piloted in Ibadan, Nigeria, is turning effluents and waste products from abattoirs into energy to generate income for poor urban communities and reduce the gases linked with climate change. The project treats the abattoir wastes and turns them into a biogas suitable for cooking and other uses. A further by-product is agricultural-grade fertiliser. The biogas is significantly cheaper than current, commercially available liquified gases.

Another winner is a joint effort between Cornell University in the US, together with several NGOs and local communities in Cambodia, Madagascar and Sri Lanka, who are partners in an initiative to boost rural incomes through the marketing of indigenous rice varieties grown under environment-friendly conditions. The project involves a production method known as the ‘System of Rice Intensification’ (SRI), which works without flooding rice paddies and results in stronger plants that need less chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Small rural producers who are taking part are achieving water savings of up to 50% and increased yields of up to 100%.

Still in Madagascar, an experimental, community-led scheme aims to show how partnerships between local people, research institutes and NGOs can deliver marine conservation and sustainable livelihoods by creating the country’s first Marine Protected Area (MPA). The project, revolving around the 1,200-strong community of Andavadoaka, is balancing the needs of local fishermen and protection of the area’s important coral reefs. Eco-tourism is being promoted as a way of generating income for conservation work, diversifying the local economy and reducing pressure on fish stocks.

**Fertiliser in small doses**

Using fertiliser in countries of the South is often fraught with problems. The high cost of these industrial products is often crippling for farmers, who are reluctant to make such an investment, given the uncertain climate. To overcome these obstacles, experiments have been made using small doses (known as micro-doses) of fertiliser, and placing them directly into the soil at the time of sowing.

An FAO fertiliser project showed an increase in yields of both millet and sorghum from using this technique. For example, the application of 20 kg/ha of Di-ammonium phosphate 18-46-0 (DAP) into the hole, together with the seed, produces an increase in yield of around 70%. A secondary advantage of this method is the small amount of fertiliser used overall, with the obvious benefits to the environment.

The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in Niger, together with local partner organisations involved in agricultural research such as the Institut de l’environnement et recherches agricoles (INERA) in Burkina Faso, the Institut d’économie rurale au Mali (IER) in Mali and the Institut national de recherche agronomique du Niger (INRAN) in Niger have also carried out promising trials using sorghum and millet, which resulted in higher yields for both crops.

In Niger, farmers are now being trained in this technique and field schools are being established.

**An eco-label for fish**

A new eco-label scheme has been launched in a bid to ensure the sustainability of the world’s marine fisheries. FAO has issued a set of guidelines to help governments and organisations wanting to use the labelling scheme for fish and fishery products. The distinctive logo certifies that the fish has been harvested in compliance with conservation and sustainability standards such as those that guard against overfishing, adverse impacts on protected, endangered or threatened species, as well as on sensitive habitats. Acknowledging the hurdles poorer countries face due to lack of financial and technical resources, the guidelines call for financial and technical support to help them implement and benefit from eco-labelling.

**New stove cuts fuel costs**

The switch from traditional charcoal stove to the new pumba stove has enabled many Tanzanian households to cut cooking time and fuel costs by more than 50%. Lonely Mkumbo, a resident of the Singida Region who used to spend the equivalent of US$0.50 per day on fuel has reduced her daily fuel bill to US$0.25. The stove, which uses dust or the residue of processed rice, maize and other crops, is far more efficient than traditional charcoal stoves and the risk of burns is greatly reduced since the flames are totally covered by the cooking pot. Environmentalists have praised the innovation and recommended it for use in both urban and rural areas.

**A passion for Moringa**

The French association PROPAGE has produced a series of fact sheets for use by projects aiming to increase the cultivation and consumption of Moringa leaves (Moringa oleifera) to improve nutritional levels. Downloadable from its website, these documents explain both the nutritional content of this tropical oleaginous tree (see Spore 106) as well as techniques for leaf drying and grinding. The bilingual site also offers on-line posters and illustrated brochures on themes including production, processing and health benefits.

**In brief**

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The airwaves are buzzing

In Cameroon, the radio station Voice of Oku is broadcasting programmes about bees and trees. The radio station recommends sustainable strategies which encompass active planting and the conservation of trees such as Calliandra spp. and Acacia spp. The broadcasts encourage the planting of trees, whose flowers help increase honey production. Bees, by carrying pollen from one flower to another, act as highly efficient pollinating agents for a number of food crops. By combining honey-producing bees with agroforestry systems, farmers can significantly improve their agricultural output.

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Success for sun-dried potatoes

Business in sun-dried sweet potatoes is booming in the Lango district of Uganda. Local farmers are selling sliced sun-dried potatoes (otere-ecek) at 800 Ugandan shillings (€0.37) per kilo. Produce dealers from Lira and Apac throng villages and rural markets to buy the potatoes, which are sold as chips. The main customers are schools and big hotels. The idea came from scientists at the Kawanda Research Station, part of Uganda’s National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO).

Kanyanya Integrated Agricultural Organisation (KAGIO)
PO Box 30182
Kampala
Uganda
Email: namarajust@yahoo.com

PigTrop, a website on tropical pigs

Pig rearing and pork commodity chains in countries of the South now have their very own website. Created by the French Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD), PigTrop presents information from a number of other research and development players, who are working with and for countries of the South. One page called “Scientific Works” outlines the technical aspects of the sector; the “Worldwide” section allows users to search for information from five major tropical geographical regions; and the “Inquisitive minds only” page combines pig trivia, with games and quizzes to test your knowledge. This vast and comprehensive website on pig rearing also features a photo gallery, links, news and recent publications.

Website: http://pigtrop.cirad.fr/index.html

Rice pellets

Researchers at the Walloon Agricultural Research Centre of Gembloux, Belgium, are testing a new fuel in Senegal. Dubbed Bioterre, it is made of agricultural waste products (coffee, rice husks, etc.) and comes in the form of pellets made by grinding the waste and mixing it with clay and water. The pellets are then granulated before being left to dry in the sun and packaged. This process enables the fuel to be adapted to both domestic and small-scale industrial usage, by modifying the composition or size of the pellets.

According to project organisers, the use of 1,000 t of rice pellets can save up to 400 ha of forest. What is more, in Senegal, where a production unit has been installed, the fuel sells at CFAF60/kg (€0.10), while charcoal costs CFAF212/kg (€0.32).

A survey carried out in some 30 Senegalese households revealed that 90% of them are willing to use Bioterre instead of charcoal. Before they can make the change, however, families must first invest in a specially converted kiln at a cost of CFAF7,000 (€11). If the system is to become more widely used, production costs will first need to come down, both for the fuel and the kiln.

Rwandan coffee used to make beer

A London brewery has started producing beer brewed from Rwandan coffee beans. The beer, which has a 4% alcohol content, is targeted at adult drinkers as a cappuccino drink or digestif. Meantime the Brewery uses fair trade Arabica coffee beans grown by the Abuhuzamugambi Cooperative in Butare Province. Brewery owner Alastair Hook also tried beans from other coffee-producing countries before settling on Rwandan coffee for his unusual brew. The brewer blind-tested coffee from Brazil and Colombia, but was not convinced that their taste was right for his coffee beer. It was not until he tried the chocolate and vanilla flavour of the Rwandan coffee that he found the “silky, velvety character” that he wanted.

Coffee is one of Rwanda’s major exports, but the brewer was anxious to buy from a fair trade source, so his next task was to track down a suitable supplier in Rwanda. “We are the only producer of coffee beer in the British Isles... We are the only producer of fair trade beer that I know of,” he said.

Mr Hook’s hunch that the marriage of beer and coffee would be a winner appears to have paid off. The British company is already selling healthy volumes through UK supermarket chain Sainsbury’s. The beer is also selling well in pubs, bars and restaurants.

Haricot beans, cowpeas, soya beans and acacias all belong to this group of leguminous plants which can harness nitrogen present in the atmosphere thanks to bacteria living in their root nodules. Increasing their cultivation would help boost vegetable production on poor soils and contribute to the regeneration of degraded environments. A further plus is the high nutritional content of nitrogen-fixing plants, which are extremely rich in protein.
Hope for Africa’s youth

The youth essay competition launched by CTA in collaboration with the Africa Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) attracted nearly 50 entries from all over the continent and all of a consistently high standard. Asked to write on the theme: Science and technology creating employment and wealth for youths in Africa, competitors put pen to paper. First place went to Winnie Alum from Uganda, second to Muthoka Christine Ndunge and third to Phillip Mutuma Munyuva, both from Kenya. The three winners have each received prizes of €200. Their essays can be read in full on CTA’s Knowledge for Development web portal.

Children and youth account for more than 50% of the population of Africa, a proportion which is rising fast, partly due to HIV/AIDS. Other factors including high unemployment rates and lack of educational opportunities combine to make Africa’s youth a particularly vulnerable sector of society. Yet Winnie Alum is convinced that Africa’s young people represent the best hope for the continent’s future. For this reason, it makes sense to invest in African youth, she says. In her prize-winning essay, Winnie speaks convincingly of the need for more projects geared towards improving the living conditions of young rural people, through the promotion of science, technology and innovation which target this sector. “These can be initiated and sustained by the youth themselves,” she writes.

Muthoka Christine Ndunge reminds us that technical progress is “the single most important determining factor for achieving sustained economic growth of a country or region.” She remains convinced that agriculture — invigorated by science and technological innovations — is the best hope for the future of Africa. Moreover, she describes how the development of tissue culture bananas and the introduction of water harvesting and soil conservation technologies in Kenya have improved yields and incomes for small-scale farmers, showing young people that there is indeed a future in farming. Phillip Mutuma Munyuva looks at two practical examples of how new crops — in this case passion fruit and grain amaranth — can increase farmers’ incomes and help convince young rural dwellers that farming is a rewarding and remunerative activity.

Website: http://knowledge.cta.int

Thumbs up for new millet

A new variety of millet developed by Burkina Faso’s agricultural research institute, the Institut national pour l’étude et la recherche agronomique (INERA), is proving a big hit with farmers in the central southern region of the country. The IKM5 variety, nicknamed Kiipala (new millet) by local farmers, is popular because it ripens more quickly than the traditional variety and has greater resistance to drought. Kyelem Benjamin, a research technician at INERA, says it has a 70-day cycle, almost half that of traditional millet. Farmers can therefore sow later, enabling them to manage their agricultural timetable more efficiently and to cut down on their workload. This means they have more time to devote to other activities such as growing maize, peanuts and cowpeas. In the words of one farmer, Souleymane Ouédraogo: “With the improved variety, you have to plough and make ridges, sow, weed and earth up, while with the traditional variety you have to go back five or six times for weeding.” Farmers are also enthusiastic about the flavour of the improved variety. It is easier to chew and much sweeter, so much so that it can be used to make zoom koom, a local drink based on millet flour, without adding sugar. Producers claim dishes made from this new variety are more appetising, since the millet is less yellow than the traditional version.

The new variety was introduced in the country’s Teess department 2 years ago. Mr. Benjamin stresses that it requires more technical precision, i.e. a distance of 80 cm must be left between each row and 40 cm between each plant. Some farmers are so keen on the new millet that they maintain it produces higher yields, a claim that is denied by the INERA researcher — traditional millet and the improved variety produce identical yields if grown in the same conditions. By contrast, he says, IKM5 is more resistant to mildew, the scourge of millet.

Website: http://knowledge.cta.int

Family farming for the future

The French website “Agricultures familiales et mondes à venir” puts the spotlight on family farming, the world’s number one activity. This sector employs some 1.48 billion agricultural workers, of whom 96% live in the South. Wherever it is practised, family farming faces a number of challenges, including less state support, the opening of markets to competition, environmental concerns and new consumer demands. But from Brazil to Thailand, from Madagascar to Cameroon, as well as in Europe, farmers are introducing innovations, examining their position, coming up with solutions to their problems and anticipating future developments.

Website: http://afm.cirad.fr

Frogs on trial

Rearing frogs can offer an additional source of revenue and food protein. In Kivu (Democratic Republic of the Congo), where this activity is being tried in artificial lakes made on the site of old brick quarries, about 30 frogs can produce a thousand more frogs for market in just 1 year. They need to be fed live prey (insects) and must be fenced off from their natural predators (snakes, birds, etc.). Frog legs are eaten locally in a number of restaurants and a sizeable market exists in Europe, which imports €29 million worth of this product each year.

Pest management in the tropics

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Germany has developed an on-line information service to provide training and support in non-chemical pest management for farmers in the tropics. OISAT Info is a web-based information service targeting the needs of smallholder farmers. It presents preventative and curative methods for managing pests with the aim of reducing the use of synthetic pesticides. Users can choose, download and edit parts of the OISAT Info which they find relevant, and print out their own tailor-made brochure. The website also offers a translation service into local languages.

Website: www.oisat.org
Fishing on-line

Before casting our lines to fish for information, it is useful to know exactly what is meant by the term “illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU)”. The Rome Declaration of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries adopted by 121 states on 12 March 2005, and hosted on the FAO website, presents in some detail the arsenal of measures on hand to limit the extent of these frauds. A downloadable brochure will allow you to find out more about the weapons available to combat illegal fishing. FAO constantly updates this section, so it is worthwhile to consult it on a regular basis.

The CTA website offers on-line access to a number of documents assembled for the Conference on ACP-EU Fisheries Relations which it organised in Brussels in December 2004. You can enter into the thick of the debate through the forum on illegal fishing created by CTA on the Euforic website, a cooperative platform for information and communication on Europe’s development cooperation. Experts can also sign up for the D-Group (see below for address).

The March 2004 issue, number 16 of the CTA bulletin ICT Update, is entirely devoted to fisheries surveillance, with special emphasis on the application of ICTs. Also keeping a keen eye on the fisheries sector is Agritrade, the CTA portal, which closely follows developments on these issues.

The websites of regional organisations are another plentiful source of information: that of the EU’s Directorate-General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs is a good starting point. For the Caribbean, take a look at the website of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), set up to promote sustainable fishing in the region; for the Pacific, the website of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) publishes a quarterly bulletin called the MICS Newsletter, dedicated to Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS). The site of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) outlines the regional MCS Programme developed by member states and gives addresses for national contact points. The Programme pêche-commerces-environnement en Afrique de l’Ouest (PCEAO), a programme implemented to promote sustainable fishing in six West African states, can be explored on-line, though only in French. The website of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) also has a good fisheries section.

Among NGOs, the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA) plays a useful role in informing coastal communities on fisheries relations between the EU and ACP countries. Based in the same Belgian office, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) publishes a magazine called Samudra, dedicated to small-scale fisherfolk around the world.

For further information:

Agritrade
Fisheries Section
http://agritrade.cta.int/fisheries/index.htm

CTA
D-Groups
www.dgroups.org/groups/acp-fisheries/index.cfm?op=act_login
• Conference on ACP-EU Fisheries relations, organised by CTA
www.cta.int/events2004/fish/index.htm

ICT Update
N° 16, March 2004

Step by step towards PPP

The proliferation of public-private partnerships (PPP) in agricultural research for countries of the South reflects the growing conviction that the world of business can and must play a role in the development of the South. A document published by the United Nations Development Programme, entitled Unleashing Entrepreneurship. Making Business Work for the Poor is one of the cornerstones of this concept. PPPs in a rural development context also feature prominently on the website of Inforessources.

To get a better sense of the benefits of this partnership, you can consult two reference papers, one published by the World Bank which traces the history of African Agricultural Research, and the other produced by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on Investing in Sub-Saharan African Agricultural Research. At this point, you will be better equipped to appreciate the advantages of PPP as outlined in two long reports from IFPRI and the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR). French speakers may also want to read the report on agricultural research published by Graine de sel, a magazine produced by the rural development network Inter-Réseaux.

To round off your inquiries, the CTA web portal, Knowledge for Development deals with the issue of benefit sharing from joint research efforts by the private and the public sector. A wide range of examples are included in the proceedings of the International Expert Workshop on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing.

For further information:

• African agricultural research

Grain de sel

IFPRI
• Investing in sub-Saharan African agricultural research: Recent trends
• Public-private partnership in agricultural research

Inforessources
www.inforessources.ch/pdf/focus ..._1_05_e.pdf

ISNAR
www.isnar.cgiar.org/ppp

Knowledge for Development
http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/ki ewf/fullreport.pdf
Over the past 2 decades, PTD has gradually gained credibility as an alternative to conventional forms of agricultural technology development, but it still lags behind in the livestock sector, where there is considerable scope for better farmer participation. As well as discussing the general philosophy behind PTD, and its applications, the book offers case studies that show how livestock-keepers have been helped by this approach. One example examines how chicken farmers in Mozambique used PTD to improve the control of Newcastle disease. Another looks at the development of herbaceous forage legume technologies in central Kenya.

Restocking for poor pastoralists

One approach is restocking — distributing livestock as a form of disaster relief, rehabilitation and development — which offers an effective means of poverty alleviation, enabling poor pastoralists to be re-incorporated into the social and economic fabric. Unlike food aid, restocking appears to promise a long-term answer to the problems of these most vulnerable rural people.

This manual aims to improve the success rate of restocking projects by offering a guide to best practices. The result of a 2-year global study on restocking policy and practice which looked at 85 projects involving 700 households, mainly in Africa, the book offers advice on the best way to go about restocking.

It also examines fundamental issues designed to help project leaders decide whether this approach is the best solution for a particular household or community — and to weigh the real chances of its success.

Restocking Pastoralists: A manual of best practice and decision support tools
By C Heffernan, F Misturelli & L Nielsen
ISBN 1 85339 589 7
GBP12.95 • €19
ITDG Publishing
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Email: info@itdgpublishers.org.uk
Website: www.itdgpublishing.org.uk

Of the world’s estimated 200 million pastoralists, more than two-thirds are considered to be poor. In recent years, this alarming state of affairs, often exacerbated by civil war, land encroachment and population growth, has galvanised the development community into coming up with some practical solutions.

In most countries of the South, rural households depend to some degree on livestock as a source of food, cash, draught power and manure for crop production. But farmers could gain even greater benefits from their livestock if they were given a greater say in research and technology development for this sector.

This book explains the participatory approach to livestock research, and with it participatory technology development (PTD), a term coined to describe a process in which local people and outsiders work together to develop technologies that can address their particular problems and help them to take advantage of opportunities.

Restocking Pastoralists: A manual of opportunities.
By C Conroy
CTA-ITDG
2005
ISBN 1 85339 577 3
CTA number 1243
40 credit points

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Better soil fertility for African farmers

Degradation of soil fertility remains the single most important constraint to food production in sub-Saharan Africa. This book examines how efficiently cycling nutrients among crops, animals and soil can help improve the sustainable productivity of farming systems in an African setting.

Written after a workshop held by the Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility (TSBF) Institute of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, the volume is a synthesis of recent research by members of the African Network for Soil Biology and Fertility (ANNet).

The book focuses on integrated soil fertility management (ISFM) as the most pragmatic approach to tackle soil degradation in Africa. This holistic management strategy addresses a whole range of causes and consequences, taking into account the social, economic and political aspects of soil fertility decline, as well as the biological and chemical aspects.

Case studies of ISFM’s application in a range of African countries as well as a discussion of belowground biodiversity and an interesting analysis of ways to scale up soil fertility restoration technologies are also highlighted.

Cigarettes can be harmful to crop pests

Meet Ali, his wife Leila and their daughter Miri. They are a small-scale farming family in a fictional setting, grappling with crop pests and diseases that are all too real. Together with their neighbours, Peter and Sarah, and John the extension agent, they are the protagonists of an entertaining and highly informative handbook, which uses the comic strip to explain the nature of crop pests and diseases, the agents that cause them and some of the best methods for getting rid of them.

The emphasis is on environmentally friendly pest control methods. Suzie the bird is introduced as the farmer’s insect-eating friend who gets rid of flies and grubs for him.

The book, which has been revised from an earlier edition, is aimed at agricultural extension agents, teachers and trainers, and the humorous strip cartoons can be traced or photocopied and handed out to farmers.

The comic strip is accompanied by a simple, well-written text which describes practical methods for controlling pests and diseases, going into considerable detail on how to prepare and apply them, and accompanied by clear drawings and diagrams.

Facts about fertilisers

This volume from FAO is a compilation of statistical data relating to the production, trade and consumption of chemical fertiliser products for countries and territories around the world. Data starts from 1981, and is arranged on a yearly basis, making it easy to track which countries are using which fertilisers, and in what quantities.

Advice on marketing

Marketing agricultural products is an area fraught with uncertainties. Firstly, it raises questions for the government: should it organise the market and guarantee a minimum price for products? Secondly, for the producer, who needs to ask: should he use pesticides and if so, how much? Should he grade his products, and how many intermediaries can he afford to involve? This CD-ROM provides help in answering many of these questions by offering access to a dozen publications produced by FAO since 1990.

Some of these documents are theory-based, but most offer practical advice for use as training materials by extension workers and by producers themselves. For example, the transcription of five texts from a radio series explains how markets are organised as well as postharvest maintenance. The Fertilizer Retailing Guide looks at the management of a fertilizer business by answering various questions that a retailer might ask. It even explains why fertilizers are useful. Overall, the subjects covered in these publications are relevant for both international and village markets.

Who pays the bill?

Leasing land to small farmers can lead to improvements in access to land for farming and to better agricultural output. In so doing, it can contribute to social and economic progress as well as to food security. Each country therefore has a vested interest in seeing that this type of commercial exchange, between owners who lease their land for a given period and farmers who compensate them, runs as smoothly as possible. But outside factors sometimes intervene to upset the balance between the two parties. These may include Nature, through storms and droughts, and Man, through conflicts, migrations and emergencies.

The sustainable use and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) is a key issue for many ACP countries, but perhaps nowhere more so than in the Pacific region, whose small island states depend on their rich but dwindling patrimony of plant biodiversity. But the topic is also a difficult one. This 32-page booklet sets out to explain the main issues and examine their relevance in a Pacific context. Using a clear and simple style the Guide provides basic information that Pacific Island countries need to make decisions about important topics such as biodiversity, intellectual property rights and landraces (crop varieties evolved by traditional agriculturalists).

The guide explains the importance of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture as an instrument to protect the genetic material of plant origin of actual or potential value for food and agriculture. It also looks at the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), and at the CBD’s “access and benefit sharing” (ABS) mechanism, a procedure which allows an interested person, company or institution access to biodiversity within a country in return for prior consent. Finally, it discusses the importance of regional cooperation in protecting plant resources, a practice that is already well established in the Pacific.

Hydrological Functions of Tropical Forests, Not Seeing the Soil for the Trees

By S. Bruijnzeel
Downloadable as PDF from: www.asb.cgiar.org/pdf/webdocs/AGEE_special_3_S_Bruijnzeel.pdf

Be prepared

This CD-ROM offers key documents on a subject of crucial importance to many ACP countries – the reform of the EU sugar regime and its effect on producers. It brings together material from CTA’s Agritrade web portal, which is dedicated to ACP agricultural trade negotiations, as well as resource materials from other sources, including the European Commission, EU cooperation agencies, ACP ministries, research institutes, NGOs and sugar associations. The idea is to give ACP countries the necessary tools to help them play an active role in trade negotiations which will shape their future.

The reform of the EU sugar regime and its impact on ACP countries
CTA
2005
CD-ROM
CTA Number 1242
5 credit points
Agriflash

A new audiovisual tool

Atr first glance, agriculture still holds only a small place in the ACP audiovisual spectrum. Neither state nor private broadcast channels devote much air time to programmes on rural development. Rural areas may also have fewer television sets and are not always covered by broadcasting networks. Television is mainly aimed at urban audiences.

Nevertheless, television can play an important role in sensitizing ACP communities to the importance of agricultural development. The audience certainly exists — many urban dwellers have one foot firmly placed in the rural world, either because they are market gardeners or traders or, quite simply, because part of their family still lives in a village. Just one TV set can allow an entire village to watch a programme. So why do we not have more agricultural content on television?

In answer to this question, CTA recently launched a series of television products which give a better understanding of current agricultural issues and show how information can help transform and improve ACP rural economies.

One of these is a short programme on agriculture in Africa, Agriflash, developed in partnership with the Paris-based production company People TV. The programme is broadcast in English, French and Portuguese during the last week of each month as part of the Business Africa programme, which goes out on 35 television channels, mainly in Africa (see end of article).

Three minutes of agriculture

Agriflash is made up of news briefs lasting a total of 3 min, inspired by items carried by CTA publications such as Spore, Agritrade and ICT Update. These briefs give viewers an insight into positive and dynamic developments in African agriculture. Since the beginning of 2005, Agriflash has looked, for example, at dairy production in Uganda, and at internet websites that offer information on prices.

Again in conjunction with People TV, CTA has begun co-producing short documentaries (8 min) aimed at farmers wanting more information to help increase their output and revenues. Four documentaries will be produced and broadcast in 2005.

Agricultural information in pictures

The first of these documentaries shows how, with support from CTA, organisations in Mali are supplying agricultural information to rural areas using various media (books, magazines, radio, meetings, mobile telephones and internet). Since this documentary is the first in the series, it contains an introduction to CTA’s mission and areas of activity.

The second programme explains how CTA’s Question-and-Answer Service (QAS) works, through a visit to a regional centre in Cameroon. The first image takes viewers into a field of pineapples, where the owner describes how he improved production thanks to advice from the QAS. This documentary also shows some of the new tools, such as telephones, radio, etc., being used by the QAS to reach farmers living in isolated places, far from the nearest town.

The final two programmes deal with product marketing. One looks at the emergence of regional markets and market information systems (MIS) that supply data on prices and volumes traded. The other examines access to international markets and negotiations under way between the EU and ACP countries.

Documents and information kits

You have indicated an interest in seeing different formats. Producing a programme which may serve as a starting point for debate, or which can act as an information service, is a huge undertaking upon which CTA cannot embark unaided. For that reason, we have teamed up with other organisations to co-produce some documentaries. We are currently working on a film on the use of biotechnological applications in rural
contexts in different countries, including ACP states. We are also hoping to co-produce a documentary on the locust plague of 2004-2005 in Mauritania with Arte, the European TV channel. Video (VHS and DVD) versions of these programmes will be available through CTA's Publications Distribution Service (PDS).

CTA is also planning to supply comprehensive multimedia products on given topics. These information kits will bring together a range of materials including printed documents, recordings for radio use and live images. There is no shortage of ideas and issues. We will kick off with a report on a study visit to South Africa, where AIDS and peri-urban agriculture will be the main themes. This will be followed by a kit on bee-keeping.

For further information:
For information on all programmes and broadcast schedules, see: http://tvcta.int
For details on the news programme Business Africa, visit: www.business-africa.net
Agriflash and the documentaries are broadcast by the following networks: SABC Africa, RTP Africa, Golfe TV, BTV, RTNB, STV 1 (English), STV 2 (French), TVCA, TVC, Antenna A, RFI, ETV, RTG1, GRTS, GBC, KTN, RTA, ORTM, MBC, NBC, ORTN, NTA Network, TVR, RTS, SLBS, Channel 10, TV TCHAD, TVT, WBS, ZNBC, CVM, Télé Bruxelles, BEN TV, Beur TV, Téléaud and Euronews.

Mailbox
Your letters keep on coming, and all of them are different — some make observations, others recount an experience. But all of them reflect the same desire to share, for Spore is a circle of readers who enjoy communicating. Keep on sending them — that’s communication!

Sweet success
In Zambia, Bob Malichi is keen to pass on some success stories from the training programmes that he runs in organic farming, based largely on information from books received through CTA’s Publications Distribution Service. Courses on beekeeping are proving particularly popular, as the photo below shows.

“Beekeeping is providing a source of income even to the vulnerable in society,” writes Mr Malichi. “In some cases, we are forced to turn away those who want to train in beekeeping, due to limited resources. Children learn the art of beekeeping at a tender age.”

A burning interest in biogas
Since we published an In Brief article on “at home with biogas” in Spore 114, Mr. Tamba has received more than 60 inquiries from readers interested in the process! “Most of them want to find out how to build methane production units and obtain biogas”, explains Mr. Tamba. He declares himself ready to do everything in his power to see that “this alternative technology can become a real force in the struggle against poverty in the developing world.”

Well fed chickens
Another faithful Spore reader and contributor, Mr. Hardouin, replies to a letter published in Spore 115 on improved poultry production. He does not wholly agree with Ms. Victoria Meremikwu and claims that small-scale producers rearing chickens can do without commercial grower ration supplements. “There are several simple well-known techniques for feeding poultry with maggots (fly larvae) or dung worms which cost nothing at all and which constitute a food source that is very rich in highly digestible proteins and lipids”, he writes. He is happy to communicate with any Spore readers who would like further details.

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蜇虫藻

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All other publications, indicated by an orange square, are available from the publishers listed, or through commercial booksellers.

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Fax: +44 1438 748844
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Website: www.earthprint.com

Children hold samples of honey for laboratory testing

• Between us

SPORE 119 ● PAGE 15
**Farmers’ organisations**

The challenges of leadership

Moussa Para Diallo successfully led his organisation in challenging the import of European potatoes which were threatening the market position of Guinea’s excellent local potatoes. Based on his experience, he outlines the qualities of the ideal farmers’ representative — combative, open, with keen negotiating skills.

What lessons have you drawn from your experience as the leader of a farmers’ organisation?

- After 13 years as head of the Fédération des paysans du Fouta Djallon (FPFD), I am convinced that a farmers’ leader is first and foremost a man who takes on challenges — he is determined to reach his goal, come what may. This challenge must become an obsession for him. That presupposes that he must first come to terms with himself as a leader, but without ever cutting himself off from his roots — the farmers themselves. It stands therefore that a leader is not someone who spends his time travelling all over the place, being seen in the best hotels and only worrying about his per diem allowance.

What in your view are the essential qualities of a good farmers’ leader?

- His first concern should be getting work for his people. He must be ready to deal with all kinds of difficulties, no matter where they arise. He must never give up. Above all, he needs to welcome dialogue and have regular exchanges with other people, at the local, national or international level. A leader is someone who is good at organising, at adapting to difficult situations and at motivating members so that they firmly believe in what they are doing. But courage alone is not enough. He also needs management skills to achieve his goals, the prime one being the well-being of farmers.

A leader must also prove himself to be honest and forward-looking and be at ease in a range of different settings. Once he has fulfilled all these conditions, he will be in a position to converse with just about anyone anywhere in the world, be able to put forward his own ideas and derive benefits from these experiences for his own organisation.

A good farmers’ leader is also someone who knows how to fight for the best prices, from both suppliers and clients who want to buy products. He must be capable of defending himself and his organisation when it comes to dealing with political and administrative powers. However, he must keep his distance from politics and be careful not to take sides. Lastly, he must think about training suitable successors and constantly push the members of his organisation to get proper training.

How do you reconcile demands for your presence in the village with the need to represent your organisation to the outside world?

- I think one of the main problems with leaders in the South is that they are too bureaucratic. A leader in tune with his membership must be able to take off his tie, roll up his sleeves and only go into town when strictly necessary. Otherwise, how can he possibly hope to present problems about which he has little real knowledge? Some people occasionally criticise me for not being in town often enough. But really, my place is here in Timbi Madina. It is the farmers who have elected me to be head of their federation, not the city dwellers. I only go to Conakry or to Europe when I have to take part in negotiations. The rest of the time, my place is here!

“Winning people’s respect is our greatest reward”

One must never lose sight of the fact that the goal of our organisations is to help improve production and marketing. So it serves no purpose to attend every meeting and conference to give one’s theoretical viewpoint. A good manager needs to have a practical approach rather than being shut off in an air-conditioned office, far removed from the real world of the farmers.

What is the hardest task for a representative of a farmers’ organisation?

- Clearly, a leader will encounter a number of pitfalls in this job. The first hurdle, and one which he needs to address without let up, is where and how to find funds and obtain loans so that people can get to work. He needs to be a good negotiator because he will have to get credit from banks. And I can tell you that this is no easy task — not in the least because the interest rates must be reasonable. Another big problem is the constant need to find new ways to help farmers with small plots of land to increase their output.

Today in Europe, only 3 to 4% of the population is employed in agriculture. But in spite of this small figure, they manage to feed the whole of Europe and to export throughout the world. In Africa, 80% of the population practices agriculture. Yet farmers can barely manage to cover their needs. The great challenge for farmers’ leaders, especially African ones, is to reverse this trend.

To carry out all these tasks, a leader must be prepared on three levels: first, he should have the intellectual capacity, second he should have the necessary experience and finally he must have the means to see them through.

He must also learn to defend himself against unjust attacks. Here, people think that if you are a leader, you must be very well off. So you have to fight to get yourself and your organisation known. Some people even go so far as to create parallel organisations, just to sabotage your efforts.

Any conclusions?

- Development is a long-term process. So if you want to succeed you need to persevere and never give up. If you knock down for the long haul, your efforts will be rewarded, because people will give you credit for your achievements. They will show their respect for you and will back you up when you make suggestions. And that is the best reward that anyone can give you. That is why the struggle must be tough, and waged on all fronts.

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