The answer is yes. Dr. Prabhu Pingali, Director of the Agriculture and Development Economics Division of Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, in his lecture at the SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series (ADSS) last 14 June, says, “If we can make farmers move from viewing agriculture as a way of life into viewing it as business,” they can happily hop in and get the best seat inside the entrepreneurial wagon.

To follow this roadmap, Pingali urges policymakers to hurdle two main challenges, namely: a) ensuring participation of small farmers and rural poor in the emerging agri-industry systems, and b) enabling the transformation and competitiveness of agrifood systems.

Why is there a need to ensure small farmer participation? Rapid growth in incomes and GDPs have led to the mushrooming of supermarkets that service consumers, also with parallel increase in purchasing power, possessing a diversity of needs in terms of changing diet, food safety, product preparation, packaging and distribution.

Encapsulated in this change in diet are the consumers’ preference for reduced rice consumption, more wheat and wheat-based products, diversity of food crops, higher protein calories, more temperate products, popularity of fast foods, and the “rise and rise of supermarkets.”

With supermarkets around the corner, the menu of the day no longer includes farming that is seen as individual, or a distribution system that is minimal, or the consumer that is sited at the end of the process, or government that is basically providing infrastructure.

The supermarkets did not evolve overnight. A lot of interconnected events have paved the pathway for supermarkets. Among others, these include technological changes such as the revolutionary grounding of information and communication technologies, genetic engineering, and transportation.

Racing against the goliath boxers are the lowly small farmers. Their punches if thrown individually cannot match against the multinational agri-based opponents competing for the more lucrative kill inside the globalized boxing ring. Such punches from isolated individual small farmers will have no stinging effect. These will only place the small farmers in a more melancholic and depressing situation-- if they would not fight according to the rules. Pingali brings in some “potential actions” to make the playing field equal.

One of these, he says, is: Increase small farmer competitiveness. In practical terms – improve their management skills. Another action: strengthen small farmer linkage with agribusiness – link farmers with agribusiness mechanisms. Still another: group together farmers to be producers. A finale fortifying action would be, as Pingali puts it, to “revitalize the extension system.”

The government as one of the defenders of the small farmers must “move towards being a regulator of contracts of various legislative arrangements: property rights, legal rights (deviating)
enabling the rural poor through policy, investment, and institutional reforms that enhance the efficiency of domestic markets and provide improved access to technology, infrastructure, and education. This enabling environment allows rural growth benefits to be broadly based, thereby enhancing overall nutrition, human capital development, and productivity and economic growth in the medium-to-long term.

Almost invariably, the successful cases of rural development and poverty reduction have shown a tenacity in the pursuit of efficiency-enhancing reforms. The key driver to these reforms has been neither globalization nor agricultural policy in developed countries. Rather, it is, by and large, the internal realization that reforms are for the benefit of the country and its citizens.

Globalization has its downside risks, but it also offers potentially enormous benefits. Many developing-country-globalizers have shown that the benefits more than outweigh the costs; for example, the speed of poverty reduction is unprecedented in China, Vietnam, and India. The challenge for most countries in the region is to find the appropriate mix of policies and institutions needed to exploit the benefits, while being on guard for the downside risks.

Fortuitously for agriculture and the rural sector, the key policy and governance reforms required for improved efficiency (increased productivity and income) are largely compatible with globalization as well.

Finally, it should be noted that while the main responsibility for poverty reduction rests with the low-income countries themselves, the investment requirements for poverty reduction are far beyond their resources, even under condition of good governance. According to the Millennium Project, the investment costs for achieving the MDGs in a typical low-income country is roughly $75 per capita in 2006, rising to approximately $140 in 2015 (in constant dollar terms). It is clear that the development assistance community has a crucial role to play in the war against poverty.

What does it take to lick rural poverty in Southeast Asia?

Southeast Asia’s achievements in economic growth and poverty reduction have been quite remarkable. These achievements, however, have not been uniform among the countries in the region. For Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam, as well as East Timor, Indonesia, and the Philippines, the challenge to maintain the momentum in reducing poverty is enormous.

For these countries, both domestic policies and institutions have constrained efficiency and raised the “cost of doing business” in rural areas, thereby blunting productivity growth and eroding competitiveness in the global marketplace. Liberalizing agricultural trade enhances the welfare of the poor, especially the landless workers and urban consumers, although the short-term cost to the sector in terms of reduced incomes and labor displacement may be quite substantial.

However, when this is combined with public investment in productivity-enhancing support services (particularly R&D and irrigation), agricultural trade liberalization is likely to be a win-win proposition.

In addressing today’s pressing issues vis-à-vis poverty and food insecurity, it is important not to lose sight of the key lessons on agricultural growth and development in Asia in the past half-century.

One such powerful lesson has to do with

FAO official / from Page 1

from its traditional role of providing technology.”

Not to end up being knocked down by the highly profit-oriented big players, small farmers need policies that will cushion them from the impact of losing out in the midst of a highly globalized economy. Perhaps, the ultimate act from government, and a challenge to all conscientious citizens, groups, etc. would be to invest more heavily on rural development: “health, transportation, technical, …” and establish rural businesses – this action would help create safety nets for small farmers.

These actions are complicated, like a thousand strands of thread being tangled all together. Yet, the challenge remains, and at the end of the day, the most meaningful action would be weighed in terms of what policies have been put up that have enabled small farmers to participate in the supply chain and made them rise from rags to riches.

Stakeholders / from Page 4

of the endangered and threatened species of flora and fauna in their area, the importance of using organic fertilizer in increasing production and net income, the bioindicators of water quality, and river management planning. Participating universities likewise recognized the assistance of SEARCA BRP in building their researchers’ capacities. Moreover, members of the local communities are hopeful that the research results would help provide the local government and NGOs with alternative livelihood activities to decrease their dependence on the biological resources in the Mt. Malindang area.

Biodiversity conservation and the issues that surround it, including the persistent perception of contradiction between economic growth and ecological integrity, are some of the focal concerns of SEARCA, in its efforts toward poverty reduction and food security in Southeast Asia. (AJTAragon and CSFule)
UN-ESCAP discusses emerging issues affecting rural dev, poverty reduction

Asia’s rural areas are at a juncture of changes affecting the global economy. Emerging issues and concerns brought about by migration, trade, tourism, and the media, among others, are presenting new challenges to development agencies, especially since these rural areas are home to two-thirds of the world’s poor.

Seeking to identify what and how it can best contribute to rural poverty reduction at this time, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) gathered experts in a meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand on 19-20 May 2005.

Nineteen experts, which included Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, discussed two questions: (1) What are the emerging issues in rural development and rural poverty reduction that ESCAP should focus on? and (2) How should ESCAP deal with those issues, given its role as a regional convenor, advocate, and capacity-builder.

Emerging issues that need to be addressed with priority include the following: (1) capacity-building of rural poor as vital change agents, (2) rural governance and institutional structure, (3) policy changes, (4) diversification of rural employment, (5) integrated rural-urban development perspective, (5) accessibility and availability of tools for rural changes, and (6) gender mainstreaming.

Two overview papers on “Rural Asia: Poverty Trends, Challenges, and Initiatives” were presented. One was by Dr. Balisacan, who focused on Southeast Asia, and the other by Dr. Mushtaq A. Khan, Chief of the National Health and Policy Unit, Ministry of Health, Pakistan, who focused on South Asia.

In his paper, Dr. Balisacan stressed the need for governments to give priority to rural development in order to meet the

Millenium Development Goals. He also presented lessons in development from the 1990s, underscoring the need for development planners to adopt a multi-dimensional approach to development and national welfare. These include the following prescription for rural development: (1) empower the poor, (2) facilitate access to markets, and (3) improve social security.

He shared that in the past half-century, one powerful lesson in agricultural growth and development in Asia has to do with enabling the rural poor through policy, investment, and institutional reforms that enhance the efficiency of domestic markets and provide improved access to technology, infrastructure, and education. “This enabling environment allows rural growth benefits to be broadly based, thereby enhancing overall nutrition, human capital development, and productivity and economic growth in the medium- to long-term,” he added.

He further noted that successful cases of rural development and poverty reduction “have shown a tenacity in the pursuit of efficiency-enhancing reforms. The driver of these reforms in developed countries has been neither globalization nor agricultural policy. Rather, it is, by and large, the internal realization that reforms are for the benefit of the country and its citizens.”

Dr. Balisacan likewise challenges multilateral organizations to take on rural development advocacy, to promote community-driven development, and to continue the important work of capacity building for rural development to help bring about agricultural modernization. For the latter, the goal is to increase productivity in each factor of production and to reduce vulnerabilities. (LLTallafer)

Indonesian officials hone knowledge of decentralized development activities

Indonesia’s decentralization laws, while necessary to address regional economic disparities, give local officials new responsibilities that may be beyond their current capabilities. To address this concern, the country’s Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) conceived and developed the Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CERD) Project. In support of CERD, SEARCA was tapped to organize and implement a Short-term Overseas Comparative Studies (SOCS) to enhance the capability and widen the horizon of district, provincial, and national government officials in various decentralized development activities. These include community development planning, financial intermediation services, and micro-enterprise development.

A three-part SOCS was conducted, the third of which was on 3-9 April 2005 in Beijing, China and on 10-16 April 2005 in Laguna Province and Metro Manila, Philippines. A total of 26 staff and officials from the national and provincial offices of Indonesia’s MOHA, Ministry of Finance (MOF), and Central Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) participated in the third SOCS.

In China, the participants visited three government agencies, namely: Department of Rural Economic System and Administration (DRESA), National Development Planning Center (NDRC), and Office of the Leading Group for Poverty Alleviation and Development (OLGPAP). The briefings focused on China’s socioeconomic development; national resource and regional planning, rural economic system and administration, and development planning; and poverty alleviation program planning, respectively. The participants also toured Dream Fox Manufacturing Company, a state-owned micro enterprise. The study tour in China was made possible with the help of the Indonesian Embassy in Beijing.

In the Philippines, the participants went to three national agencies, one nongovernment agency, and one university-based project: the Departments

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The SEARCA Diary

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The Policy Agenda

(Editor’s note: The true worth of research and human resource development can be seen when their results are used to create the desired impact. As SEARCA continues to spearhead programs and projects seen as vital to poverty reduction and food security in the region, it also strives to translate these efforts into policy recommendations and directions. This quarter, The SEARCA Diary continues The Policy Agenda, a series of policy briefs and articles that provides a venue for the articulation of policy directions, shaping of agricultural research, and provision of inputs to process and regulatory framework development, comparative studies, and policy formulation and design.)

Stakeholders commend SEARCA Biodiversity Research Programme (BRP)

Biodiversity should be seen as a broader development issue, and should be reflected in local and national laws and policies.

The Philippines-Netherlands Biodiversity Research Program (BRP) for Development in Mindanao: Focus on Mt. Malindang and its Environ, a flagship project of SEARCA, was commended by its stakeholders at the Programme’s Closing Conference held in Ozamiz City, Philippines on 19 April 2005.

SEARCA BRP is a five-year, collaborative and participatory research project on biodiversity conservation and management supported by the Netherlands’ Ministry for Development Cooperation (DGIS). It is jointly undertaken by Filipino and Dutch researchers in the area of Mt. Malindang in the province of Misamis Occidental, Philippines. Now on its fifth and final year, BRP was recently granted a six-month extension by the DGIS, from 1 July to 30 December 2005, to complete, consolidate, and contextualize research results and other program activities to achieve clear research-for-development outputs of the BRP.

Roughly 200 representatives of local government units, national government-line agencies, academe, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) working within the Mt. Malindang area, communities within the research sites, and Dutch partner institutions participated in the conference.

During the event, the results of the SEARCA BRP research activities on the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and the socioeconomic-cultural studies were presented to the local stakeholders.

These results are intended to aid in formulating development policies that simultaneously preserve biodiversity in Mt. Malindang and enrich the livelihoods of the communities in close contact with it.

Governor Loreto Leo Ocampos of Misamis Occidental, who delivered the welcome message, recognized the efforts of SEARCA BRP in making his constituents understand what biodiversity is, why it matters, and how its conservation must be built into national and local development strategies.

Dr. Marc Lammerink, vice chair of the Joint Programme Committee (JPC), SEARCA BRP’s policymaking body, cited the Programme as a potential model research framework that could be replicated on a much bigger scale within the Philippines and the Southeast Asian region, if multiple funding could be sourced.

The stakeholders also recognized the importance of research, especially in raising awareness and generating information useful for biodiversity conservation in their area. They acknowledged gaining more knowledge.

More than 200 stakeholder representatives listen to the presentation of research results of the SEARCA BRP.

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**BIC talks about biotech communication to Bangladeshis**

While all technologies involve risk, the issues that surround biotechnology, especially its application in agriculture, have generated a lot of emotional debates. The Philippines, as the first Asian country that approved a genetically-engineered crop (Bt corn) for propagation, food, and feed, has a unique experience to share in its information campaign in biotechnology.

Ms. Sonny P. Tababa, Network Administrator of the SEARCA Biotechnology Information Center (BIC), shared BIC’s experience in public education and communication with scientists from government and universities in Bangladesh. Occasion was the “Biotechnology Issues and Risk Communication Workshop” held last 19-20 June in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Her discussion focused on the Philippine experience with the biosafety evaluation of Bt corn. The workshop also demonstrated the South-South experience in biotechnology as other resource persons from the Philippines and Thailand talked about the assessment of biotech crops in terms of environment and food safety as well as socioeconomic concerns. The Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), the Bangladesh Biotechnology Information Centre (BangBIC), and the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) sponsored the workshop. (SPTababa)

**Indonesian officials / from Page 3**

of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Social Works and Development (DSWD), and Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR) of the Department of Agriculture (DA); University of the Philippines-Barangay Integrated Development Approach for Nutrition Improvement (BIDANI) Project; and the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP). The briefings at DILG, DSWD, and Quedancor dealt on decentralized governance, community-based development planning, and microfinancing for small and medium agro-based and commercial enterprises, respectively. The visit to BIDANI gave the participants a first-hand field exposure to a community-based management information system project for local development planning. On the other hand, the visit to PBSP introduced the participants to the critical roles and activities of business corporations in poverty alleviation toward national development.

At the end of the study tour, the participants submitted five action plans intended for the five districts they represented. The titles are: Community Empowerment for Rural Development to Increase Income of Corn Farmers in the District of Tanah Laut; Resettlement Program of Refugee of Poso Conflict in Year 2000; Action Plan of Banjar District; Community Empowerment for Rural Development through Training for Craftsman (Minahasa District); and Action Plan of Host Team Malinau. (SEARCA Training Department)

**SEARCA, IPGRI firm up executive training program on NRM**

In line with its strategic focus on natural resource management (NRM), SEARCA will be launching the Executive Training Program on NRM starting second quarter of FY 2005/2006. The program aims to widen the perspective and deepen the interest and involvement of corporate managers and government officials to address major concerns on NRM in the context of globalization. A series of one- to two-week courses will be developed and offered by SEARCA for this purpose.

Among the initial courses targeted to be offered by the program are Appreciation and Understanding of Ecological Principles in a Globalizing World, Resource and Environmental Valuation as an Environmental Policymaking and Advocacy Tool, Intellectual Property Governance on Biodiversity, Water Governance, and Sustainable Environmental Entrepreneurship.

While on a recent official trip to Malaysia, SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan met with Dr. Percy E. Sajise and Dr. Ponciano Batugal, Director and Program Coordinator, respectively of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) for Southeast Asia, to discuss possible collaborative arrangements on the program. IPGRI offered to help SEARCA in designing courses related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development and in enriching other courses to be developed by SEARCA.

SEARCA plans to implement the first course of the program in April 2006.

The SEARCA team responsible for developing the program is composed of Dr. Arnold G. Garcia, Research and Development Department (RDD) Acting Manager; Dr. Jesus C. Fernandez, Training Department Manager, and Ms. Nyhria G. Rogel, RDD Project Development Specialist. (JCFernandez)
SEARCA Director keynotes food and nutrition security meet

SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan delivered the keynote message on food and nutrition security during the opening program of the seminar workshop organized last 23 June by the BIDANI Development Foundation, Inc. (BDFI), in partnership with the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) and the Philippine National Nutrition Council (NNC), at the Splash Mountain-Oasis Resort & Hotel in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines. More than 40 participants from state universities and colleges (SUCs), national government agencies (NGAs), and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) attended the workshop.

In his keynote message, Dr. Balisacan pointed out that poverty and consequently food and nutrition insecurity remain to be a rural problem. His presentation highlighted the available policy options to achieve rapid rural growth, nutrition security, and poverty reduction. Expanding overall economic growth is not enough to address poverty and hunger. The weak response of poverty to growth in the Philippines compared with its Southeast Asian neighbors implies that the quality of economic growth has to be improved as well. Rural development should be anchored on increased agricultural growth as high food prices and low farm incomes result from low rates of growth in agricultural production. He articulated that the national government should re-align public spending to focus on rural infrastructure, human capital (education, basic health, and nutrition), R&D, and information. Moreover, the government should implement better-targeted programs recognizing that there is no single template for rural development, poverty reduction and food security for all the regions in the country.

The workshop, with the theme Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security in Philippine Rural Setting, was funded by the Neys-van Hoogstraten Foundation (NHF). NHF is a Netherlands-based organization geared at strengthening socioeconomic research in the field of household budgets and family nutrition in Asian countries. BDFI is the micro-finance counterpart of the BIDANI Network Program of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). FNRI, an agency under the Philippine Department of Science and Technology (DOST), serves as the lead agency in food and nutrition research tasked to provide data on the country’s nutritional status, develop recommendations for improvement of nutritional standing, and disseminate research findings. On the other hand, NNC, under the Department of Agriculture (DA), is the country’s policy-making and coordinating body on nutrition. (JSCSugui)

ISAAA, SEARCA to hold intellectual property management conference

SEARCA is collaborating with the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) on a Southeast Asian regional conference on intellectual property (IP) rights. To start off this collaboration and in preparation for the conference, ISAAA funded the participation of Ms. Carmen Nyhria G. Rogel, Project Development Specialist, SEARCA Research and Development Department, to the CropLife International Annual Conference on “Innovation and intellectual property: serving society, securing the future?” The conference was held in Brussels, Belgium on 2 June 2005.

The conference aimed at reinforcing the need for innovation incentives and the legitimate protection of IP, and at challenging current thinking on the subject through the airing of the diverse opinions of various sectors. More than 170 industry and business leaders, government advisors, academics, and representatives from nongovernment organizations (NGOs) from over 30 countries converged in Brussels to discuss the role of innovation and IP to economic growth, and spreading the benefits to serve society and secure a better future for everyone.

Among the key issues raised in the conference were:

- The important role of small and medium enterprises as drivers of innovation;
- The necessity of investing in research and development to fuel innovation;
- The evolving role of users of innovation from passive recipients to determinants of the direction of innovation; the more there is uncertainty on the usefulness of a product, the more users are required to help define it;
- The increasing importance of public-private partnerships to innovation, particularly in developing countries;
- The need to balance IP legislation with public interest;
- The importance of IP protection as the global counterfeiting industry grows;
- The appropriateness, or otherwise, of the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) trade-related aspects of IP rights (TRIPS) agreement to development;
- The cultural bias of IP systems developed anchored on Western philosophy; and
- That strong patent protection does not always lead to greater innovation; there can be situations where strong IP limits innovation because it stifies competition.

The conference program was extended to include a breakfast session on trade entitled “Roadmap to Hongkong: EU and US perspectives on trade.” The panel included representatives from the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC), Truth about Trade and Technology, and CropLife America which discussed impacts of trade on the plant science industry. This session was also in reference to the round of talks to be held in Hongkong, China later this year. (CNGRogel)
SEARCA started in April 2005 the implementation of the second phase of “Strengthening the Capacity of QUEDANCOR Self-Reliant Team (SRT) Leaders on Agribusiness and Credit Management,” a five-year capability-building project funded by the Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR). QUEDANCOR is an attached agency of the Philippine Department of Agriculture, in charge of microfinance and rural credit.

The course implemented under this phase is an improvement of phase 1 with emphasis on “Skills Enhancement and Social Awareness for QUEDANCOR SRT Leaders.” The first three of a series of 13 batches covered Regions 4, 6, and 7 of the Philippines, and equipped 79 SRT Leaders with knowledge of the SRT concept, leadership, management of farm enterprises, business planning and budgeting, action planning, and technical aspects of production management of their commodities.

On 25-29 April 2005, 29 sugarcane farmers from the province of Negros Oriental underwent training at the Plaza Maria Luisa Suites Inn in Dumaguete City. On 16-20 May, 27 swine raisers from Capiz and Aklan participated in the training held at Sampaguita Gardens Resorts in New Washington, Aklan. Lastly, on 30 May-3 June, 23 swine raisers from the provinces of Laguna and Batangas joined the training held at the Continuing Education Center in Los Baños, Laguna.

During the first day of the five-day course, the participants were given an overview of the SRT model relating it to the development of the countryside by QUEDANCOR President and CEO Dr. Nelson C. Buenaflor. The participants were also oriented on the SRT concept, the different phases of SRT, provision of credit services and programs, role of input supplier, and the qualities of and incentive for SRT Leader.

The second day was devoted to discussions and workshops on strengthening SRT leadership with emphasis on flow and forms of power, leadership and power, styles of leadership, culture and gender in organizations by Dr. Felixberto H. Roquia, Jr., a social development expert; and the management of farm enterprises and efficient agribusiness management systems by Prof. Jimmy B. Williams from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

The third day focused on farm planning and budgeting and cash flow management lecture and workshops facilitated by Ms. Blanquita R. Pantoja of the College of Public Affairs, UPLB.

The fourth day was a break from the classroom activities. The participants and the QUEDANCOR-SEARCA Project Management Group (PMG) set out for a visit and briefing/lecture on technical issues and concerns related to the participants’ production practices and management; and to visit enterprises under QUEDANCOR lending and guarantee programs where the participants were able to share views and experiences with other successful SRT Leaders.

The last day of the course was devoted to the preparation of re-entry plans facilitated by Dr. Maribec A. Campos, Project Manager and SEARCA Consultant, and reviewed by Ms. Pantoja. The concrete re-entry plans crafted by the participants based on the insights gained from the training course will be monitored and evaluated after three months by the PMG to determine how the participants fared in the implementation of the plans and how these plans improved their business operations and respective SRTs. (ATRobles)
Indonesia appoints new rep to SEARCA Board

Indonesia has a new country representative to the Governing Board (GB) of SEARCA in the person of Prof Dr Ir H Moehammad Munir, M.S., Director, Research and Community Services Development, Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of National Education. He succeeded Prof. Dr. Dodi Nandika, who has been promoted to Secretary-General of the Ministry.

Earlier, Cambodia also appointed a new country representative to the GB. Dr. Chan Nareth, Rector, Royal University of Agriculture, began serving his three-year term as GB member on 14 January 2005. Previously, Cambodia was represented by Mr. May Samoeun, Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

The GB is SEARCA’s policymaking body, composed of one representative each of the 10 SEAMEO member countries as well as the SEARCA Director and the SEAMOE Secretariat Director. At present, the GB is chaired by the country representative of Myanmar, Mr. Tin Htut Oo, Director-General, Department of Agricultural Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

The other country representatives are:

Lao PDR - Mr. Thongphahn Kousonsavath, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, National University of Laos

Malaysia - Prof. Dato Dr. Mohd. Zohadie Bardaie, Vice Chancellor, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)

Philippines - Dr. Wilfredo P. David, Chancellor, University of the Philippines Los Baños

Singapore - Dr. Tan Teck Koon, Associate Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, and Dean of Students, Office of Student Affairs, National University of Singapore

Thailand - Mr. Veerasak Wongsombut, Secretary-General, Vocational Education Commission, Ministry of Education

Vietnam - Dr. Dang Vu Binh, Rector, Hanoi Agricultural University

Brunei Darussalam used to be represented by Dr. Mohamad Yussof bin Haji Mohiddin, Director, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, whose appointment expired on 31 March 2005. Brunei is yet to nominate a country representative.

Meanwhile, preparations are underway for the 51st SEARCA Governing Board Meeting, which will be held in Langkawi, Malaysia on 23-25 August 2005. The meeting is hosted by the Government of Malaysia through Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

During its annual meetings, the GB reviews the progress of the Center programs and budgets, and acts on Management’s recommendations as regards changes in the Center’s plans as well as new initiatives. (LTLollafer)

SEARCA Deputy Director goes back to Diponegoro

Dr. Djoko Suprapto, SEARCA Deputy Director for Programs, completed his term of office on 2 June 2005. He has returned to Diponegoro University in Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia.

Dr. Suprapto was SEARCA’s Deputy Director from 3 June 2002 to 2 June 2005. He was also Acting Director of the Center from 1 January to 10 July 2003.

Likewise, the Center’s Research and Development Department (RDD) is now being headed by Dr. Arnold G. Garcia as Acting Manager. Former RDD Manager Dr. Nerlita M. Manalili has joined Vredeseilanden (VECO-Indonesia) based in Bali, Indonesia. (AJTAragon)

Aeromonas hydrophila, S. putrefaciens, and V. cholerae isolated from Koi carp with skin ulcer were used in experimental infection. Healthy fish were injected with 0.1 ml bacteria suspension at 1x10⁷ cfu/ml. Bacteria were reisolated from ulcerative lesions and kidneys and had the same biochemical characteristics as those isolated from naturally infected fish. Histopathological examination showed that A. hydrophila individually or in combination with other bacteria could have caused the small superficial ulcerative lesions. S. putrefaciens and V. cholerae displayed localized lesions which were restricted to the area injected with bacteria suspension.

The study concluded that ulcerative lesion in Koi carp was primarily caused by multiple infection of several bacteria species, although the possibility of viral contagion cannot be ruled out.

Biotech scientists / from Page 9

and kidneys. A total of 11 bacteria species were identified, with Aeromonas hydrophila as the dominant species. The other species of ulcer-associated bacteria were 1) Shewanella putrefaciens, 2) Vibrio cholerae, 3) Pseudomonas diminuta, 4) Chryseobacterium meningosepticum, 5) Empedobacter brevis, 6) Pseudomonas aerugiinosa, 7) Pantoaea agglomerans, 8) Enterobacter sakazakii, 9) Morganella morganii, and 10) Aeromonas veronii.

During the workshop, resource persons provided inputs on ABSP II and Southeast Asia projects, and discussed technical issues on food safety, environmental safety, and socio-economics in the context of risk communication. Group exercises on message mapping, writing for the print media, and mock media interviews were done to complement the theoretical aspects of the lectures. Country experiences on dealing with genetically modified crops, particularly those of the Philippines and Thailand, were likewise shared with the group. (SPTababa)
UNDP, SEARCA collaborate in impact assessment training

SEARCA has recently been tapped by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Philippines to conduct a training program on impact assessment.

The program, entitled “Training in Enhancing the Capacity of Government and Civil Service Organizations (CSOs) in Assessing Development Programs’ Impacts on Poverty Toward Effective Policy Making and Governance,” is scheduled for implementation in August 2005.

Dr. Lisa Grace S. Bersales, Dean of the School of Statistics, University of the Philippines Diliman, will serve as technical course coordinator.

The training program takes off from the need to assess the impacts of development projects, wherein a lot of resources have been allocated, to ensure that their expected benefits reach the target clients. Impact assessment measures and evaluates the changes in the well-being of individuals and communities after a particular project or program is implemented. It is thus a process of identifying the anticipated or actual impacts of a developmental intervention on the social, economic, and environmental concerns of its beneficiaries.

The training program generally aims to enhance and mainstream the roles and capacities of the Philippines’ National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) and other government agencies, CSOs, and local government units (LGUs) in conducting scientific assessment of the impacts of development programs and projects on poverty to support and promote effective policy formulation and good governance. NAPC is the oversight agency of the Philippine Government on anti-poverty programs and projects. At present, it is the lead agency in the preparation of the Plan of Action for Poverty Reduction (PAPR), which is the strategic operational plan to achieve the Philippine 2004-2010 Medium-Term Development Plan’s poverty reduction targets along the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The training program is designed for staff members of national and local government units and non-government organizations in the Philippines who have basic knowledge and experience in impact assessment and policy formulation. Twenty participants will be selected from all the regions in the Philippines to attend the course. NAPC, as the executing agency, will identify, screen, and select the final list of participants.

At the end of the training, participants are expected to produce action plans that could spin off into future action projects between and among themselves, SEARCA, and funding donors along the same subject matters of the course. (NARamos)
The weekly **SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series (ADSS)** continues to be a venue for dynamic and vibrant discussion of scientific findings, research results, and perspectives within the purview of agriculture and development. It has had high-profile researchers and practitioners from the academe, government, and industry as resource persons. **Open to the public** and held at the Center **every Tuesday at 4:00 p.m.**, the ADSS is attended by students, academics, scientists, and other members of the Los Baños community and beyond. The following are the seminars held from **April to June 2005**.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>6 April 2005</td>
<td>Fixing the Ailing Educational System of the Philippines</td>
<td>Secretary Florencio B. Abad Department of Education (DepEd), Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 April 2005</td>
<td>The Nuts and Bolts of an Economy in Crisis: A Simple Quantitative Model</td>
<td>Mr. Geoffrey M. Ducanes Consultant, Asian Development Bank (ADB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 April 2005</td>
<td>Wine from Local Fruits: A Challenge</td>
<td>Dr. Erlinda I. Dizon Associate Professor, College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 April 2005</td>
<td>Exploring Potentials of a Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership in Human Resource Development</td>
<td>Mr. Niño Alejandro Q. Manalo Assistant Professor, College of Economics and Management, UPLB</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 May 2005</td>
<td>Production and Characterization of Virgin Coconut Oil</td>
<td>Mr. Vermont P. Dia Instructor and Assistant to the Director, College of Agriculture, UPLB</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 May 2005</td>
<td>Building Partnership with Stakeholders for the Ecological Security of Lake Taal, Philippines</td>
<td>Prof. Benjamin J. Bartolome College of Human Ecology, UPLB</td>
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<td>17 May 2005</td>
<td>Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act (RA 9147) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations and Bioprospecting Guidelines: Issues and Concerns Affecting Research and Development Activities</td>
<td>Dr. Manuel V. A. Bravo Director, Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 May 2005</td>
<td>Factors Contributing to Sustainable Farming Adoption in the Philippines</td>
<td>Dr. Lorna C. Malicsi Head, SEARCA Knowledge Management Unit (KMU)</td>
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<td>31 May 2005</td>
<td>The Transformation of Research Communities in the Stories Researchers Tell</td>
<td>Dr. Jean A. Saludadez Faculty, University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 June 2005</td>
<td>Livestock Industrialization in the Philippines: Can Smallholder Broiler and Hog Producers Thrive?</td>
<td>Prof. Maria Angeles O. Catelo College of Economics and Management, UPLB</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 June 2005</td>
<td>Can Small Farmers Survive in a Globalized World?</td>
<td>Dr. Prabhu Pingali Director, Agricultural and Development Economics Division, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 June 2005</td>
<td>The Philippine Hybrid Rice Program</td>
<td>Dr. Cristina C. David Senior Research Fellow, Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 June 2005</td>
<td>Bridging Societal Divides: Poverty Traps and Policy Failures</td>
<td>Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan SEARCA Director, and Professor, University of the Philippines Diliman</td>
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</table>
**SEARCA launches Sponsor-a-Colleague program**

SEARCA training alumni and graduate study fellows will now have the opportunity to help address the human resource development needs of Southeast Asia. The vehicle is the Center’s “Sponsor a Colleague Program,” to be launched in August 2005.

From 1970 to 2001, SEARCA’s Short-Term Training Program (STTP) offered on full scholarship regular courses related to agricultural and rural development at the regional level. The scholarship covered tuition, international and local travel, training materials, health and accident insurance premiums, and full board and lodging of the participants. SEARCA’s STTP was initiated to develop the competencies of agricultural personnel in the Southeast Asian region who could not be released for long-term graduate studies.

In general, the “Sponsor a Colleague Program” aims to address the decline in scholarship grants for short-term training despite the growing need for capacity building brought about by the demands of a globalized economy. It has three specific objectives, namely: a) to enhance staff development of relevant agricultural and rural development organizations in the region through the sponsorship of SEARCA training alumni; b) to increase the number of competent human resources in the region in relevant subject matters covered by SEARCA’s training course offerings; and c) to sustain a more proactive and win-win counterparting scheme between SEARCA and relevant agricultural and rural development organizations in developing human resources in the region.

The program is expected to provide several benefits.

For the collaborating organizations, the program would strengthen institutional capacity on any fields that SEARCA training courses will cover and enhance professional growth of their staff.

For the SEARCA training alumni, the program would be an added value to them to concretely manifest their commitment and concern for their organization’s development and improvement of service delivery to their clients, and returning the favor of being once a training scholarship grantee, through sponsorship of their colleagues.

For both the collaborating organization and SEARCA training alumni, the program will require no cost to the organization and only a minimal cost to the training alumni-sponsors as a result of the pooling of contributions.

For SEARCA, the program will enable the Center to be true to its mandate of developing human resources and institutions in the Southeast Asian region toward poverty reduction and food security.

For both SEARCA and the collaborating organizations, the program could facilitate the establishment of a pool of experts on the different subject matters covered by SEARCA training courses, which could be tapped for development work in the region. (JCFernandez)

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<tr>
<th>Partner Institution</th>
<th>Date Signed</th>
<th>Purpose of Agreement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEAMEO Regional Center for Vocational and Technical Education (VOCTECH)</td>
<td>7 April 2005</td>
<td>To collaborate in common education, training, and research programs, projects, and activities; and to exchange staff, scientific materials, publications, and information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lapanday Foods Corporation (Philippines)</td>
<td>7 April 2005</td>
<td>To sponsor the international conference entitled “Agricultural and Rural Development in Asia: Ideas, Paradigms, and Policies Three Decades After” to be held on 10-11 November 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worldfish Center</td>
<td>27 June 2005</td>
<td>To implement the project Agrarian Reform Communities Project 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) and Philippine Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR)</td>
<td>5 May 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
<td>5 June 2005</td>
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</tbody>
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**SEARCA Has 18 / from Page 12**

T. Peña, Filipino, who is pursuing her MS in Biochemistry; and Mr. Arturo E. Pasa, Filipino, and Mr. Koy Ra, Cambodian, both pursuing their PhD in Forest Resource Management.

Ms. Nguyễn Thị Dương Nga, Vietnamese, was awarded a one-year scholarship funded by SEARCA for her straight PhD in Agricultural Economics at UPLB. DAAD supported Ms. Nga’s MS in Agricultural Economics program, which she was pursuing before she qualified for the straight PhD program. (LLDDomingo)
SEARCA has 9 new fellows...

SEARCA has nine new fellows from Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand. They completed their graduate studies at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

Of the nine fellows, four had fund support from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), three from SEARCA, one from the Philippine Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR), and one from the Higher Education Project (HEP) of the Government of Indonesia.

The fellows whose scholarships were funded by the DAAD, their nationalities, degree and area of specialization, study post, and title of their theses are:

Ms. Jean A. Saludadez, Filipino, PhD in Development Communication, UPM, “Research Collaboration Stories: Communication as Constitutive of Temporary Organization;”

Mr. Anut Chantiratikul, Thai, PhD in Animal Nutrition, UPM, “Effects of Kenaf (Hibiscus cannabinus) as a Substitute Feed for Lactating Dairy Cattle;”

Ms. Moe Moe Oo, Myanmar, MS in Plant Breeding, UPLB, Characterization of the Sub1 Locus Conferring Submergence Tolerance in the Rice Cultivar “Goda Heenati” (Oryza sativa L.); and

Mr. Edward Lapong, Filipino, MS in Soil and Water Engineering, UPLB, The Effect of Land Use Patterns on Runoff, Sediment Yield and Pesticide Concentration in Selected Microcatchments in Manupali Watershed, Bukidnon, Philippines.

The fellows whose scholarships were fully supported by SEARCA, their nationalities, degree and area of specialization, and title of their theses are:

Ms. Anna Floresca F. Abrina, Filipino, MS in Economics, “Environmental Regulation in the Philippines: The Case of Hazardous Wastes;”

Ms. Sopialena, Indonesian, PhD in Plant Pathology, “Epidemiology of Turcicum Leaf Blight of Corn in Indonesia;” and

Mr. Emerson V. Barcellano, Filipino, PhD in Forestry, “Characterizing the Sustainability of Coffee (Coffee spp.)-based Agroforestry System using Geographic Information System (GIS) in Kalinga Province, Philippines.”

All three obtained their graduate degrees from UPLB.

MS. Carmencita V. Kagaoan, a Filipino, obtained her PhD in Environmental Science from UPLB under the DA-BAR scholarship. Her thesis is titled “Carrying Capacity for Ecotourism of a Wildlife Sanctuary – Taganak, Turtle Islands, Philippines.”

Mr. Ismet Khaeruddin, an Indonesian, completed his PhD in Environmental Science at UPLB under the HEP scholarship. The title of his thesis is “Factors Affecting Land Use Changes and Its Implications on Biodiversity at Lore Lindu National Park, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia.”

To date, SEARCA has a total of 957 fellows (548 MS, 409 PhD).

... and 18 new scholars

SEARCA has awarded new scholarships to 18 nationals of Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam to pursue their MS and PhD programs starting school year 2005/2006. The scholars are enrolled at four universities in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand.

The new scholars who will pursue their graduate studies at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) are:

Ms. Chhim Rumuny, Cambodian, pursuing MS in Environmental Science; Ms. Nurmeiliasari, MS in Animal Science; and Mr. Rully Rahadian, PhD in Entomology, both Indonesians;

Ms. Cho Cho San and Mr. Kyaw Htay, both Myanmar nationals, MS in Agricultural Economics;

Mr. Jupiter V. Casas, PhD in Forest Resources Management, Mr. Ruel M. Majica, PhD in Agricultural Engineering, Mr. Neil C. Tanquilut, MS in Veterinary Medicine, Mr. Percival P. Sangel and Mr. Anthony Francis S. Regaspi, both pursuing MS in Animal Science, all Filipinos;

Mr. Puvadol Doydee, PhD in Environmental Science, and Ms. Phikun Nuchnuanrat, PhD in Plant Pathology, both Thais; and

Ms. Tran Thi Thu Huong, MS in Agricultural Economics, and Mr. Tran Quoc Hung, PhD in Forest Resources Management, both Vietnamese.

The other new SEARCA scholars studying in other universities, their nationality, degree program, and study post are:

Mr. Wahyu Andy Nugraha, Indonesian, MS in Fisheries, University of the Philippines Visayas; Mr. Bounsu Soudmaly, Laotian, MS in Agriculture, Kasetsart University (KU), Thailand; Ms. Noordiana Nordin, Malaysian, MS in Soil Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM); and Ms. Parinyarat Poosiri, Thai, PhD in Tropical Agriculture, KU.

Of the new scholars, six are fully supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), 11 by SEARCA, and one by the SEARCA-Cavite State University Scholarship Project.

Meanwhile, DAAD also provided support for additional one-year graduate scholarships to ongoing SEARCA scholars at UPLB, namely: Ms. Jennifer...
**Germination and Storage of Dyera costulata Hook F. and Macaranga gigantea Mull. Seeds**

Chanthol Sao  
Cambodia  
MS in Forest Seed Technology  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

High percentage of seed germination and vigor are the most important factors to be considered in the production of high-quality tree seeds for commercial plantations. The study aimed to enhance the germination and storage condition of commercially important tree seeds, Dyera costulata Hook F. and Macaranga gigantea Mull. It intended to develop tetrazolium test for rapid detection of seed viability. Paper, sand, soil, forest soil, coconut husk and paddy husk were the germination media tested for best germination. Three storage conditions (i.e., refrigerated at 10°C and 20°C and ambient at 30°C) and four storage periods (i.e., 0, 31, 89, and 181 days); three plant growth hormones (i.e., GA3, BAP, and kinetin) at four concentrations (i.e., 0.1, 0.2, 0.5, and 10 mg/l) were used to determine the best conditions for storage and growth promoter for both D. costulata. and M. gigantea seeds. Also, three germination media (i.e., sand, soil, and forest soil) and light regimes (i.e., at 25%, 55%, and 75% relative light intensity) were used to determine the best condition for seedling growth.

Results of the study indicated that the best germination media for both tree seeds was the sand, followed by forest soil and soil. The best temperature for storage was found to be at 20°C, giving 85-97 percent seed viability. However, storage of more than 89 days tend to reduce the germination rate when stored at 10°C and 20°C, and more than 30 days if stored at 30°C. Among the three types of hormones, GA3 at 10 mg/l was found to be the most effective at 65 percent viability for germination and 74 percent viability when combined with excised seedcoat. Among the concentrations used, application at 10 mg/l gave the overall best result for all the hormones in enhancing the germination process. Also, growth was significantly better at 75 percent light in forest soil condition.

The study also found that buried seeds had better germination rate than freshly collected seeds. Comparison of the anatomical structures of buried seeds and fresh seeds of M. gigantea were done using scanning electron microscopy (SEM). Results showed that buried seeds had a thinner pericarp, full endosperm, and better-developed embryonic axis compared to that of fresh seeds. Differences were also evident within the radicle area where structures from fresh seeds were not as well organized as those of buried seeds.

**Pedological Characteristics of Soils in Mount Mayon, Albay, Philippines**

Virgilia G. Armendi-Aberin  
Philippines  
PhD in Soil Science  
University of the Philippines Los Baños

The study sought to establish the nature of soil development of different soils in Mount Mayon. The frequent eruption of Mount Mayon did not pose hindrance to having a detailed analysis of its soils. Based on the history of Mayon eruption, time of deposition of parent materials, and type of volcanic materials, 11 pedons were excavated around Mount Mayon to morphologically, physically, chemically, and mineralogically characterize, and classify the soils of the representative pedons. The different pedons were located in different slopes with shallow water. The eleven soil pedons were classified as Humic Pachic Dystrudepts, Humic Dystrudepts, Vitrandic Eutudgepts, Humic Psammentic Dystrudepts, Aquic Eutudgepts, and Vitrandic Udorthents. The unconsolidated debris and materials from eruption, colluvial, and alluvial additions were the parent materials of the soils in the 11 eleven pedons. The magma composition was predominantly plagioclase, hypersthene, and augite. Therefore, the rock type of the parent material was hypersthene-augite Andesite. The very high amount of weatherable primary minerals such as hypersthene and augite (pyroxenes), and slowly weatherable primary minerals such as plagioclase indicated that weathering of these minerals was not intensive. The cumulization due to eruption, colluvial, and alluvial additions, combined with high rainfall, warm and humid conditions favored the enrichment, littering, ripening, humification, melanization, eluviation, and extraordinification of clay but not enough to form argillic horizon in soils that represent intermediate developed soils; and 3) certain degree of horizonation and deep solum in soils that represent the more advance developed soil.

**Aetiopathogenicity of Ulcerative Disease in Koi Carp (Cyprinus carpio Linnaeus)**

Sureerat Butprom  
Thailand  
MS in Animal Science  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

The study sought to chart the epizootiology and pathogenicity of the chronic persistent ulcerative lesion of the skin in Koi carp (Cyprinus carpio L.) and its aetiological agents, which included histopathological, bacteriological, virological, and experimental infection. A total of 36 Koi carps with skin ulcer were examined. Electron microscopy revealed two types of virus-like particles, which were associated with histopathological changes in the kidneys of the infected fish. The virus-like particles were presumed to be coronavirus and reovirus based on their morphology.

Morphological and biochemical characteristics of bacteria isolated from the diseased Koi were determined by routine biochemical tests in combination with the BBL Crystal Kit™. Gram-negative, non-lactose fermenting rods were isolated from the skin lesions.
SEARCA invites applications for Seed Fund for Research and Training (SFRT)

SEARCA invites all promising Southeast Asian researchers and scientists, with high quality research and training background, and without significant funding support, to apply for the SEARCA Seed Fund for Strategic Research and Training (SFRT).

Proposals to be submitted should be innovative and within SEARCA’s priority thrusts of agricultural competitiveness and natural resource management. They should have potential for large-scale impact on rural welfare and for attracting long-term funding support. SFRT will provide successful project proposals with start-up funds ranging from US$10,000 to US$15,000.

Deadline of submission is every 1 September. For more information on SFRT, please visit www.searca.org or email sfrt@agri.searca.org. (MLVRavago)

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<th>Upcoming Events*</th>
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<td>Regional Consultative Workshop on Emerging Issues and Policy Responses on Food Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in Asia: Ideas, Paradigms, and Policies Three Decades After</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biodiversity Research Programme (BRP) National Conference</td>
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<td>BRP Closing Conference in the Netherlands</td>
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<td>51st SEARCA Governing Board (GB) Meeting</td>
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<td>Ensuring Rice Security for All: Issues, Constraints, and Policy Directions Authors’ Meeting</td>
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<td>Landcare Project Meeting and Workshop</td>
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<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
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<td>Assessing Impacts of Development Projects on Poverty toward Effective Policy Making and Good Governance</td>
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<td>Training Course on Food Safety Protocols</td>
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<td>Executive Training Course on Supply Chain Management and Local Market Development</td>
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* List includes events within July to December 2005 only. Schedules may be modified without prior notice. Please visit www.searca.org for more updated information on SEARCA events.

SEARCA administers 6 new scholarships for Timor-Leste nationals

SEARCA is administering six new graduate scholarships for Timor-Leste nationals to pursue their MS and Summer programs at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in school year 2005/2006. Five of these Timorese are full scholars of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), while one is considered a trainee for the Summer Program in Agribusiness.

DAAD awarded one-month scholarships to Mr. Carlos De Deus and Mr. Cristovao Dos Reis for the Summer Program in Economics, a prerequisite to the MS in Agricultural Economics, and to Mr. Mateus Gomes for the Summer Program in Agribusiness, a prerequisite to the Master of Management in Agribusiness Management. SEARCA also supported the participation of Mr. Marcolino Fernandes E. Brito in the UPLB Summer Program in Agribusiness.

DAAD also awarded a scholarship to Mr. Luís Godinho to pursue his Master of Forestry in Silviculture and Forest Influences and to Mr. Latino Coimbra to pursue his MS in Animal Science.

The five new scholars awarded by DAAD compose the third batch of DAAD grantees from Timor-Leste whose scholarships have been administered by SEARCA. The new scholarship awards bring to 13 the total number of DAAD scholarships awarded to Timor-Leste nationals.

Ms. Yuliaty de Brito, who was in the first batch of Timorese scholars awarded by DAAD, has completed her MS in Animal Science at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

SEARCA administers this Special Project on DAAD scholarships for Timor-Leste as an assistance to the Government of Germany, which is an associate member of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). (LLDDomingo)
SEARCA revitalizes publications program. SEARCA held the first of a series of publication launchings last 29 June in simple ceremonies at the lobby of the SEARCA Main Building in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines. Dr. William G. Padolina, Deputy Director General for Partnerships of the International Rice Research Insitute (IRRI), in his Keynote Message, commended the Center’s efforts at revitalizing its publications program. He also noted the increasing number of modalities through which SEARCA could articulate research results and other information critical to agriculture and rural development in Southeast Asia. 

(Below are some of the publications launched by SEARCA during the event.)

The Asian Journal of Agriculture and Development (AJAD) contains research results and insights of renowned experts in agriculture and rural development. SEARCA has made available to the public two AJAD issues both in print and on the Internet. These issues are also available in CD format.

SEARCA also publishes monographs of various themes, which are windows through which the public could get a glimpse of lessons gleaned from the Center’s different development projects. Recently, the Center released two monographs, namely: The Journey and Beyond: SEARCA’s Experiences in Sustainable Agriculture and Community-based Natural Resources Management and Revitalizing the Philippine Agricultural Extension System.

The proceedings of the Fourth JD Drilon, Jr. Agribusiness Lecture Series held on 14 June 2004 contain information on the way forward for Philippine agriculture.

"Philippines: Bt corn and grain quality" and "Philippines: Bt corn and Trichogramma" are brochures that feature results of studies conducted on Bt corn in the Philippines.
SEARCA officials, staff, and scholars celebrate Family Day. The annual SEARCA Sports and Family Day was held last 8 April at the Baker Hall of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), where the Center is based. The day-long celebration, which grouped the Center officials, staff, and scholars into four teams (Red, White, Yellow, and Blue), involved games such as tug-of-war, basketball, volleyball, badminton, and relay. The annual SEARCA Sports and Family Day emphasizes the importance of teamwork and camaraderie, as well as the virtue of sportsmanship. Photos show (clockwise, from top left) Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Deputy Director for Administration, leading the Oath of Sportsmanship; the Red Team performing a cheering routine; the Blue Team during the tug-of-war; and a child-member of the Red Team negotiating the obstacle course.

Laotian agriculture officials visit SEARCA. SEARCA received last 7 April three officers from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Lao PDR, led by Mr. Phouthone Sophathilath, and briefed them on the Center’s activities and priority areas. Apart from renewing the ties between Lao PDR and SEARCA, the meeting also helped identify areas where the two may work together, in the common pursuit of agricultural competitiveness and rural development for Southeast Asia. Lao PDR is one of the ten member countries of SEAMEO.

SEARCA sends off Dr. Djoko Suprapto. SEARCA officials, staff, and scholars held a send-off party for outgoing Deputy Director for Programs Dr. Djoko Suprapto last 27 May at the SEARCA Guesthouse. (Please see related story on Page 8.) Photos show (from top) SEARCA scholars speaking fondly of their interaction with Dr. Djoko; Center staff and scholars posing with Dr. Djoko for a souvenir shot; and SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan handing a plaque of recognition to Dr. Djoko.