

ICARDA/CIMMYT Wheat Improvement Program for Dry Areas

Dr Sanjaya Rajaram to lead new wheat initiative

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During the meeting of the Board of Trustees of CIMMYT (International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center) at ICARDA (International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas), the two centers agreed to the joint implementation of the **ICARDA/CIMMYT Wheat Improvement Program (ICWIP)** in the Central and West Asia and North Africa (CWANA) region. ICWIP will be hosted in CWANA by ICARDA and include all research undertaken on wheat improvement in CWANA by both centers, including spring, facultative, and winter bread wheat and durum wheat. The centers also agreed that the ICARDA/CIMMYT Wheat Improvement Program should be managed by a jointly-appointed Director. As the first major outcome of the new agreement, which was signed officially at the annual general meeting of the CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) in December 2005, the two centers have named Dr Sanjaya Rajaram director of the new program.

Dr Rajaram joined ICARDA, based in Aleppo, Syria, in early 2005 as Director of the newly-formed Megaproject, "Integrated Gene Management" (MP2), which includes wheat improvement, after having worked as a wheat scientist at CIMMYT for 34 years. His association with ICARDA, however, goes back to the 1980s, when a joint CIMMYT/ICARDA program was established at ICARDA and, while still serving at CIMMYT in Mexico, he directed the CIMMYT staff posted at ICARDA in the joint program.

ICARDA and CIMMYT wish Dr Rajaram every success in his new appointment. Both centers are confident that his efforts will promote effective delivery of useful products to partners and, given his experience in wheat research and familiarity with both centers, will foster and take advantage of the many synergies between the ICARDA and CIMMYT research teams.

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ICARDA (www.icarda.org) serves the entire developing world for the improvement of barley, lentil, and faba bean; and dry-area developing countries for the on-farm management of water, improvement of nutrition and productivity of small ruminants (sheep and goats), and rehabilitation and management of rangelands. In the Central and West Asia and North Africa (CWANA) region, ICARDA is responsible for the improvement of durum and bread wheats, chickpea, pasture and forage legumes and farming systems; and for the protection and enhancement of the natural resource base of water, land, and biodiversity.

CIMMYT (www.cimmyt.org) is committed to improving livelihoods in developing countries. Through strong science and effective partnerships, the Center creates, shares, and uses knowledge and technology to increase food security, improve the productivity and profitability of farming systems, and sustain natural resources.

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) (www.cgiar.org) is a strategic alliance of countries, international and regional organizations, and private foundations supporting 15 international research centers that mobilizes cutting-edge science to promote sustainable development by reducing hunger and poverty, improving human nutrition and health, and protecting the environment.