

The SEARCA DIARY



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for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture

Timor-Leste joins SEAMEO

Full story on Page 3

*Minister of newest independent nation in the world
cites SEARCA, DAAD assistance in Timorese human
resource development*



SEAMEO Council Conference 2006 participants (front row, l-r): Pg Dato Seri Setia Dr. Hj Mohammad bin Pg Hj Abdul Rahman, Deputy Minister of Education, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam; Mr. Im Sethy, Secretary of State, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia; Prof. Dr. Bambang Sudibyo, Minister of National Education, Indonesia; Dato Sri Hishamuddin Tun Hussein, Minister of Education, Ministry of Education, Malaysia; Prof. Dr. Tran Van Nhung, Deputy Minister of Education and Training, Ministry of Education and Training, Vietnam; Prof. S. Jayakumar, Deputy Prime Minister, Singapore; Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Minister for Education, Ministry for Education, Singapore; Brig. Gen. Aung Myo Min, Deputy Minister for Education, Ministry for Education, Myanmar; Dr. Fe Hidalgo, Undersecretary/Officer in Charge, Department of Education, Philippines; Mr. Antoine Mynard, Attache for Science and

Timor-Leste / to Page 3

Note: Timor-Leste is the newest member country of SEAMEO. It was formally accepted into the organization in March 2006. See story on Page 3.

Timor-Leste: Southeast Asia's Rising Sun

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste is the newest independent country in the world. The name Timor is derived from *timur*, the Malay word for 'east', which became Timor in Portuguese. The Portuguese name Timor-Leste and the Tetum name Timor Lorosa'e are sometimes used in English. Lorosa'e means 'rising sun' in Tetum.

Timor-Leste has the lowest per capita GDP (Purchasing Power Parity adjusted) in the world, at only US\$400. However, it ranks 140th among the world's nations according to the Human Development Index, which corresponds to medium human development.

Colonized by Portugal in the 16th century, Timor-Leste was known as Portuguese Timor for centuries. It had been occupied by Indonesia since 1975, but following the United Nations (UN)-sponsored act of self-determination in 1999, Timor-Leste achieved full independence on 20 May 2002. It joined the UN on 27 September of the same year.

Geography

Timor-Leste is part of the Malay archipelago and the largest and easternmost of the Lesser Sunda Islands. To the north of the mountainous island are the Ombai Strait and Wetar Strait; to

the south, the Timor Sea separates the island from Australia; while to the west lies the Indonesian Province of East Nusa Tenggara. The highest point of Timor-Leste is Mount Ramelau (also known as Mount Tatamailau) at 2,963 metres (9,721 ft).

The local climate is tropical and generally hot and humid, characterized by distinct rainy and dry seasons. The capital, which is also the largest city and main port, is Dili; and the second-largest city is the eastern town of Baucau. Dili has the only functioning international airport, though there are airstrips in Baucau and Oecusse used for domestic flights.

Economy

Prior to and during colonization, Timor-Leste was best known for its sandalwood. In late 1999, about 70% of the economic infrastructure



of the country was laid waste by pre-independence chaos and anti-separatist militias, and 260,000 people fled westward. Over the next three years a massive international program led by the UN, manned by civilian advisers, 5,000 peacekeepers (8,000 at peak) and 1,300 police officers, led to substantial reconstruction in both urban and rural areas. By mid-2002, all but about 50,000 of the refugees had returned.

The country faces great challenges in continuing to rebuild the

infrastructure and strengthen the infant civil administration. Promising long-term projects that are in the pipeline involve Timor-Leste's petroleum and natural gas resources in the waters southeast of the country. It also has a large coffee industry, which could be fairly lucrative if managed correctly.

Demography, Culture

The population of Timor-Leste is about one million. It has grown considerably recently, because of a high birth rate and the return of refugees. The population is especially concentrated in the area around Dili. The country's two official languages are Portuguese and Tetum, a local Austronesian language, while Indonesian and English are defined as working languages.

The culture of Timor-Leste reflects numerous cultural influences, including Portuguese, Roman Catholic, and Malay. Like Indonesia, Timorese culture has been heavily influenced by Austronesian legends. Illiteracy is still widespread, but there is a strong tradition of poetry. President Xanana Gusmão is, for example, a distinguished poet. As for architecture, some Portuguese-style buildings can be found, although the traditional totem houses of the eastern region, known as *uma lulik*, also survive. Craftsmanship is also widespread, as is the weaving of traditional scarves or *tais*.

(Article lifted from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timor-Leste>)

Higher Education, Embassy of France, Singapore; Mr. Chaturon Chaisang, Minister of Education, Ministry of Education, Thailand; and Mr. Armindo Maia, Minister of Education and Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture, Timor-Leste.

(Back row, l-r): Ms. Jan Gough-Watson, Counselor for Education, Science and Training, Australian Embassy, Thailand; Mr. George Molloy, Director, International Programs and Special Projects, Council of Minister of Education, Canada; Mr. Gan Kim Yong, Minister of State for Education and Manpower, Singapore; Mr. Paul Lister, Policy Manager, International Division, Ministry of Education, New Zealand; Mr. Dankert Vedeler, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Education and Research, Norway; Dr. Edilberto de Jesus, Director, SEAMEO Secretariat; and Mr. Ong Keng Yong, Director General, ASEAN.

Timor-Leste, the newest independent nation in the world, was officially accepted as the 11th member of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) during the 41st SEAMEO Council Conference held in Singapore on 21-23 March 2006. Education Minister Dr. Armindo Maia of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports of Timor Leste expressed deep appreciation to the Organization for accepting his nation as member after two years of being on observer status in the past two SEAMEO Council Conferences. Minister Maia emphasized this membership as a milestone in the history of education in Timor Leste and implored the representatives of each member state for assistance especially in human resource development.

Minister Maia also expressed his gratitude to the Government of Germany for its assistance in the form of scholarships to nationals of Timor Leste through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and SEARCA.

DAAD has been a partner of SEARCA in human resource development efforts in Southeast Asia since 1975. The collaborative HRD project for Timor-Leste started

in 2003 and is a continuing activity implemented by SEARCA. It involves the administration and management of graduate scholarships for qualified Timorese to pursue the master's degree in agriculture and related sciences. So far, a total of 15 Timorese have participated in the scholarship project. Of this, five had completed their MS programs at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Indonesia; two have finished a Summer Program in Agricultural Economics at University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB); one had completed a one-semester program in Soil Science at UPLB; six are ongoing graduate students—three at UPLB, two at UGM, and one at Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), Indonesia; and one is awaiting admission at UGM. Minister Maia expressed the hope that the collaboration would continue in order to build up the capacity of human resources in agriculture in Timor-Leste.

The conference was attended by ministers of education of the

11 member states of SEAMEO, namely: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Timor-Leste, Thailand, and Vietnam. Officials of SEAMEO Centers were also present.

SEARCA was represented by Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, Director, and Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Manager, Graduate Scholarship Department, who was a recipient of this year's SEAMEO Service Award. (Please see related story on Page 12.) (ECCedicol)

Dr. Armindo Maia, Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports of Timor-Leste, delivers a message during the 41st SEAMEO Council Conference in Singapore.



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. 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.)

Asia's poultry industry: Are we ready for bird flu?

Not yet. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that only a handful of countries so far have come up with avian influenza pandemic preparedness plans. What is being done to contain the disease? How can the jump from poultry to humans be prevented and/or contained? What are the economic implications to the countries now affected by avian influenza?

In 1997, the H5N1 strain of the avian flu killed six people in Hong Kong. The current outbreak, however, has been the most severe, according to WHO. More countries have been hit and the disease has become tenacious, resulting in higher bird loss. The virus has become endemic in parts of Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, China, and Thailand, with more and more countries confirming bird flu outbreaks.

What needs to be done at the poultry level?

- **Set up/Improve surveillance system**

Early detection and rapid response mechanisms, crucial to successful control of the disease, have to be in place and operational as soon as possible, especially in neighboring countries that are still free of the disease. Countries also need to be open and transparent

in reporting bird flu cases in order to contain the virus. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recently provided US\$5.5 million to support emergency efforts on surveillance, diagnostic, and bird flu information in Asia.

- **Prevent the spread of the virus**

Bird to bird. Mass culling is still the most acceptable control method. Its economic impact, however, needs to be considered, too. How will poultry raisers be compensated? Vietnam has lost more than 45 million birds to the virus, and the government is attempting to vaccinate its entire poultry population. The difficulties facing this attempt include low



wages paid to the people doing the vaccination; identifying which chicken have already been vaccinated; and late delivery of vaccines. *Quarantine* of infected areas requires concerted efforts of health and agricultural workers, as well as local law enforcement bodies.

Bird to human. Persons handling infected and suspect birds are urged to use protective gear

like gloves and masks. Periodic washing of the hands and regular cleaning and inspection of poultry cages and their surroundings are likewise recommended.

- **Prevent the entry of the virus**

In countries that are still free from bird flu, the bigger concern is preventing the entry of infected birds or contaminated products. In the case of the Philippines, its Department of Agriculture has set a ban on the importation of poultry and poultry products from countries with avian influenza cases.

- **Provide up-to-date, reliable, and responsible information**

FAO has developed an avian flu bulletin and a web page to provide information on the situation in Asia and affected countries, as well as resource information to fight the virus. Providing up-to-date and reliable information is a way of "managing public anxiety" over what some fear could become a pandemic.

Funding assistance

Some Asian countries have appealed for international help in terms of funds and technical assistance to fight the disease outbreak. Vietnam needs about US\$50 million to stockpile anti-bird flu drugs. The Philippines' Bureau of Animal Industry is requesting from the government

Asia's poultry / to Page 14

Experts work on RP rice security book

Preliminary results of a book-writing project entitled, "Ensuring Rice Security for All: Issues, Constraints, and Policy Directions" were presented at the Third Authors' Workshop held on 17 February 2006 in Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

SEARCA, the Department of Agriculture (DA)-Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), and DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) have combined resources to produce this volume. What will distinguish this book from other available literature on rice is the systematic, organized, and forward-looking assessment of the Philippines' rice industry from a policy perspective. The contents of this book will focus on important rice policy issues and institutional constraints. It will also examine policy choices that will lead toward achieving rice food security, presented in a manner that can be easily understood and appreciated by lay readers, especially decision-makers and legislators.

Contributing experts include Donato Antiporta, UN Food and Agriculture Organization-Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UN FAO-RAP); Randolph Barker, Cornell University; Eliseo Ponce and Gilberto Llanto, Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS); Leocadio Sebastian, Sergio Francisco, Flordeliza Bordey,

Front row, left to right: Locel Ann Tumlos, SEARCA; Jonna Estudillo, UPSE; Leocadio Sebastian, Philrice; Randy Barker, Cornell University; Cristina David, PIDS; Flordeliza Lantican, UPLB; Merceditas Sombilla, SEARCA; Filma Calalo, UPLB; Vida Alpuerto, PhilRice; Nerlita Manalili, VECO Indonesia; and Isabelita Pabuayan, UPLB.

Back row, left to right: Majah-Leah Ravago, SEARCA; Donato Antiporta, FAO; Arnulfo Garcia, SEARCA; Arsenio Balisacan, SEARCA; Tirso Paris, UPLB; Emil Javier, NAST; Sergio Francisco, PhilRice; Bienvenido Juliano, NAST; and Ricardo Lantican, NAST.



Vida Lina Alpuerto, and Jesusa Beltran, PhilRice; Tirso Paris, Jr., Flor Lantican, Rodrigo Badayos, Prudenciano Gordoncillo, and Filma Calalo, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB); Alex Brilliantes, Ma. Concepcion Lizada, and Jose Tiu Sonco, University of the Philippines Diliman; George Norton, Virginia Polytechnic Institute; Arlene Inocencio, International Water Management Institute; Nerlita Manalili, Vredeseilanden VECO Indonesia; Arsenio Balisacan, Mercy Sombilla, Majah-Leah Ravago, and Locel Ann Tumlos, SEARCA.

Discussants were invited to critique the book chapters in order to assist authors in revising their respective chapters. They are Ramon Clarete, Emmanuel Esguerra, and Jonna Estudillo of

the University of the Philippines Diliman School of Economics (UPSE); Emil Javier, Bienvenido Juliano, and Ricardo Lantican, National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST); Cristina David, PIDS; Arnulfo Garcia, SEARCA;

Experts' book / to Page 14



UPCOMING EVENTS

SEARCA to conduct courses on Natural Resource Management, Food Safety

SEARCA is slated to conduct two new courses, one on natural resource management and the other on food safety risk management.

The *Executive Course on Natural Resource Management in a Globalizing Asia*, scheduled on 8-12 May 2006, is designed to train and reequip environmental leaders and managers in contextualizing natural resource management (NRM) concepts and principles in a globalizing Asia. It will serve as a venue for exchanging ideas, experiences, and good practices on the subject matter.

The program aims to help participants develop a more critical perspective in looking at current issues and concerns, trends and priorities on NRM, mostly through case analysis and peer-based learning methods toward formulating sound decisions and actions accordingly. Topics in this course are as follows: 1) Overview on the Current Status and Trends of Natural Resources and the Environment in Southeast Asia: What are at Stake?; 2) Globalization and the Millennium Development Goals: Where does

NRM Stand?; 3) Critical Issues and Concerns on NRM across Ecosystems; 4) Regional Capacity Building Needs and Prospects on NRM; and 5) Defining and Building Consensus on the Critical Roles of NRM Leaders in the Region. This course will be conducted in collaboration with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI).

On the other hand, a training course on food safety will be conducted in July 2006. (*Please watch out for further announcements.*) It is designed to meet the needs of middle-level and more senior staff in food-based companies in Southeast Asia. It will also be of interest to industrial, regulatory, and public health professionals responsible for managing, conducting or evaluating risk management associated with food-borne hazards.

The course aims to provide technical knowledge on essential food safety risk management issues. It will emphasize and illustrate food safety management systems, which can be applied to help provide a framework for the management of risks arising from the occurrence of food safety hazards.

Each course costs US\$900.00 per participant. This covers tuition, full board and lodging, training materials, and local transport.

Further details of these courses may be viewed at SEARCA's website, www.searca.org. (NARamos)

SEARCA BIC teams up with UP student org in biology meet

The SEARCA Biotechnology Information Center (BIC) and the University of the Philippines Cell Biological Society (UP Cells) sponsored the First SIHAY Biology Congress on 23-28 January 2006 at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). With the theme "Looking at Our Own: The Coconut Biotechnology," the week-long congress was participated in by at least 32 schools from Luzon.

The annual event included highly interactive activities like the educational visit to biotech institutions and laboratory facilities, a biotech seminar-workshop, a research competition, and the Inter-High School Quiz Contest. During the last day of the congress, seminars were conducted by coconut scientists and science competitions were held among students. Seminar speakers included Dr. Evelyn Mae-Mendoza and Dr. Rita Laude of UPLB, and Dr. Erlinda Rillo of the Philippine Coconut Authority-Albay.

To better educate the participants, biotechnology workshops were held in the afternoon to reinforce their learning from the seminars. Students were allowed to experience extraction of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), ribonucleic acid (RNA) and polysaccharide. They were also given the rare opportunity to take home samples of DNAs they extracted at the laboratory.

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SEARCA organizes a regional conference on fisheries and poverty

The link between fisheries, poverty, and sustainability raises a host of important yet unanswered questions. How dependent are the poor on fisheries? How poor are the households dependent on fisheries? Can fisheries offer sustainable livelihoods for the poor? What set of policies, institutions, and technologies are preconditions for spreading and sustaining gains to the poor from fisheries? Fisheries is therefore a fruitful area for research and development toward sustainable and pro-poor technologies, production and distribution systems, institutions, and policies.

In view of this, SEARCA is planning a conference that would raise awareness among policymakers and other stakeholders throughout the region of the importance of fisheries in development and poverty reduction programs; formulate a specific research agenda indicating priorities for research on fisheries and poverty within the region; and identify policy directions and areas for regional collaboration toward reducing poverty among fisheries-dependent households.

SEARCA plans to turn the conference outputs into a high quality reference book for policymakers, development professionals, and students of rural development and natural resource management.

To ensure that the conference objectives and expected outputs would be effectively met, a brainstorming session was held at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) on 10 March 2006. Dr. Roehlano Briones, an economist who has

done extensive work on fisheries and contracted by SEARCA as consultant to develop the conference proposal, facilitated the activity. Institutions working on fisheries and which are potential partners were represented in the brainstorming, as follows: Dr. Rafael Guerrero III, Executive Director of the Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Resources Research and Development; Dr. Mahfuzuddin Ahmed, Discipline Director, Worldfish Center and Visiting Researcher, PIDS; Dr. Danilo Israel, Research Fellow, PIDS; Mr. Wilfredo Yap, Head, Research Division, SEAFDEC; and Ms. Elvira Ablaza, President and CEO, Pacific Rim Innovation and Management Exponents, Inc.

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, Dr. Arnulfo G. Garcia, and Ms. C. Nyhria G. Rogel, Director, Research and Development Department (RDD) Manager, and RDD Project Development Specialist, respectively, attended

the session in behalf of SEARCA. Worldfish Center and PCAMRD, with which SEARCA has standing Memoranda of Understanding, have expressed interest in partnering with the Center in the conduct of the planned conference, and the presentation of relevant papers.

The ideas generated have cleared the way forward. These ideas are being used to enhance the initial conference proposal. SEARCA and its partners look forward to holding the conference in the first half of 2007. (CNGRogel)

Worldfish Center officials visited SEARCA on 25 January 2006. L-R: Dr. Yolanda T. Garcia, Visiting Scientist, Worldfish Philippines; Dr. Arnulfo G. Garcia, Manager, Research and Development Department (RDD), SEARCA; Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director; Dr. Madan Mohan Dey, Regional Director, East and Southeast Asia, Worldfish; Dr. Nicolas Bailly, Officer-in-charge, Worldfish Philippines; and Ms. Nyhria Rogel, Project Development Specialist, RDD, SEARCA.



RP agri trends, directions presented by SEARCA Director at ACIAR-Philippines consultation

SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan made a presentation on the "Philippine Economy: Trends and Directions in Agriculture" at the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) – Philippines Consultation held on 17 March 2006 in Makati City.

Dr. Balisacan showed that contrary to popular claim, the Philippines' accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) could not be a compelling reason for the comparatively poor performance of the country's agriculture sector in recent years.

This is indicated by data showing that other major developing countries in Asia operated in a similar global trading environment as that of the Philippines, but had significantly higher agriculture and overall economic growth rates than the Philippines.

He also noted that the Philippines' productivity decelerated over the years compared with China, Thailand, and Indonesia. As an advocacy, he presented the result of policy experiments promoting a 5% increase in investments

and research accompanying trade liberalization, called "Pro-Governance and Market Agenda for Action". The results show that output would grow faster, price of rice would be lower, employment in agriculture would increase, and migration from rural to urban areas would be moderated. He concluded by saying that the Philippines should focus more on domestic reforms rather than foreign problems.

The high level consultation was the culmination of a series of ACIAR consultation with various stakeholders held on 14-16 March 2006 in Davao, Cebu, Los Baños, and Manila. Attending the meeting were H.E. Tony Hely, Australian Ambassador to the Philippines;



Mr. Peter Core, ACIAR Director; Dr. John Skerritt, ACIAR Deputy Director; Dr. Patricio Faylon, Executive Director of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD); Dr. Rafael Guerrero III, Executive Director of the Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Resources Research and Development (PCAMRD); Mr. Nicomedes Eleazar, Director of the Philippine Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR); senior ACIAR Staff;

and representatives of relevant government agencies, universities, and research organizations. The output of these meetings will form the indicative priorities for future ACIAR projects in the Philippines. (MLVRavago)

Leading economist lectures on national policies vis-a-vis growth

The Philippine Economic Society (PES), headed by SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, and the University of the Philippines School of Economics (UPSE) Alumni Association worked together to present the lecture entitled "Can National Policies Really Raise Economic Growth?" held on 17 January 2006 in Quezon City.

The lecture was given by Dr. William Easterly, a Professor of Economics at the New York University in the United States and Co-Director of the NYU Development Research Institute. In his lecture, Dr. Easterly said that "extremely bad policies can kill off growth and such policies can just be a symptom of bad institutions. ...institutions are the key to the search for high pay-off reforms." His points are elaborated in his book "The Elusive Quest for Growth" (MIT Press 2002).

PES is the only recognized professional association of economists in the Philippines. (JSCSugui)

SEARCA trains 133 more QUEDANCOR SRT Leaders from four provinces

SEARCA, in partnership with the Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR), wrapped up the last of 13 batches of training courses for Phase 2 of the five-year project entitled “Strengthening the Capacity of QUEDANCOR Self-Reliant Team (SRT) Leaders in Agribusiness and Credit Management”. Phase 2, also known as “Skills Enhancement and Social Awareness Course for QUEDANCOR SRT Leaders,” aims to equip SRT leaders with enterprise development skills, and to complement the formation of SRT Municipal Cooperatives being launched by QUEDANCOR to forward countryside development.

City on 27-31 March 2006. A total of 133 farmers producing onion, rice, corn, cotton, banana, asparagus, and seaweeds were trained. Since the training series was started in March 2005, SEARCA has trained 391 SRT Leaders in 13

Issues and Concerns on Farm Production and Management; and (f) Re-entry Planning. One-day field visits were undertaken to show the participants some successful enterprises under QUEDANCOR lending and guarantee programs and other business opportunities in the locality.

As a follow-through activity, the project is conducting a monitoring and evaluation to determine



Northern Mindanao participants, QUEDANCOR and SEARCA Staff and guests pose for a souvenir photo.



Visit to the farm of the Cotton Development Administration at Polomolok, South Cotabato.



Field visit to Palayamanan, CLSU, Muñoz, Nueva Ecija.



Agribusiness and credit management workshop at Mibang Hotel, Dipolog City.

QUEDANCOR, the credit arm of the Department of Agriculture, provides financing to farmers, fisherfolk, and entrepreneurs in the country.

In the first quarter of 2006, four training courses were held as follows: Cagayan de Oro City on 16-20 January 2006; Muñoz, Nueva Ecija on 13-17 February 2006; General Santos City on 6-10 March 2006; and Dipolog

regions. (Please see *The SEARCA Diary* Vol. 34 No. 2, June 2005, Vol. 34 No. 3, September 2005 and Vol. 34 No. 4, December 2005.) The topics covered were: (a) Overview of the SRT Model; (b) Strengthening SRT Leadership; (c) Management of Farm Enterprises and Efficient Agribusiness Management Systems; (d) Farm Planning and Budgeting, and Cash Flow Management; (e) Technical

how the participants fared in the implementation of their re-entry plans after the training course. The Project Management Team is composed of Dr. Maribec A. Campos, Project Manager; Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, Project Management Associate; Mr. Alvin G. Tallada, Project Management Assistant; and Ms. Minerva A. Salcedo, Clerk. (ATRobles)

SEARCA ADSS

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 were the seminars held from **January to March 2006**.

Date	Topic	Speaker
10 January	Pinoy Farmers Internet: Bridging the Digital Divide	Mr. Roger Barroga Head, Information and Communications Technology, Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice)
17 January	The Employment Impact of Trade Liberalization in the Service Sector: An Empirical Analysis of the Philippine Experience	Dr. Leonardo Lanzona Department of Economics, Ateneo de Manila University
24 January	Thermophysical Properties of Carabeef	Engr. Floirendo Flores Assistant Professor, Food Science Cluster, College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines Los Banos (UPLB)
31 January	Philippine Population Challenges and Development Goals	Dr. Mercedes B. Concepcion Professor Emeritus, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines Diliman, and Board Member, Philippine Center for Population and Development
7 February	Paradigm Shift and Curriculum Change in Forestry and Natural Resource Management in Southeast Asia	Dr. Lucrecio Rebugio Vice Chancellor for Community Affairs, and Professor, College of Forestry and Natural Resources, UPLB
14 February	Getting to Know Payment for Environmental Services: Lessons Learned in the Field	Dr. Agustin Arcenas Assistant Professor, School of Economics, UP Diliman
21 February	Remembering, Celebrating, and Believing in Agriculture	Ms. Corazon Alma de Leon Former Chair, Philippine Civil Service Commission, and Former Secretary, Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development
28 February	Benchmarking LGU Governance and Performance: Challenges, Experience, and Lessons	Dr. Joseph Capuno Professor, School of Economics, UP Diliman
7 March	Coconut Methyl Esther (CME): A Unique and Premium Biodiesel	Mr. Rafael S. Diaz Managing Director, Asian Institute of Petroleum Studies
14 March	The Anilao Experience in Conservation Financing	Mr. Ricardo Sandalo Project Manager, Sustaining CRM Initiatives in Maricaban Strait
21 March	Rice Composites: Potential Staples of Filipinos	Dr. Wilma A. Hurtada Associate Professor, Institute of Human Nutrition and Food, College of Human Ecology, UPLB
28 March	Coconut Molecular Biology in the Philippines: Application in Reverse Biotechnology	Professor Marni Cuevo Assistant Professor, Food Science Sluster, College of Agriculture, UPLB

BIOTROP, VOCTECH send staff to SEARCA thru staff exchange program

On 12-14 December 2005, Mr. Subiyantoro, Information Resource Unit Head, and Mr. Sunjaya, Laboratory Service Coordinator from the SEAMEO Regional Center for Tropical Biology (SEAMEO BIOTROP) in Indonesia visited SEARCA as part of the staff exchange agreement that the two Centers have forged. Their program included visits to some scientific and academic institutions in Los Banos, Laguna, where SEARCA is based.

Likewise, Ms. Maslinda Zainal, Business and Marketing Clerk, and Mr. Yusrey Bin Haji Gapor, Receptionist from the SEAMEO Regional Center for Vocational and Technical Education (SEAMEO VOCTECH) in Brunei Darussalam also visited SEARCA on 8-13 January 2006 as the first recipients of the VOCTECH-SEARCA staff exchange agreement.

Meanwhile, the SEAMEO Regional Training Center (SEAMEO RETRAC) in Vietnam has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SEARCA last 15 March. Through this MOU, the two Centers plan to also implement a staff exchange project similar to those conducted with BIOTROP and VOCTECH.

On the other hand, SEARCA aims to send two of its staff members to another Center, the SEAMEO Regional Language Center (SEAMEO RELC) in Singapore, before the current fiscal year ends as part of the Center's staff development program. (*EFGenosa and RBTorres*)

SEARCA signs MOU with IPGRI

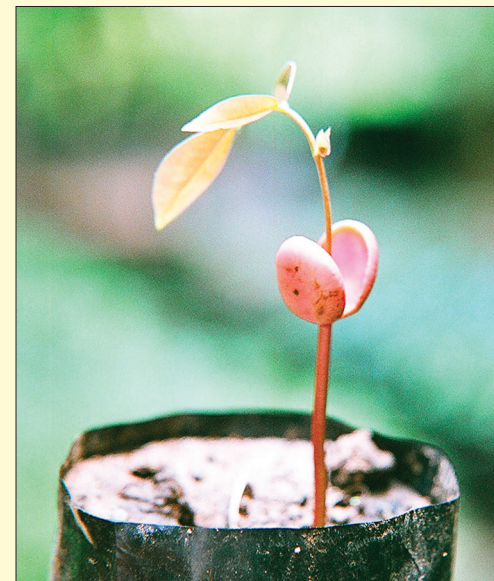
SEAMEO SEARCA recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the International Plant Genetic Research Institute (IPGRI), an international organization based in Rome with a regional office in Malaysia.

IPGRI undertakes, encourages, and supports research and other activities on the use and conservation of agricultural biodiversity, especially genetic resources, to create a more productive, resilient and sustainable harvests. It aims to promote the greater well-being of people, particularly poor people in developing countries, by helping them achieve food security, to improve their health and nutrition, to boost their incomes, and to conserve the natural resources on which they depend. SEARCA, on the other hand, has a mandate to strengthen institutional capacities in agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia through graduate education, short-term training, research and development, and knowledge exchange.

Under the MOU, both parties agree to collaborate in joint ventures in agriculture and natural resources education and training, conservation, research, and consultancy. The general areas of cooperation include the following: human resource development; exchange of staff for professional development and technical assistance; public awareness, documentation and materials development of biodiversity conservation and natural resources management good practices; exchange of scientific materials, publications, and information; policy studies on intellectual property rights for plant genetic resources and agrobiodiversity; community-based action research and case studies on biodiversity conservation and natural resource management; and international networking.

The MOU is initially for five years and may be renewed at an interval mutually agreed upon by both SEARCA and IPGRI. Signatories to the MOU were Dr. Emile Frison, IPGRI Director-General, and Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director.

An initial activity under this MOU is the implementation of the Executive Course on Natural Resource Management in a Globalizing Asia on 8-12 May 2006 in SEARCA, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines. (*Please see story on Page 6.*) (*NARamos*)



SEARCA has 3 new Fellows, 2 new Scholars

Three SEARCA scholars from the Philippines, Vietnam, and Bangladesh joined the ranks of SEARCA fellows following the completion of their graduate programs (2 MS, 1 PhD) at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

The three new SEARCA fellows are: **Ms. Lotis A. Monsales-Balala**, Filipino, MS in veterinary medicine; **Mr. Nguyen Dac Khoa**, Vietnamese, MS in biotechnology; and **Mr. Md. Nazirul Islam**, Bangladeshi, PhD in horticulture.

Ms. Monsales-Balala's thesis is titled "Isolation serologic identification and antibiotic sensitivity testing of *Salmonella* species in poultry." Her scholarship was supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). She is an Instructor at the Leyte State University in Baybay, Leyte, Philippines.

The title of Mr. Khoa's thesis is "Effect of single resistance genes and their pyramid on the diversity of *Xanthomonas oryzae* pr. *oryzae* population under field conditions as revealed by insertion sequence-polymerase chain reaction (IS-PCR)." His scholarship was also funded by DAAD. Mr. Khoa is a Researcher at the Department of Plant Protection, College of Agriculture, Cantho University, Cantho, Vietnam.

Mr. Islam's thesis is titled

"Morphometric characterization of the UPLB Makapuno coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L.) population and the influence of fruit age and endosperm type on in vitro embryo germination." His scholarship was funded by the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI). Mr. Islam serves as Senior Scientific Officer at the Horticulture Research Center of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute in Gazipur, Bangladesh.

There are now a total of 972 completed study programs (559 MS, 413 PhD) since the SEARCA Graduate Study Program started school year 1968-1969.

On the other hand, one Myanmar national and one Vietnamese were awarded SEARCA scholarships to pursue the Summer Workshop in Agricultural Economics, which is an admission prerequisite to the UPLB MS in Agricultural Economics Program. The two-month scholarships were granted to **Mr. Tran Quang Trung**, Vietnamese, and **Ms. Wah Wah Htun**, Myanmar. Their scholarships are supported by SEARCA.

As of 31 March 2006, 71 SEARCA scholars are pursuing their MS and PhD degrees in agriculture and related sciences at the following study posts: Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), Indonesia (2); Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Indonesia (6); Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia (8); Kasetsart University (KU), Thailand (5); Central Luzon State University, Philippines (1); University of the Philippines Visayas (1), and UPLB (48). The ongoing scholars include six nationals of Timor-Leste,

the newest member country of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). The Timorese scholars are pursuing MS programs at IPB (1), UGM (2), and UPLB (3) with funding from DAAD. (LLDDomingo)

SEARCA Graduate Scholarship Department Manager receives SEAMEO Service Award



Dr. Editha Calienta-Cedicol (above), Manager of the Graduate Scholarship Department of SEARCA, was among the 16 recipients of the 2006 SEAMEO Service Award. The awardees were honored in a ceremony during the 41st SEAMEO Council Conference held in Singapore on 22-23 March 2006. His Excellency Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Singapore's Minister of Education and President of the SEAMEO Council, presented the award

SEARCA Graduate / to Page 14

GRADUATE THESIS ABSTRACTS

Use of Trunk Injection Technique and Alternative Compounds in Promoting Flowering of 'Carabao' Mango (*Mangifera indica* L.).



Thanda Aye
Myanmar
University of the Philippines
Los Baños (UPLB)

A trunk injection technique is a feasible alternative of applying flower inducers in mango trees. Injecting four ml of paclobutrazol (25% SC at 1g a.i. per meter canopy) in two 4mm holes (bored at 45° angle, 2.5cm depth) to 4-5 year old 'Carabao' mango trees grown in polybags resulted to shorter shoot length and wavy leaves, indicating uptake of the compound. Injecting 2ml of Ethrel (48% SC), four months later resulted in 70% flowering, compared to the Ethrel-sprayed trees with 5%, and water-injected control with 0%. Starch and nitrogen levels in the leaf tissues of treated trees were low. Morpho-anatomical study confirmed the efficiency of trunk injection as a feasible alternative to spraying of Ethrel in mango.

Spraying of alternative bud break agents in paclobutrazol treated trees showed that nitrogen-based compounds ($\text{Ca}(\text{NO}_3)_2$, NH_4NO_3 , and NaNO_3) induced 22–50% flowering compared to 10–12.5% flowering from potassium-based compounds (K_2SO_4 , and KCl). Control trees gave no response. The positive control, KNO_3 , which exhibited 77.5% flowering, is still the best bud-break agent for mango.

Strategic Solid Waste Management Planning for Yangon City, Myanmar



Seinn Lei Aye
Myanmar
University of the Philippines
Los Baños (UPLB)

Yangon City in Myanmar needs proper environmental planning primarily on solid waste management in the face of rapid population increase and urbanization. The study focused on the analysis of the City's problems and issues of solid waste management and the ensuing formulation of a Strategic Solid Waste Management Plan. The current waste generation rate is 0.465 kg/capita/day in Yangon City with a bulk density of 250 kg/m³. Kitchen wastes and garden trimmings constitute 65 percent of the total wastes while plastic, paper and cardboard 18 percent, and the rest (17 percent) composed of glass, cans, textile, leather and rubber.

The existing solid waste management system in Yangon City is basically labor-intensive, the service area does not cover the entire City, and the final disposal sites are not sufficient for the volume of wastes. The quantity of daily wastes collected is about 671.5 tons out of the total generation of 1912 tons, or a collection rate of 35 percent. Financially, the cost incurred by Pollution Control and Cleansing Department (PCCD) in collecting and disposing of solid waste in 2003-2004 was Ks 4,932/ton (or US\$ 4.9) or about Ks 2.3/person/day (or US\$ 0.0023).

The Strategic Solid Waste Management Plan has been developed following the concepts of basic planning hierarchy and participatory planning. The strategies are envisioned for 20 years (2006-2026) covering: 1) public awareness and education, 2) waste minimization, 3) waste collection and transportation, 4) waste treatment and

disposal, and 5) cost recovery and financial sustainability.

The Action Plan, which includes the Implementation Plan, Organizational Plan and Investment Plan, is formulated for the first five years of the planning period (2006-2011). The implementation plan defines specific actions and activities to be undertaken for all the strategies identified. To fully operationalize the strategic plan, the organizational restructuring of PCCD has been proposed. The investment plan requires Ks 13,000 million (US\$ 13 million) for the implementation of the initial five years of the Action Plan.

The study recommends that the Strategic Plan should be supported with enabling policies and legislations as well as sufficient budgetary allocation for effective and successful implementation.

Morphometric Characterization of the UPLB Makapuno Coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L) Population and the Influence of Fruit Age and Endosperm Type on In Vitro Embryo Germination



Islam Md. Nazirul
University of the Philippines
Los Baños (UPLB)

Genetic diversity of embryo cultured makapuno coconut population growing at the University of the Philippines Los Baños was assessed using morphometric characters from March 2004 to October 2005. Shannon Weaver Diversity Index and χ^2 tests were used to analyze variation in both the qualitative and quantitative characters. Substantial variation with respect to crown shape, bole category, color of young fruit, petiole and inflorescence pigmentation, shape of stem base, fruit characteristics, and leaf structure was observed in the population

SEARCA Graduate / from Page 12

to Dr. Cedicol and fifteen other service awardees from different SEAMEO Centers based in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Dr. Cedicol has served SEARCA for almost 20 years now, rising from the ranks within the organization. She joined the Center in April 1986 and served the then Research and Development Unit as Administrative Assistant for two years before she transferred to the Office of the Deputy Director in charge of Academic Affairs to help handle the administration and management of the Center's Graduate Scholarship Program.

Dr. Cedicol holds a doctorate in Public Administration from the Centro Escolar University, Manila.

The other SEAMEO Service Awardees for 2006 are: Mr. Zainuddin, Office Attendant, SEAMEO BIOTROP; Mr. Kan Nyunt, Administrative Officer, SEAMEO CHAT; Ms. Maribelle A. Reyno, Educational Media Officer, SEAMEO INNOTECH; Mr. Yahaya bin Hussin, General Assistant (Gardener), SEAMEO RECSAM; Ms. Faridah bte Morsidi, Clerical Officer, SEAMEO RELC; Ms. Lam Diem Chau, Educational Management Department Head, SEAMEO RETRAC; Mr. Timbul Pardede, Public Relations/Marketing Manager, SEAMEO SEAMOLEC; Mr. Ean Lee, Publications Manager, SEAMEO SPAFA; Mrs. Vimolpatana Indradat, Administrative Publication Officer, SEAMEO TROPMED Network; Mr. Wakirin, Housekeeping Officer, SEAMEO TROPMED Indonesia; Dr. Sommai Ratanapitaksa, Course Coordinator, SEAMEO TROPMED Malaysia; Mrs. Valeriana C. Saludez, Administrative Assistant,

SEAMEO TROPMED Philippines; Mrs. Vorapan Singhsilarak, Administrative and General Affairs Officer and Secretary to the Faculty of Tropical Medicine, SEAMEO TROPMED Thailand; Mr. Alexander Chiu, Account Supervisor/Procurement Officer, SEAMEO VOCTECH; and Mr. Siriwat Sriphadung, Driver, SEAMEO Secretariat. (ECCedicol)

Asia's poultry / from Page 4

about US\$5 million to fund its preparedness and response plans.

To help needy countries, the Asian Development Bank announced it would allocate US\$58 million for grant projects against the bird flu threat in Asia and the Pacific. Some of these grants will be in cooperation with other international agencies like WHO and FAO. The World Bank, in turn, is finalizing plans to provide up to US\$500 million to countries to "supplement government resources, strengthen veterinary systems, and put in place culling and vaccine programs for animals." (VTMLedesma)

Thesis abstracts / from Page 13

occurrence of male and female phases in one palm allows self-pollination, which favors higher yield of makapuno. The principal component analysis revealed that fruit, nut and husk weight accounted for 99% of the observed variation. Twelve morphological variables, selected on the basis of principal component analysis, grouped the population into 6 clusters. Fruit and nut weights were found to be important characters in all clusters. Common characters of palm belonging to cluster I are lower weights of fruit, nut and husk with shorter fruit equatorial diameter and shorter internodes. Palms belonging to cluster II have higher weight of nut and longer equatorial

diameter. Palms of cluster III are characterized by cylindrical stem and lower number of green leaves. Cluster IV is characterized by heavy fruit and nut weight with elongated shape of nut. Higher number of green leaves is the common character of palms of cluster V. Girth, at bole regions and longer petiole length of leaves are the common characters of palms belonging to cluster VI.

Three types of makapuno endosperm i.e., A, B and C type were the three distinct developmental stages of makapuno endosperm at about 9th, 10th, and 11th month of fruit development. Fruit of 9th month was observed to be predominantly of the A type, 10th month of the B type and the 11th month of the C type. The endosperm types seemed to be the indicator of the developmental state of the embryo. Percent germination and subsequent in vitro seedling growth of embryos of different types of endosperm and age groups were not statistically different. The survival of seedlings obtained from A, B and C types of makapuno was 33 %. The embryos of 9, 10 or 11 months old nuts, having A, B and C type respectively, were virtually equally capable of in vitro germination.

Experts' book / from Page 5

Isabelita Pabuayon and Virginia Cardenas, UPLB; Fr. Francis Lucas, ASEAN NGO Coalition; and Lucila Rabuco, University of the Philippines Manila.

Eighty representatives from government agencies, academe, provincial and municipal agriculturists, among others, participated in the workshop, which brought out a vibrant exchange of ideas. The suggestions and comments of the discussants and participants are expected to enrich the discussion of issues in the book.

An abridged version of the book will be presented to the public in a national conference in July 2006. (MLVRavago)

Biodiversity research project gets six-month extension

SEARCA's Biodiversity Research Programme (BRP) was granted a second six-month extension, from 01 January – 30 June 2006, by the Netherlands' Ministry for Development Cooperation (DGIS) to complete and formally close programme activities.

A major activity of the programme for the extension period is the conduct of an impact assessment to examine the project's outputs at the level of "performance," made visible through products, programs, and services. Dr. Leonardo A. Lanzona, Jr., Professor at the Ateneo de Manila University, and Dr. Levita A. Duhaylungsod, Professor at the De La Salle University and formerly of the University of the Philippines Los Baños, have been commissioned to conduct the activity from March to May 2006.

The BRP is a five-year (2000-2005) collaborative and participatory research project implemented by Filipino and Dutch researchers in Mt. Malindang, Misamis Occidental, southern Philippines. In the last five years, the BRP has completed 18 research projects and conducted a number of capacity building activities for Mindanao researchers and other stakeholders.

The BRP aimed to contribute to the conservation, management and sustainable use of biological resources, to develop a comprehensive approach to integrating support for collaborative research and support for building and strengthening national capacity for biodiversity research, and to enhance North-South collaborative research efforts in biodiversity research for development. (CSFule)

Forum discusses local osmosis, consequences of corruption

Consequences that await corrupt societies were discussed at a forum entitled "Corruption Across Regions: Some Consequences of Local Osmosis" held last 28 February at the Global Distance Learning Center of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) in Makati City. The forum was linked via live video conferencing with attendees from the Sri Lanka Development Learning Center and Vietnam Development Information Center.

SEARCA Director Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, who is also President of the Philippine Economic Society (PES), in his Opening Remarks, stressed that corruption increases the cost of doing business in a society and hampers economic growth.

Featured speaker Dr. Raaj Kumar Sah (shown in photo), Professor of the Harris School of Public Policy Studies at the

University of Chicago in the United States, presented the ideological and conceptual bases of corruption across countries and across regions within the same country. He also provided a dynamic analysis of corruption and its political and economic consequences. According to Dr. Sah, corruption has become

almost endemic to human institutions and therefore impossible to eradicate. While programs that aim to stamp out corrupt practices will take a long time to be effective, it is still imperative that they be implemented rapidly in order

to facilitate development.

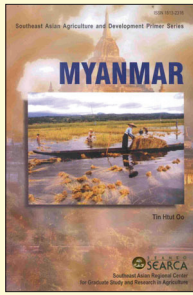
The forum was sponsored by the AIM Policy Center in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF), the AIM – World Bank Development Resource Center (AIM-WB DRC), and PES. (JSCSugui and AJTaragon)



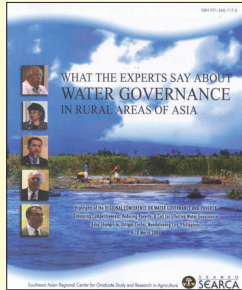
SEARCA BIC / from Page 6

The congress aimed to disseminate information regarding advances in science and technology as well as develop the academic potentials of today's youth in the field of modern biology and biotechnology. SEARCA BIC recognizes SIHAY 2006 as one of the venues for objective discussions on biotechnology. By supporting SIHAY 2006, it fulfills its objective of sharing science-based information on biotechnology among key stakeholders. (DCABaracol)

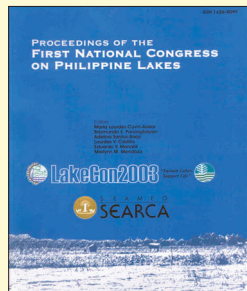
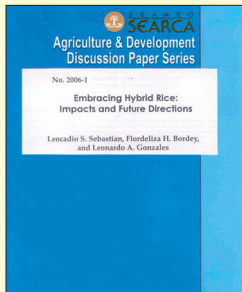
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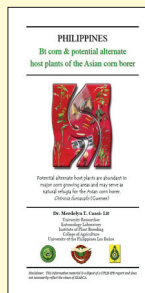
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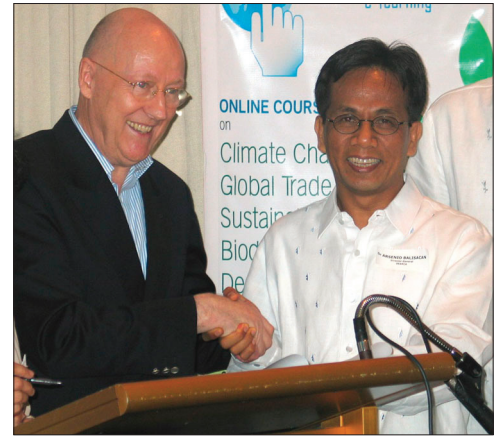
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SNAPSHOTS

SEARCA-Earth Council MOU

On 28 February 2006, SEARCA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Earth Council e-Learning. Photo shows Mr. Reto Braun (left), Chair of Earth Council's Board of Directors, and Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, shaking hands during the signing ceremony. Under the partnership, SEARCA and Earth Council will develop a series of courses on agriculture and rural development, deliverable via the Internet.



UPLB Vice Chancellors at SEARCA



SEARCA received last 11 January two new officials from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), where the Center has been based since its establishment in 1966. Flanking Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (center), SEARCA Director, are Dr. Lucrecio Rebugio and Dr. Rita Laude, who were briefed on the Center's activities and priority areas. Others in photo are (from left) Dr. Lorna C. Malicsi, Knowledge Management Unit Head; Dr. Arnulfo G. Garcia, Research and Development Department Manager; and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., Deputy Director-Administration. The officials discussed areas of further collaboration to strengthen graduate education on agricultural competitiveness and rural development in Southeast Asia.

Japanese scientists re-visit SEARCA



On 22 December 2005, SEARCA welcomed back two Japanese scientists who used to work with the Center. Dr. Isao Kusakabe and Dr. Rihio Takahashi, both Professors Emeritus at the University of Tsukuba in Japan, were received by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA's Deputy Director for Administration. Japan had been one of SEARCA's major partners in past projects and programs.