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From Paper to CD-ROM—Developing Methods to Disseminate Agricultural Research Materials

Washington, D.C.—The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) recently announced the signing of a contract with Knowledge Access International, Mountain View, CA to prepare a CD-ROM set of an entire working collection of agricultural research materials. The “Compact International Agricultural Research Library” (CIARL) will contain up to 5,000 titles available on a set of CD-ROM discs with trilingual search and retrieval software in English, French and Spanish. Saztec International, Inc., Kansas City, MO, is the subcontractor responsible for the conversion of the paper research documents into electronic files.

CGIAR is an informal association of over 40 donors established in 1971 to support a system of agricultural research around the world. Currently, the CGIAR funds 13 international agricultural research centers. The World Bank, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are cosponsors of the CGIAR.

The CIARL project is a landmark in documentation for the international agricultural research agencies. The original documents occupy more than 100 feet of shelfspace, yet the 25 CD-ROM discs containing them will easily fit in a briefcase with a CD-ROM player. It is the largest conversion of agricultural research documents to electronic format ever undertaken. Saztec International will capture and process over 1 billion characters of alphabetic and numeric text representing up to a half million pages of books, journals, and proceedings for the CIARL. Electronic images of over 100,000 pages containing graphics in both color and black and white will be captured and will be fully retrievable from the text file. The CIARL CD-ROM discs will use the powerful KAware Disk Publisher™ for preparation of the discs and KAware2™ Retrieval System for searching and displaying information on standard personal computers with compact disc drives.

(More)
Knowledge Access and Saztec International produced the prototype CD-ROM disc "Food, Agriculture and Science" using one document from each of 20 cooperating international research centers. Enthusiastic reaction to the prototype disc from 140 evaluation sites in 40 countries led the CGIAR to pursue the long-range goal of publishing the CIARL. This project supports the primary CGIAR goal:

through agricultural research and related activities, to contribute to increasing sustainable food production in such a way that the nutritional level and general economic well-being of low-income people are improved.

Matilda Butler, president of Knowledge Access, stated, "It is a privilege for us to work with the researchers and information specialists of the CGIAR in many countries to make this unique collection widely available for the first time. CD-ROM's simplicity and durability are ideally suited for use in agricultural field stations in the developing countries where the information has great practical value."

Knowledge Access International is a leading producer of indexing and retrieval software for the production of desktop databases for government, business, research and the professions. Saztec International is a diversified computer services company specializing in the conversion and maintenance of large electronic databases.

For more Information:
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