



CACCI

Food & Agriculture Newsletter

Volume 4

July 2014



Chairman's Message

The future of the world's food supply was a focal point and rising drumbeat during the past decade. Many of the forums emphasized the prospective obstacles or challenges - such as climate change - to providing food for a growing, increasingly wealthy population. Today, as businesses, our focus should be on the driving forces reshaping food and agriculture in Asia whilst authorities should recognize the potential problems but need to discover how ingenuity, technology, and resilience could create positive outcome for the region, its inhabitants and the organizations that operate there.

A wide variety of potent, interacting forces will drive the food system in the developed and developing nations of Asia over the next three decades. Developing Asian economies will grow rapidly in the longer term despite the short-term challenges each economy faces. Changes taking place in Demographic profile will create aging societies and change the composition of households. Furthermore, agriculture productivity will be challenged by environmental limits and climate change. Cultural exchanges will continue to mix Eastern and Western views of food and health.

These agricultural and food related challenges will be vastly dealt with the application of new bioscience, information technology, and nanotechnology. Over time, this global meta-system is likely to give rise to novel relationships and to generate counter intuitive, with surprising results. Yet in the face of this highly uncertain environment, timely decisions need to be made today to prepare to serve billions of future customers in Asia, in the context of a sustainable global food system.

The role of our chambers is to help decision makers in business, government, and non-profit organizations understand how these forces will drive the development of agriculture in Asia, by identifying consumer trends (upper- and middle-class Asia), competitive and regulatory landscape (evolving issues and standards), food technology (biotech and agricultural innovation), agriculture and food distribution and packaging, and environment and resources (impacts of global growth). The chambers will also enrich the global conversation about agriculture's future by supplying actionable insights, identifying new opportunities, and inspiring new dialogue.

My Best Wishes

Mr. Samantha Ranatunga
Chairman, Asian Council on Food and Agriculture



Inside this issue

- ❖ Asia-Pacific countries adopt roadmap to push toward goal of zero hunger
- ❖ WTO fails to agree on definition of private standards for food safety
- ❖ FAO, IFAD launch \$2.6 M project for small-scale agri in developing countries
- ❖ Shams Enterprise represented Bangladesh and bagged US\$35 million orders of Agro & Food products in the FOOD EX JAPAN 2014
- ❖ Agri Machinery Workshop by NAC
- ❖ New Zealand investigates options for supporting Sri Lanka's dairy sector, visits CCC
- ❖ Developing Market Value Chain systems in Papua New Guinea
- ❖ FFTC launches Agricultural Policy website
- ❖ Reforming Japan's farming sector
- ❖ COA targets Taiwan leisure farms for development
- ❖ Global recognition for traditional farming systems in China, Iran and South Korea
- ❖ Going nuts? Turkey looks to pistachios to heat new eco-city
- ❖ No Time for Complacency in Asia's Food Security Challenge
- ❖ Think Differently for Asia's Water, Food, and Energy Security - ADB President
- ❖ Investments in natural capital crucial to sustain economic growth in GMS
- ❖ APEC tackling new food security challenges

Asia-Pacific countries adopt roadmap to push toward goal of zero hunger

Regional Conference adopts FAO work priorities for Asia and the Pacific to address “magnitude of challenges” in improving food security

Governments from 41 countries across Asia and the Pacific on March 14, 2014 concluded a five-day regional conference on improving their responses to future food security challenges and efforts to end hunger.

At its conclusion, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the 32nd FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC), with some 164 delegates, endorsed four FAO regional initiatives.

The conference was hosted by the Ministry of Industry and Agriculture, Government of Mongolia.

In their final communiqué, the Government Ministers and Heads of Delegations said they were conscious of the magnitude of the challenges to achieve a food-secure Asia-Pacific region by raising agricultural productivity, in particular, the productivity of smallholder farmers, and alleviating poverty while protecting the region’s natural resources base.

The conference acknowledged that good progress had been made towards achieving Millennium Development Goal Number 1, to reduce hunger by half in the region, which could be attained by 2015 if countries redoubled their efforts and worked together in close partnership.

Speaking during the Ministerial segment of the APRC, the FAO Director-General, José Graziano da Silva, had told delegates that FAO was “working much more closely with governments, with international and regional institutions, with civil society and with the private sector to advance our goal of a food secure and sustainable world. The renewed FAO is swinging into action.”

The delegations said they recognized the positive effects and achievements of the transformational changes put in place under the leadership of the Director-General during the last biennium and noted that sustained efforts would be needed to achieve the desired outcomes.

The delegates further expressed their appreciation of the renewed efforts and actions being undertaken by the



Encouraging more local food production was one of the issues raised at the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.



FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva with civil society representatives at the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

FAO through its Strategic Framework in supporting the Members.

Regional initiatives

In the final communiqué the conference supported the implementation of FAO’s four regional initiatives on: Zero Hunger Challenge in Asia and the Pacific, Regional Rice Initiative (Phase II), Blue Growth, and Developing Local Value Chains for food Security and Nutrition in Pacific Island countries.

The delegates expressed their confidence in and continued support to the new strategic direction of the organization and underline the necessity for continuity to achieve the full impact of these changes and appreciated the efforts made in support to family farming in the framework of the International Year of Family Farming 2014 and underscored that family farming constitutes an essential component of the region’s economies and societies.

In conclusion, the conference delegates reaffirmed their commitment to work hand in hand with FAO towards the achievement of the common goals and objectives and to eradicate hunger in the Asia-Pacific region.

In his closing remarks, the Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative, Hiroyuki Konuma, thanked the conference for its guidance. “The large number of recommendations adopted by the regional conference will serve as a solid foundation for FAO and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in particular to formulate its future priorities, programme and actions for policy advice and technical assistance to member States.”

The Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific serves as the highest FAO governing body at the regional level, regional conferences are essential for ensuring the effectiveness of the Organization’s work in the field and plays a critical role in defining its work priorities.

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, March 14, 2014

WTO fails to agree on definition of private standards for food safety

By Edu Lopez



The sanitary and phytosanitary measures committee of the World Trade Organization (WTO) has failed to agree on a definition for private standards for food safety and animal and plant health and deferred a decision on a mediation

procedure designed to avoid legal disputes.

In a statement, the WTO said that both issues have been discussed for several years and countries working on compromises had thought that their efforts were close to producing a consensus solution.

The committee, which consists of all 159 WTO member governments, monitors how countries are applying the WTO SPS agreement which deals with food safety and animal plant health and discusses issues arising from these rules and from individual countries' measures.

With no consensus on a definition for private SPS standard, the committee accepted a suggestion from Canada to look at definitions for private standards used in other international forums and to try to adapt these to SPS.

However, the failure to agree on a definition aroused concern from some members, the WTO said.

A decision on the proposed compromise on the mediation procedures has been delayed until the next meeting as India wanted some issues to be clarified before it could accept the compromise.

Meanwhile, WTO members raised their concerns involving meat, animal products and live animals, shrimps, and other products, with African swine fever joining diseases that are more regularly on the agenda such as mad cow and foot-and-mouth diseases.

They shared information with each other about their regulations or SPS administrations such as the US, Canada, Pakistan and Burundi, from Japan about radiation from the Fukushima nuclear power station, and from the EU on an outbreak of African swine fever in wild pigs.

Nine specific trade concerns were withdrawn from the agenda or announced as resolved in the meeting.

Japan has lifted a ban on fresh fruits from Argentina, Australia, Chile, Italy and Turkey as a result of several years of negotiation. Others issues were withdrawn following bilateral talks among delegations attending the committee meeting.

Source: Manila Bulletin, April 9, 2014

FAO, IFAD launch \$2.6 M project for small-scale agri in developing countries

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have jointly launched a new project to help developing countries manage public investments in small-scale agriculture more effectively. The initiative USD2.6 million initiative will be co-financed by the UN food agencies focusing on countries where a lack of strong national governance means development projects can face serious challenges in delivering results.

Over a two year-period, 15 projects in ten countries will be targeted; with priority given to [projects] already under way but are encountering financial and technical difficulties. The Investment Centre Division of FAO, which leads the organisation's efforts to generate increased investment in agriculture and rural development, will collaborate with countries to improve their ability to plan and implement IFAD-funded investment programmes.

"Fragile states host the greatest proportion of poorly performing agriculture projects, and IFAD has found that the major problems consist of weak local institutions and weak local management. This co-financed project will address both the capacity-building and institution-building requirements of these poorly performing projects," said IFAD Associate VP for Programmes, Kevin Cleaver.

As for Laurent Thomas, Assistant Director-General for the FAO's Technical Cooperation Department, the initiative presents a more strategic approach to enable both UN agencies to plan better and significantly enhance the effectiveness and quality of their services to member countries. "It will lead to better results and, ultimately, to a greater impact on the livelihoods of those targeted by the programmes."

The \$2 M grant for the project was approved by IFAD's Executive Board last month; while FAO and participating countries will each add another \$300,000 to the initiative. The FAO works constantly with its sister



agency through the FAO-IFAD Cooperative Programme, which has created more than 300 joint operations worth almost \$9 billion between 1977 and 2012.

Source: Asian NGO, February 28, 2014

Shams Enterprise represented Bangladesh and bagged US\$35 million orders of Agro & Food products in the FOODEX JAPAN 2014

An Agro based Halal and safe foods manufacturing company Shams Enterprise, established in 1998 has been trying to resume production of organic agriculture and safe foods from the very beginning in Bangladesh. It was the only company from Bangladesh that participated successfully and fruitfully in the Foodex Japan that held on 4-7 April, 2014.



The Shams Enterprise displayed its different Halal and organic products in the Foodex Japan 2014, including:

- A) Processed Foods – 1. Soyvita (instant very nutritious food supplement for all ages); 2. Soybar (candy); 3. Diet (dietary supplement for Heart disease and Diabetes patients); 4. HiFiber (dietary supplement to remedy constipation, diabetes); 5. Dates Molasses; 6. Rice powder; 7. Buckwheat powder; 8. Millet



Mr. Abdus Salam with buyer

- powder; and 9. Neem powder (dietary supplement).
 B) Food Stuffs – 1. Aromatic Rice; 2. Foxtail Millet; 3. Buckwheat; 4. Sesame seeds; 5. Black Cumin; 6. Linseed; 7. Mung Bean; 8. Soybean; and 9. Coriander.
 C) Spices - 1. Turmeric powder; 2. Chili powder; 3. Coriander powder; 4. Potato powder; and 5. Sweet Potato powder.
 D) Dried, Frozen and Fresh Vegetables
 E) Dried, Frozen and Fresh Fruits
 F) Herbal products and cosmetics etc.

Many renowned buyer companies from different countries visited the booth of the only Bangladeshi company and they became impressed seeing different Halal, organic and safe products and prices. They placed confirmed orders for Soyvita, HiFiber, Diet, Buckwheat, Aromatic Rice, Sesame Seed, Mung Bean, Foxtail Millet, Sesame cake, Chili powder, Turmeric powder, Coriander powder, potato powder instantly.

Mr. Abdus Salam, proprietor of this company, expressed his deep interest participating in the Foodex Japan 2015 more efficiently and more successfully. ■



Mr. Abdus Salam with buyers



The 39th International Food and Beverage Exhibition
FOODEX JAPAN 2014
 国際食品・飲料展

Agri Machinery Workshop by NAC

The National Agri Business Council (NAC), the apex body for agribusiness in Sri Lanka, organized an agri machinery workshop, recently in a bid to introduce new agri machineries to the local agricultural sector.

The event, held under the title of “The Pathway to Productivity”, was held at Taj Samudra Hotel, Colombo. NAC says there is a need for “fast tracking” the introduction of much needed agricultural machinery to increase the productivity of the local Agricultural Sector.

Seven, overseas agri-machinery manufactures from Japan, China, Thailand and India made presentations at this workshop.

Delivering the keynote address during the event, Dr. Rohan Wijekoon, Director General of Agriculture said that the entire Island is rich with 46 agro ecological zones and cultivation can be done throughout the year. According to him, big onion and potato cultivations have already taking place during the off season.



He further stressed that the concept of poly tunnel can be easily practiced in the field and pointed out that introducing agri



machinery will play a major role to enhance the productivity with this concept.

Mr. Chinthaka Balasooriya of Farm Machinery Research Centre (FMRC) described the local requirement and licensing procedure of the agri machinery. Concluding remarks and vote of thanks was done by Chairman, NAC, Mr. Aruna Weerakoon.

The event was sponsored by Shell Oil Company and their local partner NM Distributors (Pvt) Ltd. There were many local and international participants who graced this occasion.

Mr. Rohitha Nanayakkara, Chairman-elect, explained the objectives of the workshop and mentioned that the it will help create awareness among all stakeholders of new agricultural machinery.

Source: Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Media Release, March 18, 2014

New Zealand investigates options for supporting Sri Lanka's dairy sector, visits CCC

The New Zealand Government says it is investigating options for supporting the development of Sri Lanka's dairy sector.

This was revealed when a delegation from the New Zealand government visited the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce recently.

The delegation included Tiffany Babington and Rebecca Williams from the International Development Group of New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; New Zealand's Deputy High Commissioner for India and Sri Lanka, Michael Appleton; and Senaka



Silva, Consul General for New Zealand in Sri Lanka.

The delegation, who met the Secretary General of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Harin Malwatte, said the proposed support will be made under the Dairy Cooperation Arrangement signed by Sri Lankan External Affairs Minister GL Peiris and New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully late last year.

The New Zealand officials said the Dairy Cooperation Arrangement is focusing on helping Sri Lanka improve the entire supply chain of Sri Lanka's dairy sector.

Options being explored includes training the dairy farmers and officials and helping universities build up their capacities to train and educate students on the dairy sector.

Mutual Exchange programs between Sri Lankan and the New Zealand dairy industry are also being explored.

Several dairy sector firms operating in the country, such as Lanka Milk Foods, Lucky Lanka Group of Companies, Nestle Lanka PLC, Richlife Dairies Limited, Cargills (Ceylon) PLC, met with the New Zealand officials at the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

Source: Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Media Release, May 5, 2014

Developing Market Value Chain systems in Papua New Guinea

Example of infrastructure development for Developing countries

By Mr. Fabian Chow

Papua New Guinea as a developing country is struggling with developing the infrastructure it needs. Concentration of attention is on roads but many other aspects need to be looked at. In PNG the Fresh Produce Development Agency (FPDA) held a very well attended Value Chain Conference supported by the vegetable industry players.

Held at Gateway Hotel on March 26-27, the conference brought together most major industry players from buyers, and transport companies all the way back to suppliers, consolidators and growers.

The conference was significant for the commercial horticulture in that it dealt with airing industry issues in the Value Chain of marketing vegetables. Many gaps in the infrastructure raised by the conference were seen to handicap the completion of the value chain and normal commercial advancement in-country.

During the conference small industry players were vocal over the threat of large modern hydroponics vegetable factory to traditional small size local growers. Coincidentally the LR group of Israel brought in modern technology to grow vegetables and opened their hydroponics business only a few weeks before the holding of the Vegetables Value Chain Conference. Very strong views were expressed by many industry suppliers as to what room would be left for small growers when large modern vegetable suppliers moved into the country.

Chairman of FPDA Mr Fabian Chow stressed that modernisation was a requirement and would happen one

way or another. Unless local vegetable companies adapted to be able to compete with more modern businesses they would be unable to understand and meet more stringent demands of buyers as the economy modernised.

Dr Laurie Bonney of University of Tasmania spoke about the changes in the market to be expected as vegetable buyers changed from spot markets suppliers to preferred suppliers over the next ten years. His talk was a reality check to participants to get ready for economic changes or be left out in the modernising economy.

A particular problem for the PNG vegetable industry raised at the conference was that the changing infrastructure needs had not kept pace with the changes in the economy. Professor Bonnie's address mentioned that the vegetable industry was at a "tipping point" and decisions had to be made on the market structure and infrastructures. His talk indicated that changes were coming and it was up to the industry and Government to work out what way they wanted the market structure to move towards.

About the Author

Mr. Fabian Chow has been Chairman of Fresh Produce Development Agency since May 2007. He was former National Secretary for PNG Chamber of Commerce and Industry from March 2000 to March 2006, and attended several CACCI Conferences. ■



L-R: Greg Liripu, Hon T Tomscoll, Minister for DA, Fabian Chow, Chairman FPDA

FFTC launches Agricultural Policy website

Discovering the world of global free trade, export promotion, farmers' insurance, tariffs, animal health management and all other topics related to agricultural policies in the Asian and Pacific region is now just a click away. Simply log on to <http://ap.ffc.agnet.org>, and you can enter the Agricultural Policy Database where you can read and get numerous information and data on agricultural policy issues in selected Asian countries. The latest project of Food and Fertilizer Technology Center (FFTC), the Agricultural Policy or AP website is part of a new project called the Asia-Pacific Information Platform on Agricultural Policy (AP).

The aim of the AP project is to provide a venue for information exchange on agricultural policies in various Asian countries. With the shift towards a more market oriented agricultural sector in the Asian and Pacific region, the FFTC management felt the need to support the agro producers in this globalized age for them to have a better understanding of agricultural policies as they face the pressures of volatile and competitive markets.

While there are existing agricultural policies in Asia, the region lacks a sharing mechanism by which these policies are exchanged and discussed. Given the language barrier, a lot of experts hope there could be a venue by which there could be a cross-learning of agricultural policies in a language most understood by the majority.

Continued on page 7

FFTC launches

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Its intended target clientele aside from policy makers include academicians, researchers, scholars, farmer cooperative leaders, students, etc.

With this website initiative, FFTC aims to promote countries in the Asian Pacific region through their respective agricultural policies, which hopefully can contribute to the likely formation of mutually consented agricultural policies at the regional level.

AP's solid platform

In the first year of operation, the AP project will cover the agricultural policies of Japan, Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan. The collection of information is being done through the support of FFTC's contracted partners in the said countries, which the Center selected after a careful screening process. Agricultural policies collected in each country are divided into nine topics namely: 1) overview of agricultural policy; 2) trade liberalization countermeasures; 3) agricultural land policies; 4) farmers' retirement system; 5) agricultural disaster insurance; 6) food security; 7) production and marketing policies; 8) agricultural science and technology policies; and 9) others. FFTC contracted partners have agreed to regularly submit full-length or feature articles based on the abovementioned topics which will then be edited and published in the AP website.

To further enhance the website's content, a regular seasonal advisory group meeting has also been formed to become part of the project's think tank. This will comprise of experts in the fields of agricultural policy, agriculture economy and information technology. They will be tasked to give advice and steer the overall direction of the project.

The project also aims to establish a professional cooperation network through the hosting of an international video conference on agricultural policy and



FFTC Dir. Yu-Tsai Huang (leftmost) meets the members of the AP Advisory Group. FFTC Agr'l Economist Dr. Chan-Ik Chun, leader of the AP website; Dr. Rhung-Jie Woo, Ag. Econ Professors of National Taiwan University and Dr. Yu-Hui Chen, and Dr. Kuo-I Chang, Asst. Prof., Ag. Econ. National Chung Hsing University.



conduct an international seminar on "Agricultural Trade Under the Free Trade Agreements in the Asian Region" where the AP project is going to be introduced and discussed. The said international seminar is scheduled on September 29-October 3, 2013" in Seoul, South Korea. With these two activities, it is hoped that a tight network of agricultural policy experts will be forged who will help in improving the content of the AP website.

Meanwhile, in 2014, FFTC will add another four Asian countries and will select a new set of partners in China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam. Also, another international workshop on "Collection of Relevant Agricultural Policy Information and its Practical Use" is also in the pipeline at the last quarter of next year. This workshop aims to review and appraise the status of the AP project and improve data quality and its database structure.

All of these activities are being carefully planned in order to ensure a dynamic exchange of information between and among the project's target clientele. The management hopes that through this initiatives, the agricultural policy network will create an impact in the Asian agricultural community.

Articles in the AP website

To date, there are 29 articles which have been uploaded in the website, forming part of the agricultural policy database: 10 each from Korea and Taiwan, four from Japan and five from the Philippines. The topics cover a wide variety of subjects under the agricultural policy umbrella. Below is a detailed list of the article topics per country:

Japan

- The Agricultural Labor Force in Japan
- An Outlook of Japanese Farm Households
- Japanese Agricultural Policy Reforms under the WTO Agreement in Agriculture
- Japan's Food Self-Sufficiency Ratio

Korea

- Farmland Policies in Korea

Continued on page 8

FFTC launches

... Continued from page 7

- Improvement Plan of Agricultural Distribution System
- Agriculture Policy Consulting Plan for Developing Countries
- Construction Plan of Saemangeum High Tech Agricultural Complex
- Livestock Vehicle Registration System for Animal Health Management
- Establishment of Public Consensus Agricultural Policy Committee
- Agricultural Export Promotion Policy
- Agro-Food Statistics Development Plan
- Korea's Countermeasures on Agricultural Trade Liberalization
- Overview of Agricultural Situation and Policy in Korea

Philippines

- Agricultural Tariffication Act: Tariff in Lieu of Quantitative Import Restriction
- The Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997: A Collective Approach to Competitiveness
- Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law: The Long Road to Agrarian Reform in the Philippines
- The Philippine Fisheries Code: National Policy for Sustainable Fisheries

- An Overview of Policies and Public Sector Investment in Philippine Agriculture

Taiwan

- Coping with Climate Change and Ensuring Food Security
- The Farmers Academy Ushers in the Agriculture Era
- Farmers' Academy
- Land Revitalization to Boost Food Sufficiency Capacity
- Golden Agricultural Corridor Plan
- Establishing Agricultural Cloud Services
- Free Economic Demonstration Zone to Accelerate the Internalization of Taiwan's Agriculture
- Free Economic Demonstration Zone—Value-Added Agriculture
- Strategies and Measures for Agricultural Trade Liberalization in Taiwan
- Comprehensive Agricultural Policies in Taiwan

The FFTC AP website, as the Center management explains, is a work in progress and hopes to encourage the participation of its online visitors. The Center welcomes feedback, comments and suggestions so it can fulfill its objectives and serve its clientele better.

Source: FFTC Newsletter 2013/180

Reforming Japan's farming sector

The Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives (JA Zenchu) has announced a reform plan aimed at making Japan's farming sector more competitive. But a government panel on deregulation has dismissed the plan as inadequate. Zenchu should come up with a more drastic, effective plan that would contribute to revitalizing the nation's agriculture business and farmland communities.

Japan's farming population is shrinking and graying. According to the agriculture ministry, the average age of 1.74 million active farmers who engage in agriculture as their primary work reached 66.5 in 2013. The total

area of abandoned agricultural fields amounted to 400,000 hectares — equivalent to the area of all of Shiga Prefecture — in 2010. These figures underline the urgency of reform efforts.

Although there are farmers who have management awareness and are making efforts to reduce production costs by increasing the scale of their operations, their voices are not fully reflected in decisions by agricultural cooperatives. This is because farmers who rely on other jobs for their main source of income as well as people who engage in farming as a side job make up a majority among full members of the cooperatives.

Zenchu's reform plan says it will tap more full-time farmers to key positions in agricultural cooperatives, but it needs to go further and speed up the organizational reforms by setting specific targets on getting the dedicated farmers to join its decision making.

To boost the revenue of farmers, they need to engage not only in production of agricultural products but also in processing and marketing. Zenchu needs to put its words into action to expand cooperation with businesses such as food makers to use their knowhow and technologies to make up for the lack of knowledge on the part of many farmers on how to commercialize their products.

With the aging of Japan's population and low

Continued on page 9



Reforming

... Continued from page 8

birthrate, demand at home for agricultural products is not expected to rise in the future. Zenchu's plan calls for increasing annual exports of Japanese farm products tenfold by 2020 to tap growing demand in overseas markets.

So far, farm exports have been pursued independently by individual agricultural cooperatives, and it would be a challenge for Zenchu to coordinate such efforts under a unified strategy. Cooperation with general trading houses, which have detailed knowledge of consumers' needs in other countries, should be explored.

There is criticism that farm cooperatives have deviated from their original purpose of guiding and promoting farming, and are focusing increasingly on financial services. In 2009, full members of the cooperatives — those who engage in farming — were outnumbered by associate members who do not engage in farming but use the cooperatives' financial services. With outstanding deposits totaling ¥92 trillion, they are comparable in size to a megabank.

Zenchu's plan does not include reform of the financial services division, which now constitutes a major source of profit for the group. Zenchu leaders say financial services are an integral part of its support for member farmers.

But the group does need to improve the management and supervision of its financial business. In February, Norinchukin Bank (Central Cooperative Bank for Agriculture and Forestry) reported 861 cases of embezzlement involving its employees, with damage reaching some ¥18.7 billion.

Reform of the nation's farm sector is also being discussed by the government's regulation panel and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. The national headquarters of farm cooperatives should make serious efforts not only to make Japan's agriculture competitive but also to make it attractive to young workers while protecting the environment and landscapes by carefully listening to opinions from various quarters.

Source: *Japan Times*, April 25, 2014



COA targets Taiwan leisure farms for development

Taiwan's leisure farms are to be promoted as tourist attractions with the goal of generating NT\$11 billion (US\$363.1 million) in revenues under an ROC Council of Agriculture (COA) plan announced February 6, 2014.

The COA said the plan will integrate high-quality leisure farms around Taiwan, nurture professionals in the sector, improve services, develop diverse products and expand the market. In addition, it has approved 75 areas as designated leisure agriculture sites, 317 farms as tourism facilities and provided advice and support for the launch of 140 country-themed cooking classes.



More visitors from home and abroad will sample the delights of Taiwan's leisure farms once the COA's tourism promotion plan takes effect.

COA minister Chen Bao-ji said tourist visits to leisure farms in Taiwan increased from 9.59 million in 2008 to 20 million in 2013. International tourist visits jumped from 63,700 to 260,000 over the same period, he added.

Hualien in eastern Taiwan and Taitung in southeastern Taiwan were the big draws, with 1.2 million tourist visits were made to leisure farms in the areas last year, according to Chen.

The minister said the COA is also working to promote fishing tourism.

More than 1.5 million tourist visits for whale watching are recorded each year at Wushih Harbor in Yilan County, northeastern Taiwan, Chen said, adding that it is a big market with enormous potential.

As the COA develops fishing tourism, it will seek to enhance local manufacturing and consumption, and boost employment in fishing villages around Taiwan, Chen said.

Source: *Taiwan Today*, February 7, 2014

Global recognition for traditional farming systems in China, Iran and South Korea

Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) urges further protection of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems for sustainability, food security, livelihoods and culture

Six traditional farming systems in China, Iran and South Korea known for their unique characteristics and approaches to sustainability have been designated Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) by FAO.

They include Iran's Qanat Irrigation system, an ancient network of farms that have survived for nearly three millennia; a 22-thousand-kilometer system of black stone walls built from volcanic rock in Jeju, South Korea; and the traditional Gudeuljang Irrigated rice terraces in Cheongsando, South Korea.

Also on the list are a trio of sites in China: the unique Xinghua Duotian Agrosystem, famous for its method of water-land utilization; the historic Jasmine and Tea Culture System of Fuzhou City; and, the Jiaxian Traditional Chinese Date Gardens.

The sites were officially recognized during the 28-29 April meeting of the GIAHS Scientific and Steering Committee at FAO headquarters in Rome.

These new designations bring the number of GIAHS systems to a total of 31 sites located in 14 countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. The sites are considered models of innovation, sustainability and adaptability, delivering important benefits to the ecosystem.

FAO's Deputy Director General-Coordinator, Natural Resources, Maria Helena Semedo, called for designation of more such sites around the world and concrete action to improve conservation of, and sharing of knowledge from, their time-honored methods.

"Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) have been forged over centuries, capitalizing on the accumulated experiences of rural communities and indigenous peoples across the world," Semedo said, adding that it was fitting the systems were being recognized during the International Year of Family Farming.

"Besides providing multiple goods and services, food, and livelihoods security, GIAHS systems have resulted in the preservation of significant agrobiodiversity, resilient ecosystems, outstanding landscapes, and a valuable cultural heritage," she said.

Conservation for a more sustainable future

The Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Partnership Initiative was launched by FAO in 2002 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

FAO later began pilot GIAHS programs in six countries -- Algeria, Chile, China, Peru, the Philippines

and Tunisia, starting in 2005. During the two-day meeting, participants reported on these pilot experiences and shared lessons learned through work conducted at the local and national levels on a range of interventions -- including capacity building and policy advocacy.

The Steering Committee considered new sites for potential inclusion in GIAHS and held extensive discussions on how to further develop GIAHS' efforts. They also discussed strengthening and expanding the GIAHS sites and work program, in order to ensure the safeguarding and dynamic conservation of unique agricultural systems around the world.

GIAHS' work with governments and communities is supported through FAO programs and grants from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Government of Germany, and other partners.



The Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Partnership Initiative was launched by FAO in 2002.

More about the new GIAHS sites

The new GIAHS sites include three in China, one in Iran and two in South Korea:

China - Jasmine and Tea Culture System of Fuzhou City

The Chinese people have cultivated jasmine for over 2000 years, but Fuzhou is famous for its jasmine due to its favorable climate and its invention of the tea-scenting method. Since jasmine and tea trees grow in different environments, the people of Fuzhou have shaped vertical landscapes in which they are able to grow both tea and jasmine on separate levels and in different microclimates in a vertical landscaping system.

.... Continued on page 11

Global recognition

... Continued from page 10

China - Jiaxian Traditional Chinese Date Gardens

The Jujube is a unique date species native to China. Located in the Jinshaan Canyon at the middle reach of the Yellow River, the Jia County is recognized as the place with the longest history of jujube cultivation, lasting more than one thousand years and including the whole process of domestication of the wild sour jujube to the cultivated plant. Jia County is prone to frequent drought, making the jujube trees “life-saving plants” for local families. The fruit trees also play a key environmental role, preventing sandstorms and conserving water and soil on the sparsely vegetated plateau.

China - Xinghua Duotian Agrosystem

People call Xinghua the “city with a thousand islets,” due to its stunning network of raised, cultivated fields surrounded by water. The Xinghua area was located in low-lying land for centuries and suffered frequent floods from its many lakes. The people of Xinghua built the fields with wooden supports and stacks of mud, turning the ample water supply into an irrigation system.



Jasmine tea produced at one of the newest GIAHS sites in China.



Iran - Qanat Irrigated Agricultural Heritage Systems of Kashan, Isfahan Province

The Qanat Irrigation technology and related knowledge system in Iran date back to at least 800 BC and the Kashan region has one of the oldest Persian agriculture systems irrigated by Qanats. The Qanat system has sustained food security and livelihoods by providing a reliable source of water to traditional family farmers in mostly dry areas, where farming would be impossible otherwise.

Korea – Cheongsando

In the 16th century, residents of the Cheongsando group of islands began using local stone to create a system of terraced rice fields that are irrigated by a unique, underground system. Faced with rocky, sandy soil and a scarcity of water, residents built the culverts as aqueducts that could both provide and drain away water. The Gudeuljang Irrigated Rice Terraces are found throughout Cheongsando, a group of 14 islands covering about 43 square kilometres. Farmers from different paddies join efforts in a cooperative-style system to maintain the infrastructure and to make decisions about communal water use.

Korea – Jeju

The volcanic island of Jeju is located in the southernmost part of the Korean Peninsula with sandy, rocky soil from which water tends to drain away. People used the stones in the soil to build a more than 22,000 kilometer-long series of fences as windbreaks and to stem the loss of water and soil, preserving local biodiversity in the process.

Protected by the Jeju Batdam walls, agriculture on Jeju Island has survived natural disasters for more than one-thousand years, though it now faces newer challenges like widespread urbanization.

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, May 1, 2014

Going nuts? Turkey looks to pistachios to heat new eco-city

By Fulya Ozerkan



ANKARA--Pistachios are already a key ingredient in Turkish baklava, but the country may now have found a new way to exploit the nuts known as “green gold” — by using their shells to heat a new eco-city.

Officials are currently examining plans to build the country’s first ecological city with buildings both private and public heated by burning pistachio shells.

And there can be few better locations for such a project than Gaziantep — the south-eastern region close to the Syrian border which produces thousands of tonnes of the nut every year.

“Gaziantep’s potential in pistachio production is known, as well as its considerable amount of pistachio shells waste,” said Seda Muftuoglu Gulec, a green building expert for the municipality.

“We are planning to obtain biogas, a kind of renewable energy, from burning pistachio shells,” Gulec told AFP.

“We thought the ecological city could be heated by burning pistachio shells because when you plan such environment-friendly systems, you take a look at natural resources you have,” she said.

“If the region was abundant in wind power, we would utilize wind energy.”

The pistachio-heated new city would encompass 3,200 hectares and house 200,000 people. It would be located 11 kilometers (6 miles) from the province’s capital city, also named Gaziantep.

“Imagine it just like a separate city,” Gulec said.

Pistachio Country

If the project bears fruit, pistachio shells formerly regarded as waste could become a new form of energy.

Turkey is one of the world’s biggest producers of pistachios, along with Iran, the United States and Syria, according to the U.N.’s Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Last year, it exported 6,800 tonnes of the nut, generating approximately US\$80 million in income, up from 4,010 tonnes and US\$50 million in 2010, according to the Southeast Anatolia Exporters Union.

Gaziantep alone exported 4,000 tonnes last year, Mehmet Kahraman, from the union said.

A pilot project for the new city will run in a small 55-hectare area, before rolling out across the entire city if successful.

The potential of pistachio shells was first uncovered by French environmental engineering company Burgeap which reported last year that the local variety known as Antep was the most feasible source of energy in the region.

Burgeap said as much as 60 percent of the area’s heating could be met from renewable energy resources.

The project is still pending approval from local authorities.

While Gulec declined to provide a firm timeline, she said that if officials at the municipal level reach an agreement — and if private land owners are convinced — it will be implemented in a “very short period of time.”

Source: Agence France-Presse (AFP), April 21, 2014 ■



Independent
Evaluation ADB

No Time for Complacency in Asia’s Food Security Challenge

Asia’s economies coped fairly well with the food crisis of 2007–2012, but stagnating agricultural productivity and increasingly extreme weather are putting the region at great risk of sustained higher level food prices, says a report on food security in Asia.

Upward pressure on basic food grain food prices is easing and, though they are higher than before the crisis, there are indications that prices will stabilize in the coming years. But these are not grounds for complacency, warns the Asian Development Bank’s Independent

Evaluation Department.

Its study, Food Security Challenges in Asia, takes stock of the vulnerabilities that caused the crisis and their implications. It identifies two major threats to food security: the long slowing in Asian wheat and rice productivity growth due to falling investment in agriculture, and the effects of climate change.

“Further high volatility in food prices is likely unless there is a significant response from governments,

... Continued on page 13

No Time for Complacency

... Continued from page 12

development institutions and the private sector to markedly increase agricultural productivity across Asia,” says Independent Evaluation’s director-general Vinod Thomas.

“But climate change may well prove to be the biggest threat to food security in the next 10 to 20 years; indeed, it’s already having measurable adverse impacts in Asia,” says Thomas.

After decades of declining real prices of basic food commodities, international prices of rice, wheat and corn accelerated sharply from 2006. Prices spiked twice: first, in 2008, led mainly by rice; then corn and wheat prices peaked again in mid-2012 before moderating. Rice prices moved higher up to late 2012, but have gradually declined by about 10% since early 2013.

“Over the last century, price spikes have occurred roughly every 30 years,” say the study’s task manager Andrew Brubaker and consultant Fred Roche. “What is changing are the much tighter links between food, energy and financial markets. Fuel and fertilizer costs are ‘driving’ food prices more than ever and speculative investment on commodity markets is an increasing source of potential price volatility.”

The study stresses that for all major food crops there is potential with existing technology to raise productivity in land and water use where the yield gap remains large. Farmers in much of Asia are still rarely able to achieve more than 80% of potential yields due, among other things, to pests, droughts, and economic constraints, such as low prices for certain basic crops.

Yet, public spending on agricultural research has plateaued, and while international funding for agriculture has grown, a concern is whether it will reach an adequate level and be sustained.

“Asia faces a witch’s brew of supply and demand factors in food security,” says Brubaker. “On the supply side are overexploited natural resources, including growing water scarcity, and the increasingly tangible impacts of climate change. On the demand side, Asia is becoming more urban and prosperous, which bring more diversified food requirements.”

Sustained investment is needed in agriculture to adapt to the effects of climate change. “This is a pressing issue for today, not a distant threat, and needs to be addressed as part of a country’s overall climate strategy integrating adaptation and mitigation,” says Brubaker.

Evidence from research, ranging from studies conducted in large geographical areas to the household level, compellingly argues that climate change affects agriculture in a wide range of economies, crops and farming systems over and above the dramatic effects of floods and droughts.



“It is becoming increasingly evident that measures to adapt to climate change—first and foremost through adaptation of farming systems and rural communities—will be fundamental to long-run efforts to ensure food security at both the national and household levels,” says the study.

Volatile food prices not only threaten Asia’s dramatic progress in reducing poverty, but add impetus to concerns over rising inequality in the region at a time when achieving inclusive growth has become a cornerstone of national development plans in many emerging countries.

Despite rapid economic growth, Asia remains home to 67% of the world’s hungry, some 552 million people, and more than 900 million who subsist on less than \$1.25 a day.

Says Thomas, “This raises the question of whether government food policies need rethinking in a less secure world facing the dilemma of high food prices hurting consumers in the short run, but low prices not providing an incentive for farmers to increase productivity.”

“At the end of the day, while recognizing the merits of open trade at the global level, the study recommends getting country policy choices right. These include incentives for raising productivity, safety nets for the poor, and predictable trade policies to ensure food security.”

To download the study, visit: <http://www.adb.org/documents/food-security-challenges-asia> and click on the PDF.

About Independent Evaluation at the Asian Development Bank

Asian Development Bank’s Independent Evaluation, reporting to the Board of Directors through the Development Effectiveness Committee, contributes to development effectiveness by providing feedback on ADB’s policies, strategies, operations, and special concerns in Asia and the Pacific.

Source: *The Asian Development Bank, October 30, 2013* ■

Think Differently for Asia's Water, Food, and Energy Security - ADB President

It is critical that Asia's precious but increasingly scarce water resources are managed in a coordinated way to ensure the region has not only sufficient water but also enough food and energy to meet its needs, Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Takehiko Nakao said on February 6, 2014.

"We need to think differently about water and its uses for food and energy production—and take action,"

Mr. Nakao told delegates in a keynote speech at the 14th Delhi Sustainable Development Summit in New Delhi.

Asian Water Development Outlook 2013 notes that 36 of ADB's 48 Asian member countries, including the People's Republic of China and India, have poor water security, with some nations facing imminent water crises that threaten their food and energy security. ADB's Food Security in Asia and the Pacific publication calls for a new approach in addressing malnutrition while the Energy Outlook for Asia and the Pacific looks at the policy, social, infrastructure, and technology issues affecting energy demand.

Mr. Nakao said it is critical to look at the links - or nexus - between water, food, and energy.

Excessive groundwater has been extracted in some places because subsidized energy allows for unrestricted use of electric power pumps. This in turn threatens water



*Asian Development Bank (ADB) President
Takehiko Nakao*

shortages for farmers and a lower power supply to other users. Such distorted pricing must disappear.

Meanwhile, rising energy use will squeeze already scarce water resources since large quantities of water are needed for extracting energy and refining fuels. As 80% of water use is for agriculture, water shortages lead to food shortages. The region must change its mindset to understand that "food wasted is

water and energy wasted," Mr. Nakao said.

He said river basin organizations that gather users, utilities, and government representatives are key to resolving competition between different uses for water. ADB is working with such organizations to encourage collaborative water management, set up new institutions with better data and information, and encourage innovative technologies. These activities are helping improve water security for more than 400 million people in around 30 rivers basins in the region.

The annual Delhi Sustainable Development Summit gathers policymakers, experts, and leaders from business, academia, and civil society to discuss sustainable development. The event is organized by The Energy and Resources Institute, based in New Delhi.

Source: The Asian Development Bank, February 6, 2014 ■

Investments in natural capital crucial to sustain economic growth in GMS

Member countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion face losing recent development gains unless they invest more to secure natural resource stocks, senior officials from the six countries heard at a meeting in Myanmar today.

"Every year the subregion loses 10–12% of its gross domestic product through the overexploitation of forests, land, wildlife, and fisheries as well as pollution to ecosystems. Compounded by climate change, this situation greatly threatens long-term prosperity, including food, energy and water security," Javed Mir, Director of the Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources division in the Southeast Asia Regional Department at the Asian Development Bank (ADB), said in welcoming remarks.

He added that more financing for the region's natural capital through biodiversity conservation, environmentally-friendly energy, and green agriculture is needed, but that other softer investments are also required.

Latest tools and technologies can help understand the extent and value of the region's forest, land, and water resources, as well as the demand and pressures on this

natural capital. The information must then be effectively integrated into national fiscal and investment planning systems.

Myanmar's Union Minister of Environment, U Win Tun, called for increased collaboration between primary sectors in the GMS, saying that together they have a "crucial role in ensuring food, energy, and water security."

The GMS is poised to grow 7.5% annually, doubling its economic output by 2020. While its economies are diversifying, projected growth will continue to be underpinned by natural resources.



.... Continued on page 13

APEC tackling new food security challenges

Issued by the APEC Policy Partnership on Food Security



APEC member economies are deepening public-private collaboration to improve industry production and supply chains to ensure access to safe, high quality food supplies across the Asia-Pacific, the world's largest agricultural marketplace.

Agricultural officials and industry representatives from the region, who met this week in Qingdao, underscored the importance of advancing innovative development within the sector to keep pace with changing regional and global conditions and meet long-term food security requirements. APEC Senior Officials are addressing related policy avenues here through May 15, 2014.

APEC economies account for about forty per cent of the world's population which is expected to jump from 7.2 billion today to 9.6 billion by 2050, according to the United

Nations. It is estimated that food production will need to increase by 70 per cent to meet demand at that time.

“Population growth and increasing domestic consumption as incomes around the region rise, characterized by a shift to more protein-rich diets, are compelling the public and private sectors to work together to meet the food needs of tomorrow,” said Dr Han Jizhi, Chair of the APEC Policy Partnership on Food Security.

“Industrialization and urbanization are intensifying but arable land and water resources continue to decrease and environmental pressures are mounting,” Dr Han noted. “The changing global landscape poses grave challenges to food production and access. If these are not properly addressed, the implications for food security in the region could be severe.”

APEC economies are working with the private sector to promote sustainable agricultural and fisheries development practices and facilitate investment and infrastructure growth. The APEC Policy Partnership on Food Security was created by the region's Leaders in 2011 as a channel for the sharing of industry data, best practices and policy ideas to support these objectives. It is now implementing an “APEC Food Security Roadmap Towards 2020.”

New seed varieties, better cultivation and enhanced irrigation and fertilization have greatly increased production capacity. Improving conditions for agricultural technology exchange, the adoption of better post-harvest management systems to reduce food losses and wastage, standards development and more barrier free supply chains are particular APEC focus areas.

“We are pursuing a comprehensive approach to public-private cooperation to boost food production capacity and ensure that food supplies move across the region efficiently, cheaply and safely,” Dr Han concluded. “Our aim is to keep prices in check and boost the health and nutrition of the people in our region.”

APEC Ocean-related Ministers will meet in Xiamen, China on 27-28 August, 2014. It will be followed by a gathering of APEC Food Security Ministers in Beijing on 18-19 September, 2014.



Investments in natural

... Continued from page 14

Recognizing the environmental costs of rapid economic development, GMS countries have put in place sustainable development and green growth strategies in recent years. However, operationalizing them remains a major challenge.

The “Managing Natural Capital to Ensure Food, Energy, and Water Security” meeting was attended by more than 150 delegates, including senior agriculture, energy, and environment officials from the six GMS countries, as well as representatives from ADB and other major development organizations. It is a lead up event to the 4th GMS Environment Ministers Meeting to be held in February 2015, also in Nay Pyi Taw.

The event was co-organized by Myanmar's Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, as well as ADB's Core Agriculture Support Program and Core Environment Program.

The GMS countries are Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

Source: *The Asian Development Bank, March 25, 2014* ■

Source: *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), May 14, 2014* ■

Published by the Secretariat, Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry

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