

# The SEARCA DIARY



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FOR GRADUATE STUDY AND RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURE

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## HATCHING UP A PLAN

Our plans and strategies reaffirm our resolve to be the lead enabler in the science and practice of agriculture and rural development in Southeast Asia and our commitment to building the capacities of Southeast Asian institutions working toward agricultural and rural development.

## SEAMEO Council approves SEARCA's new five-year plan

The education ministers of 11 Southeast Asian countries composing the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) approved the Ninth Five-Year Plan (FYP) of SEARCA during the 44<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO Council Conference held in Phuket, Thailand on 5-8 April 2009.

At the same occasion, the Government of the Philippines (GOP), represented by H.E. Dr. Jesli A. Lapus, Secretary of Education, renewed its commitment to SEARCA by signing the Memorandum of Agreement on the Funding Plan of SEARCA (FY 2009/2010 to FY 2013/2014) between SEAMEO and GOP. SEAMEO was represented by Dato Dr. Ahamad bin Sipon, Director of the SEAMEO Secretariat.

The Ninth FYP of SEARCA sets out the Center's vision, mission, and goals; and outlines the major strategies that the Center will undertake from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2014. It reaffirms SEARCA's resolve to be the lead enabler in the science and practice of agriculture and rural development in Southeast Asia and its commitment to building the capacities of Southeast Asian institutions working toward agricultural and rural development. The Center's main vehicles for carrying its vision and mission are its core programs on Graduate

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Scholarship, Research and Development, and Knowledge Management, which are focused on natural resource management and agricultural competitiveness.

The Graduate Scholarship Program will continue to develop a strong cadre of agriculture professionals in the region through more MS and PhD scholarships and grants. The Research and Development Program will conduct and support cutting-edge research that demonstrates the important link between rational natural resource management and agricultural competitiveness and poverty reduction and food security. The Center will further lead initiatives in agricultural and rural development toward articulating policy directions and providing inputs to policy and regulatory framework development. Further, the Knowledge Management Program will promote a learning culture, knowledge use, and knowledge creation among decision-makers, leaders, scholars, researchers, and key actors in agriculture and rural development through learning forums, training, seminars, virtual knowledge centers, a semi-annual journal, and other publications and electronic materials to be made available online.

The Ninth FYP directs SEARCA to actively work for synergy among its core programs by developing highly relevant flagship and special projects that would further enhance the Center's impact on creating an enabling environment for sustained rural poverty reduction and food security in Southeast Asia.

Building on its accomplishments toward organizational credibility and viability under its Eighth FYP, SEARCA will adopt a management strategy that features more intensive project development; regionalized operations; stronger strategic partnerships, alliances, networks, and linkages; long-term financial viability; and operational efficiency and productivity.

The 44<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO Council Conference had 172 participants from the 11 SEAMEO member

countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam), 4 of its associate member countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Spain), 1 affiliate member (International Council for Open and Distance Education, Norway), and observers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat, ASEAN University Network, SIL International, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Bangkok/Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, University of Tsukuba, Japan, The World Bank, Thailand's Ministry of Education and Commission on Higher Education, and SEAMEO regional centers. SEARCA was represented by Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, Director, and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., Deputy Director for Administration.

The conference was keynoted by H.E. Mr. Korbsak Sabhavas, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand. H.E. Mr. Jurin Laksanawisit, Minister of Education of Thailand, was elected as the new SEAMEO Council President and Chair of the Conference. H.E. Dr. Jesli A. Lapus of the Philippines was elected SEAMEO Council Vice President and the Conference's Vice Chair.

Aside from SEARCA's Ninth FYP, The SEAMEO Council also approved the following: (1) Proposal on the Seventh SEAMEO Integrated Operational Plan (FY 2009/2010-FY 2011/2012); (2) Proposal on the Fourth FYP of the SEAMEO Regional Center for Vocational and Technical Education (VOCTECH); (3) Proposed Collaborative Plans of Reaching the Unreached: Meeting of Southeast Asian Countries to Achieve the Education for All Goals Together by 2015; (4) Financial audit report for FY 2007/2008; and (5) SEAMEO consolidated three-year budget for FY 2009/2010-FY 2011/2012 and SEAMEO consolidated personnel strength budget for FY 2009/2010.

Moreover, the SEAMEO Council took various actions on the following agenda items:

- Follow up actions on the resolutions of the 43rd SEAMEO Council Conference
- Status and utilization of associate membership contributions to the SEAMEO Secretariat
- Status and utilization of Thailand's additional contribution to the SEAMEO Secretariat
- Status of the SEAMEO Educational Development Fund
- Investments of funds at the SEAMEO Secretariat for FY 2007/2008
- Assistance of SEAMEO associate members, donors, and partner institutions to SEAMEO in FY 2007/2008

- Progress report on SEAMEO-UN HABITAT Cooperation on Promoting Human Values-based Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Education in Southeast Asia (Project HVWSHE)
- Report on LEARNTECH Initiative II of the SEAMEO Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH)
- Report on the Fourth Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research
- Report on the First Regular Meeting between SEAMEO and UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
- SEAMEO Integrated Annual Report for FY 2007/2008
- Report and Plans of the SEAMEO-World Bank Project on the Use of the Mother Tongue as Bridge Language of Instruction in Southeast Asian Countries
- Report on "Reaching the Unreached: Meeting of Southeast Asian Countries to Achieve the Education for All Goals Together by 2015" and the Proposed Collaborative Plans
- Progress report on "A Structured Framework for Regional Integration in Higher Education in Southeast Asia: The Road towards a Common Space"
- Report on the Southeast Asian Education Network (SEA EduNet)
- Report on Challenges on Tropical Diseases with a Special Focus on School Health
- Report on the 2008 ICT Conference and Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Progress report on the SEAMEO Capacity-building Workshop 2008: Capacity-building of SEAMEO Training Units through Partnerships
- Progress report on SEAMEO Community Involvement Project
- Progress report on the Proposal for Strengthening and Upgrading Review and Evaluation of SEAMEO Programmes and Projects: Preliminary Evaluation of SEAMEO units
- Proposed Collaborative Plans between SEAMEO and UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office
- Spanish Foreign Programmes
- Report on the Quality and Equity in Education (QEE) Congress and Exhibition

The Conference included the conduct of a Policy Forum themed *Professional Development for Teachers*. It featured various presentations on the main theme and the sub-themes on (1) Improvement of Educational Quality and Standard; (2) Development of Teaching and Learning Process for the Disadvantaged; (3) Management of Studying and Teaching Process in Cultural Diversity; (4) Quality Assurance in Education; and (5) Establishment of Quality framework. The

## THE SEARCA DIARY

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respective presenters were experts from Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

Furthermore, the Fourth ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting was convened in conjunction with the 44th SEAMEO Council Conference. (LLTallafer)

H.E. Dr. Jesli A. Lopus (middle), Secretary of Education of the Philippines, and Dato Dr. Ahmad bin Sipon (left), Director of the SEAMEO Secretariat, sign the Memorandum of Agreement on the Funding Plan of SEARCA (FY 2009/2010 to FY 2013/2014) on 7 April 2009 during the 44th SEAMEO Council Conference in Phuket, Thailand. Signing also as the agreement's witnesses are H. E. Mr. Jurin Laksanawisit (not in photo), President of the SEAMEO Council, and Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (right), SEARCA Director.



## 20 SEARCA scholars complete graduate programs



Dr. Rahmawaty, an Indonesian SEARCA scholar, receives her diploma from Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, UPLB Chancellor, during the graduation rites on 25 April 2009. Dr. Rahmawaty graduated as one of the top five students (based on the General Weighted Average) from the Graduate School.

Twenty SEARCA scholars have completed their graduate programs (12 MS, 8 PhD) in school year 2008/2009. They are composed of one Cambodian, three Indonesians, five Laotians, one Malaysian, one Myanmar, four Filipinos, three Thais, and two Vietnamese.

Of the new SEARCA alumni, 17 obtained their graduate degrees from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB); one from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM); one from Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Indonesia; and one from Kasetsart University (KU), Thailand. They are:

### From Cambodia:

- Mr. Nov Vatthanak, Master of Public Affairs in Local Governance and Development, "Administrative Simplification as a Route to Local Administrative Reform: The Case of the One Stop Shop Window Service (OSWS) in Battambang District, Battambang Province, Cambodia," UPLB;

[20 SEARCA scholars/ to page 14](#)

## Climate change poses development challenges in Southeast Asia



Participants of the regional workshop on climate change and rural poverty in Southeast Asia held on 26-27 May 2009 at SEARCA, Los Baños, Laguna.

Climate change is already affecting Southeast Asia. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports increasing trend in temperature, decreasing trend in rainfall, and rising sea levels. The frequency and magnitude of floods and droughts have also increased in recent decades. The region is very vulnerable to climate change due to its high concentration of population and economic activity in coastal areas and heavy reliance on agriculture for providing livelihoods.

Climate change, if not addressed properly, could significantly delay the efforts of ending hunger and poverty. It threatens marginal farmers especially

those in the upland environments and communities in coastal areas. In order to help define strategies to this development challenge confronting the region, SEARCA conducted a regional workshop entitled "Addressing Climate Change and Rural Poverty in Southeast Asia: The Potential Role of Weather-based Risk Management Scheme as an Adaptation Strategy" held on 26-27 May 2009 at SEARCA.

The activity brought together a multi-stakeholder group from Institut Pertanian Bogor in Indonesia and the following from the Philippines: University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), Micro Insurance Associates Agency Philippines, and the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC). The workshop targeted to produce a regional collaborative research proposal on climate risk management and a monograph on the state of the art of climate-related risks assessment in rainfed rice and corn production.

In his opening remarks (read by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Deputy Director for Administration), Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, emphasized

[Climate change poses/ to page 15](#)

## Project on agricultural productivity conducts final workshop



Workshop participants discuss the specific knowledge products that could be generated from the project.

The Productivity Growth in Philippine Agriculture (PGPA) project held its Final Workshop on 2-3 June 2009 at SEARCA, Los Baños, Laguna. The two-day final workshop served as a venue for the study teams to present their results and findings, and to discuss the final steps of the project, including a Dissemination Workshop in September and the production of publications.

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, said in the opening remarks that the project is intended for “the policy debate concerning the sources of productivity in the Philippines and to inform policy choices in relation to productivity growth. The interest of the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) is identifying those [policy] instruments that one would need to spur [productivity] growth.”

He urged the study teams to “recall the questions that we ask: what have been the sources of growth in the respective cross-cutting and commodity sectors, what explains this growth, and what policy levers are needed in the future to stimulate or enhance growth in the sector?”

Dr. Roehlano M. Briones, PGPA Project Manager and workshop chair, presented the low to negative trends of productivity growth in the Philippines and noted that the “the agenda of the agricultural sector is to push this agricultural growth back to more robust levels.”

Now on its final year, the PGPA project had been awarding research grants to agricultural productivity experts since November of 2007.

Experts from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, University of St. La Salle, Asia Pacific Policy Center, Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, Philippine Institute for Development Studies, and the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) are among those that have received grants for their respective research studies.

Launched in March 2007, the PGPA project is collaboration among SEARCA, DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research and PhilRice. It aims to determine the nature, sources and causes of agricultural productivity, and to identify policy levers that can increase the productivity growth for the sector. Project outputs include research reports, monographs, journal articles, and a book on the country’s agricultural productivity. The project will end in February 2010. (PMVCasal)



Dr. Agnes C. Rola, Dean, College of Public Affairs, UPLB, comments on the findings presented by one of the study leaders.

## 2 SEARCA graduate alumni get seed fund for re-entry projects



Dr. Marissa Parao



Mr. Keopheth Phoumphon

Two SEARCA graduate alumni recently got small grants as seed money for their re-entry projects.

Dr. Marissa Parao, a Filipino SEARCA graduate fellow and faculty member of the College of Forestry, Benguet State University (BSU-CF), Philippines was granted the amount of PhP 150,000.00 for her re-entry project titled, “Ecological Impact Evaluation of a Bioremediation Study in Antamok Mine Waste Dump, Philippines.” On the other hand, Mr. Keopheth Phoumphon, a Laotian SEARCA fellow and lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering, National University of Laos

(NUOL), in Lao People’s Democratic Republic was granted US\$ 4,959.50 for his re-entry project titled, “Development of a Database of Land Use Change in Houy-zon, Namhoun and Nasouang Watershed in Nasaythong District, Vientiane, Lao PDR.” Dr. Parao’s institution will provide counterpart logistical support. Mr. Keopeth’s home institution will provide a counterpart funding of US\$2,530.00.

Dr. Parao finished her PhD in Forestry in 2008, while Mr. Keopeth finished his MS in Land and Water Resources Engineering in 2009, both at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and SEARCA funded Dr. Parao’s PhD scholarship, while SEARCA funded the MS scholarship of Mr. Keopeth.

The SEARCA Re-entry Program is one strategy employed by SEARCA to ensure immediate impact of SEARCA’s capacity building program as well as to widen the reach of the Center in

contributing to agriculture and rural development in the region. Through this Program, graduating scholars or newly graduated scholars may submit a re-entry plan/proposal. Such plan/proposal must include project activities that will be undertaken by the newly graduated fellow and implemented together with his/her institution or other interested institutions in the home country. This may serve as starting point for a national or regional research study on issues addressing a specific concern that will utilize the expertise of the fellow or other SEARCA fellows in the country or the region. This re-entry plan may also serve as a subject of follow-up proposal for funding by interested donors. This shall be monitored by SEARCA, through its core departments. The Re-entry Program provides financial support of up to a maximum of US Dollars Five Thousand (US\$5,000) to selected proposals. Endorsement and counterpart funding from his/her institutions is a requirement. (ECCedicol)

## 3 travel grants awarded

The SEARCA Travel Grants Program helped a Malaysian and two Filipinos to present their scientific papers in three separate conferences held in Germany, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom between March and May 2009.

Mr. Muhammad Afdal, a Malaysian graduate student at the Department of Animal Science, Universiti Putra Malaysia, presented his paper titled "Effect of Processing of Palm Oil Petiole on Palatability in Bali Cows (*Bos sondaecus*)" at the Annual Meeting of the British Society of Animal Science (BSAS) held in Southport, United Kingdom on 30 March - 1 April 2009.

Dr. Damasa M. Macandog, Associate Professor, Institute of Biological Sciences, University of the Philippines Los Baños, presented two papers titled "Understanding and Conserving Indigenous

Knowledge on Sustainable Natural Resource Management in the Cordilleras Region of the Philippines" and "Application of Multi-Agent Systems (MAS) Modeling and Role Playing Game in the Sustainable Management of Degraded Upland Areas in the Tropics" at the Seventh International Science Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change held in Bonn, Germany on 26-30 April 2009.

Dr. Emma M. Sabado, faculty member, Department of Plant Science, College of Agriculture, Mindanao State University, Philippines, presented her paper titled "Assessing the Diversity of Selected Arthropods in Cabbage-Growing Areas in Mt. Malindang, Misamis Oriental, Philippines" at the Annual Scientific Conference of the Pest Management Council of the Philippines 2009 held in Baguio City, Philippines on 5-8 May 2009.

The SEARCA Travel Grant aims to provide opportunities to Southeast Asian nationals with limited funds to participate and present papers in scientific conferences or fora, locally or internationally in order to discuss with other scientists and scholars developments in their respective disciplines.

Since the program was started in 2005, 33 Southeast Asian researchers have received support from SEARCA. It is one of the strategies SEARCA undertakes to help build the capacity of academic and research institutions in Southeast Asia, especially those in agricultural and rural development. More information on this program is available at [www.searca.org/web/research/travelgrants/](http://www.searca.org/web/research/travelgrants/). (RCDikitanan)

## SEARCA conducts SFRT seminars

SEARCA conducted seminars on research projects done in Vietnam and Lao PDR under the Seed Fund for Research and Training (SFRT) Program.

### SFRT SEMINAR IN VIETNAM

In collaboration with the University of Economics (UEH) of Ho Chi Minh City, SEARCA organized a presentation titled "Empirical Studies for Agriculture in Vietnam from SFRT Grants in the Period 2006-2008" held at the UEH's Faculty of Economics on 14 April 2009.

This is the second such presentation held in Vietnam. (The first was held in Angiang University in May 2007 for Grants awarded in 2005.) Five completed studies were presented, as follows:

1. Competitive Analysis for Major Agricultural Products in Mekong Delta: The Case of Tien Giang Province by Dr. Nguyen Trong Hoai, Dean, presented by Mr. Luong Vinh Quoc Duy, Lecturer, Faculty of Development Economics UEH
2. Value Chain Analysis of Shrimp Products in Mekong Delta, Vietnam by Dr. Vo Thi Thanh Loc, Cantho University
3. Propagation and Growing Native Plant Species *Erythralum scandens* BL (Bo khai) and *Phyllanthus elegans* L (Rau ngot rung) for Food and Income Generation by Hill Tribe in the Northern Mountainous Regions of Vietnam by Dr. Dang Van Minh,

Dean, Post Graduate Faculty, Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry

4. Soil Fertility Degradation Classification in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam by Dr. Vo Quang Minh, GIS & RS Lab, Department of Soil Science & Land Management, College of Agricultural & Applied Biology, Cantho University
5. Cultivation of Mud Snail (*Certhidea obtuse*) and Blood Cockle (*Anadara granosa*) Into Mangrove System in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam by Dr. Ngo Thi Thu Thao, Department of Coastal Aquaculture, College of Aquaculture & Fisheries, Cantho University

Most of the members of the audience were Vietnamese graduate students and faculty of UEH.

### SFRT SEMINAR IN LAO PDR

In Lao PDR, SEARCA co-organized the SFRT seminar with the National University of Laos (NUOL) on 25 June 2009. The following studies and their research findings were presented:

1. Impact of Theun-Hinboun Hydropower Electricity on Agricultural Production and Natural Resource Management: Case on Four Villages Downstream of NumTeun 1 Hydropower, Hinboun district, Khammoun Province by Dr. Silinthone Sacklokham, Associate Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, NUOL

2. Impact of Eucalyptus Cultivation on Livelihood and Biodiversity Conservation in Khammouan Province by Dr. Sitha Khemmarath, Associate Professor and Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, NUOL

Held at NUOL's main campus, the seminar was attended by university faculty and researchers from the Research Office of NUOL; Research Division of the Faculties of Forestry, Environmental Science, and Social Sciences; National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI); and Policy Research Center of the Ministry of Agriculture.

These country SFRT seminars are aimed at informing the public on research and development projects undertaken in the country and the results of these efforts. The event was also deemed to be a venue to encourage more submissions to the SFRT Program so that better and more innovative projects can be funded.

The SFRT was started by SEARCA in 2007 to assist Southeast Asian researchers with limited start-up funds to translate their promising research and training into scientific outputs that could be applied to promote agricultural and rural development. It is envisaged to enhance the chances of chosen research and training proposals of securing long-term support from donor agencies. (CNGRogel)

## 6<sup>th</sup> Policy Roundtable zeroes in on agribusiness for development



Participants of the Sixth Policy Roundtable held in Halong, Vietnam on 16-17 April 2009.

Technological advances, urbanization, trade liberalization, and an expanded role of the private sector, among many, have led to changes in agricultural and food systems in developing countries and economies-in-transition. Agribusiness and agro-industry are playing an increasingly important role in the socio-economic development of these countries. The importance of the supply chain is increasingly being recognized, with specialized procurement channels and new standards for product quality and safety. All these highlight the need for an enabling policy environment, value chain programs, and industry requirements and standards.

Thus, on 16-17 April 2009, SEARCA, the Korea FAO Association, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) of Vietnam jointly organized the Sixth Policy Roundtable on Building Capacities for Agricultural Competitiveness of Transition Countries in Southeast Asia in Halong, Vietnam. It was themed "Agribusiness: Challenges and Opportunities for Growth Towards Food Security and Poverty Reduction in Transition Southeast Asia."

The roundtable aimed to: (1) have a common understanding of the state of agribusiness development in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV), including challenges and opportunities for growth; (2) share and learn from experiences on agribusiness development from more developed economies; (3) understand the impacts of the current global economic crisis on agribusiness in transition economies; (4) appreciate the requisites for an enabling environment for agribusiness, particularly in the light of the economic crisis; (5) develop a concrete plan of implementation for priority capacity-building programs on agribusiness development, including a timetable and modality for mobilizing resources for the activity; and (6) explore possible

partnerships between and among SEARCA, CLMV governments, and organizations from East Asian countries to actively collaborate in the capacity-building of these transition countries.

Dr. Rolando T. Dy, Executive Director of the Center for Food and Agribusiness and Dean, School of Management, University of Asia and the Pacific, Philippines, presented the plenary paper on the theme. He discussed global and regional trends and outlooks influencing agribusiness in transition Southeast Asia; agribusiness and rural development concepts and perspectives; requisites and stumbling blocks of an enabling environment for agricultural competitiveness; agribusiness models in Southeast Asia; a framework for transition economies; and his recommended areas for research and capacity building in this area.

The 23 participants raised questions on safety nets for farmers for prices of raw materials; solving pollution from animal husbandry; determination of shares in pricing and profit in joint ventures; and lessons and prospects on cooperativism. Dr. Dy and the participants also elaborated further on some lessons and experiences with the various agribusiness models.

The country presentations of Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam provided background information on agriculture; constraints and challenges to agricultural competitiveness; and existing policies, plans and strategies in the respective countries. They also included suggested areas of cooperation in the Sub-region with SEARCA and FAO Korea Association, including human resource development needs.

Among the recommendations from the presentations and ensuing discussions was capacity development for (a) macro-

level agricultural competitiveness through awareness forums and study tours for policy makers highlighting lessons from successes of neighboring countries; (b) policy advisers on supply chain analysis; and (c) micro-level competitiveness focusing on hands-on training on organizing specific bottleneck and priority segments in the supply chain common to the CLMV countries, e.g., cold chain storage; and (d) provision of an enabling environment for enhancing the connections between small and medium rural enterprises and large urban-based enterprises.

A Policy Roundtable Statement was crafted as an output of the activity that could be seen as a collective voice on emerging strategic concerns. It reads, in part, "Agriculture constitutes a substantive portion of gross domestic products of these countries but they continue to suffer from low productivity and limited agribusiness, beset by poor transportation and communication infrastructure; poor market access; limited human capacities; and legal and regulatory environments not favorable to investment in agribusiness.

"Enabling agricultural competitiveness in these transition economies calls for good macro fundamentals, infrastructure, and governance and institutions. Various agribusiness models have proven successful in Southeast Asia, and what is needed is a sound agribusiness framework grounded on the basics of supply chains."

It relayed the need for a positive program on capacity building on topics contained in the aforementioned recommendations. It is hoped that the statement could help inform decisions of governments on policy issues. (CNGRogel)

# LEAPing toward excellence in higher education administration

Fourteen higher education administrators from Southeast Asia participated in a three-day forum titled “Leadership Excellence for Academe Program in Southeast Asia (LEAP SEA)” organized by SEARCA on 20-22 May 2009.

The forum aimed to provide a venue for sharing significant new knowledge of leadership and management of higher education, especially in agriculture. LEAP SEA is a reformulation of the “Advanced Higher Education Administrator Development (AHEAD) Course”, implemented by SEARCA from 1993 to 2003, which had 937 training alumni.

Dr. Felix Librero, forum coordinator and professor at the UP Open University, said that there is a need to adopt appropriate approaches to knowledge sharing such as the use of e-platforms. However, he emphasized that experience-based learning through the construction of case studies of unique problems and solutions experienced by executives is equally important. For the latter, face-to-face meetings are needed; otherwise, experiences will remain with the individuals.

The LEAP SEA executive forum had five discussion themes: 1) environment of higher education in agriculture, 2) contextualizing higher education in agriculture in the new millennium, 3) strategic management for higher education institutions in agriculture and forestry, 4) learning organizations and total quality management: focus on higher education institutions in agriculture and forestry, and 5) enhancing and sustaining standards and assessment in higher education in agriculture and forestry.

Resource persons were the following: Dr. Supachai Yavaprabhas, Director, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (RIHED) based in Bangkok,

Thailand; Prof. Mario Antonio G. Lopez and Dr. Federico M. Macaranas, both professors of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) based in Makati City, Philippines; Prof. Jose S. Navarro, Director, Continuing Management Education Program, University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) based in Pasig City, Philippines; Prof. Mariano J. Dinglasan, Jr., Professorial Lecturer, UA&P; and Dr. Lee S. Yudin, Dean, College of Natural and Applied Sciences, University of Guam, and President, Asian Association of Agriculture Colleges and Universities (AAACU).

According to Dr. Supachai, change and diversity sum up today’s higher education administration in Southeast Asia. Thirty years ago, higher education was only for the elite and gave priority to the male members of the population. Over the years, the massification of higher education has resulted to an increase in the number of institutions offering higher education not only in SEA but everywhere. With the increasing number of institutions comes the concern for the quality of higher education provided.

“Changes have happened very rapidly. The academe has to adapt – this may mean curriculum change at least every five years or a fusion program/mix of everything may also prove useful,” said Dr. Supachai. He added that in the years to come, the sets of skills needed by the society could change. Thus, apart from examining students’ learning, there is also a need to continuously retrain educators/faculty to keep academic programs relevant.

Two significant observations surfaced during the workshop facilitated by Prof. Lopez. These are: 1) people do not seem to want to take up agriculture, and 2) agriculture graduates do not end up with jobs related to their field (job mismatch). He challenged the participants this: “How should higher education institutions reinvent agriculture? Where is the passion in agriculture? Agriculture

has moved on over time but our image of it is still that of a man and a carabao.”

All resource persons agreed that education evolves and different ways of managing higher education arise over time. They enumerated some directions that higher education institutions should look into including:

- *Financial resource generation:* Instead of relying on old sources of funds, strategists must generate new funds from the private sector alongside public sector funding.
- *Faculty development, retooling or retraining:* This is to ensure that the faculty impart relevant knowledge and could address the society’s contemporary needs.
- *Organizational restructuring:* Many education models have been applied in different parts of the world; it is the administrators’ role to review what will work best in their respective higher education institutions.
- *Program revision:* Both content and delivery may need to be changed in order to be more effective.

Through LEAP SEA, SEARCA would like that new experiences on and knowledge of higher education administration be continuously shared through systematically organized scholarly accounts published as a book of cases for general circulation. During the learning event, participants have agreed on a timetable to carry out and write their action case studies detailing their respective practices and reflections on academic leadership in the context of Southeast Asian realities and challenges. Once the case study manuscript is finished, it will be circulated for collective peer reviewing. The peer-reviewed cases will be published into a book or monograph on academic leadership.

SEARCA’s partners in this first offering of LEAP SEA were AIM, UA&P, and SEAMEO RIHED. (RMMDedicatoria)



Prof. Mario Antonio G. Lopez of the Asian Institute of Management facilitates the discussion on strategic positioning of HEIs in SEA countries.

# Thesis Abstracts

## A GIS-BASED FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR GIBBON PROTECTED AREA IN TRUNG KHANH NATURE RESERVE, CAO BANG PROVINCE, VIETNAM



Tran Quoc Hung  
Vietnamese  
PhD in Forest Resources  
Management  
University of the Philippines  
Los Baños

This study was conducted to develop a GIS-based forest resource management system for the Gibbon Protected Area in Trung Khanh District, Cao Bang Province, Vietnam. The study gathered primary vegetation data from 34 sample plots in the Cao Vit Gibbon Protected Area. Primary socio-economic data are also gathered through interviews with 74 households of the nearby villages. SPSS Regression is used to analyze the correlation between some socio-economic factors and Gibbon habitat. GAME model is used to develop a database system of forest resource management in the study area using ArcView software.

Analysis shows that there is a total of 131 trees, shrub, vine and herb species from 59 families found in the research area. Floristic composition analysis shows that the research area is dominated by some species such as *Cephalomappa sinensis*, *Dendrocnide urentissima*, *Radermachera sinica*, *Acer tonkinensis* Lecomte, and *Excentrodendron hsienmu*.

The study shows that local people rely on agricultural production, animal husbandry, forest products, gardening, fishery and wage labor for their income. Forest products rank third as main source of income in the nearby villages. However, firewood collection, timber cutting and livestock grazing pose a big threat to the Cao Vit Gibbon Protected Area. This is also reflected and affirmed through the correlation analysis. The study site has a generally steep topography with an elevation range of 500 – 1000masl and interrupted by lowland depressions. The analysis shows that human activities are mostly carried out in areas near the villages, at lower altitude, and less steep slope where accessibility is much easier.

Databases for forest resource management system are created through the GAME Model. The area and location of the suitable gibbon habitat are identified by GPA - FRMS. The study confirms that limited habitat and degraded vegetation, especially food plant species for gibbon, are reasons for larger number of Cao Vit gibbon in group (5–7 individuals). The potential Gibbon habitat is also assessed by using the GPA - FRMS, and own assumptions in lieu

of very few studies on gibbons. The study is really useful not only for forest resources management in the Gibbon Protected Area but also for other protected areas in Vietnam.

## PHYSIOLOGICAL, MORPHOLOGICAL AND AGRONOMIC RESPONSES OF HYBRID, HIGH YIELDING AND TRADITIONAL RICE (*ORYZA SATIVA* L.) VARIETIES TO AGE OF SEEDLING AND SPACING



Aye Aye Thwe  
Myanmar  
MS in Agronomy  
University of the Philippines  
Los Baños

A field experiment was conducted from May to October 2007, at the Central Experiment Station of the University of the Philippines Los Baños to examine the physiological, morphological and agronomic responses of three rice varieties to different spacing and seedling age; to evaluate the effect of plant spacing on the number of productive tillers and grain yield of three types of rice varieties; and to determine the optimum combination for plant spacing and seedling age of three types of rice varieties for high crop growth and productivity.

The three rice varieties (PSB Rc 72H, PSB Rc 18, and Dinorado), three seedling ages (8, 15, and 20-day old seedling), and two levels of spacing (20 x 20 cm and 40 x 40 cm) were the treatments in the experiment.

There were significant varietal differences in the number of tillers hill<sup>-1</sup>, number of days to maturity, number of productive tillers hill<sup>-1</sup>, panicle length, number of panicles hill<sup>-1</sup>, dry matter partitioning, leaf area index, and number of leaves on the main culm. PSB Rc 72H, significantly attributed to dry matter partitioning, produced highest panicle length, and number of leaves on the main culm. PSB Rc 18, produced the highest number of tillers and productive tillers hill<sup>-1</sup>, the longest days to maturity, the highest number of panicles hill<sup>-1</sup> and leaf area index. Dinorado had the lowest values in all parameters measured.

Using different seedling ages significantly affected to plant height, days to maturity, root pulling resistance, dry matter partitioning, leaf area index, specific leaf weight, phyllochron (day leaf<sup>-1</sup>), and the number of leaves on the main culm. Plant height and days to maturity were significantly increased using 20-day old seedlings. Dry matter content, leaf area index, and specific leaf weight increased significantly

at 15-day-old seedlings. The shorter phyllochron, higher root pulling resistance and number of leaves on the main culm were observed for 8-day old seedlings.

Difference in spacing significantly affect plant height, number of tillers hill<sup>-1</sup>, number of productive tillers hill<sup>-1</sup>, panicle length, number of panicles hill<sup>-1</sup>, number of filled grain per panicle, root pulling resistance, dry matter partitioning, CGR, LAI and phyllochron. Most of these characters increased significantly at wider spacing.

Crop growth rate was significantly higher for PSB Rc 72H using younger (8-day old) seedling age and wider spacing. For PSB Rc 18, highest CGR was recorded with 15- day old seedling and closer spacing, while in Dinorado high CGR were recorded with younger age of seedling and closer spacing. However, significant responses on grain yield were observed only at closer spacing.

There was no significant difference on root aerenchyma cell number, size, and total aerenchyma cell area due to variety, seedling age, spacing and their interactions.

## THE EFFECT OF TREE PRUNING AND POSITION SEED IN FRUIT TO ENHANCE SEEDS QUALITY AND PRODUCTION OF PAPAYA (*CARICA PAPAYA* L.)



Luis Manuel Branco  
Timorese  
MS in Agriculture  
Institut Pertanian Bogor

The objectives of this research are to study the effect of pruning and seed position inside the fruit on papaya seeds quality and study the effect of fruits location in difference branches on papaya seeds production and quality. The research consisted of two experiments, the first experiment was the influence of tree pruning and seed location in the fruit to seeds quality of papaya and the second was relation of fruit location on different papaya tree branches to seeds production and quality. Using papaya seeds (IPB-2) harvested from Center for Tropical Fruits Studies orchard in Bogor. The first experiment was arranged factorial random group two factors with four replications. The other hand experiment was arranged single factor group with three replications. The results showed the single brunch has high production of the seed and seeds from primary branches have high vigor and high nitrogen, phosphor, and potassium content in seeds. Increasing of branch can be decreased production and of seed quality.



## SEARCA launches new publications and KC3



From left to right: 1) Mr. Tith Sarunreth, Minister Counsellor/Deputy Head of Mission, Royal Embassy of Cambodia; 2) Dr. Arnulfo G. Garcia, SEARCA Research and Development Department Manager and co-editor of "Poverty Reduction through Sustainable Fisheries: Emerging Policy and Governance Issues in Southeast Asia"; 3) Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director and co-editor of "Reasserting the Rural Development Agenda: Lessons Learned and Emerging Challenges in Asia" and "Securing Rice, Reducing Poverty: Challenges and Policy Directions"; 4) Dr. Roehlano M. Briones, Visiting Research Fellow at SEARCA and Senior Research Fellow at PIDS, and co-editor of "Poverty Reduction through Sustainable Fisheries: Emerging Policy and Governance Issues in Southeast Asia"; 5) Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration; and 6) Dr. Nobuhiko Fuwa, Visiting Research Fellow at SEARCA and Associate Professor at Chiba University, and co-editor of "Reasserting the Rural Development Agenda: Lessons Learned and Emerging Challenges in Asia".

They are holding the following books: 1) *Securing Rice, Reducing Poverty: Challenges and Policy Directions*; 2) *Securing Rice, Reducing Poverty (Book Overview)*; 3) *Changing AgriFood Markets in Southeast Asia: Impacts on Small-scale Producers*; 4) *Poverty Reduction through Sustainable Fisheries: Emerging Policy and Governance Issues in Southeast Asia*; 5) *Regional Experts' Consultative Meeting on Overcoming Obstacles to Agricultural Microfinance in Southeast Asia*; and 6) *Reasserting the Rural Development Agenda: Lessons Learned and Emerging Challenges in Asia*

Dr. Larry Digal, editor of "Changing AgriFood" was on medication that day so he was not able to join in the event.

Themed "Regional Knowledge, Local Application," SEARCA hosted a book launch held on 29 May 2009 at Powerbooks, a commercial bookstore in Makati City, Philippines. SEARCA also introduced during the launch its new knowledge-sharing initiative, the Knowledge Center on Climate Change (KC3).

The launch showcased two new SEARCA publications, namely: 1) *Changing AgriFood Markets in Southeast Asia*, and 2) *Poverty Reduction through Sustainable Fisheries*. Moreover, two old SEARCA publications were re-introduced to the public. These are: 1) *Securing Rice, Reducing Poverty*, and 2) *Reasserting the Rural Development Agenda*. All publications feature the agriculture and rural development (ARD) sector.

*Changing AgriFood...* is based on the work of the Regoverning Markets Programme, which ran from 2005 to 2008. It is an intensive multi-partner collaborative research and policy support program dissecting best practices in connecting small-scale producers with dynamic markets.

*Poverty Reduction...* contains the papers including a synthesis of agenda for future research presented during a conference of the same title convened by SEARCA in 2007. It is a handy reference material providing insights to policy makers, researchers, and ARD administrators to aid them in the decision-making process.

*Securing Rice, Reducing Poverty* attempts to bridge gaps on the rice sector by providing a systematic, organized, and forward-looking assessment of the industry. It also provides a glimpse of what ails the ARD sector as a whole.

*Reasserting the Rural Development Agenda* revisits familiar themes and controversies that have played a crucial role in shaping the way ARD is viewed today. It draws up policy lessons from the major ideas and paradigms that have influenced academic and policy thinking in the past 30 years.

These four publications constitute the first set of publications to be distributed by Powerbooks, the Philippines' top-ranking book distributor, under

its recently signed partnership agreement with SEARCA.

On the other hand, KC3 is a five-year program, which intends to piece together various climate change-related works and knowledge solutions from different Southeast Asian groups. It aims to facilitate quick and easy access of knowledge solutions, particularly, adaptation technologies and best practices in agriculture and natural resources sectors to address poverty and other development concerns. KC3 will provide a venue for knowledge exchange and sharing on climate change, with the objective of strengthening related research and development, capacity building, and policy advocacy efforts among Southeast Asian countries.

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, in his remarks during the launch, challenged developing practitioners to look at climate change through the lenses of poverty reduction and food security, which are closely linked with agricultural and rural development.

"As a country, the Philippines needs to address its primary development concerns. These long-neglected concerns have been begging our attention long before climate change. [These include] food safety, natural resource management, among others. Attending to them would take people out of the poverty trap, making our country more agile in confronting global challenges [such as climate change]," he said.

Meanwhile, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, recognized the event as a major milestone for SEARCA because it brings SEARCA's knowledge products closer to the wider reading public. "Through this partnership with Powerbooks, we hope to extend our reach and linkages to individuals and organizations who share a common concern and interest in poverty alleviation and food security in Southeast Asia," he said.

The event was graced by H.E. Mr. Tith Sarunreth, Minister Counsellor/Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Cambodia; H.E. Tran Trong Duan, Third Secretary, Embassy of Vietnam; Dr. Gilda Gabertan, Officer-in-Charge, Bureau of Plant Industry; and Ms. Belen Acosta, Special Departmental Coordinator of Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC). The editors of the launched books -- Dr. Nobuhiko Fuwa, Dr. Roehlano Briones, and Dr. Arnulfo Garcia -- also attended the launch. (RMMDedicatoria)

# Snapshots



Dr. Akira Yamauchi, Professor of Agronomy and Director of the International Cooperation Center for Agricultural Education (ICCAE) of Nagoya University, Japan, visits SEARCA on 29 June 2009. He met with Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (in blue polo), SEARCA Director; Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (left), SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, and Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Manager of SEARCA's Graduate Scholarship Department. Dr. Akira discusses possible collaborative activities between ICCAE and SEARCA.



Dr. Gatot Hari Priowirjanto (4th from right), Director of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Open Learning Centre (SEAMOLEC) based in Indonesia, together with SEAMOLEC staff, visits SEARCA on 29 April 2009 to discuss the possibility of a Dual Masters Degree Program in Agriculture. Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (not in photo), Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, and Ms. Nova A. Ramos, SEARCA Training Associate met with them.



Participants of the SEARCA Photography Workshop 2009 pose for a graduation shot after receiving their Certificates of Completion on 25 May 2009.

The resource persons of the said short course were Mr. Edmund G. Centeno (wearing blue/green striped shirt) and Mr. Jon Paul F. Maligalig (1st row, right) who are both instructors at the College of Development Communication, University of the Philippines Los Baños.



The participants of the Review Workshop on Building Climate Resilience in Agriculture Sector in Asia and the Pacific, including Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, and Dr. Mercedita A. Sombilla, Manager of SEARCA's Consulting Services Department held on 14-15 May 2009. The study Building Climate Resilience in the Agriculture Sector of Asia and the Pacific recommends cost-effective adaptation responses that could build greater climate resilience into the agriculture sector in Asia and the Pacific. The Asian Development Bank-sponsored agriculture sector study, carried out by the International Food Policy Research Institute, uses predictions of global climate models to develop scenarios to 2050 for Asia and to derive implications for food security



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (2nd from left, top row) represents SEARCA in the International Biodiversity Day held on 22 May 2009 at the SEARCA Umali Auditorium, Los Baños, Laguna. Dr. Saguiguit read the Message of Support of SEARCA on behalf of Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director.

## Hohenheim University taps SEARCA in Food Security Center Initiative

SEARCA has been tapped by the University of Hohenheim, Germany as one of its network partners in its project on Food Security Center (FSC), an initiative supported by the German Government.

The FSC aims at providing effective and innovative, scientific contributions to reduce hunger and achieve food security, and thus to progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal 1. Special emphasis will be given to the role of gender and to the ecological sustainability of food production in the tropics and subtropics. In each of the three developing continents, both a university and a network partner are part of the FSC network.

The University of Hohenheim is one of five German universities that emerged as the best in a competition involving 44 outstanding university projects. Each winning university will each get up to €5 million funding for promoting development cooperation over the next five years.

The University of Hohenheim's partner universities in developing countries are Sokoine University of Agriculture and Technology, Tanzania; Universidad de Costa Rica; and Kasetsart University, Thailand.

The competition is a joint initiative of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

This competition is envisioned to sustainably strengthen university structures in the developing countries; reinforce the importance of development cooperation in German universities; and showcase the excellence of universities in dealing with development policy issues, functioning as "innovations think tank."

The other selected German universities are Technical University of Braunschweig, University of Kassel, Cologne University of Applied Sciences, and Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich.

These universities have melded all aspects of their current commitment to development cooperation into excellent programs that focus on topics that fall within the Millennium Development Goals. They cooperate with each other in a partnership network, enabling them to strengthen their partner universities in developing countries and facilitate their integration into the international scientific community.

The award-winning projects aside from the Food Security Center are as follows: "Excellence through Dialogue—Sustainable Water Management in developing Countries" of the Technical University of Braunschweig; "International Center for Development and Decent Work" of University of Kassel; "Centre for Natural Resources and Development" of the Cologne University of Applied Sciences; and "LMU Center for International Health" of the University of Munich.

(Source: Barbel Sagi, University of Hohenheim, June 2009)

## SEARCA, UPV to undertake joint programs

SEARCA and the University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV) have agreed to undertake education and research programs on common areas of interest. The agreement is covered by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that the two parties signed on 3 April 2009 at the UP Diliman campus, Quezon City, Philippines.

Signatories were Dr. Minda J. Formacion, UPV Chancellor, and Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA

Director. The signing was witnessed by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., Deputy Director for Administration of SEARCA and Dr. Alice Joan G. Ferrer, Vice Chancellor for Planning and Development of UPV.

Under the five-year MoU, UPV and SEARCA will focus on providing academic training for scholars of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization's eleven member countries. SEARCA

and UPV will also exchange scientific materials, publications, and methodology.

UPV is known as the center of fisheries and marine science education and research in the Philippines. This year, it will embark on a Strategic External Review to seek avenues to strengthen the university's competitiveness and relevance amidst today's global challenges. SEARCA provided a modest grant to UPV to support the said review. (MAFABad)



Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (in white) and Dr. Minda J. Formacion sign the memorandum of understanding while their respective witnesses (Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. and Dr. Alice Joan G. Ferrer) look on.

## SEAMEO bestows various recognitions

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) recognized excellence in various endeavors during the 44<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO Council Meeting held in Phuket, Thailand on 5-8 April 2009.

### SEAMEO-JASPER RESEARCH AWARD

Mr. Nantha Kumar Subramaniam, Vice Dean and Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Information Technology and Multimedia Communication, Open University of Malaysia, received the 2008 SEAMEO-Jasper Research Award. He was recognized for his research titled *Toward Asynchronous Collaborative Learning Pedagogy for Adult Learners in Small Learning Communities: Implementation and Characteristics that Influence Adult Learners' Critical Thinking Ratio*. The study underlined the importance of innovation in education through information and communication technology (ICT) for sustainable development. It demonstrated how the use of ICT in education helps achieve quality education for all and set an ideal environment for lifelong learning.

The plaque of recognition was presented to Mr. Subramaniam by H.E. Mr. Jurin Laksanawisit, Minister of Education of Thailand and SEAMEO Council President, and Mr. Jean-Vianney Auclair, Assistant Deputy Minister, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, Canada on 6 April 2009. The award entitles Mr. Subramaniam to a travel fellowship to Canada and two countries in Southeast Asia to enable him to disseminate his research results.

Established in 1990 with the support of the Government of Canada, the SEAMEO-Jasper Research Award recognizes exemplary research conducted in the region by Southeast Asian nationals. This yearly award aims to encourage



Ms. Alicia D. Revilla, Information Systems Specialist of SEARCA, receives from H.E. Mr. Jurin Laksanawisit, Minister of Education of Thailand and SEAMEO Council President, the plaque of recognition for being one of the 2008/2009 SEAMEO Service Awardees.

young scholars to conduct research on a relevant theme on social development in Southeast Asia and to facilitate continued interaction and knowledge-sharing among Southeast Asian and Canadian researchers.

### SEAMEO-AUSTRALIA PRESS AWARD

Ms. Nguyen Thi Kim Loan, a journalist for *Business Forum*, a newspaper in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, won the 2008 SEAMEO-Australia Press Award. Ms. Loan was recognized for her account of the sacrifices of teachers, school officials, and the community in order to provide quality education to underprivileged pupils in Van Ban District, Lao Cai Province, Vietnam. She received the plaque of recognition on 6 April 2009 from H.E. Mr. Jurin Laksanawisit and Ms. Anne Reynolds, Counsellor (Education) of the Australian Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. The award entitles Ms. Loan to a three-week study visit and internship at *Melbourne Age*, an Australian newspaper.

The SEAMEO-Australia Press Award recognizes excellent coverage of education issues by

journalists in Southeast Asia. SEAMEO and the Australian Government coordinate to make this recognition possible through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Australian Education International of the Australian Embassy in Bangkok.

### SEAMEO SERVICE AWARDS

The SEAMEO Council established the SEAMEO Service Awards at the 38<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO Council Conference in Manila, Philippines in 2003. It is intended to recognize and express appreciation to staff members of SEAMEO units who have demonstrated exceptionally high levels of achievement in such areas as work performance, innovation and creativity, professionalism, and commitment that contribute to the success of the Organization's mission and goals. Each SEAMEO unit selects its recipient of this annual SEAMEO awards based on a standard set of criteria.

Ms. Alicia D. Revilla, Information Systems Specialist of SEARCA, was among the recipients of the 2008/2009 SEAMEO Service Awards. The awardees were presented plaques of recognition on 6 April 2009 by H.E. Mr. Jurin Laksanawisit during the Welcome Dinner of the 44<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO Council Conference at the Sheraton Grande Laguna in Phuket, Thailand. They were also treated to a tour of places of interest in Phang Nga, Thailand.

Past SEARCA recipients of the SEAMEO Service Awards are: Mr. Eugene Phillip S. Boone, Grounds and Buildings Supervisor (2007/2008); Ms. Susan V. Fernandez, Head, Management Services Unit (2006/2007); Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Manager, Graduate Scholarship Department (2005/2006); and Ms. Lily L. Tallafer, Senior Executive Assistant, Office of the Director (2004/2005). (LLTallafer)

## SEARCA hosts RETRAC staff's study tour



Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (left) hands a copy of the Southeast Asian Agriculture and Development Primer Series: Vietnam to Mr. Vu Hieu (center) and Mr. Nguyen Tan Hung of SEAMEO RETRAC.

SEARCA hosted two senior staff members of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional Training Center (RETRAC) on 24-27 May 2009 under the SEAMEO Staff Exchange Program. They were: Mr. Vu Hieu Nghiem, Head of Planning and Facility Management, and Mr. Nguyen Tan Hung, Head of Finance and Accounting.

RETRAC staff were particularly interested to learn how SEARCA developed its Ninth Five-Year Plan, how the Center manages its facilities, and how it has implemented the automation of its financial management system. SEARCA also took

the opportunity to discuss with RETRAC possible activities for collaboration.

The Staff Exchange Program is aimed at enhancing the staff's personal and professional development while providing opportunities for the staff to broaden their knowledge, learnings, and experiences in their particular disciplines or areas of expertise. These aims are achieved by enabling individuals to exchange with staff of various SEAMEO centers. As a staff development approach, the Staff Exchange Program has the advantage of enabling learning through a natural office setting, semi-structured training set-up, and hands-on experience. (MAFABad)

# SEARCA awards scholarships to 16 Southeast Asians

Sixteen Southeast Asians received graduate scholarships from SEARCA during April-June 2009. Eight of them began their study programs this June at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB); the other three are starting their studies in August 2009 – two in Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) and one in Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM). The other five were awarded scholarships to pursue non-degree courses at UPLB under the Center's Academic Bridging Program.

The new scholars are from Cambodia (2), Indonesia (3), Myanmar (1), the Philippines (4), and Timor-Leste (6). Eight of them are pursuing their master's, three their PhD programs, and five with academic bridging scholarships.

Of the 16 new SEARCA scholars, eleven are funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD); while the rest by SEARCA.

## Scholars at UPLB

From Cambodia - Mr. Tho Kim Eang, Project Assistant, Faculty of Agronomy, Royal University of Agriculture (MS in Plant Pathology); and Mr. Heak Pring, Vice Chief of the Department of Planning and Public Relations, Ministry of Rural Development (MS in Environmental Science);

From Indonesia - Mr. Daud Samsudewa, Lecturer, Faculty of Animal Science, Diponegoro University (PhD in Animal Science);

From Myanmar - Ms. Yin Yin Nwet, Assistant Program Officer, Department of Agricultural Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MS in Agricultural Economics);

From the Philippines - Ms. Gay Therese M. Bucol, Agricultural Technologist/Provincial HVCC Coordinator, Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, Siquijor (MS in Horticulture); Ms. Aisa O, Manlosa, Instructor, Northern Mindanao State Institute of Science and Technology, Butuan City (MS in Environmental Science); Mr. Kenneth A. Laruan, Instructor, Benguet State University, Benguet, (PhD in Forestry); and Mr. Artemio A. Martin, Jr., Instructor, Isabela State University, (Straight PhD in Soil Science).

## Scholars at Indonesian Universities

Pursuing their graduate studies at IPB are Ms. Widaningrum, Researcher at the Indonesian Center for Agricultural Post Harvest Research and Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Indonesia (MS in Food Science), and Mr. Raimundo Mau of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, Timor-Leste (MS in Information Technology for Natural Resource Management).

The lone new scholar at UGM is Mr. Johan Setiawan, Head of Ecotourism and Environment

at the Tanjung Putting National Park, Forestry Department, Indonesia (MS in Tourism Planning).

## Academic Bridging Scholarships

Begun in 2006, the Academic Bridging Program aims to provide assistance to best qualified scholarship candidates from transition economies of Southeast Asia, including Timor-Leste, in upgrading the bachelor's degree of agriculture graduates to enable them to qualify for admission to the Graduate School of reputable universities in Southeast Asia and even outside the region.

Scholars under the Program take up undergraduate technical courses that would enhance their knowledge in their respective areas of specialization. They may also take up specialized training courses to improve English language proficiency and other technical skills.

Two of the five Timorese scholars have begun their studies in June 2009. They are Mr. Afonso Alves D.J. Candido, from the Faculty of Economics, Institute of Business, and Mr. Natalino B. Martins,

from Caritas Australia Timor-Leste. Mr. Candido is pursuing a non-degree program in agricultural economics and Mr. Martins, a non-degree program in animal science.

The other three scholars have deferred their enrolment to School Year 2010-2011. They are: Ms. Ana Jeannie Magno De Corte-Real Araujo (agronomy), Mr. Ergilio F. Vicente (community development), and Ms. Elda G. Da Silva (agronomy). Ms. De Corte-Real Araujo works with the International Labor Organization, while Mr. Vicente and Ms. Da Silva are affiliated with Centro Juventude Covalima and Vocational Training Center, respectively.

The 11 new scholarship grants (MS, PhD) bring to 1,250 the total number of graduate scholarships that SEARCA has awarded to nationals of the SEAMEO member countries while the five new academic bridging scholars bring to 14 the total number of scholarships under the Academic Bridging Program. As of 30 June 2009, SEARCA has 105 ongoing graduate scholars. (LLDDomingo)

## Experts urge regional action against global financial crisis

"There are a lot of things you cannot do if [your] planning framework is national, but you can do more if you transcend national boundaries," urged Dr. Larry Chee-Yoong Wong, Senior Fellow at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia during the policy roundtable titled "*Global Financial Crisis: Impacts, Challenges, and Responses toward Strengthening Agriculture and Food Security in Transition Southeast Asia.*"

This was the Seventh Policy Roundtable on Building Capacities for Agricultural Competitiveness of Transition Countries in Southeast Asia. It focuses on four Southeast Asian transition countries namely Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV). SEARCA, Korea Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Association, and Lao PDR Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry organized the said event held on June 26-27, 2009 at the Don Chan Palace Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR.

A total of 20 participants -- nine senior CLMV policymakers and/or policy analysts, six representatives from Korea FAO Association and other Korean organizations and five from SEARCA and UPLB -- gathered for this

roundtable. Three experts served as resource persons.

Dr. Purushottam K. Mudbhary, Chief of the Policy Assistance Branch at the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO provided an overview of the negative impacts brought about by the world food and financial crisis in relation to the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction efforts. He noted that the crisis affects non-agricultural sectors more than agriculture per se. As a way forward, he asserted the UN's three-track approach, which includes the right to food, safety nets for the long-term, and the importance of investing in agriculture.

Dr. Sisira Jayasuriya, Professor of Economics at Latrobe University, Australia explained the cause of the global financial crisis. As he put it, the crisis is essentially a result of loose financial regulation. The impact on developing countries is the reduction in exports thereby creating unemployment, lower labor remittances, lower rural incomes, and reduced rural well-being. He echoed the International Monetary Fund's (IMF)

Expert urge/ to page 14

**From Indonesia:**

- Dr. (Ms.) Rahmawaty, PhD in Forest Resources Management, "Participation Land Use Allocation in Besitang Watershed, Langkat, North Sumatra, Indonesia," UPLB;
- Dr. Rully Rahadian, PhD in Entomology, "Structure of Collembola Community and Its Nutrient Mineralization as Affected by Application of Different Organic Manures and Effective Microorganisms," UPLB;
- Dr. I Wayan Budiassa, PhD in Agricultural Economics, "Optimization of Groundwater Irrigation-based Farming System Towards Sustainable Agriculture in North Coastal Plain, Bali," UGM;

**From Lao PDR:**

- Mr. Souvanthong Namvong, MS in Community Development, "Farmer Driven Approach and Its Contributions to Farmer Empowerment in the Village Extension System of Lao PDR," UPLB;
- Mr. Keopeth Phoumphon, MS in Environmental Science, "Influence of Land Use Change and Watershed Degradation on Irrigation System in Sasaythong District, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR," UPLB;
- Mr. Bouthsakone Inthalangsee, Master of Management in Development Management, "The Certification Process in Organic Rice Production: The Case of Sangthong District, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR," UPLB;
- Mr. Bounmi Phommakone, MS in Environmental Sciences, "Impact of Climate Variability on Traditional Upland Rice Production and Farmers' Adaptation Mechanisms in Luangprabang Province, Lao PDR," UPLB;

- Mr. Chittakone Sisanonh, MS in Soil Science, "Responses of Corn to Different Rates of Applied Phosphorus in Dystric Cambisols (CmD) ay Saenedine Village, Lao PDR," KU;

**From Malaysia:**

- Ms. Leng Min See, MS in Animal Genetics, "Isolation and Characterization of Microsatellite Loci in Giant Freshwater Prawns, *Macrobrachium rosenbergii*," UPM;

**From Myanmar:**

- Mr. Kyaw Wai Naing, MS in Horticulture, "Seedling Tolerance of Mango (*Mangifera indica* L.) Varieties to High Soil Aluminum Levels," UPLB;

**From the Philippines:**

- Dr. (Ms.) Jane B. Tranquilan, PhD in Animal Science, "4-Methyloctanoic Acid and 4-Methylnonanoic Acid in Goat (*Capra hircus* L.) Meat as Affected by Castration and Nutrition," UPLB;
- Dr. Ruel M. Mojica, PhD in Agricultural Engineering, "Development, Evaluation, and Optimization of a Micro-controller-based Mechanical Coffee Roaster for Small-scale Roasting," UPLB;
- Dr. Jupiter V. Casas, PhD in Forest Resources Management, "Local Governance as a Determinant to Sustainable Forest Development of Two Community Forestry Projects in the Province of Bukidnon, Philippines," UPLB;
- Mr. Jay Ronel V. Conejos, MS in Animal Science, "Comparative Efforts of Mannan

Oligosaccharide (MOS) and Doxycycline on the Performance, Nutrient Digestibility, and Intestinal Morphology of Swine (*Sus domesticus*)," UPLB;

**From Thailand:**

- Ms. Suwisar Ketin, MS in Agricultural Economics, "Economic Assessment of Mangosteen Farmers' Adoption of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) in Rayong Province, Thailand," UPLB;
- Dr. Pattarawat Jeerapattanatorn, PhD in Community Development, "Sufficiency Economy Policy and Agricultural Extension Service in Phrae Province, Thailand," UPLB;
- Dr. (Ms.) Phikun Nuchnuanrat, PhD in Plant Pathology, "The Efficiency of Medicinal Plant Extracts for the Control of Crown Rot Fungi on Banana Fruits (*Musa* spp.)," UPLB;

**From Vietnam:**

- Mr. Nguyen Duc Tung, MS in Entomology, "Efficacy of the Predatory Mite, *Neoseiulus longis-pinosus* (Evans) (ACAR: Phytoseiidae) to Control the Two-Spotted Spider Mite *Tetranychus urticae* Koch (ACARI: Tetranychidae) on Green Bean and Acceptability of the Technology to Farmers in Hanoi, Vietnam," UPLB; and
- Mr. Do Truong Lam, MS in Agricultural Economics, "Determinants in the Choice of Contract Arrangements in Swine Production in Hung Yen Province, Vietnam," UPLB.

The completion of these scholars bring to 1,056 (448 PhD, 608 MS) the total number of SEARCA graduate alumni. (LLDDomingo)

Expert urge/ from page 13

suggestion for Asia that it may need to rebalance growth away from exports and toward domestic demand in order to return to pre-crisis growth rates. This then may mean a reorientation of the economy as well as exploration of new trade and production patterns.

Lastly, Dr. Wong pointed out four key drivers in the renewed interest in agriculture. These include 1) agri-biotechnology coupled with ICT and nanotechnology "to revolutionize and push out agricultural production and profit frontiers," 2) supply chains and trading networks expansion, 3) the rise of supermarkets, and 4) agriculture as the

"main vehicle for reducing poverty and preserving the environment in the rural areas."

He said that CLMV countries have somehow been shielded from the global crisis since their financial sectors are not strongly integrated with the international financial system. However, he noted that CLMV are still not free from the crisis' indirect impacts.

On the other hand, CLMV representatives also took the floor and raised common impacts of the global financial crisis on their respective agricultural economies. These include reduced exports for

traditional export crops and increasing rural unemployment, poverty, hunger, and diminishing rural well-being.

This discussion builds up on previous CLMV policy roundtables focused on 1) strengthening agricultural competitiveness; 2) building capacities in this respect; 3) shoring and sharing capacities to improve agriculture and its competitiveness; 4) food safety, emerging issues, and challenges in sanitary and phytosanitary measures; 5) biofuel development vis-à-vis food security; and 6) agribusiness challenges and opportunities vis-à-vis food security and poverty reduction. (RMMDedicatoria)

## Climate Change poses/ from page 3

that while farming communities do not contribute much to climate change, they are the ones greatly affected since “agriculture is subject to the vagaries of nature.” Farming communities constitute the majority of Southeast Asians living below the poverty line. “With low income and meager assets as well as limited access to financial insurance and safety nets, these households have to deal with climate related shocks under highly constrained conditions,” said SEARCA’s top official.

According to Dr. Felino P. Lansigan, Professor, Institute of Statistics, UPLB, one strategy to reduce the vulnerability of marginal farming communities to climate variability is by managing the risks inherent in agricultural production systems. “Climate risk management strategies may include the use of area-specific, real-time, cumulative rainfall data to determine the optimal cropping dates, the application of weather-based indices seasonal climate forecasting, and provision of some agricultural support fund to vulnerable agricultural communities.”

Dr. Rizaldi Boer, Director, Center for Climate Risk and Opportunity Management in Southeast Asia and Pacific based in Bogor, Indonesia, presented adaptation and mitigation programs pursued in

Indonesia. Some strategies for managing climate risks and uncertainties in agricultural production include shallow wells, participatory irrigation, and the use of biogas technology.

Dr. Lansigan recommended for crop calendars to be updated accommodating the trends and impact of climate change. He also urged the government to invest on hydrologic and meteorologic data stations to serve as early warning systems. Adequacy of weather data is an issue in implementing weather-based mechanisms. Furthermore, it is important to downscale (localize) seasonal climate forecast to the provincial level so that farmers can adjust their plans (e.g. planting schedule, crop density) appropriately, thereby minimizing their costs. In more general terms, adaptation strategies need to be area-specific in order to be more effective.

Dr. Romulo T. Aggangan, Director of Forestry and Environment Research, PCARRD, emphasized the need for a consolidated national response to address climate change. He presented PCARRD’s National Science and Technology Program on Climate Change, which aims to sustain productivity and competitiveness of the agricultural sector amidst climate variability. The components of the program include vulnerability and impact assessment, response mechanisms, policy and institutions, and crosscutting concerns.

Dr. Lorna M. Calumpang, Head of SEARCA’s Knowledge Resource Unit, also presented the center’s “Knowledge Center on Climate Change” (KC3), a fairly new initiative that is envisaged to supply ready-to-access information that address the impacts of climate change on the agriculture and natural resources sectors in the region.

Crop losses in the Philippines are contributed by typhoons (55%) and droughts (15%), said Mr. William H. Martinez of Micro Insurance Associates Agency Philippines. Risk management programs such as typhoon/drought relief, input subsidies and crop insurance schemes are crucial. Microfinance institutions cannot provide credit to farmers unless there is crop insurance to back it up, as agriculture is very risky. With agricultural production representing the major livelihood of marginal farmers, the impact of climate change cannot be taken lightly. Weather-based risk management scheme could even out agricultural risks and blunt the consequences of climate change, especially to the rural poor, more bearable.

Dr. Agnes P. Rola, Professor and Dean, College of Public Affairs, UPLB, facilitated the writing workshop on the regional collaborative research proposal, entitled “Climate Risk Management, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Poverty Alleviation in Southeast Asia.” (RCDikitanan)

## SEARCA conducts/ from page 16

- Dr. Genandrialine Peralta, Regional Adviser in Environment, World Health Organization;
- Dr. Shiqui Zhang, Professor and Deputy Dean, College of Environmental Sciences, Peking University, Beijing, China;
- Dr. Rex Victor Cruz, Dean, College of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of the Philippines Los Baños (CFNR-UPLB);
- Dr. Margaret Calderon, Associate Professor, CFNR-UPLB;
- Dr. Maria Angeles Catelo, Associate Professor, College of Economics and Management (CEM), UPLB;
- Dr. Rosalina Palanca Tan, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU);
- Prof Jaime Kim Bayani, Assistant Professor, ADMU;
- Dr. James Peters, Winrock International;
- Dr. Roberto Yap, Environmental Economist, Klima-Climate Change Center;
- Mr. Rodrigo Fuentes, Executive Director, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB); and
- Ms. Rusyan Jill Coburn, Research and Policy Specialist, ACB.

Dr. Francisco pointed out in her lecture that there is more to environmental economics than product valuation. Aside from the various tools

and frameworks used in valuation, environmental economics is useful in policy, project, and program assessment, as well as in advocating environmental conservation and protection. On the other hand, course coordinator Dr. Asa Jose U. Sajise, of UPLB-CEM explained that users should know how to maximize and value the benefits derived from environmental products, because the values of environmental goods are usually underestimated.

Undervaluing environmental goods can further contribute to environmental damage, one of which is pollution, said Dr. Zhang. She stressed that the convergence of markets, government, and communities backed up by a strong environmental policy is crucial to reducing environmental degradation, particularly in terms of pollution management.

The forum included a workshop. The participants were divided into three groups; each group was asked to present a concept note on a development project infusing the principles and theories discussed in the forum. The participants’ results proposals were: 1) Valuation of Forest Resources for Sustainable Land Use in Cambodia, 2) Assessment of Economic Vulnerability and Water-saving Technologies, and 3) Total Economic Valuation of Southeast Asian Dolphins. These projects were critiqued by the resource persons.

During the closing program, Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, congratulated the participants and expressed his satisfaction with the forum’s outcome. He reiterated the role of sound environmental analysis in decision-making, particularly in resource allocation for sustainable environment. He challenged the participants to make a difference and play a role in achieving effective and sustainable policies, to make Southeast Asia a good place for future generations.

Three representatives from the participants expressed their gratitude to the organizers and resource persons. They pointed out that the lectures and subsequent open forum were very informative. They expressed the hope to implement the projects conceptualized during the workshop once they return to their home countries.

Another highlight of the learning event was a study tour of various LLDA project sites practicing clean development mechanisms (CDM) within the Laguna province (Southern Luzon, Philippines). These included the Sta. Cruz Environmental Complex and Slaughter House, Kalayaan Sanitary Landfill, Kalayaan Integrated Solid Waste Management Project, and Majayjay Falls Ecotourism Park. (RMMDicatoria with report from KBorroomeo)

## SEARCA conducts executive forum on environmental economics



Participants and resource persons of the Executive Forum on Environmental Economics for Decision-making held on 30 March to 3 April 2009 at SEARCA, Los Baños, Laguna.

The environment is considered a communal resource – everyone can freely access and use its resources. However, since there are no existing markets for products derived from the environment, (e.g., protection from the sun's UV rays, clean air, good water quality, and carbon sequestration) the value of these products and services are often undervalued. There is an increasing need for decision-makers and mid-level resource managers to understand environmental problems from an economics perspective. This is where environmental economics come in.

SEARCA, together with the Economy and Environment Program for Southeast Asia (EEPSEA) and Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) of the Philippines organized an

Executive Forum on Environmental Economics for Decision-making on 30 March to 3 April 2009 at SEARCA. This is the fifth in a series of SEARCA's executive forums on Natural Resource Management (NRM). Twenty participants from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam completed the five-day learning event.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, in his opening remarks, emphasized that the sustained effect of integrating the environment in policymaking begins with understanding how policies can harm the environment. He said that it is necessary to know both the costs and benefits of NRM in designing an effective policy.

The forum comprised lectures and workshops covering regional environmental concerns within Southeast Asia and the application of environmental valuation as a tool for policymaking and environmental planning. It emphasized the current trends, debates, and issues in climate change, biodiversity, and transboundary resource problems. Regional experts as well as researchers from academe and international organizations served as resource persons, namely:

- Dr. Herminia A. Francisco, Director, EEPSEA;
- Dr. Orapan Nabangchan, Senior Economist, EEPSEA;

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## Taiwan hosts training in rapid testing for pesticide residues

Twenty-six participants from Asia and the Pacific underwent a *Training Course on Rapid Bioassay of Pesticide Residues (RBPR) on Fruits and Vegetables for Market Inspection and Farm Education*. The training, held on 18-22 May 2009 in Taichung, Taiwan was organized by SEARCA with the Food and Fertilizer Technology Center for the Asian and Pacific Region (FFTC/ASPAC), Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), and Taiwan Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) Council of Agriculture. RBPR is a rapid testing/screening tool for pesticide residues in fruits and vegetables.

RBPR was developed in Taiwan by TARI. More than 200 stations in Taiwan covering farmer associations, various food supply systems, and major supermarket chains have successfully adopted it since 1985. The principle of RBPR is to detect and stop contaminated shipments before the public consumes these. RBPR gives quick results, thus making it possible for contaminated



Training participants test their newly acquired knowledge on RBPR through a hands-on laboratory exercise.

produce to be withdrawn from the farm gate or market before it is sold. Bioassay has been gradually adopted in other countries in the region, particularly Korea, China and Vietnam, and in some countries in Central America.

Dr. Edward Yun Cheng, Senior Scientist and Ms. Ching-Hua Kao, Entomologist were the main resource speakers during the lecture sessions. Both of them also led a team of researchers from TARI, who assisted the participants during the hands-on exercises. The training was well-coordinated by Dr. Te Yeh Ku, technical consultant of FFTC.

The training participants were government researchers, laboratory technicians, inspection officers, and extension workers from Cambodia, Iran, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Nepal, New Caledonia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. They had intensive lectures and hands-on exercises of the RBPR techniques, as well as an exposure trip to rapid bioassay stations. The lectures also provided the participants greater appreciation of the applicability as well as limitations of RBPR. The key elements of RBPR's success in terms of adoption and consumer acceptance were also shared. (MHViray)