

fresh

News from AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center



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A collaborative partnership with the Center for Assistance to Sustainable Development (CASD) improves capacity for technology delivery, dissemination and training for vegetable production in southern and central Cameroon

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Regional networks: The building blocks of development

Active communities of practice engage collaborators in crafting joint policy and advocacy efforts to link agriculture, health and nutrition across several countries. AVRDC promotes regional networks as a means to examine cross-sector issues and explore solutions that can be adopted and adapted for individual benefit and region-wide impact.

AARNET meets in Bangkok



The Steering Committee of the **ASEAN-AVRDC Regional Network for Vegetable Research and Development (AARNET)** held its 8th annual meeting from 19-20 March 2013 at Kasetsart University in Bangkok,

Thailand. AARNET Chairman **Philip Chew Hong** welcomed delegates from all ten ASEAN member countries, including **Normah Binti Tuah** (Brunei Darussalam), **Sitha Mam** (Cambodia), **Liferdi Lukman** (Indonesia),

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Up on the roof: AARNET participants admire the flourishing vegetable beds in the rooftop garden at the Lak Si District Office, Bangkok.

Bounnueng Douangboupha (Lao PDR), **Pauziah Muda** (Malaysia), **Nyi Nyi Aung** (Myanmar), **Flora Jarilla** (Philippines), **Poh Bee Ling** (Singapore), **Grisana Linwattana** (Thailand), and **To Thi Thu Ha** (Vietnam), as well as AVRDC Deputy Director General – Research **Jackie Hughes** and Regional Director for East and Southeast Asia **Robert Holmer**. **Fuziah Hamdan** (Brunei Darussalam), **Ahsol Hasyim** (Indonesia) and **Thiraporn Pinthongpan** (Thailand) attended as official observers and members of the secretariat **Fong Siew Lee** (Singapore) and **Sheila de Lima** (AVRDC Administration and Training Officer) were present.

The delegates discussed the status of project activities in the region, such as the home and school garden initiatives implemented in different member countries

following last year's Expert Consultation on Home, School and Other Public Facility Vegetable Gardens. Procedures for conducting ASEAN-wide comparative trials of promising advanced vegetable breeding lines from AVRDC were reviewed. Scientists from the region were encouraged to attend "Families, Farms, Food," a regional symposium to be held on 25-28 February 2014 in Bangkok. Meeting resolutions will be forwarded to the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Crops.

The increasing importance of vegetable production to ensure food and nutrition security in rapidly urbanizing areas of ASEAN was highlighted during a field trip to the famous rooftop vegetable garden of the Lak Si District Office. Established in 2003, the garden features more than 100 different species of vegetables and fruits

grown in an area of just 440 m² on the 10th floor of this government building. The group also toured the Ban Khun Ta Garden and Learning Center along busy Sukhumvit Road in Bangjak, Bangkok, where workshops and training courses on self-reliance in renewable energy and growing and preparing healthy food, especially vegetables, are open to area residents.

More info:

Lak Si Roof Top Garden

<http://organicagrisolutions-thimmaiah.blogspot.tw/2013/02/roof-top-gardens-for-climate-smart.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/grandpa.cityfarm>

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Experts discuss research priorities



More than 50 participants attended the **Expert Consultation on Vegetable Research and Development Priorities in Southeast Asia** on 21 March 2013 at Kasetsart University, Bangkok, organized by the ASEAN-AVRDC Regional Network for Vegetable Research and Development (AARNET) with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Taiwan.

AARNET steering committee members from the 10 ASEAN member states presented their needs for vegetable research and development to scientists from AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Kasetsart University, Mahidol University, the Taitung District Agricultural Research and Extension Station, and the University of Freiburg to identify and prioritize common concerns, research gaps and development efforts.

AVRDC was represented by **Jackie Hughes**, Deputy Director General – Research, **Robert Holmer**,

Regional Director East and Southeast Asia, **Jaw-Fen Wang**, Global Theme Leader – Production, **Andreas Ebert**, Global Theme Leader – Germplasm, **Peter Hanson**, Global Theme Leader – Breeding, **Gregory Luther**, Technology Dissemination Specialist, **R. Srinivasan**, Head of Entomology, **Jen Wen Luoh**, Assistant Specialist – Nutrition, **Pepijn Schreinemachers**, Agricultural Economist, **Narinder Dhillon**, Vegetable Breeder – Cucurbits, **Ramakrishnan Nair**, Vegetable Breeder – Legumes, and **Ngoni Nenguwo**, Postharvest Specialist, along with research assistants and administrative staff from the regional office in Bangkok. **Poonpipope Kasemsap**, Vice President for International Affairs of Kasetsart University, AVRDC's host institution in Thailand, welcomed the scientists and thanked AVRDC for the opportunity for KU scientists to meet and actively interact with ASEAN experts. **Nomindelger Bayasgalanbat**, FAO Technical Officer Nutrition Policy, **Jintana Yhung-Aree**, Assistant Professor Community Nutrition Division and

Suttilak Smitasiri, Head of Communication and Behavioral Science Division, both of Mahidol University, shared their expertise on human nutrition during the working group discussion. **Ekarat Kruangpanad**, Advisor Sustainable Agriculture and Extension of the GIZ-ASEAN Biocontrol for Sustainable Agrifood Systems project, provided valuable insights for safer vegetable production, while **Hsueh-shih Lin**, Director, Taitung District Agricultural Research and Extension, shared Taiwan's perspective on possible contributions to address vegetable research and development challenges in the region.

Issues identified as priorities by each country will be integrated into a roadmap of potential research programs that will harness the full potential of AARNET and contribute to the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework and its Strategic Plan of Action for Food Security.

Ensuring adequate, safe and nutritious food for all is a high priority and long-standing focus of ASEAN community building. A recent FAO-ASEAN consultation recommended strengthening vegetable research and development activities through regional mechanisms such as AARNET.