

September 2011 newsletter

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Indigenous plants, fruits and vegetables



ACP countries have a rich botanical diversity, and yet not enough resources are allocated for research on their indigenous fruit and vegetable species that have traditionally provided food, nutrients, solutions to health-related problems and livelihoods.

In this new dossier, Professor Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Mauritius, shares her thoughts on ethnobotany and ethnopharmacology, which are interdisciplinary fields of research that specifically focus on the empirical knowledge of indigenous peoples. She notes that while European traditions of plant use are well-studied and recorded, in many cases traditions are poorly understood in other regions. In another contribution, Professor Mary Abukutsa-Onyango of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology focuses on acknowledging the advantages of African indigenous fruits and vegetables and overcoming the constraints through targeted research, training and value addition. Such plant species are often better adapted to climatic constraints than exotic fruit and vegetable crops that have been introduced.

Our dossier also contains links to research documents and analytical reports relating to underutilised indigenous fruits and vegetables, highlighting the most promising crops and their value to agricultural and rural development.

Ethnobotany and the future of R&D on indigenous plant resources

Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, Centre de phytothérapie et de recherche (CEPHYR), Ebene, Mauritius

Plants have formed the basis of sophisticated traditional medicine systems that have been in existence for thousands of years and continue to provide mankind with new remedies. Although some of the therapeutic properties attributed to them have proven to be erroneous, medicinal plant therapy is based on empirical findings from several years of observation and rigorous research. The importance of ethnobotanical inquiry as a cost-effective means of locating new and useful tropical plant compounds cannot be overemphasized. Interest in exploring the potential of chemotherapeutic agents continues.

In her article, Gurib-Fakim argues that many of the plant-derived pharmaceuticals and phytomedicines currently in use today were traditionally used by native people around the world. Some of this knowledge has been documented and codified or studied scientifically. Medicinal plants typically contain mixtures of different chemical compounds that may act individually, additively or in synergy to improve health. A single plant may, for example, contain bitter substances that stimulate digestion, anti-inflammatory compounds that reduce swellings and pain, phenolic compounds that can act as an antioxidant and venotonics, antibacterial and antifungal tannins that act as natural antibiotics, diuretic substances that enhance the elimination of waste products and toxins and alkaloids that enhance mood and give a sense of well-being.

Many analysts believe that the current "one drug fits all" approach may be unsustainable in the future. In the management of polygenic syndromes and conditions, there is a renewed interest in multi-ingredient synergistic formulations. Rationally designed polyherbal formulation is being developed as option for multi-target therapeutic and prophylactic applications. This has led to the development of standardized, synergistic, safe and effective traditional herbal formulations with robust scientific evidence that can also offer faster and more economical alternatives.

Read the whole article: knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14398

Researching African indigenous fruits and vegetables – Why?

Traditionally, Africans made use of edible fruits and leaves of plant species growing wild as weeds. These edible plants were well-known to the rural communities and were often collected from the wild or planted in home gardens as intercrops with staples. Abukutsa describes how some indigenous fruits and vegetables are still collected in the wild, especially in southern Africa and parts of eastern and western Africa. She argues that the hidden potential of indigenous fruits and vegetables needs to be exploited to play a pivotal role in solving malnutrition, food insecurity and poverty challenges facing Africa. She concludes that African indigenous fruits and vegetables are high-profile commodities with nutritional and health benefits. They have a role to play in food security, nutrition, income and sustainable development in Africa and beyond; they are a 'gold mine' to be harvested and research will accelerate this process.

Read the whole article: knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14426

Selected references on indigenous plants, fruits and vegetables

Ethnopharmacology, food production, nutrition and biodiversity conservation: Towards a sustainable future for indigenous peoples

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14397

V. H. Heywood, Centre for Plant Diversity & Systematics, School of Biological Sciences, University of Reading, UK, 2011

This [paper](#) aims to provide a perspective of ethnopharmacology that explicitly extends the range of disciplines it covers so as to embrace food and nutrition and biodiversity, both wild and domesticated, and places it in the context of the dramatic changes to our planet during a period of rapid global change and the impacts that these changes are having on human health and nutrition and on its resource base.

Ethnopharmacology, biodiversity, agriculture, food and nutrition are inextricably linked but suffer from compartmentalization and a lack of communication which have to be overcome if progress is to be made. Fortunately, a convergence of interest between the agricultural biodiversity and the biodiversity conservation sectors has emerged in recent years and there is an increased appreciation of the need to adopt a wider approach to human nutrition than the conventional agricultural model allows; there is also a greater awareness of the important role played by diversity of crops, especially local species, and consumption of wild species in achieving balanced nutrition. Ethnopharmacologists need to take much more cognizance of the fate of the resource base – the plants, animals and microorganisms – and of the actions being undertaken under the auspices of treaties, such as the Conservation on Biological Diversity and its Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, to counter its degradation and loss.

Although it has been suggested that the 'golden days' of ethnopharmacology may be over, it is proposed that by embracing the challenges of broadening the remit so as to include the health aspects of wild biodiversity employed in nutrition, a new 'golden age' beckons. The paper concludes with some suggestions for action.

New series of booklets on African priority food tree species

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14404

A new series of booklets '[African Priority Food Tree Species](#)' examines 11 priority food tree species in sub-Saharan Africa, such as the Bush Mango, the Shea Butter and Tamarind tree. Each booklet (or leaflet) includes a synthesis of current knowledge about each species as well as recommendations for their conservation and sustainable use. This publication is the result of a joint effort between African research organizations: the Sub-Saharan African Forest Genetic Resources Network (SAFORGEN), Bioversity International and the Forest Research Center of INIA (Spain). This series is available in English and French. (Bioversity International, 5/9/2011)

Strategic framework for underutilized plant species research and development, with special reference to Asia and the Pacific, and to Sub-Saharan Africa

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14328

H. Jaenicke and I. Höschle-Zeledon (Eds), International Centre for Underutilised Crops and Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species, 2006

This [paper](#) provides a Strategic Framework for underutilized plant species research and development activities. Developed through wide consultation, it aims to avoid duplication of effort and to help cover gaps in current knowledge, while allowing outputs and approaches to be synthesised regionally. The Framework acts as a roadmap to guide stakeholders as they develop the work plans needed to generate new knowledge, lobby policy makers, or develop markets. It will also guide efforts to set both research and funding priorities. Focusing on the differing needs and circumstances of two world regions – Asia and the Pacific, and Sub-Saharan Africa – the Strategic Framework outlines the outstanding challenges and opportunities to be considered in promoting increased use of these plants. An integrated, partnership approach is proposed, focusing on the following intervention areas to generate maximum impact: knowledge generation, communication, capacity building, policy improvement and market development.

Current status of fruits and vegetables production and consumption in francophone African countries – Potential impact on health

J. Ganry, *Proceedings of the 11nd International Symposium on Human Health Effects of Fruits & Vegetables*, B. Patil (Ed.), *Acta Horticulturae 841*: 249-256, 2009

This [paper](#) attempts to link the production of fruits and vegetables in francophone countries of Africa, to the prevalence of some chronic diseases, such as diabetes and obesity. It is based on data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) and information collected through a survey made in twenty francophone countries of Africa and Indian Ocean. The survey was in preparation for the workshop on 'Promotion of fruits and vegetable for health in francophone African countries', held in Yaounde, Cameroon, on 23-26th of October 2009. It was noted that there is a great diversity of situations related to the geographic position, the cultural traditions behaviour and economic situation. Very few countries are reaching the recommended intake of 400g of fruits and vegetables per capita per day. These are humid-forest countries including Cameroon, Gabon, Guinea, Rwanda, and Burundi, where banana and plantains are the fruits most consumed. The situation in Sahelian countries like Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, and Mauritania is even worse with availability below one third of the critical level. A first analysis of data from FAO and WHO is supporting the assumption of a relation between a low consumption of fruits and vegetable and a high prevalence of chronic diseases like diabetes and obesity in some conditions.

[Access to high value markets by smallholder farmers of African indigenous vegetables in Kenya](#)

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14327

I.K. Ngugi, R. Gitau and J.K. Nyoro, *Tegemeo Institute, Egerton University, Nairobi, Kenya, 2006*

Consumers have become increasingly aware of the nutritional and medicinal value of African indigenous vegetables. This has caused a rise in demand especially in major urban centres. The supply has, however, not matched this growing demand. Most farmers are semi commercially oriented poor farmers, not organized, and lack inputs and skills to enable them to satisfy the dynamic market requirements. They are not able to access high-value markets such as supermarkets and are often exploited by middlemen. Responding to the changing consumption patterns and market opportunities occasioned by the growing demand for these vegetables in the urban centres, a number of farmers in collaboration with development agencies and government have come together to form producer groups to get around their constraints and meet the conditions in the markets. It is against this backdrop that this [study](#) was undertaken with the principal objective of identifying how small-scale farmers could better be integrated in the emerging and restructured markets such as supermarkets. The study identifies the factors attributed to successful inclusion in the chain supplying the dynamic markets and estimates the cost and benefits of the inclusion. The data used in the study were collected using a checklist of interviews with various stakeholders who were involved in the African indigenous vegetables business.

[Crops for the Future](#)

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14346

The [Crops for the Future website](#) provides a range of information on publications, courses, projects and news relating to underutilised indigenous crops. The [Crops for the Future Research Centre](#) has been created in the summer of 2011. The Research Centre is specifically designed to evaluate underutilised crops from around the world. It is at the heart of an international effort to seek out which crops have the potential to be grown for human sustenance or on a commercial basis for food, pharmaceuticals or biomaterials in the climates of the future.

[Vegetables, fruits, herbs and seasonings of the Caribbean](#)

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14342

This [website](#) is an online index and provides a list of important plants from the Caribbean, including their species names, health benefits, uses and history.

[African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development: Special issue dedicated to African leafy vegetables](#)

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14355

[10 papers](#) on African leafy vegetables are presented.

[Worldwatch Institute's 'Nourishing the planet' featuring indigenous vegetables](#)

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14314

This blog has been created by the Worldwatch Institute to promote and enrich their leading publication 'State of the World 2011: Innovations that Nourish the Planet'. Blog posts [regularly feature](#) underutilized and indigenous crops and plants.

Browse the dossier for more resources:

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14302

[International Conference on Innovations in Extension and Advisory Services](#)

[Continuing our K4D focus on extension leading up to the international conference on Innovations in Extension and Advisory Services: Linking Knowledge to Policy and Action, 15-18 November 2011, Nairobi, Kenya](#)

Jamaica's Rural Agriculture Development Agency to survey the population on the island's agriculture sector

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14408

The Rural Agriculture Development Agency (RADA) in Jamaica stimulates growth in the sector through engaging its stakeholders. According to Phillip Chung, Senior Director of the Division of Technology, Training and Technical Information at RADA, his Agency would embark on a large scale-media campaign to change the perceptions (essentially negative) about the role technology plays in the local sector, if it wasn't for the lack of funding.

The Agency's primary tool in the battle to change perceptions is the promotion of Jamaica's technological advances. RADA has turned to more economical and innovative tools to spread its message. The use of Facebook and Twitter pages and an online diagnostic system which allows farmers with internet connection to upload photos of diseased plants and other issues and send them directly to extension officers, are some example of the new technologies RADA is using. The officers are equipped with a laptop computer, video recording and still cameras and other technologies while in the field. In addition to text and voice messages the Agency has in recent months been feverishly working to fine tune a Geographic Information System or GIS. This system will help to map and analyze data collected by extension officers while in the field. It is a first of its kind for RADA and is expected to improve the farmer registration process and enable officers to produce reliable statistics regarding acreage and crop production. (Go-Jamaica.com, 15/8/2011)

10th AC Meeting on S&T for ACP agricultural and rural development

10th Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Science and Technology for ACP Agricultural & Rural Development

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14364

The theme for the 10th AC meeting in the Commonwealth of Dominica is "Safeguarding the ACP Food System through Science, Technology and Innovation". It will be held during the Caribbean Week of Agriculture, in Dominica and the outputs will be presented during the Alliance Meeting to contribute to decisive actions that policymakers can take for safeguarding the ACP food system. This is appropriate as AC members continue their efforts to advocate for policy and institutional change and adequate financial resources, for undertaking innovative research and teaching to generate and apply new and existing knowledge in support of agricultural innovation and enhanced performance for socio-economic development.

The meeting programme (day-to-day schedule) can be downloaded [here](#).

Venue: Garraway Hotel, Commonwealth of Dominica

Dates: 9 - 13 October 2011

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Developments | Follow the latest RSS feeds for this section

Towards a global observatory of policy instruments on STI

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14373



In 2010, UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Science in Latin America and the Caribbean, based in Montevideo (Uruguay), developed a pilot methodology for the standardization and systematization of data on science, technology and innovation (STI) policies in the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, together with a sophisticated information platform known as the Science Policy Information Network (SPIN). This platform is a cluster of databases equipped with powerful graphic and analytical tools that has been devised for political leaders, planners, directors and administrators of science and technology in parliaments, universities, research institutions, production enterprises concerned with innovation, international organisations; and researchers and other specialists whose field of study embraces science and technology policies. UNESCO has plans to turn SPIN into a global observatory, starting with Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific. In parallel, UNESCO is preparing a proposal to standardize and normalize the way in which the surveys and information about operational STI policy instruments are produced around the world. This work will culminate in the Paris Manual. A group of well-known international experts and STI decision-makers are meeting in Paris on 19-20 October 2011 at UNESCO's invitation to take this process forward. (UNESCO, 5/9/2011)

Making the EU's Common Agricultural Policy coherent with development goals

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14379



This ODI Briefing Paper calls for a fresh look at the EU's Common Agricultural Policy alongside development goals and the new global context. The CAP has the potential to affect developing countries in a variety of ways. The EU has recognised that making development policy in isolation is not sufficient. Its commitment to Policy Coherence for Development seeks to ensure that all policies, not only development assistance, promote growth in developing countries. This briefing paper analyses CAP reform options against development goals and finds that research is urgently needed to analyse the coherence between the reforms and European development policy. (ODI Briefing Papers 69, September 2011)

New European research programme to define policy for the sustainable management of soil

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14383



A new research programme led by European research institutions with funding from the European Commission will help to define a policy for sustainable management of soils, with a view to adopting a legally binding Soil Framework Directive, such as exists for air and water. The Ecological Function and Biodiversity Indicators in European Soils (EcoFINDERS) programme, which launched in January 2011, brings together 22 institutional European research partners, including the University of Cambridge, to formulate how best to manage the health of soil. The goal of EcoFINDERS is to design and implement soil strategies aimed at ensuring the sustainable use of soils. ([Univ. of Cambridge](http://www.univ.cam.ac.uk), 14/7/2011)

Pioneering study shows how traditional seed systems may cope with climate change

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14388



A [new study](#) conducted by Mauricio Bellon, Programme Director at Bioversity International, and colleagues, throws light on the ways that smallholder farmers will be able to obtain seeds that will cope with climate change. The team surveyed Mexican maize farmers in four different agro-ecological zones to find out where the farmers got their seed and then modelled how variation in regional climate might affect their environment. For all communities except those in the highlands, predicted future maize environments are already represented within the 10-km radial zones, indicating that in the future farmers will have easy access to adapted planting material. Farmers in the highlands are the most vulnerable and probably will need to acquire seed from outside their traditional geographical ranges. This change in seed sources probably will entail important information costs and the development of new seed and associated social networks, including improved linkages between traditional and formal seed systems and more effective and efficient seed-supply chains. The approach pioneered in this research, of integrating information about seed systems with fine-scale examination of predicted climate shifts, is important because it has the potential to be applied in other regions and countries. ([Bioversity International](http://www.bioversityinternational.org), 19/8/2011; [CCAFS](http://www.ccafs.org), 1/9/2011)

REDD+ and Agriculture: a cross-sectoral approach to REDD+ and implications for the poor

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14393



This paper by K. Graham and R. Vignola (from the Overseas Development Institute, ODI) outlines the linkages between forests and agriculture, and the need for national level REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, with the + referring to forest conservation, sustainable forest management and carbon stock enhancement) policies and programmes to effectively address agriculture as a driver of deforestation and forest degradation, and ensure that local level food security is not compromised. It examines a number of policy approaches (that may form part of a REDD+ strategy) to address deforestation and forest degradation caused by the expansion of agriculture. The agriculture sector and forests are intrinsically linked, most obviously through their direct competition for land. The authors argue that to harmonise agricultural and REDD+ policy goals, agricultural intensification will be necessary, but not sufficient. They believe that in the absence of other policy and regulatory measures to reduce deforestation, intensification is very unlikely to reduce pressure on forests, and most likely only large scale land use planning will be essential in identifying areas for specific "place based" policies to support REDD+ objectives. The paper discusses the potential policy options as well as some potential socio-economic impacts (for subsistence as well as commercial farmers), and how policy design and targeted REDD+ revenues can be used to mitigate them. ([REDD-net.org](http://www.redd-net.org), August 2011)

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Selected publications | Follow the latest RSS feeds for this section

Biodiversity – Science for humans and nature (Agropolis Dossier)

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14412

This 'Dossier' by Agropolis International illustrates biodiversity research that has been carried out by the scientific community of the Agropolis institutes with the aim of boosting international awareness on this unique research platform. This research is described in four chapters, along with a final chapter describing research involving joint participation of citizens and scientists: 1. Origin and evolution of biodiversity; 2. Functional biodiversity; 3. Societies and biodiversity; 4. Modelling—biodiversity scenarios; 5. Biodiversity — civic science.

The previous thematic dossier from Agropolis focused on '[Agronomy, crops and cropping systems](#)'.

Climate change, food security, and agrobiodiversity: Toward a just, resilient, and sustainable food system

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14414

C. G. Gonzalez, *Fordham Environmental Law Review*, Vol. 22, p. 493, *Seattle University School of Law Research Paper No. 11-19*, February 2011

This [article](#) examines the underlying causes of the crises in the global food system, and recommends specific measures that might be adopted to address the distinct but related problems

of food insecurity, loss of agrobiodiversity, and climate change. The article concludes that the root cause of the crises confronting the global food system is corporate domination of the food supply and the systemic destruction of local food systems that are healthy, ecologically sustainable, and socially just. The article argues that small-scale sustainable agriculture has the potential to address the interrelated climate, food, and agrobiodiversity crises, and suggests specific measures that the international community might take through law and regulation to promote the transition to a more just, resilient, and sustainable food system. (via [PAR](#), 31/8/2011)

The state of climate information services for agriculture and food security in East African countries

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14419

M. Kadi, L.N. Njau, J. Mwikya, A. Kamga, CCAFS Working Paper No. 5, 2011

Through research conducted by way of questionnaires, consultations, visits, interviews, and websites, the [current study](#) sets out to inventory different types and formats of climate information used in East Africa. It also assesses current climate services, including how such services are disseminated and applied by various regional and national actors, and makes recommendations on the sorts of measures that might be taken in order to better satisfy climate information needs of the agriculture and food security sector in East Africa. Eastern Africa has good regional meteorological services network within NMHSs (National meteorological and hydrological services) and ICPAC [Inter-Governmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) Climate Prediction and Applications Centre] as a specialized sub-regional institution is well co-funded by member states. The institutions websites are regularly updated. The Internet high-speed availability in the region facilitates easy accessibility of climate information and products. Some countries have poor data observation network, including Eritrea and Somalia. There are insufficient funds to continuously disseminate climate information and prediction products for instance holding workshops or through print media. There is no early warning budget line allocated by governments. The early warning sector that is responsible for disseminating climate forecast products and information is located in the Ministry of Agriculture in some countries. This research evaluates the various methods that are available to estimate crop production and cropped area in such farming systems. A description and summary tables from a database of estimated crop yields in Uganda, collated from a large set of field studies over past decades, are also provided.

Postharvest and value addition of horticultural produce – Strengthening technologies for linking farmers to market: Proceedings and recommendations, 2011

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14422

This [publication](#) is the proceedings of the expert consultation meeting held by APAARI (Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions) in collaboration with Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) in Malaysia on 29 November – 2 December 2010. It includes details of presentations and discussion in five technical sessions, and recommendations of the meeting. Strategies and action plans proposed to address key policy, technical and management issues on postharvest and value addition of fruits, vegetables, ornamentals, herbs and medicinal plants with special reference to strengthening linkages of farmers to markets in the Asia-Pacific region are also featured. ([APAARI](#), 8/9/2011)

Supply chains in export agriculture, competition, and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14425

G. Porto, N. D. Chauvin and M. Olarreaga, World Bank, 2011

The focus of this [book](#) is on a neglected source of 'real costs' for farmers in low-income countries: market power along the supply chain. The authors argue that the exercise of market power along the supply chain will have a number of possible effects. Given that the impacts on prices will imply a redistribution of income across agents in the economy, there will also be implications for poverty and the attainment of poverty reduction objectives. The analysis shows that the effects of market power on income distribution and the incomes of poor households can be significant. It also demonstrates that there is much heterogeneity, both across countries for a given crop, and within a country for different crops. Measures to increase competition – to make the market structure less concentrated – will have effects similar to those resulting from actions to reduce customs clearance times, facilitate the movement of goods across borders, and so forth. The latter are issues that are at the forefront of the policy agenda in many countries and the activities of development agencies. The analysis is not only an interesting exercise but it is of great policy significance as it suggests that more attention should be devoted to competition policy in low-income countries.

Prolinnova policy brief: Strengthening local resilience to climate change

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14430

The latest (June 2011) [policy brief](#) from Prolinnova reports on the organisation's investigative work on how poor rural communities develop innovations that enables a stronger resilience to changes in climates patterns. This brief focuses on community-based adaptation to climate change, and the means needed to recognize and document local innovation. A number of example from the field help illustrate Prolinnova's research (2008 – 2011) into the innovation and creativity processes appearing in local communities that face uncertainty and hardship due to climate-related environmental change. At a moment in time where food security and climate change are at the top of the agenda, Prolinnova has made three detailed recommendations to help policy makers integrate local innovation in the climate sensitive agricultural programmes they are currently developing:

- Give local innovation due recognition in policy and planning,
- Promote farmer led adaptation to climate change, and
- Link Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) to local governance and innovation.

Food security and climate change in the Pacific: Rethinking the options

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14435

Report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Pacific Studies Series, September 2011

This **report** produced by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) describes the present state of food security and its contributing factors in the Pacific region, assesses its prospects amid the growing threats and likely impacts of climate change, and presents potential areas for more active assistance, investments, and interventions from ADB and other development partners. While technical and policy measures to ensure food security amid the ensuing climate change are numerous, interrelated, and complex, the successful implementation of programs and projects calls for simple and flexible designs that carefully consider the capabilities of relevant stakeholders at the regional, national, and local levels. The Pacific island governments view climate change as a priority issue, especially in terms of its potential impacts on food security, and need clear directions in addressing both issues. ([ADB](#), 9/2011)

Food Security, nutrition and sustainability

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14439

Edited by Geoffrey Lawrence, Kristen Lyons and Tabatha Wallington, Earthscan, April 2011

This **book** offers critical insights by international scholars, on global food security, supermarket power, new technologies, and sustainability. The book also assesses the contributions of diet and nutrition research in building socially just and environmentally sustainable food systems and provides policy recommendations to improve the health and environmental status of contemporary agri-food systems. The book features contributions from a range of social science perspectives, including sociology, anthropology, public health and geography, with case study material drawn from throughout the world. ([Reviewed by the New Agriculturalist](#))

Plant genetic resources and food security

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14441

Edited by Christine Frison, Francisco López and José T. Esquinas-Alcázar, Earthscan, July 2011

This **book** explains clearly the different interests and views at stake between all players in the global food chain. It touches upon many issues such as international food governance and policy, economic aspects of food and seed trade, conservation and sustainable use of food and agricultural biodiversity, hunger alleviation, ecological concerns, consumers' protection, fairness and equity between nations and generations, plant breeding techniques and socio-economic benefits related to food local economies. The book shows that despite the conflicting interests at stake, players (consumers, farmers' communities, the seed industry and research centres, among others) managed to come to an agreement on food and agriculture for the sake of food security and hunger alleviation in the world.

Food sovereignty and agricultural trade policy commitments: What are the margins of manoeuvre for West African states?

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14444

C. Laroche Dupraz and A. Postolle, International Congress European Association of Agricultural Economists (EAAE), 2011

This **paper** questions the possibility for West African states to reach food sovereignty given their various trade commitments and other external constraints. The starting hypothesis is that the concept of food sovereignty could be a political tool and provide economic instruments to boost the protection of agriculture in developing countries. The particularity of the approach used in the study is to combine historical economic analysis with political approach (in term of strategy, confrontation and objectives of public policy actors) to food sovereignty and trade commitments. Firstly, the authors ascertain that there is a huge gap between food sovereignty discourse and instrumentation and reality of agrarian protection and support in developing countries in general and more specifically in Western Africa. The second part focuses on the international binding commitments to test the reality of an antagonism between a neoliberal view of globalisation, carried out by the GATT/WTO system, and an alternative in favour of food sovereignty, by analysing recent negotiations, at WTO and with EPA, as well as to IMF structural adjustments conditions. The last part of the paper studies the internal constraints (such as the persistence of an "urban bias" against rural realities, the complex technicality of WTO exemption requests) and dynamics (talks of a common agricultural policy in the region, encouraging trends towards regional integration) related to the development of food sovereignty policy in West Africa.

Small farms and market modernisation

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14448

IIED Reflect and Act Briefing, July 2011

This **briefing** reflects on IIED's Regoverning Markets project, which looked at how the 'supermarket revolution' was affecting poor producers. It showcases how public and private actors can use policy and innovative business models to ensure modernisation includes smallholders. The objective of the Regoverning Markets project was to support policies and practices on agrifood market modernisation that are inclusive of small-scale producers, by generating evidence and facilitating policy dialogues. Key findings show that small-scale farmers

are often unaffected by modernisation of food markets, because flexible wholesalers mediate the changes: this changes as food safety and traceability become top priorities. Also, integrating small producers requires organised farmers and pertinent public and private policies. Moreover, it found that companies with inclusive business models are keystones for pro-poor development – as are ‘bridging partners’ who act to match farm produce with customer demands. This briefing thus reflects on IIED’s farm-to-market project and its possible contribution to future development to alleviate rural poverty.

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Events | Follow the latest RSS feeds for this section

US & UK researchers meet to consider how to protect new science without excluding developing world

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14368

Dates: 9 – 20 November 2011

Venue: University of Warwick, Warwick, UK

The University of Warwick and Boston University are joining together to hold a gathering of US and UK researchers, science based businesses, and related organizations that will explore how to create legal means of protecting new science and innovations without the costs of the products and licenses shutting out the developing world. Details of the conference may be found at www.srltv.org.

The conference will look at a variety of voluntary licensing mechanisms, in which innovators voluntarily give up their legitimate patent monopolies to allow innovation to reach the developing world affordably. Such mechanisms are an alternative approach to the compulsory licensing mechanisms provided by international intellectual property treaties such as TRIPS that have proven to be both confrontational and cumbersome to invoke.

10th African Crop Science Society Conference

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14351

Dates: 10 – 13 October 2011

Venue: Maputo, Mozambique

The African Crop Science Society and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) cordially invite you to attend the 10th African Crop Science Conference to be held in Maputo from October 10th to 13th, 2011. Details of the conference may be found [here](#).

The Conference will emphasize the role of research on providing for new and improved livelihood opportunities for farmers in Africa, which will impact on their income generation and food security. This event will facilitate a learning, dynamic and interactive environment. Opportunities will be created to interact and learn from each other and to open and broaden our horizons.

Grants and competitions | Follow the latest RSS feeds for this section

CDKN Global research call

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14300

Deadline for application: 24 October 2011.

The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) is pleased to announce its second global research call. The call will cover two themes:

- Climate Compatible Development – policies and processes.
- Climate-related Disaster Risk Management and Resilience.

CDKN seeks to fund research of the highest scientific standards with clear policy impact. In this call, CDKN challenges the international academic community to construct the most appropriate and innovative research to provide a robust evidence-base for decision-making, working directly with decision makers during the course of their research to achieve maximum impact

International Foundation for Science (IFS) research grant application process now re-opened

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14334

Deadlines: First session is 9 October 2011; Second session is 29 January 2012.

New applicants wishing to apply for a research grant to [IFS](#) are invited to submit their research application form before either of the dates highlighted below. There will be two time-bound research grant application sessions before the new three programme strategy is adopted in 2012. The deadline for the first session is 9 October 2011, and the deadline for the second session is 29 January 2012. IFS grantees wishing to submit a renewal application should communicate directly with their contact person(s) at the IFS secretariat.

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Agricultural engineer / researcher specialised in sustainable tropical agro-forestry systems, CIRAD

Deadline: 20 October 2011

Working within the "PCP Grand Sud Cameroun" platform, the researcher, to be stationed in Yaoundé (Cameroon), will identify opportunities for improving the sustainability and resilience of agro-forestry systems, in particular by taking advantage of the diversity of their products and services and adapting their management. He/she will contribute to the design of innovative systems by combining the intensification of production and maintenance of ecological services, drawing on skills in experimentation and modelling.

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Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14304



The 'Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' or **IPBES** is an interface between the scientific community and policy makers that aims to build capacity for and strengthen the use of science in policy making. Although there are many organizations and initiatives that contribute to the science policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services, there is no ongoing global mechanism recognized by both the scientific and policy communities that brings information together and synthesizes and analyses it for decision making in a range of policy fora such as the global environmental conventions and development policy dialogues. IPBES will be the mechanism that addresses the gaps in the science policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

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