

February 2011

In this Issue:

- New website, new logo
- Program director position announcement
- Program director's message
- Announcements
- USAID's Bureau of Food Security
- Cacao-cashew systems book launched
- 2nd SWAT-SEA Conference in Vietnam
- Research Spotlight: Lesotho
- Gender and participatory methodologies workshop
- Editor's Note

Management Entity:

- S.K. De Datta: Administrative Principal Investigator
- J. Michael Kelly: Interim Program Director
- Keith M. Moore: Associate Program Director
- Michael Mulvaney: Assistant Program Director
- Michael Bertelsen: Associate Director, OIRED
- Maria Elisa Christie: Program Director, Women in International Development
- Lindsey Sutphin: Communications Coordinator
- Christina Brannan: Administrative and Financial Services Associate



Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program

SANREM gets a new look

To better represent SANREM CRSP and its current research theme of conservation agriculture, the SANREM CRSP Management Entity has approved a new logo.

Researchers are now asked to use the new logo, which can be uploaded from the SANREM website: <http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp/partners/team-room/official-documents/> along with the USAID logo and acknowledgement text.

SANREM also recently launched its re-designed [website](#). Amado Ohland, SANREM's web design specialist, launched the site February 15. The new site has updated news stories, announcements about the Annual Meeting in May, and new sections on conservation agriculture, common acronyms, and an improved Team Room for project partners.

The SANREM Knowledgebase (SKB) also has a new design: <http://apps.cals.vt.edu/cgi-bin/WebObjects/SANREM.woa/wa/advancedSearch>

Please take the time to look through the site and send us any feedback you may have.

SANREM CRSP seeks a new program director

The Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program (SANREM CRSP) at Virginia Tech is seeking a program director to oversee the program's research, reporting, and relations with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Candidates should have a PhD in agronomy, crop science, soil science, natural resource management, or a related field. Experience working with or in developing countries is required.

To see full posting and apply, search the posting number 0101016 at https://listings.jobs.vt.edu/applicants/jsp/shared/search/Search_css.jsp.

Applications will be considered until the position is filled.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SANREM CRSP is made possible by the United States Agency for International Development and the generous support of the American people through USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EPP-A-00-04-00013-00.



VirginiaTech
Invent the Future

Program Director's Message



At one time or another we have all heard the expression that "change is a constant." And that has certainly been true for SANREM as we have made the transition from Phase III to Phase IV. We have new projects, new investigators, new countries involved, and a new focus to pursue.

The new year also saw us initiate a search for a new program director as Dr. Theo Dillaha decided to return to his academic home in the Biological Systems Engineering Department on a fulltime basis. We wish Theo every success in his new pursuits and thank him for his many years of service to SANREM. The search for a new director is still underway and more specific information can be had elsewhere in this newsletter. If you are aware of qualified candidates that might enjoy joining the ME team here in Blacksburg, please encourage them to apply or send me your nominations and I will be happy to make a contact.

The new year was also a time of change for me. I had comfortably settled into a quiet retirement filled with days devoted to improving my woodworking skills, pursuing my interests in aviation, some interesting consulting activities, travel, and my volunteer work at Smithfield Plantation. Assuming the interim program director's position has provided me with an opportunity to explore some new niches as well as apply my many years of research and program management experience in new arenas. This has certainly been a stimulating experience for me thus far and I look forward to continuing to work with you to put SANREM IV on a firm foundation that will help to assure its success longer term.

Also as noted in the lead story in this issue of the newsletter, we have made some changes in how we present ourselves with the adoption of a new logo that is more reflective of SANREM IV and a totally re-configured website that will give us a fresh face on the world. As you are well aware web based commu-

nication is now the norm and it is in our collective best interest to present ourselves in ways that more effectively communicate who we are, what we do, and what we have learned. We have a great communications team in Amado and Lindsey, and your participation in this process going forward is absolutely essential as we seek to keep our materials fresh and informative. Lindsey will be more than happy to work with you to highlight your good work on the SANREM website and elsewhere.

Announcements

The SANREM CRSP Annual Meeting is now scheduled to take place in Blacksburg, VA on May 16-19. For more details: <http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp/partners/meetings/annual-meeting-2011/>

The Second International Conservation Agriculture Workshop and Conference in Southeast Asia will be held July 4-7, 2011 at the Royal University of Agriculture, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. For more information on the abstracts and conference program, contact Mike Mulvaney: mulvamj@vt.edu; on logistics and the workshop, contact Manuel Reyes: mannyreyes@nc.rr.com.

USAID reorganization, new Bureau of Food Security

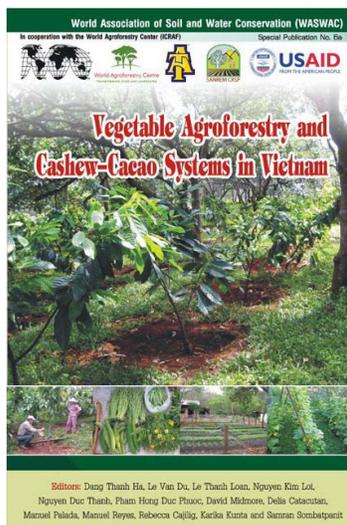
The reorganization of USAID is centered on the Feed the Future program, which came out of the president's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative. In order to elevate the visibility of Feed the Future, the Bureau of Food Security was created in the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on November 22, 2010.

There are three offices within the bureau: (1) Program Coordination/Budget office, (2) Private Sector and Innovation office, and (3) Agriculture, Research, and Technology (ART) office, which includes SANREM and most of the CRSPs.

"This bureau will lead a whole-of-government effort to implement President Obama's Feed the Future initiative, a multibillion-dollar international effort led by USAID to develop the agricultural sectors of a number of countries throughout the developing world." – USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah

New book on cacao-cashew systems in Vietnam launched

A new book details studies and makes recommendations to significantly increase cacao production in Vietnam by growing the crop under cashew canopies. The book, "Vegetable Agroforestry and Cashew-Cacao Systems in Vietnam," includes research by a team of scientists from LTRA-5. They successfully tested adding cacao, also known as cocoa, to cashew farming systems in Nghia Trung, Vietnam.



A team led by SANREM partners at Nong Lam University tested eight cacao varieties on farmer-owned cashew plantations and had promising results – cacao grew exceptionally well under the cashew canopy. In terms of the net present value per hectare, **this cashew-cacao system will increase incomes by 159 percent compared to a pure cashew system.**

The researchers also found that farmers save money if they grow home garden vegetables under the cashew canopy instead of buying the vegetables in the market. Growing high-value crops like vegetables also helps increase profits since growing trees alone does not provide immediate income. Researchers also found that cashew yields increased when vegetables were planted among the trees.

The book also gives information about gender-based divisions of labor. Men are dominant in growing commercial crops, and women produce crops for subsistence in home gardens. Vietnamese women rarely participate in agricultural extension activities because of their time-consuming household duties, and training sessions are not planned to accommo-

date their schedules. However, since women hold key roles in farming, the researchers worked with them and found that women can be better trained and empowered through an unscheduled informal approach than a traditional formal scheduled method.

The research team was made up of scientists from NLU in partnership with scientists from the World Vegetable Center and the World Agroforestry Center, North Carolina A&T State University, Texas A&M University, University of California, Berkeley, Central Queensland University, and MARS Incorporated.

Published by the World Association of Soil and Water Conservation and the World Agroforestry Center, the book was launched on January 6, 2011 during the Second International Soil and Water Assessment Tool Conference in Southeast Asia held in Ho Chi Minh City.

Second International SWAT-Southeast Asia Workshop and Conference

The Southeast Watershed Assessment Tool-Southeast Asia took place January 4-8 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Nearly 100 scientists, policy makers, and students discussed critical water resource needs for agriculture, alleviating water quality problems, and developing strategies to address climate change.

A major component of the conference was the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT), a USDA product widely used to quantify the impact of land management practices in large, complex watersheds. Participants discussed how to best adapt SWAT to match Southeast Asia's water needs.

Daniel P. Ames, from Idaho State University, gave a two-day workshop on MapWindow GIS software, a free and open source program. MapWindow is great for Southeast Asia because it is free, easy-to-use, can be customized, and operates in multiple languages,

Research Spotlight: Lesotho

including Vietnamese.

Lesotho is a unique country. It's one of the few sovereign countries completely surrounded by another country, and its mountainous terrain and land ownership practices present unique challenges for agricultural production. SANREM CRSP researchers from the University of Tennessee and the National University of Lesotho (NUL) aim to tackle these challenges through developing conservation agriculture production systems (CAPS). CAPS has the potential to lessen soil erosion and improve soil fertility through maintenance of a year-round soil cover, minimal tillage, and crop rotation systems.

SANREM researchers Dayton Lambert and Michael Wilcox have both had long experiences working in agriculture, but they were shocked at the level of soil erosion in Lesotho. "You could see the maize crop still standing in the soil that had eroded off of the farm and onto the road!" said Wilcox. Lambert and Wilcox, along with Forbes Walker and principal investigator Neal Eash, hope to use CAPS to improve Lesotho's soils. Eash said that since no-till farming was pioneered in Tennessee, his team has the experience to

Growing Nations, and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT). In November and December 2010, SANREM researchers led eight NUL graduates conducting household surveys in the Butha Buthe district. They asked people about their farming practices, and agricultural and household economics. Wilcox said these baseline surveys will help guide research and function as a gauge for progress throughout the project.

At the Growing Nations site in Maphutseng, researchers established two adjacent sites – one has conservation agriculture treatments, and the other uses conventional farming methods. On the conservation agriculture site, they set up a Bowen ratio unit, which will help monitor carbon levels. More productive soils have higher amounts of carbon sequestration, so CAPS is expected to slowly increase soil organic carbon. In 2011, another unit will be set up on the conventional tillage site to compare carbon emissions between the two sites.

The research team looks forward to its return to Lesotho in May. Part of the team will conduct more surveys in southern Lesotho, and the other will compare crop performance at the experiment site in Maphutseng.



Ntebholeng Monyane interviewing a female farmer in Manoeleng, Lesotho. Eight recent graduates of the National University of Lesotho spent a month surveying people in the Butha Buthe district.

develop CAPS and convince farmers to adopt it. Eash stressed the importance of the project's partners in Lesotho: NUL, the non-governmental organization

Gender and participatory methodologies workshop

How does gender affect research results, and how do research results affect men and women differently?

That question is the theme of USAID-funded gender research and a focus of a workshop held at OIRED for researchers, most of whom were graduate students soon departing to developing countries to conduct thesis data collection. Maria Elisa Christie, SANREM's gender equity coordinator, hosted the workshop with several participatory methodology exercises researchers can use in their studies.

In one exercise, she asked the group whether or not they agreed with the statement "The greatest gender inequalities in agriculture are at the household and farm level." The group "voted with their feet," going to opposite sides of the room depending on their responses and held a discussion about their reasoning.

Christie divided everyone into groups and asked them how "It's a boy!" would be thought of in different cultures. Most said that sons are respected because they have better economic options and are more likely to inherit property. However, some said that girls could be favored because they will stay close to the family. Other students said it would depend on which parent you ask or whether or not that family already has sons.

The groups were also given two soil samples and were asked to determine which one was healthier. Christie said it is important to listen to the vocabulary used and how the participants describe and analyze the soil to understand their perceptions as to what is healthy and what is not.

Keith Moore, SANREM's associate director, told the group that technical knowledge is one of the biggest barriers to interpreting people's perceptions. He gave an example of a farmer describing plant height by pointing to a level near his ankle and saying "this high." The surveyor wrote down "two weeks after planting," which was not what the farmer meant.



Maria Elisa Christie gives a group of graduate students two soil samples. She asked them to identify which one was the healthiest and explain how they made their decision.

Christie said "gender is something we are imprinted with from the day we were born." She said researchers have to understand the process, knowledge, perceptions, and beliefs of groups in order to be effective.

Editor's Note

As the communications coordinator for the SANREM CRSP, I encourage you to contact me with any content you would like to see in the newsletter or on the [website](#) at lindsey.sutphin@vt.edu. You can also subscribe to the SANREM CRSP mailing list by e-mailing me your name and e-mail address.



Check us out on Facebook and Twitter! Followers and fans get news about our projects, publications, events, and updates to our website.