

**ICARDA News**  
**INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH**  
**IN THE DRY AREAS**

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**Halting the Spectre of Famine**  
**The Future Harvest Consortium Steering**  
**Committee Meets at ICARDA**



*Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy (left), Director General, welcomed the Steering Committee members and other participants to the meeting and wished them success in their deliberations. H.E. Dr Mohammad Sharif (right), Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Afghanistan, read a message from H.E. Mr Sayed Hussain Anwari, Minister of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Afghanistan. He assured the Steering Committee of his Ministry's full cooperation, appreciated the ongoing work of the Consortium, and spelled out key priorities for the future.*

Aleppo, Syria (22 August): Rebuilding food security and the economy by rehabilitating agriculture is the top priority for the Future Harvest Consortium to Rebuild Agriculture in Afghanistan (FHCRAA). The Steering Committee of the Consortium met at ICARDA in Aleppo, 7-8 August, to review work in progress and determine future projects and priorities.

Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy, Director General, welcomed the Steering Committee members and other participants to ICARDA. He said a long road lies ahead for the people of Afghanistan and the Consortium is making rapid progress in implementing its work plans in collaboration with the Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture and

Animal Husbandry. He said he was pleased to welcome the Deputy Minister of the Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (MOAAH), H.E. Dr Mohammad Sharif, who is a member of the Steering Committee, on his second visit to ICARDA.

Dr Sharif read a message from H.E. Mr Sayed Hussain Anwari, Minister of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Afghanistan, assuring that his Ministry was grateful for work of the Consortium to rebuild the agricultural sector "which is vital to the livelihood of the people of Afghanistan." In his own statement Dr Sharif commended ICARDA for its active support and fast progress, and identified priorities for the Consortium to include in its work plans.

Dr Willie Erskine, ADG (Research), presented an update on the progress made by FHCRAA. Other presentations included progress reports on needs assessment studies on seed system and crop improvement; livestock, feed and rangeland; soil and water; and horticulture.

The FHCRAA Steering Committee agreed to focus Consortium attention on research for development and human capacity building, information exchange that enhances synergy, and to support the Government of Afghanistan with MOAAH as focal point for optimizing agricultural development.



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*Steering Committee members and Consortium partners from CIMMYT, ICRISAT and IPGRI, along with ICARDA senior management staff members, spent two days at ICARDA reviewing progress of work and setting priorities for the future.*

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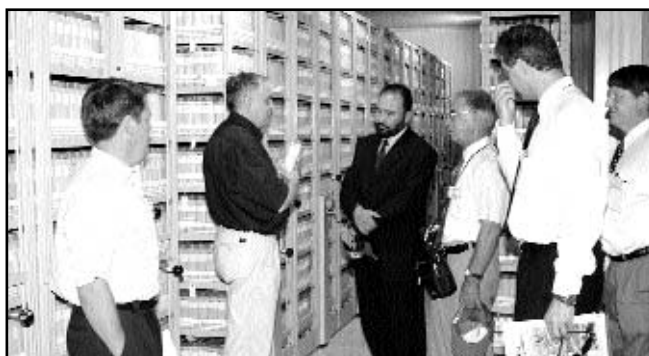
## Visit to ICARDA Facilities



*Virology Lab*



*Cereal Quality*



*Gene Bank*



*Seed Unit*



*Sheep Unit*



*Animal Nutrition Lab*

The MOAAH has listed four priority areas for agricultural development:

- (i) Training of Afghan scholars, particularly in outside universities
- (ii) Equipment for research departments such as seed health
- (iii) Close working relationships with MOAAH in joint planning and practical field work
- (iv) Effective plant protection for emergencies such as locust and Sunn Pest infestation

Approximately 3500 metric tons of wheat seed has already been distributed to 63,340 families for the spring planting. On 1 August, an ICARDA seed shipment of 53 tons left for Kabul to be used for seed multiplication and in breeding improved varieties. Afghan men and women have been trained in seed production and plans for a fall distribution of seed and fertilizer are

already in place. A Code of Conduct has been developed with input from the Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture to provide a regulatory framework for seed production and protect local genetic resources.

A Needs Assessment for Livestock was accomplished against all odds and at great personal risk to the survey team. Despite the dangers, the team traversed the country, visiting 183 villages and interviewing approximately 1700 farmers. NRMP Director, Dr Richard Thomas of ICARDA stated that "there were other 'desk' assessments available, but we felt it was necessary to go into the rural areas and talk directly to the farmers."

This research has provided the basis for project plans to restore dairy production: improve ruminant management, address the sickness and disease that threaten what is left

of the livestock, and multiply them to resume cultivation. Animal power is essential to plowing fields and for transportation.

In the 1970s, 60% of the exports from Afghanistan included almonds, pistachios, citrus fruits and other high-value horticultural crops. Rebuilding orchards destroyed by war is the best hope for replacing lucrative poppy production. Soil and water assessments are in progress to determine how to begin replacing lost trees and rebuilding irrigation systems.

Supported by funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Consortium Steering Committee draws from global scientific expertise to identify priorities and develop collaborative projects for getting Afghan farmers back on their feet. Led by ICARDA, the Consortium is an inter-

national multi-partner effort.

The Steering Committee is composed of the following members who were all present for the meeting in Aleppo:

Dr Mohammad Sharif, Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry

Dr Raymond Morton, USAID

Dr Edwin Price, Texas A&M Univ.

Dr Ronnie Coffman, Cornell Univ.

Dr Peter Cooper, International Development Research Center

Dr Mahmoud Solh, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Dr Patrick Brown, Univ. of California at Davis

Dr Amit Roy, International Center for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development

The following Consortium partners also attended the Steering Committee meeting:

Dr Masa Iwanaga, DG, CIMMYT, Mexico

Dr William Dar, DG, ICRISAT, India

Dr George Ayad, IPGRI, Italy

Dr N. Kaska, IPGRI, Italy

During the course of the meeting, the participants took the opportunity to visit ICARDA's research and training facilities.

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