The CGIAR Program for Sustainable Agricultural Development in Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC) was initiated by a consortium of nine CG Centers in 1998 in close collaboration with eight CAC-NARS and with financial support of the donors. The Program is managed by a Program Steering Committee (PSC), which had already met twice: first in Tashkent (28-29 September 1998), and then in Tbilisi (23-25 June 1999).

The Third PSC Meeting of the CGIAR Program was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 30 May - 01 June 2000. The Meeting, jointly organized by the Program Facilitation Unit (PFU) based in Tashkent and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR) of Turkmenistan, was attended by 31 participants who represented eight CAC-NARS (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan in Central Asia, and Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in the Caucasus), nine CG Centers (CIMMYT, CIP, ICARDA, ICRISAT, IFPRI, ILRI, IPGRI, ISNAR, and IWM). The Opening Session of the Meeting on 30 May was attended in addition to the above-mentioned Meeting participants by guests from different ministries of Ashgabat, scientists of different institutes of Turkmenistan and representatives of the donor community accredited in Ashgabat. Acad. Guram Aleksidze, Main Scientific Secretary of Georgian Academy of Agricultural Sciences who represented Acad. Valerian Metreveli, President of Georgian Academy of Agricultural Sciences, and Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy, ICARDA's Director General, co-chaired the session.

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The Meeting was inaugurated by His Excellency Mr. Serdar Babaev, the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources of Turkmenistan. In his statement, Mr. S. Babaev highlighted the importance of agriculture and water management in Turkmenistan. He expressed his sincere thanks to CGIAR for initiating the Program, to Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy, Director General of ICARDA and to Prof. Timothy Reeves, Director General of CIMMYT for their contributions to the Program. He read a message from His Excellency Mr. Saparmurat Turkmenbashiy, President of Turkmenistan. In his message HE Mr. Saparmurat Turkmenbashiy congratulated the participants for the Meeting. He emphasized the importance of agricultural sector in Turkmenistan and other CAC countries. He also highlighted that Turkmenistan in 1999 produced 1.5 million tonnes of wheat and 1.3 million tonnes of cotton. He expressed the hope that the CGIAR Program activities will continue to provide assistance to the agricultural sector of Turkmenistan and other CAC countries. He wished all the success to the participants of the Meeting. The Meeting participants also took the opportunity to pay rich tributes to the late Academician Mr. Saidmahkhum Usmanov of Uzbekistan for his initiatives and pioneering leadership in the development of the CGIAR Program. Acad. Usmanov, the ex-President of the Uzbek Academy of Agricultural Sciences, expired in Tashkent on 18 March 2000 after a brief illness.

In Session II, after the adoption of the agenda, two new co-chairpersons of the PSC were unanimously elected. These were Prof. Timothy Reeves of CIMMYT representing the CG Centers, and Prof. Akmurat Babaev, representing the CAC-NARS. Also, an Executive Committee of the PSC was constituted for the first time with the following members: Prof. Timothy Reeves, Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy, Prof. Akmurat Babaev, Acad. Valerian Metreveli, and Dr. Jitendra Srivastava (Chairperson). Thereafter, Dr. Beniwal, Head of PFU-CGIAR Program, made a presentation on “Update on CGIAR Collaborative Research Program Activities during 1999-2000”. He highlighted different activities of the Program stakeholders with respect to collaborative research, strengthening of national programs, and donor relations organized during 1999/2000.

In Session III, reports and presentations by the nine CG Centers on the ongoing activities under the approved themes of the Program were made. These included: Productivity of Agricultural Systems (including Germplasm Enhancement, Strengthening of National Seed Supply Systems, Cropping Systems Management and Agricultural Diversification, Livestock Production Systems and Integrated Feed/Livestock Management), Natural Resource Conservation and Management, Conservation and Evaluation of Genetic Resources, Socioeconomic and Public Policy Research, and Strengthening of National Programs. All the nine members of the CG Centers’ Consortium for CAC expressed their readiness to continue the initiated activities in a partnership mode with CAC-NARS. They noted and appreciated a positive role of the PFU, which facilitates Program activities in the region.

The NARS Heads/representatives expressed their satisfaction with Program development and made some useful suggestions for further Program activities and development. They expressed their gratitude and thanks to the CGIAR for supporting the Program and the PFU for its active role in establishment of collaborative activities between them and the CG Centers.

On behalf of the Meeting participants, Prof. Reeves expressed gratitude to the President of the Turkmenistan, His Excellency Mr. Saparmurat Turkmenbashiy, for supporting the Meeting. He also read a statement from the participants of the meeting addressed to him, which appreciated his support to agricultural research and development in Turkmenistan, and urged him to provide a greater support for agricultural research. The statement was handed over to Prof. Akmurat Babaev.

The Meeting participants noted a substantial progress on Program development and implementation of Program activities, intensification of partnerships among the CAC-NARS, collaborating CG Centers and among the NARS, CG Centers and the donors, and integration and coherence of the overall Program that was repeatedly mentioned by speakers in closing remarks.

Meeting participants visiting the barley breeding program at Akhal. In the plot are (from left to right): Acad. B. Sarginov, Prof. N. Makhmudshodjaev, Prof. A. Sabybolat, Prof. Dr. A. El-Beltagy and Dr. A. von der Osten.

(Continued on the next page)
The Meeting ended with expression of thanks to the host country, to the outgoing Chairpersons of the PSC, Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy and Acad. Metreveli for their contributions to the Program, and to all the Program stakeholders/participants, which was proposed by Dr. Beniwal. A special gratitude was expressed for Dr. Alexander von der Osten, Executive Secretary of CGIAR, for his support to the Program from the very beginning.

On the third day, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Turkmenistan arranged a field visit to the Institute of Agriculture and Water Management to see the ongoing collaborative research activities in cereals and soil management at its Scientific Production Research Center at Akhal (near Ashgabat). It was heartening to see that the Center has made an excellent progress in wheat research as a result of collaboration with CIMMYT and ICARDA and the IWWIP (International Winter Wheat Improvement Program, which is a tripartite program of Turkey, CIMMYT and ICARDA based in Turkey), which started in 1995.

News on Collaborative Research Activities
Productivity of Agricultural Systems

Wheat Evaluation Mission in Uzbekistan

Dr. H.-J. Braun and A. Morgounov, Wheat Breeders of CIMMYT, participated in the ADB mission in Uzbekistan to evaluate the wheat improvement program of the country, 17 April - 3 May. The objective of the evaluation was analysis of the present situation in wheat improvement and variety testing to prepare a proposal for a future project on enhancing wheat production in Uzbekistan. Extensive trips were made across the country including Fergana Valley, Tashkent, Jizzakh, Samarqand, Karshi, and Bukhara regions. Both research institutions and production farms were visited. The prepared report will constitute a part of a future project.

Economic Study of Wheat Sector in the Caucasus

CIMMYT Economics Program Visiting Scientist Dr. J. Longmire and CIMMYT Wheat Program Consultant Dr. David Bedoshvili conducted economic study of wheat sector in the Caucasus, 10 April - 8 May. The study is similar to the one done by Drs. J. Longmire and A. Moldashev in Kazakhstan in 1998 in the framework of the World Bank/IDF grant project. The objective of the study is to analyze the current situation in wheat production with emphasis on technology development and potential for its future growth. The first stage of the study was a field visit across Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, which will be followed by the analysis of the data collected and preparation of a publication. A similar study is anticipated in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in 2000.

New Wheat Varieties Identified in Tajikistan

During the last several years, both spring and winter wheat lines have been provided to Tajikistan Academy of Agricultural Scientists through international nurseries from CIMMYT/ICARDA Spring Wheat Program in Aleppo (Syria), and from IWWIP in Turkey. It is heartening to note that some of the supplied lines have performed much better than the local standard checks. Moreover, in the Vaksh Branch of the Institute of Agriculture, three ICARDA/CIMMYT spring bread wheat varieties from Aleppo, Bocro-04, Sham-04, and especially Sham-06, were found very suitable for the region. They are resistant to diseases and promise good yield. In 1999, they were top yielders in the trials. They have requested assistance of ICARDA in providing them with seeds of these varieties. Two new winter wheat varieties, Tasiq and Norman, selected from the IWWIP (Turkey/CIMMYT/ICARDA) material, were submitted for the official yield trials. It is hoped that a similar success will be achieved in barley and legume improvement in the near future.
News on Germplasm Enhancement

Evaluation of Winter Barley Nurseries in Turkey

Dr. V. Shevtsov visited Turkey, 6-8 April 2000, for evaluation of winter barley nurseries for cold tolerance. Together with the principal barley breeder from Central Research Institute of Field Crops (CRIFC), Dr. T. Akar, he looked through 2 200 plots of winter barley nurseries at Haymana, Altinova, and Bala Experimental Stations. In general, the crop establishment was good because of a timely rainfall during the autumn. A thick snow cover during the winter season resulted in snow mold infection, especially at the Haymana Experimental Station. Here, frost of -15°C caused severe damage to susceptible entries. Although 20% of the susceptible lines were completely killed by frost, 60% of the tested germlasm survived well (90-100 %). These included breeding material developed with the use of cold-tolerant germlasm from Krasnodar Research Institute of Agriculture.

Dr. Shevtsov also visited Aleppo, ICARDA Headquarters (9-16 May), where winter barley nurseries were evaluated on agronomic score. On the basis of data on barley cold tolerance work received from Krasnodar and Turkey modifications in the crossing program have been made. The very valuable data on cold tolerance and resistance to snow mold have been shared with collaborators in Iran and the CAC countries.

Cereals and Legumes Matured Earlier in Central Asia

This season cereal maturity in Central Asia came 15-20 days earlier than usual. As a result of a mild winter, vegetation continued during winter and early spring. Also, sub-optimal water availability to wheat resulted in early maturity. In rainfed conditions, the rate of precipitation was 30-40 % less than the long-term average. For example, Galli-Aral area in Jizzak region in Uzbekistan received only 220 mm rainfall instead of an average of 340 mm. In some rainfed areas, bread wheat even failed to produce any grain yield, while winter barley yielded 600-900 kg/ha. Similarly, barley and legumes, planted in spring, performed very poor and could not even provide seeds. On the contrary the autumn-planted legumes provided moderate grain yields. For example, in Galli-Aral Branch of Andijan Research Institute of Grain, autumn-planted chickpea and lathyrus yielded 600-800 kg/ha, whereas the spring-planted crops failed. Therefore, winter cereals and legumes should be preferable in regions with moderate climate.

Activities on Potato

The activities of the International Potato Center (CIP) in the CAC Region have concentrated on:
- The identification, assessment and evaluation of national project needs and opportunities
- Training activities, involving all eight countries of the region, and
- Developing strategic partnerships and medium-term plans for the CAC Region.

Cereal and Legume Nurseries Visited

A number of promising lines were identified during a visit of Dr. V. Shevtsov to research centers in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Azerbaijan where he observed barley, wheat, and legumes nurseries together with the local breeders. In Kyrgyzstan, two winter barley lines from ICARDA program and three winter wheat lines from IWWIP (Turkey/CIMMYT/ICARDA) program are considered as candidates for submitting to official yield trials and on-farm/demonstration plots. In the Kazakh Research Institute of Agriculture (Almalybak), there are promising lines of chickpea and lathyrus, which will be multiplied for large plot testing. At Krasnovodopad breeding station (southern Kazakhstan), several barley lines from ICARDA nurseries showed good adaptation in very dry conditions that prevailed during this season.

Livestock Production Systems and Integrated Feed and Livestock Management

Integrated Feed and Livestock Production in the Steppes of Central Asia (IFL-CA): Progress and Activities

In the second quarter of 2000, activities were intensified in the IFAD-supported Project on "Integrated Feed and Livestock Production in the Steppes of Central Asia". In addition to on-going activities, three workshops were conducted with participation of ICARDA (Drs. L. Iniguez, A. Aw-Hasan, M. Sulieimenov), consultant Dr. E. Thomson and NARS scientists from four countries. These were: "Early weaning and lamb fattening", 22-26 May in Nurata, Navoe region, Uzbekistan; "Socioeconomic studies in the IFL-CA project", 12-16 June, in Almaty, Kazakhstan; "Range rehabilitation and standardization of research activities", 19-23 June, in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. Four young scientists, one each from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan visited ICARDA Headquarters in April/May for 1-month training in socioeconomics, animal production, rangeland improvement, and forages, respectively. The project provided 15 computers and four field vehicles to the four project participating NARS of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.
Conservation and Evaluation of Genetic Resources

Collection Missions on Pistachio and Melon Started

Collection missions on pistachio and melon started jointly as per the agreement between IPGRI and two Uzbek Research Institutes. These are:

- Collection mission on “Study on the ecogeographic distribution and agro-morphological characterization of pistachio in Central Asia and enhancement of the conservation and use of its genetic resources” with the Uzbek Research Institute of Forestry, Tashkent.
- Collection mission on “Enhancement of the use of melon genetic resources in Uzbekistan through the strengthening of on-farm and ex-situ conservation” with the Uzbek Research Institute of Plant Industry, Botanica (Tashkent).

Breed Characterization of Small Ruminants

The following work has been carried out in the framework of the USDA/ICARDA Project on Sheep and Range Management:

- On-station breed characterization of small ruminants in all eight CAC countries. The work has been completed in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia;
- On-farm breed characterization of sheep is going on in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and of goats in Tajikistan.

Natural Resource Conservation and Management

A New Project on On-Farm Soil and Water Management Launched in Central Asia

A new 3-year project on “On-farm Soil and Water Management for Sustainable Agricultural Systems in Central Asia” was started in the five countries of Central Asia effective 04 April 2000. A three-day Stakeholders Meeting of the Project was held 2-4 April at Tel Hadya, and approved workplan and budget for the year 2000. The Project is financially supported by the Asian Development Bank.

The approved workplan for the year 2000, in addition to activities started in 1999 in Kazakhstan on soil salinity and marginal water use (within the CGIAR initiative), will include activities on farming systems in all the five countries; on-farm irrigation and drainage management in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan; marginal water use in Turkmenistan; and soil erosion management in Tajikistan. Especially heartening is to see that it is the very first ICARDA Project making headway full-scale activities in Tajikistan.

Preceding the start of the Meeting, the participants observed one-minute silence in the memory of the late Academician Said Usmanov, the ex-President of the Uzbekistan Academy of Agricultural Sciences, who recently passed away. A rich tribute was paid for his pioneering role and contributions for the start of the ICARDA/CAC collaborative work in Central Asia. A Project Steering Committee was approved which included representatives of NARS management, National Coordinators of the Project, ICARDA Coordinator of the Project, Asst. Director General - International Cooperation of ICARDA, and Regional Coordinator for ICARDA’s Central Asia and the Caucasus Regional Program. Decisions were taken on the allocation of Project budget and to immediately start activities in all the five countries.

Rangeland Management

The following activities are being carried out in framework of the USDA/ICARDA Sheep and Range Project:

- Monitoring of rangelands in the Karnab area (Samarkand, Uzbekistan);
New Collaborative Activities Initiated in On-Farm Soil and Water Management Project

In addition to on-going activities in Kazakhstan on soil salinity management (Arys-Turkestan site) and treated marginal water utilization for fodder production (Sorbulasik site), new sites for project activities in the five countries were identified for starting new collaborative research activities:

- **Soil tillage and crop diversification activities**: At Shchortandy in Northern Kazakhstan and at Almalybek in Southern Kazakhstan; at Jal and Zhana Pakhta in Kyrgyzstan; at Cotton Growing Research Institute and at Gafsa-Aral in Uzbekistan; at Gissar in Tajikistan; and at Research Institute of Agriculture and Water Management in Turkmenistan.

- **Soil salinity and water management activities**: Established at Uchkhaz in Kyrgyzstan; and at Vakhsh in Tajikistan.

- **Soil erosion control activities**: at Faizabad in Tajikistan.

- **Irrigation scheduling to improve water use efficiency**: at Vatan in Turkmenistan.

The project provided four field vehicles and four PCs to the NARS of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. A limited support for activities in Turkmenistan has been provided from the available CGIAR funds. Drs. F. Karajeh and M. Suleimenov visited four countries (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan) in May, whereas Dr. C. Studer visited Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Meetings/Workshops/Conferences Organized

The First On-Farm Cereal Traveling Workshop in Uzbekistan

An in-country travelling workshop on “Conducting Cereals On-Farm Trials and Demonstrations Plots” was organized in Jizzak and Kashkadarya regions of Uzbekistan, 9-11 May, 2000. The workshop was jointly organized by the Uzbek Scientific Production Center for Agriculture (USPCA), ICARDA and CIMMYT. Drs. V. Shevtsoy of ICARDA and Z. Kahlilov of PFU-CIAR provided all the necessary logistics for the workshop.

The objective of the workshop was to improve the skills of the research and development staff of the national agricultural research development organizations in conducting on-farm trials and demonstrations in collaboration with farmers and in organizing field days to facilitate rapid transfer and adoption of research results by farmers. A total of 42 representatives of different institutions of USPCA from six Regions of Uzbekistan, farmers, the State Committee for Variety Testing, Quarantine Service, and local project executive committees took part in the workshop. In the beginning of the workshop, Prof. A. Amanov, Deputy Director General of USPCA, made a presentation on “Agricultural research, extension and training in increasing productivity and profitability of crop production”; and Dr. V. Shevtsoy on “On-farm trials and demonstration plots: methodology and analysis of results”. A number of questions were raised by the participants during the discussion session on promising varieties, resistance to diseases and soil salinity, rapid seed production, details of crop production technology, disease and insect control, and the use of stimulators. Some issues of the forthcoming harvesting campaign and methodology for data analysis were also discussed during field visits. At present, the most urgent challenges facing cereal breeding in Uzbekistan are: a) development of the reliable varieties with resistance to yellow rust, b) early-maturing varieties with high economical indices of water use, and c) varieties tolerant to high soil salinity. Also, the serious challenge of lack of water necessitates selecting more suitable crops and varieties for the rainfed conditions.

Field visits during the Workshop included visits to demonstration plots in three *elit khoz*es (elite farms) in Jizzak and Kashkadarya regions. Presently, the most preferable varieties of winter wheat in accordance with agronomic score were: Dostlik (selected from the IWWIP of Turkey/CIMMYT/ICARDA material), Ulugbek 600 (locally developed), and Umanka, Delta and Knyaza (from Krasnodar).

It should be emphasized that it was the first field workshop of this kind for most participants in the last 10 years, and thus all of them were very grateful to ICARDA for the opportunity to establish contact with their colleagues. They now believe that the on-farm trials and demonstrations will assist in testing and fast seed multiplication of new promising varieties of winter wheat and barley and help build a necessary linkage between the available technology and its use by farmers. While closing the workshop, Dr. Shadiyar Hodjanazarov, Head of Kashkadarya Agroprom, assured that these activities would be extended to other regions of Uzbekistan. On behalf of participants he expressed sincere gratitude to the three organizers for good initiative, and especially ICARDA Management for supporting this traveling workshop.

Participants of the on-farm cereals travelling workshop in Uzbekistan.
Regional Workshop on Early Weaning and Lamb Fattening

As integral part of the workplan of the IFL-CA project, ICARDA and USPCA organized a regional training workshop on early weaning and lamb fattening in the district town Nurata, Navoe region, Uzbekistan, 22-26 May 2000, to discuss and demonstrate the feasibility of early-weaning to reduce grazing pressure and promote a rapid recuperation of the lactating moth, as well as fattening of early weaned lambs to capitalize market opportunities. The workshop was attended by 10 participants, two each from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, and four from Uzbekistan. The Workshop involved theoretical presentations and discussions of the benefits of proposed technologies, followed by practical demonstration of the on-going project activity close to Nurata “Faizulla Khodjaev” farm.

The workshop was led by Dr. Euan Thompson, animal nutritionist and former ICARDA scientist who has ample experience in small ruminant production in dry areas. He was actively assisted by local scientists Prof. S. Yusupov, Director of the Karakul Sheep Breeding Institute in Samarkand, and Dr. N. Bobokulov, scientist in-charge of this project activity. The issue under discussion proved to be not so easy, considering that it has not been a traditional practice in this area. However, the market-oriented transition requires to look more carefully for new opportunities to raise income of small farmers as market demands have been undergoing remarkable changes. Further studies will show as to what extent the concept of early weaning (mid-March) will give anticipated advantages in the steppes of Central Asia.

Participation of CAC Scientists in Training Courses/Workshops/Conferences/Study Visits

Training on Food and Forage Legume Improvement

A 10-day training course on “Food and Forage Legume Improvement” was successfully finished on 4 April in Tashkent. The course was organized by ICARDA, and attended by 10 food and forage legume scientists from the eight CAC countries. Drs. Rajinder S. Mallotra and Ali Abd El-Moneim from ICARDA’s Germplasm Program were the course instructors. Dr. Victor Shevtsov coordinated the course activities, whereas PFU provided the logistical support for course. It was for the first time that such a training course was organized for the legume scientists of the CAC countries. The course was rated by the participants as extremely useful. A compilation of the Country Reports made by the representative country participants is in progress.

International Conference on Science and Technology in Malaysia

Cad. Abdusattar Abdukarimov, Director of the Research Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology, and Chairman of the CATCN-PGR Coordination Committee, attended the International Conference on Science and Technology for Managing Plant Genetic Diversity in the 21st Century, held on 12-16 June 2000 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Conference was jointly organized by The Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia (PORIM) and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI). The purpose of the Conference was to review critically the state of the science concerning the conservation and sustainable management of plant genetic resources. The Conference goal was to develop a global vision for the next century.

Training on Modern Approaches in Wheat Improvement

A training course on modern approaches in wheat improvement, agronomy and research management was conducted in Almaty, 10-13 April. The course was organized by NACAR and CIMMYT in the framework of the World Bank/IDF grant project. The objective of the course was to update the researchers on the latest techniques in breeding, agronomy, biotechnology, genetics as well as to provide some training in research management including fund raising, international relations and communication. The course was attended by 20 participants from different research institutions in Kazakhstan.
Participation of CAC Scientists in Training Courses/Workshops/Conferences/Study Visits

Training on GPS Management

A one-day training on the use GPS (Geographical Position System) was organized by IPGRI-CAC on 25 May, 2000 in PFU-CGIAR Office in Tashkent. It was attended by six scientists from Uzbek Research Institute for Plant Industry and the Uzbek Research Institute of Forestry. These scientists would participate in future missions on study, conservation and use of genetic resources of *Pistacia, Pyrus* and *Melon* in Uzbekistan, which would be conducted during 2000.

Training Course on Integrated Soil and Water Management in Tashkent

A 10-day training course on "Integrated Soil and Water Management" was organized in Tashkent, 10 to 19 May, by ICARDA in collaboration with SANIRRI (Central Asia Regional Institute on Water Management) and USPCA of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The course was organized under the aegis of the Asian Development Bank-supported project on "On-farm Soil and Water Management in Central Asia". A total of 17 scientists of soil and water use from seven CAC countries participated in the training course. The topics covered in the course included: soil-plant-water relations, water use efficiency, evapotranspiration and crop water requirements, irrigation water quality and marginal water use, soil fertility conservation; and crop irrigation techniques, irrigation scheduling, drainage water management, water salt balances, wind erosion, water harvesting techniques, supplemental irrigation, and on-farm soil and water management for natural resources conservation. The course coordinators were Dr. R. Ikramov, Director of SANIRRI, and Dr. Fawzy Karajeh, Senior Water Specialist of ICARDA. The ICARDA-CAC Office provided the logistic support to the course organization. The course participants found the course very useful. Certificates were awarded to the participants for successfully completing the course.

Regional Seminar on Methodologies in Socioeconomic Research

A Regional Training Seminar on "Methodologies in Socioeconomic Research" was organized in Almaty, Kazakhstan, 12-16 June. The course was organized by ICARDA render the aegis of the IFAD-supported Integrated Feed and Livestock Project in collaboration with the Kazak Research Institute of Economics and Organization of Agro-industrial Complex of NACAR. The training seminar aimed to discuss and standardize methodologies for socioeconomic studies, including market analysis, which will be used during the conduct of the project's activities. Fifteen socioeconomic scientists from four Central Asian countries attended the seminar. Dr. A. Aw-Hassan, Senior Socioeconomist of ICARDA, was the scientific coordinator of the course. Logistic arrangements for the course were made by NACAR, ICARDA-CAC in Tashkent and the Project's National Professional Officer, Dr. Gazziz Sarbasov, based in Almaty.

Regional Training Workshop on Range Management and Rehabilitation

A regional training workshop on range management and rehabilitation was organized in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 19-23 June, under the aegis of the IFAD-supported project on "Integrated Feed and Livestock Production in the Steppes of Central Asia". The workshop was jointly organized by ICARDA and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Turkmenistan. The technical coordinators of the workshop were Dr. Mustafa Bounejmate of ICARDA, and Dr. Shamurat Kherremov of Turkmenistan. A total of 15 scientists from four Central Asian countries attended the training course and exchanged their knowledge to establish effective network research collaboration in the field. New available technologies were introduced through presentations by keynote speakers from the region, ICARDA and Turkey. The goal of the workshop was also to standardize methodologies for comparative studies across the countries.
Participation of CAC Scientists in Training Courses/Workshops/Conferences/Study Visits

Study Visit to Aleppo

Four scientists from Central Asia (Dr. T. Mukinov, forage specialist from Uzbekistan; Dr. A. Esenbayev, socio-economist from Kazakhstan; Dr. S. Turyshbekov, livestock specialist from Kyrgyzstan; and Dr. A. Zverev, range specialist from Turkmenistan) went to ICARDA for 1-month study visit program in April/May 2000. This was a part of the training activities of the IFAD-supported project on “Integrated Feed and Livestock Production in Steppes of Central Asia”.

Training Seminar on Cereal Breeding and Seed Production in Tajikistan

A training seminar on “Revival of plant breeding and seed production in Tajikistan” was held in Dushanbe, May 3-6, 2000. The seminar was organized by GTZ and CIMMYT under the aegis of a GTZ-supported project on cereal breeding and seed production in Tajikistan in collaboration with the Tajik Academy of Agricultural Science (TAAS). It was attended by scientists, seed producers, and farmers. Present in the inaugural ceremony were H.E. Dr. S. Kabirov, Minister of Agriculture, Dr. O. Maksumov, Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. M. Baratov, Advisor to the President of Tajikistan, Dr. S. Murodov, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Acad. B. Sanginov, President of TAAS, and Dr. S. Orupov, Head of State Committee for Variety Testing. The lectures were presented among others by Drs. H. Braun and A. Morgounov, Wheat Breeders (CIMMYT), Dr. V. Shevtsov, Barley Breeder (ICARDA-Tashkent) and Drs. H. Messner and F. Hufler, representatives of GTZ.

The seminar covered topics relating to cereal (both wheat and barley) improvement agronomy, seed production and variety testing. Field visits were also organized to show participants the progress in cereal breeding in Tajikistan. The seminar was considered very useful. The Tajik scientists are effectively using the improved wheat germplasm/lines provided by CIMMYT/ICARDA Spring Wheat Program in Syria, and the International Winter Wheat Program of Turkey, CIMMYT and ICARDA, based in Turkey.

News from the CAC National Programs

AZERBAIJAN

Cereal Traveling Workshop in Azerbaijan

A cereal traveling workshop was organized in Azerbaijan by the Ministry of Agriculture of Azerbaijan, May 16-19, 2000, which coincided with the 50th anniversary celebrations of Azerbaijan Research Institute of Agriculture. The Institute has contributed greatly into development of many released varieties of cereal and legume crops. A real breakthrough has been done in improvement of winter durum wheat. A group of outstanding varieties was developed by academician J. Aliyev, who is called the father of “Green Revolution” in Azerbaijan. After he started breeding bread wheat varieties, he has succeeded in developing very good varieties such as “Barikutli 5” and “Giymatli 2.17”, which considerably outyielded the old standard wheat checks. Their fast multiplication and introduction into practice has allowed to increase grain production to the level of self-sufficiency.

(Continued on the next page)
News from CAC National Programs

(Continuation from page 9)

The traveling workshop (for two days) was attended by participants from ICARDA (Dr. Habib Keleta, Sr. Wheat Breeder, based in Turkey, and Dr. Victor Shevtsov, based in Uzbekistan), CIMMYT (Dr. Mohamed Mergoum, based in Turkey), Turkey, Georgia, Russia, and Azerbaijan, who visited Gobustan, Tar-Tar, and Djalalabad regions and saw on-farm trials/demonstration plots of winter wheat and barley. There were a number of lines and varieties that looked very promising. The scientists from ICARDA and CIMMYT together with local breeders also had a chance to make selections in wheat and barley nurseries.

International Conference on “Science of the Third Millennium” in Kazakhstan

A n International Conference on “Science in the Third Millennium” was organized by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Astana (the new capital of Kazakhstan), 10-12 May. The Conference was attended by about 200 participants from the western, CIS and CAC countries and International Funds and Organizations. The Conference participants included two Noble Laureates, Prof. Dr. G’Y Hoof of Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and Prof. Dr. Klaus von Klitzing of Max-Planck Institute, Stuttgart, Germany. Dr. S. Beniwal represented PFU-CGIAR and ICARDA in the Conference, whereas Dr. Alexel Morgounov represented CIMMYT.

Prior to the Conference Opening in Astana on 11 May, the Conference participants were welcomed in the afternoon of 10 May by HE Mr. A. Polov, the First Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan and HE Mr. K. Kusherbayev, the Minister of Education and Science of Kazakhstan. The Conference, held in the House of Kazakh Parliament, was inaugurated by HE Mr. Alexander Polov. A number of papers were presented by the Conference participants including those by the two Noble Laureates. Dr. Beniwal made a presentation on “CGIAR Program for Sustainable Agricultural Production in Central Asia and its role in Agricultural Science in Kazakhstan”, which was well received by the audience. Dr. A. Morgounov made a presentation on CIMMYT’s role in improving wheat production in Central Asia with special emphasis on its work in Kazakhstan.

The Conference ended in Almaty in the evening of 12 May with the signing of a joint statement on cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science and the representatives of the International Funds and Organizations.

Meeting of the Technical-Scientific Council on Plant Genetic Resources

A meeting of the Technical-Scientific Council of Uzbekistan on “Study, Enrichment and Use of Plant Genetic Resources (Plant Gene pool)” was held in the State Committee on Science and Technology of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2 June 2000. The members of the Council discussed issues of further activities on conservation of plant genetic resources in the country. A proposal to increase the membership of the working groups within National Network on Plant Genetic Resources with the purpose of including all the national entities dealing with genetic resources to the Network activities was made. Ms. M. Turdieva, IPGRI Scientist in Tashkent, participated in the meeting and briefed the members of the Council about IPGRI’s activities supporting the PGR conservation in the Republic as well as in the region.

ICARDA-CAC Joined Earth Day Celebrations in Tashkent

ICARDA’s Regional Office in Tashkent cosponsored a Meeting organized in Tashkent to celebrate the Earth Day on 21 April. The Meeting was jointly sponsored by International Fund “ECOSAN”, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Dr. S. Beniwal, speaking on the occasion, highlighted the importance of soil, water and the environment in the present day context, especially for improving agricultural productivity and production in a sustainable manner. He also highlighted the current activities that ICARDA and the CGIAR Program are carrying out in Uzbekistan in the context of the earth.
Prof. A. Abdukarimov Elected as the Academician

Prof. Abdusattar Abdukarimov, Director of the Research Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology, and Chairman of the CATCN-PGR Coordination Committee, was recently elected as the Academician of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences. The CGIAR-CAC Program family congratulates him on this important achievement and wishes him many more years of professional success in future.

Donor Activities
Training Workshop on Competitive Grant Scheme

A training workshop on “Competitive Grant Scheme (CGS) in agricultural research and extension”, was organized by the ECSSD of the World Bank in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture of Romania in Bucharest, 1972 June 2000. The objective of the workshop was to provide a forum for the exchange of experiences, and identification of common issues, constraints and solutions during the design, establishment and implementation of competitive grants programs.

The workshop was attended by 50 participants from Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region. The CAC region was represented by Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Dr. S. Beniwal, Head of PFU, and Dr. A. Morgounov, CIMMYT-Kazakhstan, also attended the Workshop. Dr. Pamela George was the main Workshop instructor, whereas Dr. Cornelis von der Meer was a resource person. Dr. Jitendra Srivastava was the anchor of the workshop and benefitted the participants from his rich experience in the subject. All the workshop arrangements were made by Dr. Stefan Nicolau of Romania in collaboration with the local World Bank Office in Bucharest.

The workshop covered both policy and science issues including, among other things, governance and management issues, peer review process, scientific collaboration and networking, etc., as well as financial and administration issues, including accountability, transparency, reporting, monitoring, evaluation, etc. The workshop was organized as a question-answer clinic where countries implementing CGSs brought their experience to the table to share with others as to how they designed and initiated the system, and highlighted the problems that the participants might be encountered while implementing the CGS. This also provided an opportunity for participants to learn the potential and limitations of the CGS Programs, and the lessons from others’ experiences, etc. The workshop also had a good training component. During the workshop the NARS participants made an exercise to prepare an Operational Manual for Competitive Grants in Agricultural Research for their countries based on the Manual and other training materials developed by the World Bank for the ECA region.

Prof. I. Kobori Visits Central Asia

Prof. Iwao Kobori, Professor at the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo and Vice-Chair, ICARDA Board of Trustees, visited Tashkent (18-20 June). He met Dr. Z. Khalikulov, Consultant Scientist of PFU, Drs. G. Rashidova and L. Gusakova, Experts Combating Desertification, State Committee of Science and Technology, and Prof. N. Makhmudkhodjaev, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Water Management of Uzbekistan and Director General of the Uzbek Scientific Production Center of Agriculture (USPCA). They discussed the issues related to preparations of the forthcoming workshop on “New Approaches to Water Management in Central Asia”, which will be jointly organized by UNU, ICARDA and Uzbekistan in Tashkent, 5-9 November 2000.

Prof. Kobori with Prof. Makhmudkhodjaev, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Director General of USPCA, and his colleagues in Tashkent.
Dear Readers,

It is our pleasure to produce No. 04 of the CAC News for you. This Newsletter is published with the aim of providing information on the collaborative activities by the nine CGIAR Centers in collaboration with the eight CAC-NARS, which are being carried out under the CGIAR Collaborative Program.

The Program had its Third Program Steering Committee Meeting in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 30 May - 01 June. A fair coverage of this Meeting is provided in this issue of the Newsletter.

We still feel that we need to cover more information on the activities that are carried out by different NARS of the CAC countries and the donor community in the region. Thus, we would indeed appreciate receiving information on them from our colleagues and readers. We would also appreciate your comments, suggestions, and opinions regarding this Newsletter.

We take this opportunity to thank our readers and wish them good health, happiness and all the success in their work.

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