



The International Centre for
Underutilised Crops

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ICUC-News #50

31 July 2007

Dear colleagues,

ICUC-News celebrates its 50th issue today. Therefore I thought we should do something different this time: each time a new reader joins us, she or he submits a short introduction to the GoogleGroup website. There is a wealth of experience amongst the group and it would be nice to share that with everybody.

Unfortunately, these short introductions get automatically deleted when the subscription is confirmed. I therefore would like to request from each of you a short introduction (no more than 25-50 words) which I will then collate in a new section "ICUC network" in future issues of ICUC-News. Please send your messages to my inbox h.jaenicke@cgiar.org, rather than in response to the GoogleGroup so that we avoid too much traffic in people's inboxes, especially at a time when many are on holidays and don't have regular access to their mailboxes.

In this issue:

1. Funding & Job opportunities

- 1.1. Call for proposals: Systematization of traditionally excluded groups' participation experiences in new non-farming rural markets
- 1.2. 8th European IFSA Symposium "Empowerment of the rural actors: a renewal of Farming Systems perspectives"

2. Workshops & training courses

- 2.1. International Congress on Aromatic and Medicinal Plants, Morocco May 2008
- 2.2. International Doctorate in Agrobiodiversity
- 2.3. 11th International Congress Of Ethnobiology
- 2.4. Update on Tropentag

3. Publications & information

- 3.1. Underutilized species blog
- 3.2. Boletín de la Asociación Argentina de Horticultura
- 3.3. Article: "Diversity of plants in cocoa agroforests in the humid forest zone of Southern Cameroon"
- 3.4. Thumbs up for Palau's taro wine
- 3.5. Biofuels and Ecology

4. ICUC-related information

- no entry -

With best wishes,
Hannah

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1. Funding & Job opportunities
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1.1 Call for proposals: Systematization of traditionally excluded groups' participation experiences in new non-farming rural markets

The Chorlaví Group convenes public and private organizations and civil society institutions interested in the rural problems of Latin America, to participate in the 2007 Projects Contest. The subject of the contest is: "Systematization of traditionally excluded groups' participation experiences in new non-farming rural markets: Social services provision such as entertainment, sports, traditional education and health, transport, restoration, training, among others, small industry, handicrafts and rural tourism."

In this contest, the Fund will allocate an estimated sum of US\$175,000 which will be distributed between 10 and 12 projects. Go to <http://www.grupochorlavi.org/> or write to concursochorlavi@rimisp.org for further information.

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1.2 8th European IFSA Symposium "Empowerment of the rural actors: a renewal of Farming Systems perspectives"

The 8th European Symposium of the International Farming Systems Association (IFSA) will be held from 6 to 10 July 2008 at Clermont Ferrand (France). IFSA Europe offers an opportunity for multi-disciplinary exchanges between researchers and actors in rural development, concentrated on some essential questions related to the sustainable development of territories:

How to strengthen the capacities for initiative and innovation of players in the farming world and more widely in the rural world ?

How to renew ways of supporting and guiding these initiatives by research, territorial collectivities and development organisations ?

Deadline for abstracts: 1 October 2007. More information at <http://www.8th-european-ifs-symposium.org/>

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2. Workshops & Training Courses

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2.1 International Congress on Aromatic and Medicinal Plants, Morocco May 2008

Association Marocaine pour le Développement de Plantes Aromatiques Et Médicinales (ADEPAM), l'Institut Agronomique e Vétérinaire Hassan II et l'ICARDA organisent Le Congrès International PAM – Maroc 2008, Mai 2008 a Rabat, Maroc.

Programme provisoire:

domestication et culture des plantes aromatiques et médicinales (PAM);

technologies de transformation des PAM;

Législation et normes dans le domaine des PAM;

Rôle des PAM dans le développement local.

Comité d'organisation

ADEPAM

IAV Hassan II

ICARDA

Personne contact:

Dr Zrira Saadia: zrira_saadia@yahoo.fr

Dr El Mourid Mohamed: melmourid@yahoo.fr

The Moroccan Association for the Development of Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (ADEPAM), the Insitute for Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences Hassan II and ICARDA will organise the International Congress on MAP Morocco 2008, May 2008 in Rabat, Morocco.

Provisional programme:

Domestication and culture of aromatic and medicinal plants (MAP)

Technologies for the transformation of MAP

Legislation and norms in the area of MAP

Role of MAP in local development

Organising Committee:
ADEPAM
IAV Hassan II
ICARDA

Contact persons:
Dr Zrira Saadia: zrira_saadia@yahoo.fr
Dr El Mourid Mohamed: melmourid@yahoo.fr

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2.2 International Doctorate in Agrobiodiversity

The Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies of Pisa (SSSUP) Italy is about to start the 4th year of the International Doctorate in Agrobiodiversity. The PhD Programme is run in collaboration with the National Academy of Sciences of Italy and is funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR).

The Course aims to contribute to the enhancement of human resource capacity in the utilisation and management of biodiversity in agricultural and natural systems, in order to improve the sustainability of agriculture and the conservation of genetic resources and agroecosystem (bio)diversity for the well-being of present and future generations. An International Scientific Board will supervise activities and ensure education and research excellence and oversee the choice of themes relevant to developing countries' agriculture, where applicable.

Six scholarships are available to motivated students from any country. Applications from developing countries are particularly welcome. The application must include description of a research project that the candidate proposes to carry out during the three-year period of the Doctorate. English will be the one and only language for all activities envisaged in the Doctorate. Further information on the Doctorate and the online application form can be found at www.sssup.it. The deadline for receipt of online applications is 30 September 2007.

The Course will have two curricula:

(A) Plant genetic resources

(for further information, please contact Prof. Enrico Porceddu (porceddu@unitus.it))

(B) Functional biodiversity in agroecosystems

(for further information, please contact Prof. Pierdomenico Perata (p.perata@sssup.it) or Paolo Bàrberi (barberi@sssup.it))

For information about the application, the evaluation procedure and the course logistics, please contact Mr Mario Zinnai or Ms Laura Bevacqua (agrobiodiversity@sssup.it)

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2.3 11th International Congress Of Ethnobiology

Congress theme: Livelihoods and collective biocultural heritage. The congress will be held in Cusco, Peru in June 2008. Written, video, artistic and other contributions are welcome. Please submit a 500 word description of your contribution by March 05, 2008 to ice2008@andes.org.pe.

More information at <http://www.andes.org.pe/english/web/Welcome.html>

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2.4 Update on Tropentag

October 9-11, 2007 in Witzenhausen, Germany

Three different workshops will be offered before the Tropentag 2007 Conference, on October 8th and 9th, 2007. These pre-conference workshop are:

1. "Irrigation field day" - basics of practical irrigation technology
2. "Plant Physiology Lab" - non-destructive methods for measuring photosynthesis and chlorophyll content

3. "Soil profile preparation"

As only a limited number of participants can attend these workshops, early booking is requested. Please download the information file for more details on these three workshops:
<http://www.tropentag.de/conference/PreConference.pdf>

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3. Publications & Information

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3.1 Underutilized species blog

GFU has set up a blog dedicated to underutilized species. A link to it can be found on GFU's home page www.underutilizedspecies.org.

This is an information exchange tool that complements the GFU portal. We hope this will stimulate further thinking, learning, discussing.

Hoping you will enjoy it!

Your GFU team

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3.2 Boletín de la Asociación Argentina de Horticultura

If you are interested to receive "Noticias de la ASAHO", the Bulletin of the Argentinian Society for Horticulture, please drop a line to Federico Silvapintos at publiasaho@gmail.com.

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3.3 Article: "Diversity of plants in cocoa agroforests in the humid forest zone of Southern Cameroon"

ASB congratulates Dennis Sonwa, scientist with ASB partner IITA, for the publication of a paper entitled "Diversity of plants in cocoa agroforests in the humid forest zone of Southern Cameroon"

Abstract

In the humid forest zone of Southern Cameroon, farmers generally associate cocoa with native and exotic trees in complex agroforestry systems. Despite the socio-economic and ecological importance of these systems, few studies have investigated their plant composition. We investigated tree composition of cocoa agroforests along a gradient of market access, population density and resource use intensity in the humid forest zone of southern Cameroon, comprising (i) the sub-region of Yaoundé, (ii) the sub-region of Mbalmayo, and (iii) the sub-region of Ebolowa. Market access, population density and resource use intensity all decreased from the first to the third sub-region. We quantified the diversity of tree species associated with cocoa within individual agroforests, among agroforests in the same region, and among the three sub-regions, and classified the tree species according to their main uses. A total of 9.1 ha belonging to 60 cocoa agroforests were inventoried in 12 villages. We encountered a total of 206 tree species with an average of 21 tree species per agroforest. In the more urbanized area around Yaoundé, agroforests were less diverse than in the other sub-regions. In all of the agroforests, food producing tree species tended to be more frequent than other species. Two thirds of the food trees were native forest species and one third was introduced. From Ebolowa to Yaoundé, the density of food producing trees doubled and the density of exotic food-producing species increased relative to native species. Some local species producing high-value non-timber forest products were found in the agroforests, but their density was far lower than that of exotic tree species. The agroforests also provide medicine, charcoal and other products for household consumption and sale. We conclude that unless there are specific efforts to promote local forest tree species in cocoa agroforests, these will progressively lose importance with increasing market access, population pressure and land use intensity.

Journal article published by Springer Netherlands in Biodiversity and Conservation (2007) 16:2385–2400. It is available now at <http://www.springerlink.com>

For more information, please email d.sonwa@cgiar.org

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3.4 Thumbs up for Palau's taro wine

From: *Radio New Zealand* (sent by Tevita Kete)

There's been a positive taste reaction by Japanese people to Palau's new taro wine or sochu. Currently there was only sochu made from cassava and sweet potato, but with the help of Japan donating a wine extracting machine, Palau has made wine from taro. It is made by fermenting rice and yeast for 7 days then adding cooked and mashed taro for another 7 days. The fermented mulch is then distilled and extracted in 3 hours at 50 percent alcohol. Thomas Taro, the vice president of Palau Community College's agriculture extension school, says Japanese taste testers have given it the thumbs up.

"The product itself - I guess Palau is the only country doing taro sochu. It has that very unique taste, and that texture to it. It's mild with a distinct taste and aroma of taro, and that's what makes it unique and kind of exotic."

Thomas Taro says the products economic potential for Palau, is huge.

3.5 Biofuels and Ecology

An interesting discussion by Jon Lovett of carbon footprints, food miles and biofuels, their sustainable production and ethical trade...

<http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1365-2028.2007.00792.x>

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4. ICUC-related information

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- No entry -

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Championing underutilised plant species for food, nutrition and sustainable development