Inclusive and demand-driven innovation is the key to fighting poverty, eradicating malnutrition and hunger, and providing environmentally sustainable solutions to the most pressing challenges faced by smallholder farmers in the drylands,” said Dr David Bergvinson, in his inaugural address to all senior management, scientists and staff of ICRISAT.

Dr Bergvinson assumed office as Director General, ICRISAT, effective 1 January.

“In tackling the poverty challenge persisting in the drylands of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, innovation has to be driven by the demands of farmers and markets, and we must recognize the important role of women and youth to enable inclusive market-oriented development,” he emphasized.

In his address, Dr Bergvinson articulated his passion and commitment to smallholder agriculture, and a strong desire to improve the lives of millions of impoverished smallholder farmers and their families living in the drylands.

Laying down the foundations of his leadership, he said: “I am highly committed to the success of ICRISAT. We are on a journey together to lift smallholder farmers in the drylands out of poverty by leveraging the very best that science and innovation can offer them.”
Prior to his appointment at ICRISAT, Dr Bergvinson was with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, USA, as Senior Program Officer, Crop Value Chains and Digital Design for Agriculture Development. He had been with the Foundation since 2007.

He was responsible for accelerating the development and delivery of farmer-preferred products and services for staple crops in the developing world by formulating strategies, forging partnerships and applying digital technologies. He represented the Foundation on the CGIAR Fund Council.

Before joining the Foundation, Dr Bergvinson was a Senior Scientist with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) at its Mexico headquarters for over 12 years.

His research background is in crop improvement, plant biochemistry, integrated pest management, and entomology.

He is no stranger to ICRISAT, having interacted with the institute’s scientists on projects dealing with grain legumes, village level studies, seed systems, and digital technologies in smallholder agriculture.

Dr Bergvinson, who succeeded Dr William Dar, is expected to move ICRISAT further in generating and sharing cutting-edge global scientific innovations, and in bringing about genuine pro-poor growth and inclusive market-oriented development in the dryland tropics of the world.
Sustainable and profitable groundnut seed production in Nigeria

Training lead-farmers to assist in farmer-to-farmer dissemination of improved groundnut production technologies is a critical part of the strategy being successfully deployed by ICRISAT to build a profitable groundnut seed industry.

As part of the strategy ICRISAT-Nigeria recently organized trainings on dry season groundnut seed production.

The goal of the training was to encourage dry season groundnut seed production among farmers in order to make available to farmers seeds of improved groundnut varieties for planting in the wet season, thus increasing their overall productivity.

The training was attended by 150 lead farmers from Kano, Jigawa, Bauchi, Katsina and Kaduna States.

Based on availability of irrigation facilities in their localities and their involvement in dry season farming, lead farmers were selected from different locations in the various states for the training. The trainings focused on the special practices needed for effective and profitable groundnut seed production in the dry season. The training addressed the choice of seeds, land preparation, water requirements, seed treatment, sowing practices and sowing dates, weeds, pests and disease control, determination of maturity period, ideal harvest practices with focus on control of aflatoxin contamination and storage.

ICRISAT will provide the trainees with Foundation seeds and fertilizers through the Groundnut Value Chain (GNVC).

For more information on groundnut visit http://exploreit.icrisat.org/page/groundnut/686 and for seed development systems visit http://exploreit.icrisat.org/page/seed_systems/672.

New publication

Prevalence and distribution of aflatoxin contamination in groundnut (Arachis hypogaea L.) in Mali, West Africa

Authors: Dr F Waliyar

Published: 2015. Crop Protection pp 1-7

Abstract: Groundnut is a major source of livelihood for the rural poor in Mali. However, the crop is prone to pre-and post-harvest aflatoxin contamination caused by Aspergillus flavus and Aspergillus parasiticus. To minimize health related hazards from exposure to aflatoxin contaminated food, information on the prevalence and distribution of aflatoxins (AFB1) in the groundnut value chain in Mali is needed. A study was undertaken in three districts (Kayes, Kita and Kolokani) to assess aflatoxin contamination in the field and storage.

http://authors.elsevier.com/a/1QKEoxPFYOL1G
Access this article free on Science Direct until 25 February 2015.

Readers’ comments

The GreenPHABLET will be a very useful tool for the farmers to get quick answers to their problems, hope it will be available in the market soon.

Mr DS Bisht, ICRISAT Alumnus

Editor’s Note: The product will be available in the market from 19 January 2015. For queries contact Dr Dileepkumar Guntuku at G.Dileepkumar@cgiar.org or call 91 40 30713205.
Odisha Government extends ICRISAT pigeonpea project for four years

The success and impact of ICRISAT’s pigeonpea seed systems project has prompted the state government of Odisha, India, to extend the project to three new districts (Ganjam, Gajapati and Sonepur) of the state over the period 2015-2018.

The ‘Introduction and Expansion of Improved Pigeonpea Production Technology in Rainfed Upland Ecosystems of Odisha’ had been implemented in five districts (Rayagada, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Bolangir and Boudh) of Odisha state during the period 2011-2014.

Acknowledging ICRISAT’s contribution, the Department of Agriculture and Food Production, Government of Odisha, invited ICRISAT to put up a stall showcasing new and improved technologies beneficial to smallholder farmers at an agricultural fair at Berhampur, Ganjam district, Odisha.

Pigeonpea in demand at agri fair
One of the major attractions at the ICRISAT stall was the unpolished pigeonpea dal sold in 500 g and 1 kg packs by NGO partner Loksebak from Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi district. There was high demand and over 1,000 kg of dal was sold at the fair.

A team headed by Mr Sarat Kumar Tripathy, State Coordinator, put up the stall where samples of pigeonpea plants with pods of different varieties/hybrids and informative print material developed by ICRISAT were displayed.

The stall was visited by a large number of farmers from 10 districts of Odisha and government officials including Mr Pradeep Kumar Maharathy, Minister of Agriculture, Government of Odisha; Mr Rajesh Verma, Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Food Production; Mr Aparti Sethy, Additional Director of Agriculture; and Mr Saroj Kanta Das, Deputy Director Agriculture (Pulses).

For more information on pigeonpea visit http://exploreit.icrisat.org/page/pigeonpea/687.

The project partners were Department of Agriculture and Food Production, Odisha; Odisha State Seed and Organic Product Certification Agency; and NGOs Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan, Loksebak, People’s Forum, Shramika Shakti Sangha and Centre for Social Action and Tribal Development.

The project is funded by the Government of Odisha under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana scheme and was undertaken as part of the CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes.

Welcome

Dr Boubie Vincent Bado, a Burkina Faso national, joined on 5 January as Principal Scientist–Dryland Systems and Livelihood Diversification, in the Research Program–Resilient Dryland Systems, Niamey, Niger. Dr Bado has a PhD in Soil Science and Environment, University of Laval, Quebec, Canada. Prior to joining ICRISAT, he worked as Principal Scientist/Rice Agronomist (from 2004), Head of Sahel Station (Saint Louis) and Regional/Country Representative (Senegal) (since 2006) at AfricaRice.

We welcome Dr Bado and his family to ICRISAT and wish them all success.