



Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program

SANREM CRSP
Office of International Research, Education, and Development
Virginia Tech (0378)
840 University City Blvd., Suite 5&7
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

Phone: (540) 231-1230
Fax: (540) 231-1402
sanrem@vt.edu
www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp

Trip Report:
International Farming Systems Association (IFSA) Global Learning Opportunity (GLO)
and
Visits to FAO and IFAD
30 October – 4 November 2005

Keith M. Moore
Associate Program Director
Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (SANREM)
Collaborative Research Support Program (CRSP)
OIRE/VA/Tech

Executive Summary

This week of events was both intellectually stimulating and provided a wide range of valuable SA & NRM contacts. Activities began with an introduction to the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Initiative (Chapter 14 of Agenda 21). Civil society representatives figured prominently in the International Farming Systems Association (IFSA) Global Learning Opportunity (GLO). GLO events began with the World Café – an informal method to both mix participants and stimulate the learning environment. Paper sessions, organized as roundtables of brief synoptic presentations followed by questions, discussion and debate, were prized over monotonic 20 minute presentations. The IFSA GLO launched a new model in international interactive learning events. I participated in roundtable sessions on Food, Agriculture and Rural Development Policies, and on Knowing and Learning Processes. The Key Note Address was delivered by Prabhu Pingali (Agricultural and Development Economics Division, FAO) on emerging challenges for small holders in the global food economy.

Later in the week I visited the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) where I spoke with the East and Southern Africa Director. I also spent the final day making contacts with several officers in FAO: Crop and Grassland Service; Research, Extension and Training Division; Livestock Production Group; and the Livelihood Support Program Team.



Sunday, 30 October 2005: SARD Initiative

As a pre-conference event, IFSA organizers invited members of the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Initiative to present progress on achieving the goals of Chapter 14 of Agenda 21 of the Rio Summit on Sustainable Development. The SARD Initiative involves a coalition of civil society groups managed by FAO to promote sustainable agriculture and rural development actions around the world. The “Major Groups” of civil society designated by the initiative are: farmers, NGOs, indigenous communities, workers and unions, commerce and industry, local authorities, scientific and technical community, women, and youth. IFSA is the representative of the scientific and technical community. Seven Major Group representatives participated in the IFSA Global Learning Opportunity activities. The SARD objective is to link civil society voices in policy and practice across the national, regional and global levels to support sustainable agriculture and rural livelihoods. Coordination is beginning at the international level and they have initiated a national level activity in Kenya to establish a coordinated voice within civil society for sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Eve Crowley, is the SARD Focal Point at FAO for Chapter 14 of Agenda 21.

Monday, 31 October 2005: IFSA GLO Opening Sessions

The Global Learning Opportunity began with a mixing/focusing event: the World Café. Participants were arranged four to a table with marking pens and sheets of poster paper. A general question was posed concerning our learning expectations for the conference. After we discussed and summarized our thoughts in about five minutes, one of us at each table remained as the host and the other three moved on to other tables. We did this five times, responding to questions concerning priority sustainable agriculture issues, best practices that should be shared, and two other questions. In this way, we introduced ourselves to at least 15 new people from around the world and learned about their priorities, interests and concerns.

Constance Neely and John Dixon coordinated the activity.

Clive Lightfoot, IFSA President, opened the GLO Plenary Session with a call to move beyond just doing good research to making a difference in the lives of small farmers and the rural poor. He noted that during this Global Learning Opportunity we should be sharing good ideas and practices across the regions. In the following presentation, Nadarajah Sriskandarajah (European IFSA representative) stressed going beyond biophysical work to the variety of ways of learning and how we need to be more cognizant of how we know about knowledge in our work. Representatives from the other regional associations made brief presentations: Vo Tong Xuan (Asia); Christine King (Australia); Bernardo Rivera (Latin America); Robert Mazur (North America); Jeff Mutimba (Africa); and Rym Ben Zid (North Africa and Near East).

Much of the GLO was organized into Thematic Roundtables: (1) Food, Agriculture and Rural Development Policies; (2) Marketing and Trade; (3) Knowing and Learning Processes; and (4) Development Strategies, Pathways and Synergies. I presented and followed the discussions during the course of the GLO in two of these (1 and 3). I will summarize the discussions in each of these separately.

Theme 1: Food, Agriculture and Rural Development Policies

This set of Roundtables was organized by Marcelino Avila (Rural Development Division, FAO). It is in this set of roundtables I presented SANREM CRSP work on the Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee (NRMAC) of Madiama. These sessions emphasized the difficulties associated with incorporating all stakeholders into sustainable agriculture and natural resource management solutions. Several of the presenters raised the issue of social capital and the difficulties of creating and measuring it. Others focused more tangibly on developing the right organizational mix and networking. Helen Dayo (SARD Women's Associations Representative from UPLB-Philippines) made an excellent presentation recounting the reflective development of gender issues and women's empowerment as professionals within the university structure. Jean Sibiri Zoundi (INERA-Burkina Faso) provided an interesting presentation on crop-livestock interactions for sustainable agriculture and food security which emphasized connecting local producer organizations to the market through incentives, state enabling policies, and NGO support. Constance Neely's presentation emphasized the essential role of livestock in rainfed environments with respect to poverty alleviation.

We concluded that effective agriculture and rural development with social equity requires the creation, management and evaluation of partnerships involving government, civil society, private sector, donors, universities, and CGIAR Centers. Efforts need to be focused on empowering farmers, women and other minorities through participation, decentralization, organization (coops), and education and training in business, vocational, and leadership skills. This involves strengthening information exchange, networking, and communication for sustainable development.

Theme 3: Knowing and Learning Processes

This set of roundtables was lead by Christine Holding Anyonge (FAO, Rome) and Christine King (University of Queensland). In this set of roundtables I presented my work on network analysis for technology development and transfer. The first roundtable focused on scaling up, social learning and social/institutional networks. Jeff Mutimba (Uganda) presented findings from a program to privatize extension in Uganda which funded farmer groups to pay for extension services. Virginia Cardenas (UPLB, Philippines) described new participatory approaches to extension management. Kevin Gallagher (FAO) described how the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach was evolving toward a broader program of adult learning with greater emphasis on management and facilitation skills. He cited a Thai Ministry of Education example of scaling FFS. Another presentation by Esbern Hansen (Denmark) demonstrated how Farmer Field School (FFS)-trained farmers were more likely to adapt (through transformative learning) to new market incentives for production compared to non-FFS trained farmers. German Escobar (RIMISP-Chile) presented issues concerning internet learning networks which have provided a core focus of communication about their multiple project activities, noting that two formats were required: those that reflected local specificity, and those that can be generalized for wider audiences. Rainer Krell (FAO, Rome) presented findings from a forum of communication experts working in a wide range of disciplines. He identified four types of knowing which shape knowledge acquisition and transfer: physical, scientific, intuitive and mystic. Bernard Hubert (INRA-France) told us about how European agricultural researchers were developing methods for the co-production of knowledge with their clientele.

Subsequent roundtables focused on the facilitation of learning by multi-stakeholder groups. Rainer Krell discussed the importance of focusing on standardizing and simplifying communication for true transdisciplinary dialog since many disciplines talk past each other without taking the others insights into account. Chris Opondo (African Highlands Initiative-ICRAF) presented a model of a multi-stakeholder farmer innovation system where facilitation worked at multiple levels (social organization, market linkages, research/extension, etc.) with specialized facilitators involved at each one. Chris King (University of Queensland) outlined a process of working over the course of a year individually with stakeholder groups before bringing them all together for a successful multi-stakeholder meeting. Clive Lightfoot (IFSA President) made a presentation on peer-to-peer learning which involves de-constructing successful cases in one setting/locality and re-constructing (and adapting) them in new circumstances. The question posed was how to re-invent peer-to-peer learning on a sustainable basis – his answer is: commercially. He suggested looking at the Linking Local Learners website: <<http://www.linkinglearners.net>>.

Plenary Policy Presentation:

The Emerging Global Food Economy: Challenges for Smallholder Agriculture – Prabhu Pingali
Pingali discussed emerging challenges in the global food economy. He noted the convergence of urbanization and a transition in diets leading to a shift from cereal-based production systems to a higher share of prepared foods (processed). These changes are linked with the co-existence of under- and over-nutrition. Food markets are also changing. The supermarket share of agricultural production is growing everywhere – Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Contracting and the economies of scale are becoming ever more important for small farmer survival. The patterns of trade are shifting as well. The least developed countries are relying increasingly on food imports. Consumption (consumerism) is now driving the food system. The new system emphasizes differentiated products, post-harvest processing, and high levels of science and technical skills. Energy scarcity is forcing a trade-off between biofuels and food security. The implications for small holder agriculture are that small farmers must become more commercially oriented, they must ramp up their scales of production and, consequently, bargaining power. The promotion of agricultural modernization will involve creating the enabling environment for small farmers to develop capacities to adapt to these dynamic new conditions and integrate into the market – or provide them with exit strategies.

Not everyone in the audience was happy to hear about this demise of the small farmer. Pingali responded to few questions, but had provoked considerable food for thought.

Thursday, 2 November 2005 – IFAD

I met with Joe Yayock (Director, East and Southern Africa Division). I introduced the new SANREM CRSP program. Joe was familiar with the CRSP concept having worked on the Peanut CRSP many years ago when at Amadou Bello University in Kano, Nigeria. Joe was very interested in our activities and briefly described his division and how IFAD functioned. He said he would pass on the information about the SANREM CRSP to his colleague, Mohamed Beavogui (Director for West and Central Africa) who was on leave.

Friday, 3 November 2005 – FAO

I met with Eve Crowley, Rural Livelihood Strategies and Poverty Alleviation Focal Point for the SARD Initiative (Chapter 14 of Agenda 21). I briefly outlined the SANREM CRSP program. We agreed to keep in touch and find ways that the SANREM CRSP and SARD could collaborate.

I was invited to lunch with the Livestock Working Group. This group is composed of representatives of Heifer International, Humane Society International, FAO, ILRI, and ICRAF. I later spoke with Simon Mack (Livestock Production Group, FAO). His concern was that the message about the importance and benefits of livestock was not getting out. There is a Livestock Week Conference that once provided useful exchange but has now become stagnant.

Eric Kueneman (Crop and Grassland Service, FAO) met with me and we discussed potential collaboration in West Africa. They have an Integrated Pest and Pesticide Management (IPPM) program stressing crop management and minimum tillage. Their work in Burkina Faso focuses on cotton-based IPM. Souleyman Nacro is their local coordinator. I told Eric about the current status of SANREM CRSP project development and we exchanged books and handouts. We look forward to an opportunity to collaborate in these and other activities world wide.

Abubaker Maddur (Research, Extension and Training Division, FAO) described how they serve the national agricultural research services (NARS). This involves harmonizing biotechnology policy and planning, as well as coordination of strategic planning, training for research management, and ICT applications. The latter involves a platform for a database of proven technologies which would require only a minimum of adaptive research for application by a national program. Technology for Agriculture (TECA) is an interactive knowledge-based information management system allowing dynamic content generation and decentralized management. The content for this data base is currently under development and would be shared (both access and contributions) with the national systems.

FAO is about to undergo a re-organization soon. In this reorganization, Maddur's division will be combined with Extension. Their field program is not funded, so they are dependent on their partnership with member countries for all field related programs. Partners are being sought to evolve a proactive strategy for information sourcing and content development. TECA is also seeking network focal points and technical editors for quality control www.fao.org/sd/teca/.

The Division also has a project in Egypt, Virtual Extension and Research Communication Network (VERCON). The VERCON model uses internet-based ICT to strengthen linkages by supporting communication and the creation, sharing, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information among a network of farmers, extension agents, and agricultural researchers as well as other stakeholders. Maddur also noted that the General Affairs and Information Department (GI) of FAO, particularly their Library and Documentation Systems (GIL) had been assisting on the IT side of his division's activities. GI also houses the WAICENT (the world agricultural information center). Key specialists include: Stephen Rudgard, (x56171, A106, stephen.rudgard@fao.org) and Francisco Perez Trejo (x. 53425, A102).

My final meeting at FAO was with a part of the Livelihood Support Program team (Jan Johnson, Marta Bruno, Florence Egal, and Dominique Reeb). Bob Mazur joined me for this meeting. Bob and I described the SANREM CRSP program. From the perspective of the Management Entity, I provided an overview of the program, its objectives, and the current status of our program development. Bob described Iowa State's livelihoods approach which has been incorporated into an application for a SANREM CRSP competitive Long-Term Research Activity Award.

The Sustainable Livelihood Programme (www.fao.org/sd/dim_pe4/pe4-040501_en.htm) is built on existing projects in developing countries and structures its activities according to eight subprogrammes: Improving peoples access to natural resources; Participation, policy and local governance; Livelihoods diversification and enterprise development; Natural resource conflict management; Capacity building in cultural context; Institutional learning; Mainstreaming sustainable livelihoods approaches in the field; and Referral and Response Facility. During the discussion, Jan confirmed: (1) the importance of forming intermediate level local organizations (as done in the SANREM CRSP-West Africa activity); (2) the value of training which builds self-esteem and empowers local leaders; and (3) the need for such local associations to have an economic incentive in order to maintain sustainability. His prime example for noting these points was a project in Honduras.

List of Contacts:

Marcelino Avila, Rural Development Division Marcelino.Avila@fao.org
Christine Holding Anyonge FAO Christine.HoldingAnyonge@fao.org
Marta Bruno, Livelihood Support Program Consultant marta.bruno@fao.org
Virginia Cardenas, Extension, UPLB vcard@laguna.net
Ibrahima Cissé, IER-Mali, Ibrahima.Cisse@ier.ml
Eve Crowley, Senior Officer, Rural Institutions and Participation Service
Rural Development Division, FAO – Rome eve.crowley@fao.org
Alexander Daniel, President, Institute for Integrated Rural Development (IIRD) India
iirdind_agd@sancharnet.in
Helen Dayo, WOCAN and Anthropology, UPLB-Philippines helenfd2002@yahoo.com
John Dixon, CYMMT john.dixon@cgiar.org
Florence Egal, Food and Nutrition Division florence.egal@fao.org
Javier Ekboir, Senior Research Fellow, ISNAR (IFPRI-San José) j.ekboir@cgiar.org
Germán Escobar, Centro Latinoamericano para le Desarrollo Rural gescobar@rimisp.org
Arthur Getz Escudero, International Partners for Sustainable Agriculture arthur@igc.org
Kevin Gallagher, Special Programme For Food Security FAO kevin.gallagher@fao.org
Esbern Friis Hansen, Danish Research efh@diis.dk
Bernard Hubert, INRA-France hubert@avignon.inra.fr
Glenda Humiston, University of California-Berkeley humiston@nature.berkeley.edu
Jan Johnson, Livelihood Support Program jan.johnson@fao.org
Christine King, University of Queensland-Gatton, Australia christine.king@uq.edu.au

Aichi Kitalyi, Livestock and Farming Systems, RELMA-ICRAF a.kitalyi@cgiar.org
Rainer Krell, FAO Rainer.Krell@fao.org
Eric Kueneman, Crop and Grassland Service, FAO Eric.Kueneman@fao.org
Tokida Kunihiro, Battambang Agricultural Productivity Enhancement Project
tokida.kunihiro@jica.go.jp
Clive Lightfoot, President, IFSA clive.lightfoot@linkinglearners.net
Simon Mack, Livestock Production Group, FAO Simon.Mack@fao.org
Catherine Macombe catherine.macombe@cemagref.fr
Abubaker Maddur, Research, Extension and Training Division abubaker.maddur@fao.org
Peter Mann, International Editor, WHY Speaks peter@worldhungeryear.org
Robert Mazur, Iowa State University rmazur@iastate.edu
Jeff Mutimba, Uganda jeff.mutimba@africaonline.co.ug
Constance Neely, Consultant, Livelihood Support Program, FAO clineely@earthlink.net
David Norman, Kansas State University, dnorman@k-state.edu
Chris Opondo, African Highlands Initiative-ICRAF c.opondo@cgiar.org
Nic Paget-Clarke, In Motion Magazine, npc@inmotionmagazine.com
Dominique Reeb, Forestry Department dominique.reeb@fao.org
Bernardo Rivera, Universidad de Caldas, Colombia brivera@ucaldas.edu.co
Maylee Thavat, Australian National University maylee.thavat@anu.edu.au
Neil Trent, Executive Director, Humane Society International ntrent@hsihsus.org
Jaime Salinas, Programa Apoyo a Agricultura Sostenible en laderas para C.A.
(PASOLAC/Honduras) jsalinas@dei.gob.hn
Norman Uphoff, Cornell University ntu1@cornell.edu
Terry Wollen, Director, Animal Well-Being, Heifer Project terry.wollen@heifer.org
Vo Tong Xuan, President, University in Mekong Delta, Vietnam v.xuan@cgiar.org
Joseph Yayock, Director East & Southern Africa Division, IFAD j.yayock@ifad.org
Rym Ben Zid, Consultant-President of IFSA-North Africa & Near East bz.rym@planet.tn
Jean Sibiri Zoundi, INERA-Burkina Faso jeansibiri_zoundi@yahoo.fr