



Spore

Ecoagriculture	
<i>The music of soundness</i>	1
Food additives	
<i>Old foods for new</i>	3
Agricultural press	
<i>Medium or mediator?</i>	4
IN BRIEF	6
LINKS	10
PUBLICATIONS	11
BETWEEN US	14
VIEWPOINT	
<i>Trade negotiations</i>	
<i>Do you play patience?</i>	16

Website: spore.cta.int



In this issue

The way something looks and feels is often telling in whether or not we

accept it, and texture is an important topic in this Spore. We offer you a major article about food additives and their role not only in preserving food but also in improving its texture. With 'natural' additives often grown in ACP countries, they offer special opportunities for ACP farmers. We pay tribute to farmers' newspapers, and how they add texture to the information fabric spread before their readers. And the main article on a new way of blending agricultural and ecological goals could add a new feeling to development policies.

The real piece of feeling is the Viewpoint on the art of negotiating ACP interests in world trade. Add these all together to the usual mix of news, views and reviews, and we believe that you have the Spore you have come to want. So, once more, with feeling.

Illustration: Tami Andon / Source: Betty Press, Panos Pictures



Ecoagriculture

The music of soundness

After a generation of fresh and not so fresh farming philosophies which have failed to meet the challenges of food security and biodiversity, is the newcomer – ecoagriculture – likely to work?

If music be the food of love, what shall we make of agriculture? The love of food or, more likely, the source of food for the body and some for the soul? Individually, socially, culturally, economically?

Can we, just for a few minutes, regard agriculture as an orchestra with a choir? Where the total agricultural output is the product of the combined efforts of all the instruments and voices, and the people who play and sing. Imagine that the string instruments and players are the cultivators, with their seeds, scythes and stores. The wind instruments and players could be the animal breeders and their livestock; the percussion section the traders, processors, bankers and researchers; the choir a motley crew of the voices of extension workers, communicators, political institutions, local communities and civil society representatives. Got the picture?

Most orchestras have an overall leader, and section leaders. They are entrusted, in our agricultural analogy, with sectoral coordination and overall leadership and policy guidance, aiming at a harmonious and coherent output.

In agriculture, as in music, there are many different tunes, although some fundamentalists insist that there is only one basic tune in the world. Fundamentalists in agriculture could, arguably, advance a similar thesis, that there is only one agriculture, in the time-honoured definition of the "science, art and business of cultivating the soil, producing crops and raising livestock."

But just as there are many forms and approaches in music, so in agriculture we have commercial, emerging and subsistence farming; cash-crop, plantation, free-range, crop-livestock, slash-and-burn



Micro-dykes save water and stop erosion at the front line in Mali.

Photo G. Pirozzi © Poros Pictures

systems; organic, low-input, zero-tillage; sound, ecological, permaculture approaches. And so on. (See some definitions in *In Brief*, page 9)

The latest approach is known as ecoagriculture, and it lends itself particularly well to the musical analogy, since it seeks to harmonise agricultural and ecological needs.

Much hope is being placed on ecoagriculture as a way of meeting the challenges of food security and adequate nutrition. The notion was originally defined in the late 1990s as “land-use systems designed to produce both human food and ecosystem services, including habitat for wild biodiversity”. As it has moved towards the centre in current agricultural thinking, it has been weighed down with a fairly hefty definition, worthy of any solid symphony: “Ecoagriculture is sustainable agriculture and associated natural resource management systems that embrace and simultaneously enhance productivity, rural livelihoods, ecosystem services and biodiversity.”

Farmer, fauna, flora

The notion is a noble attempt to move beyond the confrontation between, on the one hand, agricultural practice and the demand for food and, on the other, the importance of preserving biodiversity and a rich, ever-evolving diversity of fauna and flora. The positions are often characterised, on the side of agriculture, by its spread into new areas which are either vulnerable and prone to swift degradation or are natural habitats such as forests whose clearance destroys biodiversity. On the side of fauna and flora, the standard policy is to create parks and reserves and strive for an accommodation of or with local communities. Each sod turned, each river dammed, each tree felled, each flock fenced in resounds with a thump, much like a beat on a poorly tuned drum.

In many national and international fora, the two parties seem to be locked in an endless wrestling match. *Spore* has long put forward the position that, when push comes to shove, it is food production that should rise above biodiversity concerns. (See ‘First, Food!’ in *Spore* 95). This, though, is ultimately

an untenable argument. When one stands back from the tussle, it becomes clear that a drastic shift has to take place in policy thinking and in both agricultural and ecological practices. No longer can the goal be an uneasy co-existence of the two parties; it has to be their co-habitation. Instead of a stand-off, far better to seek to share “common ground, common future”, a phrase borrowed from the title of a recent report sponsored by IUCN – the World Conservation Union.

Which way to turn?

That report, which included the definition of ecoagriculture quoted earlier, stresses that many farmers, especially those in intensive farming systems, have faced a difficult trade-off between production and biodiversity. “If they want to protect a little more biodiversity, they must sacrifice a lot of production; if they want a little more production, they must sacrifice a lot of biodiversity.” For poor producers in developing countries, the options have not been benign: “a lack of advanced technologies often leads to biodiversity loss – more land and resources are used for agriculture than would be needed using more sustainable and productive techniques. In more highly capitalised farming, it is often an excess of modern techniques – methods that create too much pollution or compact the soil – that leads to the loss of biodiversity.”

The challenge, from a policy perspective, is how to manage ecosystems as a whole, with protected areas as reservoirs of wild biodiversity within a ‘matrix’ of land managed to protect its habitat value while also providing food and income. How can agriculture gain a much higher profile in biodiversity planning? The report stresses that “when farmers, conservationists, and policy-makers manage landscapes with both food production and species conservation as essential values, dramatic progress can be made on both fronts.”

Open door for farmers’ groups

As usual, it is at the institutional level that much has to be achieved. There are already helpful signs of success from new approaches, many in ACP countries, which could encourage new rural institutions, such as federations of farmers’ organisations, to join the established bodies in working out practical approaches. Among the measures put forward by the ecoagriculture community are the reduction of habitat-destructive practices by improving yields on existing land; the acceptance of wildlife habitats on farms; increasing protected wetland areas alongside farming areas (as in Zimbabwe and Senegal); mimicking natural habitats by integrating productive perennial plants (as in South Africa); and insisting on improved fallow periods which can support more wild species than continuous annual planting (as in Zambia and Kenya).

One type of agriculture which is often offered as a fundamental solution in such approaches – organic – is not necessarily part of the ecoagriculture set of approaches. The advances made in sustained yield increases in what was previously regarded as a low-yield form of farming do make the organic approach an important one, but it is not, warns the Common Ground report, the only one. “In many cases, farms where agrochemicals are used can still protect precious habitat through careful management (such as using filter strips to prevent excess nutrients from entering waterways), supplemented with other strategies, such as increased crop diversity or establishment of wildlife corridors. In impoverished soils, such as many found in Africa, some chemical fertiliser is often needed in combination with organic nutrients to build up soil organic matter for sustainable production. Strategic, but limited, use of non-persistent pesticides is part of many integrated pest management systems.”

Could ecoagriculture open a new chapter in agricultural productivity and biodiversity management? Could it orchestrate a new overture? Its willingness to overcome dilemmas, instead of feeding them, is refreshing, and augurs well, as does its clear aversion to purism. Within very clear limits, it is open to consideration of chemical inputs and some highly controlled applications of genetically modified crops. Like many emerging schools of agricultural thought, including organic and permaculture, it is strong on mood and weak on the maths. If it can produce the right equations that reassure farmers about the risks involved, and planners about the way it enables sustainable improvements in productivity, then it will attract many devotees.

In an effort to move the approach along, a coalition known as Ecoagriculture Partners has been launched by the agricultural research advocates Future Harvest and IUCN. It may seem to have come from the top and, to be sure, it is not a grassroots initiative. Yet it has opened its doors to cooperation with farmers’ organisations, producer groups and the progressive agricultural media. As the song says, ‘Walk Right In’.

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Ecoagriculture seeks a balanced set of land-use systems for producing human food and managing biodiversity. The key challenges are:

- gaining acceptance of the new mix of ideas;
- mobilising resources for capacity building;
- moving to the co-habitation, not co-existence, of agriculture and biodiversity.

Old foods for new

For producers and consumers, the food experience is about taste, and looks and texture too. If you can grow the additives they want, you're onto a winner.

We share this planet with a nation whose culture has created a demand for microwave ovens in cars, for radio-frequency ovens that cook and brown in seconds and for new levels of consistency and convenience from the food manufacturer. We may regret this estrangement from simple, sometimes slow, food and simple cooking, but it is part of reality in the market of urban diets.

Most foods simply do not have the consistent quality that these markets now demand. And so additives are used to smooth out variations in food characteristics. Among the many definitions of 'food additive', a decent but distilled one (adapted from Codex Alimentarius, see [Links](#)) is "a substance or ingredient not normally present in that food that is added to enhance the quality or safety of that food". This covers a wide range of substances in the product developer's cupboard. Some are synthetic, based on chemical mixes, such as those extracted from coal tar; others are naturally-occurring, such as berry juice. Some additives such as sugar and salt are very familiar; others less so, such as calcium disodium ethylenediamine tetraacetate (E 385), used in canned shellfish but banned in some countries. Additives are commonly classified by their function in foods – colouring, emulsifying, preserving, flavouring or extending.

Molecules make a meal

About 10 synthetic colours find their way into our food, with tiny quantities being required to achieve the required cosmetic effect. Although approved under the strict safety conditions set by the *de facto* standard-setter, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), many of these colours are derived from distillates of coal tar, other components of which make toxicologists nervous. The list is shortening as more natural colour alternatives are approved.

Most naturally occurring foods contain both water and oil (or fat) in some sort of stable association – an emulsion. Emulsions are responsible for some of the attributes of food relating to texture and mouth-feel. Flavour additives tend to be more soluble in lipids (fats) than in water, and they retain the flavours we enjoy most in the so-called non-aqueous phase – the

non-watery part. Emulsifiers are used by food scientists in such foods as chocolate, salad cream, sausage and ice-cream.

Many emulsions are unstable, as when cream rises to the surface of milk. They can be stabilised by increasing the viscosity – the clinging nature – of the aqueous phase in the emulsion. This prevents oil droplets coalescing, and involves using such stabilisers as starch, guar gum or proteins such as gelatin. The slightest addition of, say, a thickener known as carrageenan, derived from a simple moss, can make the difference between a consistent, and therefore saleable, bottled sauce and an unsettled, unsaleable one.

Preservatives are a more controversial form of additives. These are anti-microbial compounds which retard microbial growth. Suspicion surrounds preservatives because they interrupt the biochemical processes of cells. Sceptics also argue that if foods were diluted less they would not require preservatives.

Other additives such as flavourings are either extracts or synthetic 'look-alike' analogues of natural flavours. Compounds such as acids, sweeteners and flavour enhancers, such as monosodium glutamate (the famous MSG on Chinese restaurant menus), boost naturally occurring flavours. Their use as extenders for more expensive ingredients has besmirched the name of additives, raising suspicions that additives are present to mask fraud.

True colours

Faced by a public wary of possible health risks in synthetic additives, and with the production costs of these additives rising, it is no wonder that many foods are enjoying new-found fame as additive substitutes. Turmeric (*Curcuma*) and beetroot (*Beta vulgaris*) have been propelled to stardom because of their colouring properties – yellow and dark red, respectively, although they fade when exposed to light over long periods. Dried carrot powder, with its beta carotene components, makes a bright orange-red colouring, but it too bleaches in light. A sturdier dark red colourant is amaranth (*Amaranthus* sp.) – just 1 part in 4,000 will turn a bland jelly dark red. Also stable in light, but prone to darkening in darkness, are the theaflavins in tea which give a rust-red colour.



Photo P. Kannakaran © Hall Studio



Photo B. Gibbons © Hall Studio



Photo N. Carlin © Hall Studio

Amaranth leaves (top) have been in use for thousands of years as colouring, the resin of liquorice plants for chewing, and the bright powder of turmeric roots as a saffron substitute

The use of purely chemical additives is also retreating in the face of equally effective natural sources. Peanut and soy flour, for example, are rich sources of the baker's widely used natural emulsifier lecithin, and the resulting emulsions can be stabilised using okra or tamarind extracts. Beware, however: peanut derivatives may face problems in such international markets as the EU which have raised barriers against peanuts on health grounds.

Grow into additives

It is, indeed, market forces and trade regulations which will dictate the future of additives. Most industrial producers, partly in awe of the 'organic' genre, know that the discovery of a safe and effective natural alternative will spell the demise of their synthetic one. The transnational corporation Roche, for example, searches continuously for natural ingredients through bio-prospecting.

'Natural' does not mean safe, however. Mildly sweet glycyrrhizin from licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) has disturbing physiological effects, and the steviol glycoside sweetener from the honey leaf (*Stevia rebaudiana*) (the topic of the phenomenally popular article on *Stevia* in *Spore* 94) is endorsed by the FDA not as a food additive but as a dietary supplement. Much of the agitated debate around *Stevia* as an additive is about how health laws are applied, allegedly, as a way to protect trade interests.

Additives make for a complex topic, biologically speaking. Yet, economically speaking, they add value to existing foods, making them last longer, go further and have greater appeal to more customers. The move towards using natural alternatives presents an opportunity for many an ACP producer, covering much more than ACP foods alone.

See [Links](#), page 10

Agricultural press

Medium or mediator?

We, in agriculture, shall not be where we must without the passion of the agricultural press of ACP countries. Read all about it.

Six senses, standards and a pen

Maintaining high standards is essential in the press, agricultural versions included. Harvests, incomes, communities, sectors, animals, ecosystems, national economies and more all depend on them. That credo of reliability overrides any of the temptations of prepared stories, per diems or sheer laziness that sometimes dangle in front of a weary or weak writer.

As well as general principles, each sector or publication has its own codes. *Spore* writers, for example, are implored to use six senses in researching stories, to triple-check references and to treat a press release as a possible point of departure for a story and not as a model of the final text. That the founders of the World Summit Task Force of Agricultural Media Professionals (see *Spore* 101) made such ethics a cornerstone of their policies suggests room for professional improvement here.

The advent of more information through the World Wide Web has made the life of an honest journalist harder. "The Web is a maze of dead-ends, scams and mis-information. We try to sort out the credible sites, based on information from journalists, researchers, etc in the news industry. It's a communal effort." Welcome words from *The Journalist's Toolbox*, recommended by RAP21, the African Press Network run by the World Association of Newspapers.

A future issue of *Spore* will cover resources and standards for agricultural journalists.

The end of the month is always a critical time in farming. It's the time to review sowing campaigns, check forage stocks, plan weeding, maintain tools and machines. Much depends on the weather, and on whether such inputs as fuels, fertiliser and cash are obtainable, all of them having become less reliable – with some believing that even the climate has been given a dose of structural adjustment, so variable has it become!

Depending on the nature of the agricultural business, salaries and bills are due to be paid, reports written, funding proposals delivered, even tax or insurance forms completed. All in all, a familiar pattern, shaped by deep-rooted farmer savvy and by bureaucracy, and often recorded in those little diaries known as farmers' almanacs (see green box).

Many drums, one beat

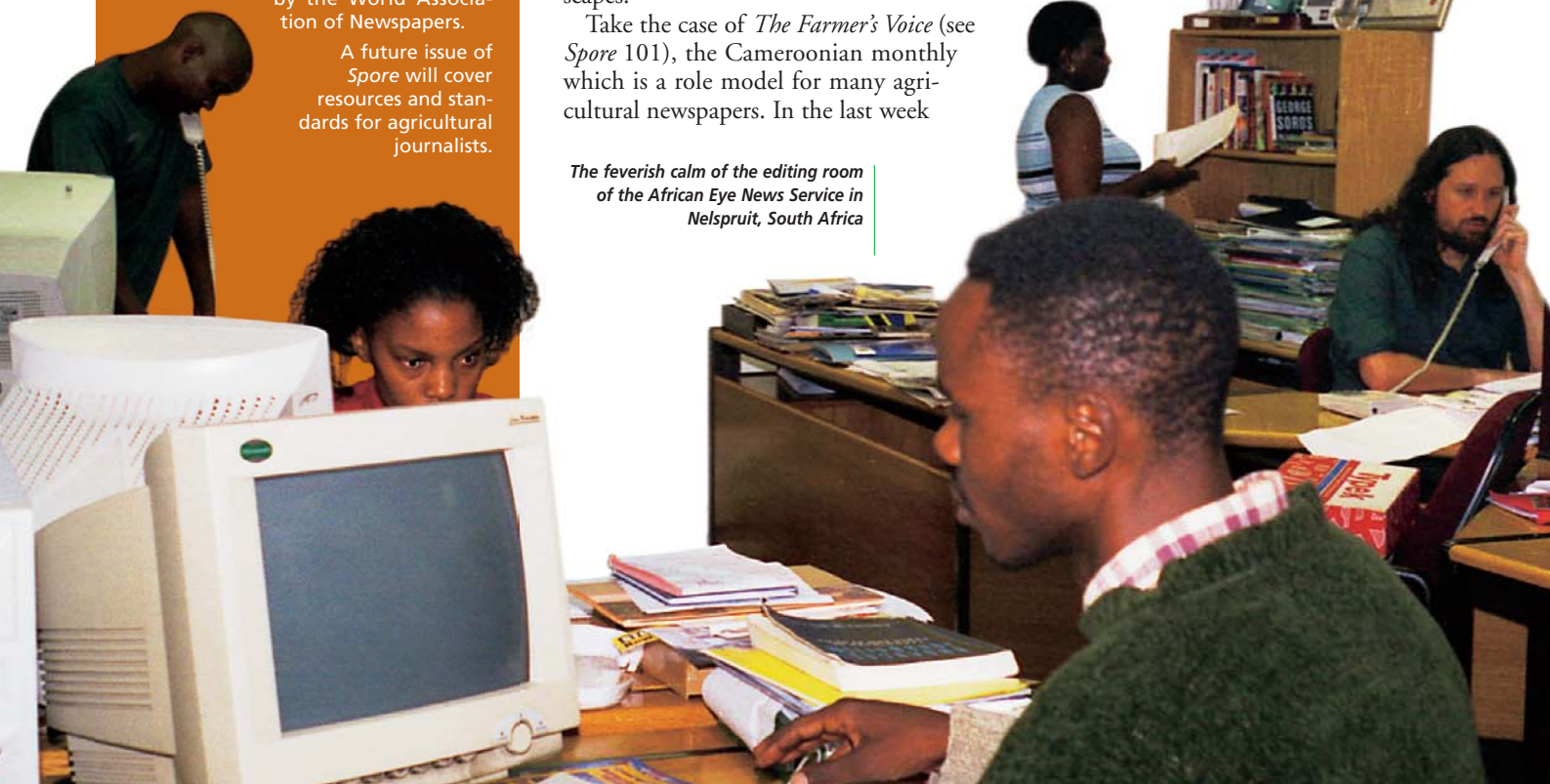
The same regularity, quarterly, monthly, weekly or even daily, dominates the life of a newspaper or magazine publisher. This holds whether you're in charge of a community broadsheet, or one of the recently emerged papers in many an ACP country which have been welcomed as flag-bearers of plurality and press freedom. And it also holds for the new wave of farmers' magazines sweeping through our rural landscapes.

Take the case of *The Farmer's Voice* (see *Spore* 101), the Cameroonian monthly which is a role model for many agricultural newspapers. In the last week

of each month, the editors of the French and English editions get together with the publisher and editor-in-chief, in their orderly and none-too-spacious offices in central Yaoundé, the nation's capital. So it was with their meeting at the end of February 2003. They reviewed last-minute adjustments to the layout and content of the March issue. Then they turned their minds to the April issue; they finalised stories; they selected as many readers' letters as they could; they discussed the impact of a recent *Spore* article about their Website; and they caught up on the report about the distribution of the February edition (see yellow box).

Similar scenes take place in the editorial offices of hundreds of agricultural periodicals across the globe, be it the editorial conference of the daily agricultural bulletin in Suva, Fiji, or *Spore's* own bi-monthly committee, described in *Spore* 99 and 101 respectively. Or the monthly sessions of the new *Farmers' Monthly* magazine, striving to develop a niche in South Africa's new sector of emerging farmers.

The feverish calm of the editing room of the African Eye News Service in Nelspruit, South Africa





Whose news?

How much are they all one of a kind, these newspapers and magazines? Some belong to a particular sector, such as *CitiNews* of the Citrus Growers Association of Belize or the well-endowed and colourful *Horticulture in Malawi* magazine. A few, such as *The African Farmer* and Benin's monthly *Agri-Culture*, are explicitly commercial, struggling to stay above the break-even point in a fragile market.

The standard model of an ACP farmers' magazine is not just about farming but about rural life and environments in general. An example is *Communautés Africaines*, published by the APICA NGO enterprise in Douala, Cameroon (again!), and approaching its third decade as a newsletter about small-scale agricultural technologies, with handy hints for improving village infrastructures in water supply, lighting or education. It has never erred from the classical model of a simple standard design,

Almanacs then and now

Almanacs, or yearly calendars, have been used by farmers and others dependent on natural cycles for thousands of years. The first versions, developed in what is now called the Near East, and in Egypt and Ethiopia, were notched sticks for measuring astrological changes and seasons.

Printed versions appeared in Europe in the 1480s, America in 1639: the African-American Benjamin Banneker's *Almanac*, published in 1791, was soon followed by the *Farmer's Almanac*, still published today. Gradually, almanacs grew into diaries full of tips on the best day to plant out seedlings, to harvest fruit, to check the livestock – a rich blend of scientific data and rural wisdom.

A leading contemporary almanac – not emulated elsewhere in ACP countries – is the *Tropical Farmers Almanac*, covering the Caribbean. It has less in the way of astrology than its predecessors, but is equally full of truisms ("many a bee has drowned in his own honey"). It brims with market information, input measurements, weather data, pesticide poison charts, export guides and monthly things-to-do lists per crop or vegetable.

▲ *Tropical Farmers Almanac* is published by Caribbean Marketing and Consulting, AMC Complex, 188 Spanish Town Road, Kingston 11, Jamaica.

once typed but now produced using simple desk-top publishing software. The *AgriPromo* bulletins of INADES-Formation in Côte d'Ivoire and *Ecoforum* from the Environment Liaison Centre International in Kenya have shown similar staying power. They are all driven by a service attitude, with an almost evangelical fervour, and external funding.

The most recent wave of publications has come from the now ubiquitous federations of farmers' organisations (FFO), typified by *La voix des producteurs*, produced by the Fédération des unions des producteurs du Bénin (FUPRO). They carry an FFO's multiple burdens, with an esoteric mix of market information, crop guidelines and reports on changes in the organisation. The same mixture is found in *Ground-Up* which promotes the messages of the Participatory Ecological Land-Use Management (PELUM) Association, a network of 130 FFOs and other civil society bodies in southern Africa.

As these federations grow into their multi-task roles of being service-provider in the village and field, and representative in local and national political fora, they will no doubt separate the institutional from the technical in their range of publications. These are best kept apart.

Do you believe?

What keeps these publications going? Faith, faith, and more faith. Their financial viability is their weakest point but the demand, if not a paying market, is strong. The sums are simple enough: major income does not come from sales, but from grants, loans and increasingly advertising. In a measured way, this is the only way to keep income at a level that will allow investment in new production technology, in the crucial distribution chain and in sustainable staffing.

Information is in better supply, in part through sharing news through the Internet. The transformation of information into knowledge is a skill that will develop as training in agricultural journalism and professional networks grow. As the mighty World Association of Newspapers is expected to conclude at its June 2003 meeting in Ireland on 'Strengthening the Future of Newspapers', the viability of any newspaper will depend on its ability to develop additional information services and use new media. Then it will thrive.

And in the brittle world of agricultural periodicals in ACP countries, thrive they must. When *Spore* interviewed the editor of *The Farmer's Voice* for this article, the talk was not about the newspaper's image or its editorial process. We talked for hours about how it is used by readers as a forum to settle, or record the settling of, the occasional tensions and stresses that are inevitable in the dynamics of local development initiatives. When readers make a mediator of the press, the publishers must make sure they stay in business.

Vital signs

There are many unsung heroes in the back offices of the agricultural media. Vital Okomé, of *The Farmer's Voice*, is typical: a lithe lad in his mid-20s, ambitious, dedicated, and a bit of a rap artist. In his mail room jammed full of orderly piles of back issues, he suddenly launches into a song-like chant. His job description, rap-style.

"OK, see, my job is to distribute the newspaper in the Centre province, which includes Yaoundé, but in fact I'm involved with all the copies, no matter their destination.

Near the end of each month, the production people call me and I take the print-copy off to the printers. Two or three days later, they call and I go off with my mate Bernard in one of the cars to collect the result – 16,000 copies. It takes a couple of trips to get them all back here – nearly 50 packs of 250 copies each.

First I pack up the parcels to go to the [10] regional offices like in Baffoussam and N'gaounderé [they get around 500] – they distribute copies locally, including to local government representatives. Nowadays a shipping company picks them up; before we used to take them to the railway station. That's made a big difference to us, even if the copies get there no faster.

The next day, I do the kiosks here in town. We used to have a list of 52, but we've cut it down to about 15 heavy sellers, some sell more than 100; in all, I sell 1,075 like this. They sell for FCFA 300 a copy, and they give me FCFA 225.

Then I go off to all the villages round-about, 50 in all; it takes a long day, dropping off 10 here, 20 there, to little stockists. I do two numbers together, and collect the money at the same time.

The postal subscribers – 280, including our friends abroad – take me a day to do what with all the folding, cutting the labels, sealing the envelope tight. I only get to the post office the day after.

Then it's time for subscribers here in Yaoundé, they've each paid FCFA 5,000 for a year, and I take them their copy by hand, one by one, knock knock, knock knock. I've got the labels and everything all sorted out by neighbourhood, and it still takes me 4 days to do them all.

Next, the bulk orders, like the offices of the German or Dutch development agencies, who take 70 and 50 each, and the institutional ones.

The National Assembly gets 180 copies, one for each member. The Office of the President takes 19, I take them there personally, they expect me. And the Prime Minister 5, Ministry of Culture 6, Justice 6, Industry and Commerce 7, External Affairs 8, Agriculture 6, Women's Affairs 6 ..."

"I finished all that today for the February issue," he beams. "Now I have to do my accounts for the petrol, wrappers and sticky tape, and sign off on the inventory [a painstakingly filled ledger of who got what]. Look, add them up, I did 3,303 copies this month in the province alone.

And tomorrow, I'm off back round the kiosks to make arrangements to collect their payments."

FCFA 650 = € 1

Oncho has gone

■ Onchocerciasis, known widely as river blindness, has practically disappeared in West Africa. After 28 years of axy, the programme to combat onchocerciasis (ONCHO) closed down on 6 December 2002. The programme prevented 300,000 cases of river blindness, and made it possible for 25 million hectares of fertile land to farmed in the 11 countries belonging to the programme: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. A separate African Programme to Combat Onchocerciasis (APCO) was launched in 1995 to cover the 19 other African countries which had not been part of ONCHO.

Development prize

■ The international King Baudouin Prize for Development has been awarded every 2 years since 1980. It is granted to a person or an organisation for their lasting and sustainable achievements in improving the quality of life in developing countries. Previous winners have been active in a wide range of areas: adult literacy, micro-enterprise loans, HIV/AIDS, agrarian reform, food security and vaccine development.

The next prize will be awarded at the end of 2004.

✉ The King Baudouin Foundation
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Calling young vets

Nearing the end of your veterinary studies, or just graduated? The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) regularly selects qualified young vets for internships of 1 to 6 months at their headquarters, although it offers no financial support. The internships focus on principal animal diseases, food safety, animal welfare, veterinary health standards in international trade, Website design and information systems.

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Email: oie@oie.int
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Cocoa plant good for forest

■ It has long been thought that cocoa plants have had a damaging effect on dense rain forests, but now it seems that planting them can help reforestation. According to research conducted in southern Cameroon by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), local farmers have a net positive impact on the environment whilst managing to grow food and cash crops. They grow their cocoa in an area of great biodiversity which is near the forest and contains a lot of fruit trees, medicinal barks and wood for carving. Furthermore, the thousands of hectares that have been laid bare by slash-and-burn are now put to use in a fallow system for growing cassava, groundnuts, maize and more.

But demand for food is still on the up, and the farmers find themselves having to make inroads into the forest. The researchers from IITA have been working with the



Small farmer, big contribution

farmers to intensify their work in the cultivated areas, and to convert fallow areas into permanent cropland. They are searching for the best way to grow cocoa trees in the forest, whilst growing annual crops to provide food and a cash income for the first few years, waiting for the cocoa trees to mature. The overall approach has several advantages: crops are being diversified, soils are being better protected, greenhouse gas emissions are being cut back and, since demand for cocoa is rising again, the basis is being laid for sustainable incomes.

The research is supported by two consortia, one for Alternatives to Slash-and-burn Agriculture, the other for Sustainable Permanent Crops.

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Marriage of medicines

■ The value of locally available herbs in cost-challenged health systems grows by the day. In several countries, herbal medicine is being matched up with conventional (also called modern, Western or allopathic) medicine and official medicinal research. In Mozambique, a government programme encourages liaison between traditional medical practitioners and its National Health Service; herbal and conventional medicines may now be put on a par with each other. A survey of medicinal herbs is in progress.

In South Africa, the role of traditional medicine has been recognised with the formation of a National Traditional Healers Council. Traditional healers have to sit qualifying examinations and those who pass receive certificates. Provincial and national structures are being set up and the Council is advising the South African government on traditional healing.

In Kenya, however, the government's intention to introduce herbal drugs in public hospitals has caused controversy. The Kenya Medical Association, allopathic to the core, claims that the

effectiveness of most herbal drugs has not been scientifically proven. But at the School of Alternative Medicine and Technology herbal practitioners can update their knowledge of traditional medicines, bringing it

in line with the demands of allopathic medical practice.

Herbal and allopathic remedies can work with each other, giving the patient the benefit of all-round treatment. And, in a sense, the 'marriage' between the two disciplines took place long ago – herbal plants are the basis of many conventional pharmaceutical drugs.

Beach doctor. A Sangoma woman waves the tail of a bull across a candle during a healing ceremony in Durban, South Africa.



Photo S. Harris / PetreNET Africa

Fresh fish



Photo Bernard Favier © Louma productions

Five of the original fish in Nzérékoré; thousands followed

■ A farm-based fish-farming project is making good headway in the forest area of Guinea, providing both additional income and proteins to local families. The area is poor in animal protein and fish is an essential source. Until now, local people have had to fall back on imported frozen fish, brought in through the port of Conakry, 1,000 km away. In 1999, a fish-farming project was set up in the department of Nzérékoré by APDRA, the association for fish farming and rural development in humid tropical Africa.

Drawing on its earlier experiences in Côte d'Ivoire, APDRA

focuses on extensive fish-rearing. Fish are raised, eating naturally, in ponds created in unused depressions in the landscape. The ponds cover an area of about 3,000 m², or 10 times the size of ponds used for intensive fish-rearing. This reduces the size of start-up investment and running costs. The association makes no financial contribution, leaving the farmers to meet their expenses. It does, however, provide the nursery fish and training and monitoring. The farmers have managed to make their activities viable, and a good complement to their other work.

Local consumers win too, preferring to buy the locally produced fish: 80% of the output is sold on the spot, and the rest is taken by nearby villages. At the end of 2002, when the project closed, the results were impressive: 50 farmers were fish-farming 15 hectares of fish ponds, on both extensive and intensive scales.

A transition phase will soon be completed and a new, 3-year project is set for launch later in 2003 with support from the French development agency AFD. It will cover a larger area. According to Christophe François, who has run the APDRA project for 3 years, the key to success is in the variety of models on offer: "show people a range of models, each one matching a certain type of farm. That's what makes it work, and that's why it needs time to take off."

APDRA, 3 square Guimard
F 78690 Voisins-le-Bretonneux
France
Fax: +33 1 42 37 88 65
Email: contact@apdra-f.com

Micrografts for mega jujube trees

■ With a variety of uses in dry areas, the jujube tree (*Ziziphus mauritania* Lam.) is always a candidate for propagation, and now micrografting techniques are offering prospects of massive production. The tree is very common in the Sahelian-Sudano belt of sub-Saharan Africa; its small fruits – also known as Chinese dates – are much liked and an important source of income. It has many other uses too, and is thus a good choice for reforestation, being able to contribute to environmental protection and to a reduction in poverty and malnutrition.

Grown wild in Africa, the jujube is a native of India where its fruits are 10 to 20 times larger. A group of researchers in Senegal are looking at how to introduce Indian varieties which are adapted to arid conditions. The technique of micrografting is a fast track to large-scale and rapid propagation – all in the short term.

From: Bois et Forêts des Tropiques,
2002, Number 272

V V Satyavathi, G L Sita et al
IIS-Bangalore, India
Email: sitagl@mcbl.iisc.ernet.in

Chickie Cola

■ Cola nutshells are a good foodstuff for poultry, small producers in Nigeria have discovered. Feeding hens this way releases more cereals for human consumption. The Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria confirms that ground cola nutshells can substitute up to 60% of the poultry's ration of maize.

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PMB 029, Festac Town
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After shrimps, tilapia

■ No doubt about it, Belize is working hard on its aquaculture. Shrimp production has more than doubled since 1998. In 2001, it almost reached the level of 4,000 t and generated revenues of \$US 50 million (€ 46 million). Further annual increases of more than 50% are expected until 2005. The aquaculture sector is diversifying too: in December 2002, a tilapia farm was opened. Occupying 160 hectares, initial production is set at 1,300 t, providing 80 jobs. It is planned to grow to a capacity of 2,600 t, and to employ 200 people.

Doing down drought

■ Developing food production despite droughts, that is the goal of DRENDA, the new Drought Research Network for Southern Africa. Membership is free and open to all.

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Namibia
Fax: +264 61 206 3791
Email: kchinsebu@unam.na

Protecting the Congo Basin

The Congo Basin Forests Partnership is now hard at work after its launch at the Johannesburg World Summit in September 2002. Its focal point is now the Conference of Ministers responsible for Central African Forests.

An implementation meeting was held in Paris in January 2003 with 14 governments participating, including six from the region (Cameroon, Congo, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon), plus representatives of the European Union, donors, the timber sector and NGOs.

The stakes are high: the preservation of the world's second largest forest area (2,300,000 km²) and its renowned biodiversity.

Pigeon Pea Leaves 1 – Rinderpest 0

■ Will the final whistle soon blow on rinderpest, one of the oldest known diseases of livestock? It can be eliminated by 2010, believe FAO animal health experts, making it the second disease to be eradicated in history, after smallpox. Also known as cattle plague, it is a highly infectious and fatal viral disease. Efforts are now underway to locate and eliminate the last traces of the virus which cause the disease; these appear to be limited to herds in the semi-arid rangelands of the Horn of Africa. A vigorous policy of vaccination has eradicated rinderpest from most parts of the world, but not all farmers can afford to vacci-

nate. An alternative approach has been developed at the Indian Institute of Science (IIS) in Bangalore.

The IIS has developed a transgene pigeon pea which could be beneficial in countries where cattle are fed with pigeon pea leaves. These contain virus proteins. When these leaves were fed to animals, as an edible vaccine for rinderpest, the animals' immune response suggested that the leaves could provide immunity. If there is sufficient interest, the project may be pursued for commercialisation.

V V Satyavathi, G L Sita et al
IIS-Bangalore, India
Email: sitagl@mcbl.iisc.ernet.in

Some like it hot

■ Chickens have a better chance of surviving a heat wave if they have been exposed to high temperatures in their infancy. This is important to know, since a heat wave during the last week of breeding can be fatal to many meat chickens, at least to those selected for fast growth.

Researchers from Venezuela and France have demonstrated that if a 5-day-old chick is exposed to a temperature of 36 to 40°C for 24 hours, it will better survive a heatwave during its sixth week. This has been shown in actual working conditions in tropical rearing of small livestock, but the technique is still being refined before being applied to flocks of 12,000 to 20,000 chicks.

✉ M. Picard
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37380 Nouzilly
France
Email: picard@tours.inra.fr

Beans under threat

■ Beans are a vital vegetable in eastern Africa, but are under threat from the bean common mosaic virus (BCMV), transmitted by aphid insects. In a study in the Lake Victoria basin area of Tanzania, the incidence of the disease was found to be 100% in some fields. Symptoms consisted of leaf malformation, plant stunting and vein banding. The affected plants produced very few pods and these had fewer seeds per pod than healthy plants. BCMV-resistant varieties of beans have been developed, but farmers in the region have not adopted them, often because they are unaware of the disease. The study, carried out by the Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology at South Africa's University of Pretoria, showed the need to inform farmers about BCMV.

You like cooking books?

■ With many traditional foods from ACP and other developing countries finding their way into the world's supermarkets, demand is growing for recipes. A new FAO post-harvest Website has an interactive database – with 800-plus recipes from 54 countries for starters. In French, Spanish and English. The Cookbook's contributors are nutritionists and cooks, who can submit extra recipes on the site. Go on – it's a great way to promote your sales!

www.fao.org/inpho/en/informations/cookbook

Visionary fountains

■ A regional workshop held in Paramaribo, Suriname at the end of January 2003 proposed the establishment of a policy network with a view to contributing to "the fundamental transformation of the agricultural sector of the CARICOM/CARIFORUM countries through strengthening the process of agricultural policy decision making". The network is to be launched in October 2003 and is intended to supplement the work of the some 20 existing agricultural networks, mostly product- and process-focused, in the region. The need for more cohesive regional cooperation on agriculture has become more urgent in the Caribbean, as in other regions, in the context of regional participation in multilateral trade negotiations. The proposed network therefore has two goals: to operate a system of information exchange for promoting effective agricultural and rural development policies in line with national development objectives; and to support the formulation of common negotiating positions

with regard to extra-regional agricultural trade agreements and the promotion of intra-regional trade. The launch of the Caribbean network, and a Pacific equivalent which is likely to emerge in the next year or two, will mean that all six ACP

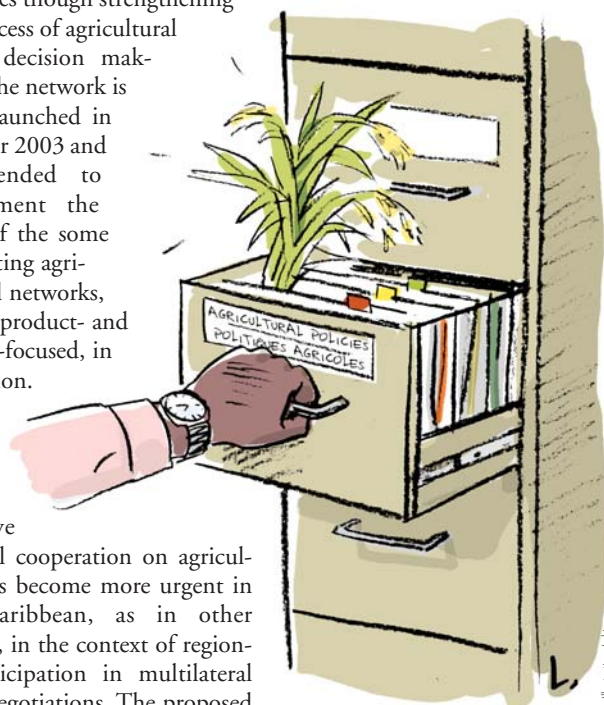


Illustration: Lulino

regions have a regional agricultural policy network.

While the indicators for the desired 'fundamental transformation' have yet to evolve, the workshop and the resulting network were boosted by a host

government paper on the repositioning of agriculture and the enhancement of rural life. In all, 32 participants from 14 Caribbean countries attended the event, co-organised by CTA and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA).

Rust-resistant coffee

■ A spontaneous hybrid of robusta and arabica coffee plants has been discovered in New Caledonia in the western Pacific. It is noted for its strength of taste, fertility and resistance to the *Hemileia vastatrix* rust.

Coffee cultivation started in New Caledonia in 1878, but was abandoned because of a failing economy and the sensitivity of arabica plants to rust. The plantation areas lived on, however, and the two species *Coffea canephora* (which provides robusta coffee, resistant to rust) and *Coffea arabica* jointly developed a spontaneous hybrid.

The old plantations thus took on a second lease of life as a centre for natural plant diversification.

The French development research institute IRD has conducted several prospecting campaigns to seek out these resistant hybrids, renowned also for their productivity and quality. The most interesting find so far has been a hybrid quite similar to the *Laurina* species (also known as Le Roy or the Pointed Bourbon), which is an arabica with a high quality taste and aroma, and low in caffeine. It is resistant to rust and, unlike some other hybrids, has a good yield.

At present, the IRD is studying 2,500 young plants which have been collected with the agreement of the authorities in the southern province of New Caledonia. In the long term, they could serve to improve the taste of other varieties and to combat rust.

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More milk, thanks to oil seeds

■ A cattle feed supplement that significantly raises milk production has been developed during a 3-year joint research effort between the Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and India's National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). The supplement, in the form of protein meal, is produced after oil is extracted from oilseed crops such as sunflower and rapeseed. These products are not normally efficiently utilised by dairy cattle "because most of the protein in the feed is degraded in their rumen, or first stomach," says CSIRO scientist, Dr Suresh Gulati. With the new protein meal, larger quantities

of proteins will by-pass the cow's rumen, allowing nutrients such as essential amino acids to be absorbed from the small intestine, boosting milk production. India's 11 million village dairy farmers stand to gain.

"The milk yield has gone up about 1 litre per cow/buffalo per day, thereby providing producers with additional income of around 9 Indian rupees (US\$0.33) a day, per animal," according to the NDDB's Senior Scientist, Dr Manget Ram Garg. A feed supplement plant has now opened in India's Gujarat State and trials are taking place to assess the viability of establishing similar plants in other areas.

Sustainable agriculture

■ Farming systems, like rain-bows and banana plants, come in various forms, colours and interpretations. New terms, such as ecoagriculture (see Main article) are forever emerging. In general, sustainable agriculture is the ability to sustain production over time. There are several types and many overlaps:



Photo C. Hughes © Panos Pictures

Even the smile is organic

Organic agriculture: Agriculture without the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Techniques such as mulching and composting are used to provide natural inputs. Emphasises local farming knowledge and techniques adjusted to different local conditions.

Permaculture: Often seen as a development of the organic system, it is basically an abbreviation of 'permanent agriculture'. Permaculture farmers do not generally use inputs, even organic, from outside their farms. Some actions are linked not only to local microclimates but also to lunar cycles and astrology, sometimes known as 'cosmovision'. (See also: www.permaculture.net)

Agroecology: The science of sustainable agriculture. Incorporates contemporary scientific understanding of biological principles and resources in farming systems.

Conservation agriculture: Emphasises the use of soil man-

agement practices such as direct sowing/no-tillage, reduced tillage/minimum tillage, incorporation of crop residues and establishment of cover crops.

Ecoagriculture: Seeks to help farmers to grow more food while conserving habitats critical to wildlife, based on an understanding of wildlife biology and ecology, on-the-ground experimentation and scientific advances. Adherents claim that the approach breaks with both traditional conservation policies and modern agricultural techniques. (See Main article)

Low-external-input and sustainable agriculture: LEISA seeks to minimise the use of external inputs and make optimal use of local resources. Stresses the application of knowledge rather than inputs.

Environmentally sound agriculture: Aims to improve farm profitability without causing environmental damage. Chemicals may be used in moderation.

How green was our classroom

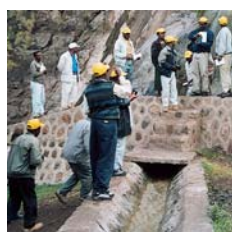
■ If ever proof was needed that the impact of an on-the-spot study visit can be worth several times that of an abstract distance-learning seminar, here it is. In late January 2003, while drought-prone parts of Ethiopia were suffering from acute food insecurity, and the world's press was grasping that food security is more than a question of the market, 16 specialists from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia were absorbed in an intensive study tour of small-scale irrigation around the country. In particular, they were looking at how to expand irrigation to mitigate the effects of drought and to increase cropping intensity.

They clambered over dykes and channels, walked uphill and down dale, sat for hours with producers, drew lines in the soil and drew conclusions in the evening.

The actual irrigation technology was but a small part of their focus: they were looking also at production systems, financial arrange-



Seeing is believing



ments, marketing, policy and regulations, support systems and social and environmental issues. Among the questions that kept

them busy – and continue to exercise their minds as they now transfer their lessons to their own working environment – were: How can farmers better modulate production and incomes by not all growing the same product? How can lending agencies get closer to farmers, to ease the credit process? And just what are the practical indicators that extension workers can use in their gender analyses, aimed at fostering more leadership roles for women?

The study visit, organised by CTA with the support of the Tigray Water Resources Development Bureau, was a follow-up to the seminar 'Private sector participation and irrigation expansion in Africa', the report of which was announced in *Spore* 103.

Crop technologies conference

■ 'Harnessing crop technologies to alleviate hunger and poverty in Africa' is the theme of the sixth annual African Crop Science Society conference, 12–17 October 2003 in Nairobi, Kenya.

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Website: africancrops.net

New code on pesticides

■ The revised International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides was adopted by the FAO in November 2002. It significantly reduces the threats posed by agrochemicals and promotes practices that minimise health and environmental risks. It embraces not only distribution and use, but also such issues as regulation, management, packaging and labelling, application and disposal. The Pesticides Action Network, which had campaigned for the Code's adoption, said that it "sets improved global standards".

Eritrea's beer barley

■ Eritrea's barley crop has long occupied 20% of the country's farmland, but it has only been cultivated for food and for producing Siwa, a lightly alcoholic drink. A 2-year research project has shown that the country can also produce varieties of barley used for making beer. Three varieties have been earmarked for improvement through hybridisation and breeding. This new market will provide extra income for farmers, as well as cutting back on the import bill for the annual volume of 3,600 t of barley (2001).

AgriForum

Cassava mosaic diseases – a deadly duo

■ Two forms of the insect-transmitted African cassava mosaic virus (ACMV) have combined to result in a destructive virus, ruining thousands of hectares of cassava crops in Uganda and threatening southern Nigeria. The Democratic Republic of Congo is also seriously affected. Early in 2003, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) started deliveries of resistant plants to farmers for planting before the disease strikes.

Food safety

The road map from plough to plate

What goes into people's food, whether on your own plate or your customer's 10,000 km away, has become a hot issue in health, nutrition and international trade. There's much more to food safety than additives (see page 3).

An introduction to a highly complex area, where the once-simple rules of the market are now piled high in massive volumes that are affecting the lives of ACP producers.

Go any day to the harbours or any other downtown area of Tema in Ghana, or Suva in Fiji, or Maputo in Mozambique, or Kingston in Jamaica, and you cannot miss the lines of ramshackle stalls on wheels serving streetfood to local workers. Whether our food is produced at the roadside, or we select from the enormous array in our local supermarket, much of it has been prepared by some other person. As consumers we must rely on the good offices of those producing our food. As producers, local vendors or exporters, betraying that consumer trust will result in business failure.

The marketplace has always been the engine room driving the movement towards high quality, safe and wholesome food. The retail lobbies in the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe were responsible for improved food standards in supermarkets through the 1960s and 1970s. More recently, standards have been set at international levels. Food standards – especially those involving any sort of quarantine risk – are often policed at borders. As a result, many ACP countries are updating their food legislation in the form of Food Safety Bills. These will increase

protection for local consumers, reduce the drain on domestic economies through food-related absenteeism and health care, strengthen a country's reputation as a wholesome tourist destination, and improve its international trading position.

Quality control

Maintaining food quality, however, is a continuum, and standards are always changing. In 1998, it became mandatory for food processors around the world to demonstrate that they had attended to issues relating to quality matters before acquisition – at the point of harvest. This was formalised through the system of quality maintenance known as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) – fortunately pronounced 'hassip'. Using this system, each step in the chain between harvest and consumption is evaluated for the effect it has on ultimate quality. The step is carefully documented and cross-checked records must show compliance with predetermined limits. For the horticulturalist this may mean in the field, sometimes even before harvest. Although currently only mandatory for a limited number of products and crops, the practicality of the system is now demonstrable and is finding its

way into the fresh produce industries.

This is good news for farmers who go to a lot of trouble to produce top quality merchandise only to lament deterioration as a result of delays, poor post-harvest handling and indifferent processing techniques. HACCP is now a reality in many horticultural industries and will be increasingly important to primary producers around the world. The impact on farmers will be that their produce must be treated with the greatest care possible – not only during its nurture but, more importantly, during the post-harvest stage.

For the smaller farmer and processor, looking at the question of quality and the HACCP chain is like working in a vacuum. But they ignore it at their peril, since it defines their opportunities to sell. Increasingly, the first indication for small exporters that their quality standards have become unacceptable is the collapse of the market, and an inability to dispose of produce. How can this be anticipated? What quality standards are required of their crops? It is clear that a priority task for farmers' organisations and other support bodies is to assist groups of producers and processors to familiarise themselves with these standards.

For producers and processors, your first ports of call are the national trade and food safety bodies (since each country has specific circumstances and procedures) and the Codex Alimentarius, a collection of internationally adopted standards on food. Codex aims at protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair trade practices in the food trade, and promoting coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organisations. Codex specifies the quality requirements not only in processed foods in all their forms but also – more recently – in fresh horticultural commodities. Codex standards offer an instant guide to the standard which is commonly achievable in competing countries and provide the framework for grower/processor specifications, an essential part of HACCP.

For further information

Codex Alimentarius



Secretariat of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Food and Agriculture Organization
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome, Italy
Fax: +39 06 5705 4593
Email: Codex@fao.org
Website: www.codexalimentarius.net

HACCP



A clear and comprehensive introduction to the principles and practice of HACCP is provided by one of its main protagonists, the United States Food and Drug Administration and the FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

Website: vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~com/haccpov.html



For the hard task of climbing up the HACCP learning curve, for mutual support and some solidarity, try the international HACCP Alliance.

HACCP Alliance,
120 Rosenthal,
College Station,
TX 77843-2471, USA
Fax: +1 979 862 3075
Website: haccpalliance.org

Food safety in general

A wonderfully clear gateway to most food safety issues is the Food Microbiology Information Centre (FMIC). More essential reading, especially with an eye on trading standards, is available from the Food Safety office of the Commission of the European Union.

FMIC, c/o Nottingham Trent University, Burton Street, Nottingham, NG1 4BU, UK
Fax: +44 1636 817000
Email: Stephen.Forsythe@ntu.ac.uk
Website: www.ntu.ac.uk/external/fhc/hotspot.htm



EU Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection
200 rue de la Loi,
BE-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Website: europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/intro/index.htm

Publications

A small world



■ A child's work is seldom an individual strategy. The chores children undertake benefit not only themselves, but the whole family. The Zimbabwean twins, Tinotenda and Tafadzwa are 6 years old and not yet at school. Tinotenda helps fetch water and firewood, herds the goats and chases the baboons from the fields. His twin sister helps look after her younger siblings, collects firewood, sweeps and helps wash plates.

This is just one example from the interesting collection of essays in *Women, Men and Work*, written by researchers from the University of Zimbabwe on rural livelihoods. Just like the role of children in the household economy, the essays deal with the coping strategies of families, often leading to tensions between priorities. Nature conservation giving way to making money from it through crafts or firewood, for example.

Other cases, such as a fruit-drying programme, confirm the need for development workers to fully understand local social dimensions and dynamics before any intervention can be successful.

Women, Men and Work: Rural Livelihoods in South-Eastern Zimbabwe
 Edited by P Hebinck & M Bourdillon.
 Weaver Press Ltd, 2001. 172 pp.
 ISBN 0779220030
 GBP 14.95 • € 22.10
 African Books Collective Ltd
 The Jam Factory
 27 Park End Street
 Oxford OX1 1HU, UK
 Fax: +44 1865 79 32 98
 Email:
 abc@africanbookscollective.com
 Or in Africa : Weaver Press Ltd
 PO Box 1922, Avondale, Harare,
 Zimbabwe

Right rights, right?



Do you remember this photo caption in *Spore 93*: 'Many African farmers have no land rights – their husbands do'? In a nutshell, this reflects the uncertain legal status of most women in agricultural economies.

Changing both formal and customary laws in favour of women's rights is only one side of the coin, the awareness of women of their rights and their ability to claim these rights is the important other. These issues were in the limelight at a CTA co-seminar held in Kampala, Uganda in 2001, reported in *Spore 93*, with that photo.

The seminar proceedings have been re-worked into a comprehensive book on the legal environment of women and their role in the agricultural economies of Eastern and Southern Africa.

It is a good reader on the topic with some practical and absolutely do-able recommendations, such as setting up legal literacy

programmes, establishing legal aid centres and using all kinds of available media to disseminate legal information to women.

The Economic Role of Women in Agricultural and Rural Development: Revisiting the Legal Environment

Summary report of a CTA seminar, held in Kampala, Uganda, 19–23 February 2001.
 CTA, 2002.

80 pp.
 ISBN 92 9081 2621
 CTA number 1113.

10 credit points
 Downloadable from:
www.cta.int/pubs/women/index.htm



Sell apples on the trees?

■ There is much more you can do with wood than cook and build. So-called non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are attracting interest, at the cusp of environmental conservation and income-generation (see *Spore 89*). NTFP harvesting does not necessarily contradict forest conservation.

Tapping the Green Market aims at keeping the two in balance. It provides profiles of major NTFPs throughout the world and pays attention to the ongoing search for sustainable ways of managing forests, including the certification of NTFPs. It warns, rightfully so, against optimism about certification – this requires a wealthy and environmentally conscious group of consumers and that rules out many of the world's NTFPs.

An interesting new tome in the People and Plants conservation series.

Tapping the Green Market
 Certification and Management of Non-Timber Forest Products
 Edited by A Guillen, S A Laird, P Shanley & A R Pierce.
 Earthscan – WWF International, UNESCO and Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, 2002.
 480 pp.
 ISBN 1853838101
 GBP 24.95 • € 36.90
 Earthscan
 120 Pentonville Road
 London N1 9JN
 UK
 Fax: +44 207 278 1142
 Email: earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk



More on moringa



All the papers from the international workshop on moringa held end-2001 in Tanzania (see *Spore 96*), plus bibliography and databases of the major players and Websites.

Development Potential of Moringa Products

Edited by A de Saint Sauveur, V Appora, F Besse & L Fuglie,
 CIRAD – PROPAGE – SILVA, 2002.
 1 CD-ROM, ISBN 2 87614 516 2
 CTA number 1126.
 40 credit points

Full and frank debates

■ These proceedings are an excellent account of debates at a broad breakthrough conference held in Brussels in 2001.

Sustainable Agriculture in the New Millennium. The Impact of Biotechnology on Developing Countries.

Edited by K Plenderleith & P de Meyer. Friends of the Earth Europe – Oxfam – Bund – Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 2002.
 168 pp.

Free
 FOE Europe
 Rue Blanche 29
 B-1060 Brussels
 Belgium
 Email: info@foeeurope.org
 Fax: +32 2 537 5596

Ask for the sake of asking

■ Finally, a book that gives the floor to agricultural researchers, who explain what determines their agendas, who is paying for it and to whom they are accountable. Developments in the UK and Nigeria in recent decades set the stage for this illuminating discourse.

Science, Agriculture and Research.

A Compromised Participation?
 W Buhler, S Morse, E Arthur, S Bolton & J Mann. Earthscan, London, 2002. 176 pp.
 ISBN 1853836915
 GBP 17.95 • € 26.50
 Earthscan Publications Ltd
 120 Pentonville Road
 London N1 9JN
 UK
 Fax: +44 171 278 1142
 Email: earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk

Net working

■ These proceedings of a forum on the implementation of national export strategies present best practices and guidelines for national trade networks in developing economies.

Executive Forum 2001. Is Your Trade Support Network Working?
 International Trade Centre
 UNCTAD – WTO, Geneva, 2002.
 92 pp. ISBN 92 9137 242 0
 US\$ 20 • € 18.70 (for developing countries)
 For ITC's address see elsewhere.

Safe instructions

■ A real whopper of a practical handbook on technical constructions for relief workers in emergency situations. It is crammed with technical guidelines, drawings and designs for constructions varying from water reservoirs to encampments, including how to plan and manage such interventions. Every relief worker's bookshelf should have one.

Engineering in Emergencies:
A Practical Guide for Relief
Workers (2nd Edition)
J Davis & R Lambert. ITDG
Publishing, London, 2002.
720 pp. ISBN 1853395218
GBP 24.95 • € 36.80
ITDG Publishing
103-105 Southampton Row
London WC1B 4HL
UK
Fax: +44 20 7436 2013
Email: orders@itpubs.org.uk

Good groundwork

■ These workshop results are a good example of how an in-depth analysis can help a local farming system go through changes.

Indigenous leafy vegetables in the
Upper East Region of Ghana.
Opportunities and constraints
for conservation and
commercialisation
International Centre for
Development Oriented
Research in Agriculture (ICRA),
Wageningen, and the Centre
for Biodiversity Utilisation and
Development, 2002. 168 pp.
Price available on request
ICRA
PO Box 88
6700 AB Wageningen
The Netherlands
Fax: +31 317 427 046
Email: icra@iac.agro.nl

So many countries, so many customs

■ A collection of well-conceived papers on land and agrarian reform programmes and related problems throughout the developing world.

Whose Land?
Civil Society Perspectives on
Land Reform and Rural Poverty
Reduction – Regional
Experiences from Africa, Asia
and Latin America.
Co-publication of The Popular
Coalition, IFAD & UNRISD,
Rome, 2001.
ISBN 92 9072 012 3
Single copies free
The Popular Coalition to
Eradicate Hunger and Poverty,
c/o IFAD 107, Via del Serafico
00142 Rome
Italy
Email: coalition@ifad.org
Downloadable from:
www.ifad.org/popularcoalition/
re_wland_main.htm

Agriculture on the menu



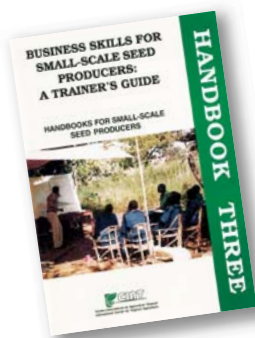
■ “In Jamaica, if we eat what we grow and grow what we eat, then the Ministry of Agriculture’s mandate of providing access to safe, nutritious foods for our people would be greatly advanced.” With these words in his preface, Roger Clarke, Jamaica’s Minister of Agriculture, hits the nail right on the head. What better way is there to promote a nation’s

agricultural sector and healthy food for its population than by publishing a cook book?

The recipes look and *are* tasty (our editor can attest to that!) and the book is graphically attractive, as one would expect from a recipe book. This kind of initiative is worthy of being taken up by other countries – and their Ministers.

Cook Up Jamaican Style. Eating What We Grow
Rural Agricultural Development
Authority, Ministry of Agriculture,
Jamaica, 2002. 116 pp.
ISBN 976 601 312 7
US\$ 9 • € 8.45
RADA
Hope Gardens
Kingston 6
Jamaica
Fax: +1 876 927 15 92
Email: rada@cwjamaica.com
Some recipes from the book are also
available online at:
www.radajamaica.com/jml

Seeds of change



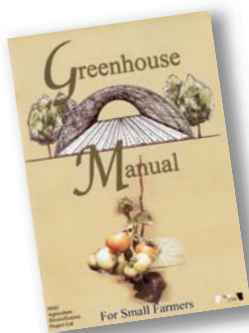
■ Here are three handy ‘how to’ manuals on producing seeds for the market, written for individual farmers, community groups, local NGOs and schools lacking experience or formal training in seed production.

One focuses on producing

bean seed, the second on business skills for seed businesses in general and the third is a trainer’s guide for facilitators who want to promote and develop seed businesses. The guides have been field tested in Uganda, but are meant for a much wider audience in sub-Saharan Africa.

Producing Bean Seed
Business Skills for Small-Scale Seed
Producers & Trainer’s guide
Three issues in the series ‘handbooks
for small-scale seed producers’
S David & B Oliver. International
Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)
– Africa.
Single copies are available free of
charge within Africa, and additional
copies cost US\$ 6.50 • € 6.10 per
manual including airmail postage.
PO Box 6247
Kampala
Uganda
Fax: +256 41 56 76 35
Email: ciatuga@imul.com

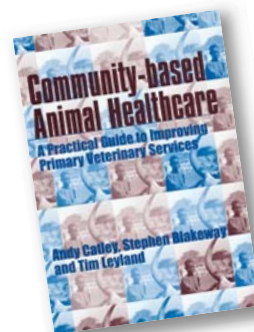
Under cover



■ Growing crops in greenhouses can increase off-season availability of vegetables and improve product quality through better control against damage from pests and weather. However, greenhouse cultivation is a labour- and time-intensive way of farming, and requires considerable financial investment.

A group of NGOs in Dominica, having joined forces to encourage diversification of the island’s agriculture, set out to promote greenhouse cultivation. With support

Take the bull by the horns



■ Where there is no vet, there very well could be a community-based animal health care worker (CAHW). The new publication, *Community-based Animal Health Care*, is full of practical guidance for the design and management of community-based animal health services, including the training and deployment of CAHWs.

It shows how to establish links between basic level CAHWs, private veterinarians and State veterinary services. It will be especially useful for countries with remote pastoral and mountainous regions, where veterinary services are lacking.

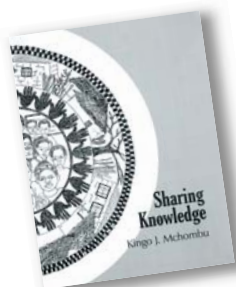
The book definitely fills a gap – there is not much written material available for these workers.

Community-based Animal Health
Care: A Practical Guide to
Improving Primary Veterinary
Services
A Catley, S Blakeway
& T Leyland.
ITDG Publishing, London, 2002.
360 pp.
ISBN 1853394858
GBP 9.95 • € 14.70
ITDG Publishing
103-105 Southampton Row
London WC1B 4HL
UK
Fax: +44 20 7436 2013
Email: bookshop@itpubs.org.uk

from CTA, they published a practical manual on growing crops in greenhouses, covering all the steps, from construction to marketing the yields. A booklet which will also be useful for neighbouring islands.

Greenhouse Manual For Small Farmers
NGO Agriculture Diversification
Project, 2002. 52 pp. 2002.
US\$ 12 • € 11.30
J Foye
NGO-ADP
PO Box 268
Dominica
Fax: +1 767 448 23 08
Email: spat@cwdom.dm

Two know more...



■ Mobilising the knowledge of rural people is essential for their development, is what Kingo Mchombu must have thought. He wrote *Sharing Knowledge* for men and women in villages and rural areas who fancy transforming their communities through information sharing.

He calls it a handbook, but it is more than that – rather a work-

book for community groups such as reading clubs, radio listening and youth groups. Each chapter ends with questions or points for discussion.

The book promotes the establishment of Community Information Resource Centres as active centres, representing the community and serving as focal points for projects and brokers for information, organising discussions, field visits and training workshops.

A useful workbook with a refreshing look at information sharing.

Sharing Knowledge Handbook
By K J Mchombu, Oxfam Canada,
2002. 104 pp. ISBN 0 9694699 1 8
Oxfam Canada
880 Wellington Street / Suite 400
Ottawa, ON
K1R 6K7 Canada
Fax: +1 613 237 05 24
Email: enquire@oxfam.ca
Downloadable from:
[www.oxfam.ca/publications/](http://www.oxfam.ca/publications/SharingKnowledge.htm)
SharingKnowledge.htm

The weakest link

■ The real strength of this book, pithy enough for a UN author, lies in its recognition of the link between technical cooperation (TC) and national capacity building. This link is missing in many TC programmes, too often shaped by donors and non-empathetic foreign experts, and too little by national priorities.

The result? Little more than a counter-productive compensation of 'lacking skills', where little sticks and little stays. And all this when TC is often lauded as the most effective form of development assistance, as it used to be called.

Already well known for moving *Beyond Aid: From Platitude to Partnership* (an earlier book of his), Stephen Browne insists that TC must be applied only to

develop national capacities and run by countries themselves. South-South skill swaps have their place, but are secondary to scholarships and national training.

It's all done in the assertively honest style that reflects recent rethinks by the UN Development Programme (see *Spore* 103) whose poverty reduction programme Browne leads. His arguments are not always new, but his overall framework serves to re-evaluate some old donor dogmas. In all, he breathes new life into the now weary mantra of 'capacity development'.

The added value of the book are six country case studies: the Ugandan, Bolivian and Philippino ones are the most pertinent to most ACP states. In

any case, this is a must for ACP planners and policy-makers striving to build up their home-grown national capacity.

Developing Capacity Through Technical Cooperation. Country Experiences
By S Browne, Earthscan – UNDP,
2002. 224 pp. ISBN 1853839698
GBP 17.95 • € 26.50
Earthscan Publications Ltd
120 Pentonville Road
London N1 9JN
UK
Fax: +44 207 278 1142
Email: earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk



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Publications on CTA's list are available free-of-charge to PDS

subscribers. Subscribers can order publications on CTA's list up to the value of the credit points available to them. Subscribers can only request publications on the order forms provided.

Non-subscribers who wish to join the scheme should write to CTA for an application form. Applications will be considered from agricultural and rural development organisations in the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) Group of States; individ-

uals resident in ACP countries may also apply.

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Email: cta@itpubs.org.uk — Website: www.itdgpublishing.org.uk

Hooked on coffee

■ Not a word on growing coffee, just its marketing and export, including to niche markets for fair trade and organic coffees. With import and export profiles, information on trade organisations and treaties, quality issues and a glossary of terms, making this guide a must for everyone involved in the coffee trade.

Coffee: An Exporter's Guide
International Trade Centre UNCTAD – WTO, Geneva, 2002. 310 pp.
ISBN 92 9137 241 2
US\$ 28 • € 26.20 (for developing countries)
ITC - Palais des Nations,
1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland
Fax: +41 22 733 44 39
Email: customerservice@intracen.org

First, get the book

■ The need for a healthy, up-to-date book sector that can continuously provide learning materials is a major challenge for Africa. This book discusses book sector planning and includes examples in a dozen sub-Saharan countries.

Making Book Coordination Work!
C Salzano, Association for the Development of Education in Africa, 2002. 96 pp.
ISBN 1901830160
GBP 12.95 • € 19.10
African Books Collective Ltd
For ABC's address see p. 11.

How lies the land?

■ The proceedings of a meeting on developing quantitative methods for assessing the degradation of the dryland areas of the world. The CD-ROM includes keynote papers, country experiences and regional approaches.

Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands - LADA Project
FAO, World Soil Resources Reports. 2002. 48 pp + CD-ROM.
ISBN 9251047979
US\$ 24 • € 22.45
FAO Sales and Marketing Group
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome - Italy
Fax: +39 06 5705 3360
Email: publications-sales@fao.org

Whose knowledge?

■ The differences between Western and non-Western values and ways of thinking and doing things become strikingly clear from this collection of essays on endogenous knowledge in the agricultural and botanical sectors.

Ancient Roots, New Shoots. Endogenous Development in Practice
B Haverkort, K van 't Hooft & W Hiemstra. COMPAS – Zed, 2003. 280 pp. ISBN 1 84277335 6
GBP 15.95 • € 23.50
Zed Books, 7 Cynthia Street
London N1 9JF – UK
Fax: +44 20 7837 4014

Mailbox

We got mail, you got mail! — this time from and about readers in four ACP regions — including one from our growing number of correspondents in Haïti. Welcome all, especially to an 'outsider' from east Asia. Does it matter where you're from when we know where you're going?

The tree of life is dead

"My postcard pictures a dead tree," writes Jeannis Fritzner (rue Sylvio Gator/imp. Exumé 15, Delmas, Haïti), "but I sent it anyway, since it would please you more than a picture of a painted concrete cathedral."

"CTA equals the soil, the soil equals trees and trees equal life. I do not know why this tree is dead. If you could shed any light on the cause of its death, please tell me. It is a *Azadirachta indica* or neem tree."

It is difficult to tell from just a picture of the trunk what caused the death of the tree, Jeannis. In general, neem trees are real survivors — though they all die sometime. One thing they cannot stand is wet feet — a high groundwater table will affect them. Despite their insect-repelling characteristics, neem trees are prone to a few scale insects. The yellow scale insect (*Aonidiella orientalis*) has been a serious problem during high infestations in West and Central Africa, giving affected trees a burnt appearance.

A more serious problem in Africa is 'decline', best defined as a combination of factors in a particular order which gradually cause the tree to deteriorate. General factors such as soil type, site or a genetic disorder, combined with insects, drought or pollutants, might cause a general decline in a certain tree population in a certain region.



In so many words

Agnes Maska, (Post Restante, Kasese Post Office, Kasese, Uganda) is looking for a penpal. "I'm a farmer and my husband is a farmer too. I have five children and bring them up by selling my farm products. I would like the penpal to advise me about farming, so that I can develop my farm to get more products."



Check that name!

Writing from Côte d'Ivoire, Kouakou Nagacy follows up on an article in *Spore* 92 about ackee fruit. He wonders how ackee is pronounced, and he has also seen a different spelling of the fruit's Latin name *Blighia sapida*. "In *Spore* the 'h' looks a lot like a 'b'," he writes. He also wonders about the plant's numerous common names. "In the centre of Cote d'Ivoire, we call it kaha and not kaka."

The real spelling is *Blighia* with an 'h' after the 'g'! And in the word 'ackee', the 'a' is pronounced as in apple, and 'ckee' as in key. And yes, there are a lot of names! Some regions' names have a similar sound to the Caribbean ackee: akee, akye, akyen (various African countries), aki (Costa Rica) and akie (Suriname). Other languages are more descriptive, as in the Spanish *seso vegetal* (vegetable brain) and *huevo vegetal* (vegetable egg) or *arbre a fricasser* (ragout tree) in French-speaking Haïti.

Still waters can be sickening

The article on wetlands ecosystems in *Spore* 100 focused on their multiple uses and how they could be better managed and conserved for future generations. Samuel Zeleke from Gambella in Ethiopia writes that wet-

lands are an underutilised resource in most ACP countries, poorly managed and conserved and "simply left as a swimming pool. This negligence and mis-use have made wetlands suitable areas for breeding and spread of troublesome diseases like malaria and bilharzia." He argues that better management of these resources "will go hand and hand with controlling the spread of these diseases better too."

Oh, very young

"I have *Spore* 100 in front of me and I would like to convey my personal thanks to the entire editorial team of *Spore*," writes Gaffoh Kpekpasi, an agricultural engineer from Togo, a self-professed keen reader of *Spore*. The Viewpoint on youth in *Spore* 100 by Cyprien Essong Zé recalled the article 'Should I go or should I stay?' in *Spore* 90.

"The exodus of rural youth to towns to find work is as old as the hills but where is the solution? Politicians only care about what is going on in the cities. They are even ashamed to visit the rural areas and stay instead in town and their meetings in luxury hotels, telling rural youth to stay in the villages. Some even come from rural areas themselves, but as soon as they have acquired such a position, they're lost."

African agriculture still really needs a technical transformation. "I think that the opinion of Cyprien from Cameroon raises serious questions for an agricultural technician. Here we have a brother who is cultivating 5 hectares with modest means and instruments (hoe, axe, pickaxe, baskets, perhaps a couple of oxen and a straw hut). Looking at those rudimentary tools, 5 hectares is too much for a family if you take into account all the different operations involved. To me, the reasons are clear for the exodus of kids to the cities. Unless we put all the evils from which Africa suffers high on the agenda and take courageous civil and political measures — for agriculture is the foundation of any country's development — the failure of agriculture will provoke a total collapse of society for generations."

Pushing for agriculture

It's not just youth that latched onto *Spore* 100. The main article on media has been echoing around the world of writers and communicators, among them Chris Cottorone, the associate information officer at the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center in Taiwan. "*Spore* addressed an issue recently of major importance when it discussed Media and Agriculture. While I am not sure why agriculture was pushed off the world's major agenda, the article will certainly help it to be pulled back into the limelight. More importantly, issues such as food security, biotechnology, and urbanization are making many around the world see that to understand these issues, one needs to understand agriculture and the important role it plays in human life. Pushing outward for greater public awareness while pushing internally for higher standards seems like an excellent approach to ensuring agriculture and agricultural research stay on the stage — for good."

Measuring impact: tell us how you do

Does your work have anything to do with disseminating and exchanging information? Are you, for example, involved in extension work, rural radio, a library, a question-and-answer service, a network, a newsletter? If so, you could be involved, now, in a book which CTA is preparing for publication.

The book is about the impact of information projects, services and products on development. It will ask such questions as "How do we measure impact?", "Who should measure impact?" and "Why do we need to measure impact?". To answer them, it will feature impact stories and case studies, and analyse them.

Can you help us to gather these stories and studies? The stories should relate your personal experience of an impact study of a service or a product; the impact studies should be ones that have already been completed. In Mailbox in *Spore* 103, you will have read a letter from Martin Francis Arko, an extension agent in Ghana, relating how *Spore* helped him make "quite an impact in the farming community". Clearly, he has a story to tell. Do you? Or do you know of a suitable case study? If you do, please send a brief outline of it to ...

Kay Sayce
Sayce Publishing
West Hill House
6 Swains Lane
London N6 6QS, UK
Fax: +44 20 7485 7957
Email: sayce@enterprise.net

Refreshing course

With the growing complexity of the issues faced by CTA's partners, and the related key information-oriented tasks CTA has to undertake, there has grown, too, a need for the staff at the Centre's headquarters to be on top of these issues and their implications for CTA's programmes.

It's not just the ever-rich diversity of the type of partners with whom CTA works – central government, decentralised structures, NGOs, public-private research partnerships, civil society bodies, federations of farmers' organisations and so forth – but the substantive topics too.

Some CTA staff members have much experience in specific areas of agriculture and rural development and are content specialists; others are more concerned with such processes as communication techniques or partnership-building strategies. Some are bits of both. Together – and we're looking at 38 people from 19 countries here – they form a powerful composite whole.

No fear of flying

He has always had something special about birds, has Alan Jackson. Not just a dedicated scientist, he also is the archetypal bird-watcher. In the main, they are rather canny people, bird-watchers, with a sharp eye for detail. After all, you have to be someone special to stand in a field, hear 27 species of birds at once and recite their characteristics to any passer-by.

Now, after a decently long career devoted to tropical agriculture and science for development, Alan is no longer at CTA, which he joined in 1984 as a technical advisor. Previously, after a degree in agricultural botany from Reading University and a post-graduate year on plant breeding in Cambridge in his native England, he worked on insect resistance for the Cotton Research Institute in Tanzania, on cocoa research in Ghana and on science liaison in India with the British Council.

His broad scientific and field experience, and a passionate belief in the emergence of young well-trained scientists, were well used in selecting the people, themes and publications for CTA's programmes of seminars, study visits and publishing – many of which he initiated. During 18 years of solid toil, very few unfounded scientific works got past this watchman. Among his peaks of satisfaction: a programme on the role of women in agricultural extension in the late 1980s, an issue then entering the ever-changing policy environment.

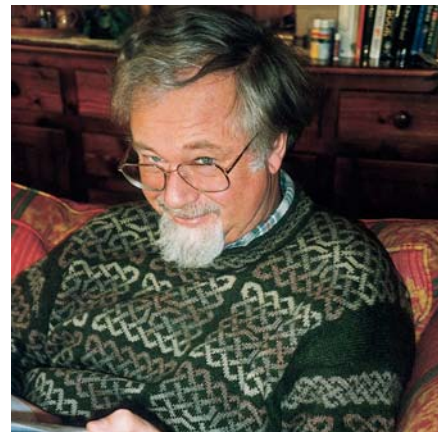
In 1996, he became head of the Publications and Dissemination Department,

At times, though, there is a need for what the process people call 'a lot of facilitating'.

And so was born the practice of holding CTA internal seminars, three or more times a year, for all staff. The 1-day seminars are led by external speakers and discussion leaders. The topics tend to be broad, important to all of CTA's programmes whether in publishing, communicating or capacity building. In 2001 and 2002, they included modes of networking, genetic modification and gender and agriculture. Early in 2003, a session was held on 'social capital' – essentially the pooled knowledge of, and links between, the people of a community – and how to exploit this capital.

The topics being considered for coming months are youth, NEPAD, knowledge management, participatory technology development and biosafety and intellectual property rights.

For the staff of CTA to engage in discussions about the real issues, as part of their regular 'duties', is part of the organisation's strategy of becoming a 'learning organisation' – and a real refresher.



home to *Spore* – whose editorial committee he had joined in the mid-1980s. If *Spore* has indeed flown to new heights in recent years, it is to a great extent thanks to the way Alan managed the process. He steered the team into those new spaces where innovative thinking, straight talking and writing, and scientific and political exactness (not the same as correctness!) could blend into excellence. Such light but firm-handed management can work wonders at the right time.

He was, whichever way other people's winds blew, the wind beneath our wings. Somehow, flying will never be the same again.



Spore is a bi-monthly publication providing information on agricultural development for ACP countries. *Spore* is available free-of-charge to relevant organisations and individuals in ACP and EU countries. Subscriptions may also be purchased from ITDG (see page 13).

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Now Special Trade Ambassador, Anthony Hylton, 45, from Yallahs, Jamaica, is a lawyer by training. He spent 9 years in Parliament, holding several Ministerial and Cabinet posts. He is now examining energy options to reduce Jamaica's dependency on oil. He addressed the CTA seminar of November 2002 on effective ACP participation in multilateral trade negotiations with the European Union (EU) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Trade negotiations

Do you play patience?

For years a driving force in ACP trade negotiations, he is strongly driven, and quite a driver. Shortly after wowing the seminar's opening session, he sat with Paul Osborn of *The Negotiator*, the seminar newspaper, and talked frankly about unity, strength and the values involved in this high-stake diplomacy.

The elections in Jamaica a few weeks previously hadn't worked out too well, he was now an ex-MP. Losing your seat is part of the process, he said. "My long absences on foreign trade issues had taken their toll. It's difficult to have a rural constituency with this sort of work."

He'd been using vivid language about the EU that morning, about it not being as altruistic as it might wish to be seen, and about ACP issues being subsumed by greater issues. Whence, from where, did he draw his enduring commitment to the cause when the playing field was obviously not very level at all? "It's part of the reality, you recognise it, it's in the back of your mind. I don't complain, I try to understand and internalise it. It's a fact of life. But I'm not resigned to it because I do believe that it can change."

Our lack of clarity

His face is calm, but you can see the energy racing, focused, within. Everything has a precise meaning. "When I say they're not altruistic, in fact I appreciate much of what the EU has done. Paradoxically, to have concluded the Cotonou Agreement in the light of all the other EU objectives was

A global asset

That's a bit smooth maybe? Doesn't he really think that the ACP-EU relationship is like the dying embers of the old colonial fire? "Well, whether it's dying embers or an opportunity for renewal, is one way or the other. We have over 25 years of what I consider to be a global asset. What will we do with that? In the WTO there is an excellent opportunity for cooperation with the EU. The EU has spent quite a lot of time, effort and resources in building this up at a time when it itself recognises the value of unity. That's why my point to Lamy (the EU Trade Commissioner) and all the others is that it is silly to do anything that will undermine ACP unity. You need ACP strength; you can't have a fragmented ACP in your negotiations for regional economic partnerships (REPAs) and at the same time ask for coordination at the WTO level.

You have to sit down in honest dialogue and consultation, rather than dictate, and you work it through as honest partners. Before the ink was dry on Cotonou, they came with the EBA [*which would allow 'everything but arms' to be imported into Europe at no duty from the least-developed countries*]. I negotiated that and immediate-

signed Cotonou. We have a negotiating time-line and we need some critical resources to build our capacity.

There's a saying that the way to Hell is paved with good intentions, but even if [some EU positions] are well-intended yet – and this is the sum and substance of my point – the effect is to kill me, then I don't give a rat's arm; I'm dead, I'm dying."

Throwing away 25 years

With this bunch of carrots called REPAs, is the ACP in danger of fragmenting? After all, he had said "unity is vital". But do the unity sums add up? "United doesn't mean ignoring national needs; what is critical is to build up the capacity to make the correct arrangements. We need all-ACP teams. It would be foolhardy to fractionalise into small regional units where the required capacities are just non-existent. That was a question in the seminar. In francophone Africa they regard ACP as a transfer mechanism – a sad thing to say. If that is all it represents to you, then no doubt the francophones are rushing to sign a REPA when they are unprepared, they don't know what they are likely to get, and they will risk putting asunder the notion of ACP unity."

" If the effect of good intentions is to kill me, then I'm dead "

itself a response by the EU to address some legitimate concerns. At the heart of it, I believe the EU wants it. There are a number of constraints – some are on our side, in terms of capacity to implement, and sometimes in our lack of clarity and coherence. I do not ascribe any ill will to the EU, in fact there's quite a bit of good will. But it does have its own agenda and objectives.

What is absolutely necessary is that we sit down together at the highest level and look at each others' agenda. You've got to understand it, otherwise what comes out instead is confusion or worse, anger, and anger has no place in these discussions."

ly called for an impact assessment. We felt that the EU wanted to be seen, in the run up to Seattle, to be doing something for LDCs. I said, fine, but if you want to do something, do something substantial, not another gimmick."

So had the EU, in going for the EBA initiative and returning to a preferential agenda, been listening to the wrong voices within Europe? Was there a moment when he'd thought 'if only they had done something differently'?

He corrects again with precision. "I don't know that there was a moment in time, there were things done then and even now that can be done. It's two years since we

A case of 'fools rush in'? Those eyes twinkle; even he can't prevent that. The diplomat's words take a tad longer to grasp: "I wish that countries would understand that ACP-EU relations are a global asset, painstakingly developed over 25 years. At a time when the world is moving towards globalisation, why would you go in the other direction?"

[This is an abridged version of an interview first published in *The Negotiator* on 28 November 2002. www.cta.int/seminar2002]

The opinions expressed in Viewpoint are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of CTA.