

World Farmer

IFAP Newsletter, January- February 2006

International
Federation of
Agricultural
Producers



A YEAR TO COMPLETE UN-FINISHED AGENDAS

By David King, Secretary General

A new year usually starts with another list of good intentions. In France this is called “voeux”, or wishes, and every major political figure has some. In the USA, the President gives his “state of the Union” speech, along with more good intentions for the year. Other countries have similar traditions.

IFAP’s wish for 2006 is for no more good intentions, but rather a concerted effort to carry out what has already been agreed.

Looking back at 2005, we see a year of un-finished agendas – the current Doha WTO negotiations have a history of missed deadlines, a year of unachieved goals – the UN Millennium Development Goals are way off track to meet the 2015 targets, and a year of new strategies to follow old, unfulfilled strategies – like the new FAO reform proposals. Let 2006 be the year of political will to actually implement the plans and strategies that are currently on the table.

2006 marks the 60th anniversary of IFAP. Throughout the year, IFAP will be challenging itself and its partners on the results that it is delivering for farmers. The World Farmers’ Congress, that will be hosted by NACF in Seoul, Korea, 13-19 May 2006, will be the focus of these activities.

By the time of the IFAP Congress, negotiators in WTO should have put in place the modalities for making commitments in agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA). Farm leaders need to be close to their trade and agriculture ministers up until then, to make sure that the deal is fair and gives real benefits to farmers. Not all observers are confident that the April 30th will be met, but it is better for farmers to push for progress now than leave it to a last minute rush in July with the possibilities of unforeseen results.

Separate from the WTO negotiations, IFAP is looking to get more progress this year on industrial concentration issues, on measures to address the vulnerability of individual farm families in the face of the power of the multinational companies that dominate the agri-food chain. IFAP is partnering with several other international bodies to look at appropriate market instruments (e.g. collective bargaining) and appropriate risk management instruments (e.g. insurance schemes) to help to strengthen the situation of farmers in the food chain. At the Congress in Korea, IFAP will explore with Asian ministers of agriculture how to make markets work better for farmers. *Continued on page 7*

IFAP Events

- May 13-19: IFAP 37th World Farmers’ Congress and 60th Anniversary Celebrations, Seoul, South Korea. *Theme: 60 years of empowering farmers – for diversity, for sustainability, for health, for peace.*
- September 28-29: Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Agriculture, jointly organized by the IFAP, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France.
- November 16-18: WABCG 26th Council Meeting, Hannover, Germany.
- November 20: WABCG-ISO Annual Consultation, London.
- November: IFAP Executive Committee.

IFAP participation in International Events

- Jan. 30 – Feb. 2: FAO Regional Conference for Africa, Bamako, Mali
- February 1-2: World Bank -DFID-OECD-AFD Public Private Dialogue, Paris, France. *IFAP will organise a round table with OECD development centre.*
- February 6-10: UNCTAD Commission on Trade in Goods and services, and Commodities, Geneva.
- February 7-8: Povnet meeting (OECD), Paris.
- February 13-14: 1st IFAD Farmers’ Forum, Rome.
- February 15-16: IFAD Governing Council, Rome.
- February 20-23: Codex Working Group on Apples, Santiago, Chili.
- February 22-24: Annual Meeting of OECD Tractor Codes, Paris.
- March 7-10: International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Porto Alegre, Brazil.

To read on the IFAP website www.ifap.org

- IFAP [Calendar 2006](#)
- [IFAP Report on WTO Conference](#) in Hong Kong, December 2005
- [Speech of the IFAP President Jack Wilkinson at the FAO Conference](#), Rome, 22 November 2005.
- *Boletín del Comité para América Latina y el Caribe-No 2-[La agricultura de nuestra región](#)* (Spanish only)
- *Conférence de l’ONU pour les Changements Climatiques. [Intervention des agriculteurs de la FIPA](#), Montréal, 9 décembre 2005.* (French only)

IFAP Activities

IFAP Mediterranean Farmers' Committee, 28-29 November, Antalya, Turkey

The 9th Session of the IFAP Mediterranean Committee was hosted in Antalya, Turkey by Turkish member organisation TZOB. Discussions during this meeting, held immediately after the meeting of Euro-Mediterranean ministers to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Barcelona Process (Euro-Mediterranean partnership agreement signed in 1995), focused on the identification of a common Mediterranean identity. The meeting was also the opportunity to discuss the results of a study entitled "Sustainable agricultures in the Mediterranean basin: constraints and perspectives", carried out by the IFAP Secretariat in partnership with the CIHEAM (International Center of High Studies on Agronomy in the Mediterranean. This study aims at better identifying the farmers' needs and will serve as a tool to lobby the European institutions in the run up to the establishment of a free trade Euro-Med zone in 2010. Participants also discussed such important issues as the urgent need to bridge the gap between the two shores of the Basin through building strategies for strengthening the capacities on information on the Euro-Med partnership, training, extension services, quality identification of the Mediterranean products, improve the functioning of domestic markets and others. They also agreed on the need to strengthen their collaboration with the research community and with the European institutions. A new bureau was elected, with M. Guy Giva from APCA (Assembly of the Chambers of Agriculture of France) has been elected as President of the Committee. M. Giva announced his new program of work. More See Report of this Session. **More:** See Report of this Session at <http://www.ifap.org/en/publications/reports.html>

Joint WHO/OIE/FAO/World Bank Conference "to Mobilise Resources for the Control of Avian Influenza in Animals and for the Prevention of Pandemic Influenza in Humans", Geneva, 7-9 November 2005

IFAP was represented by Mr. Robert Burden (Canada) at the joint conference "to Mobilise Resources for the Control of Avian Influenza in Animals and for the Prevention of Pandemic Influenza in Humans" organized by key international organisations involved in this area. This meeting clearly illustrated the challenges the world faces, and also the heavy reliance placed on the world's farming community, in preventing and reducing the spread of both avian influenza (AI) and the associated human pandemic influenza. Three specific topics were discussed: The Status of International Health and Country Responses; Addressing the Global and Regional Dimensions of AI; and Supporting the Implementation of Integrated

Country Programs. Mr. Burden highlighted three issues relating directly to IFAP and its member organizations: Compensation for farmers; Surveillance and Lab Resources; and Biosecurity. The issue of ensuring an appropriate level of compensation for farmers was identified as a major priority during the meeting. It was generally recognized that society is essentially expropriating the farmer's assets in order to reduce the risk of disease spread. This creates a situation where costs are very concentrated and benefits are quite widespread. Dr LEE Jon-wook, Director General of the WHO, stated that farmers make the single greatest contribution to preventing AI and the potential for a human pandemic. Unfortunately, the concept of what constitutes appropriate levels of compensation was not discussed in any level of detail. As a result of the meeting, Mr. Burden said: "While I was very pleased that speakers recognized the need for compensation, I am quite sure that they do not fully understand the operating reality faced by farmers. There is a need for a clearly defined compensation framework that can be applied in all areas of the world. Solutions that serve to reduce the risk of a global pandemic resulting from AI, yet do not eliminate the potential for the world's farmers to operate effectively and efficiently." **More:** A detailed outline of all interventions made as well as a summary of the 10 issues and 12 action items that were identified on the closing session can be found on the WHO website at http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/2005/avian_influenza/avian_influenza_meeting_presentations/en/index.html.

OECD Global Forum on Agriculture, Paris, Nov. 30-Dec. 1. Theme: Coherence between Trade and Development Policies"

The Chair of IFAP's Asian Farmers' Committee, Raul Montemayor, addressed the first session of the Forum on the subject "Policy Coherence for Development: What it Means for Farmers". IFAP President Jack Wilkinson participated in the "high-level roundtable" discussion to draw conclusions from the Forum discussions. He stressed the need for increasing international investment in agriculture, including in research, and deplored the decline in aid for agriculture. Aid to agriculture has been falling in real terms since the mid 1980s with the world's poorest bearing the brunt of the decline. Structural changes around the reorganisation of supply chains, and increasing downstream concentration, as well as the negative impact of tariff escalation on the development of a value-added sector in developing countries, are limiting the ability of farmers to benefit from emerging market opportunities, Wilkinson said. The IFAP President also urged OECD to do more impact analysis of current policies on both intended beneficiaries and on third parties.

IFAP Activities

AgriCord Board meeting, Paris, 1 December

At its meeting in December 2005, the Board discussed progress reports on the 52 projects that are being implemented under the Trade Capacity Development Program (TCD), and examined progress of other AgriCord projects. The TCD program runs until the end of 2006, and an evaluation is already underway. Discussions have started for an expanded follow-up program. The signing of a new three-year capacity development program with CIDA Canada was announced. The Chair Gerard Doornbos (Netherlands) said that he was pleased with the progress made in strengthening farmers' organisations in developing countries since AgriCord was created in 2003. He said that AgriCord's efforts had led to a much stronger engagement of farmer leaders from developing countries in IFAP policy discussions, and called for greater efforts in translating these policy recommendations into strategic programs in the field. Mr. Doornbos recalled that he was no longer President of the Dutch Farmers Organisation LTO, and so announced that would leave the Chair of AgriCord after the next IFAP World Farmers' Congress.

IFAP first participation at COP 11 of UNFCCC (United Nations Convention on Climate Change) and Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/ MOP 1)- 28 November- 10 December, Montreal, Canada

The IFAP delegation, represented by Canada member organisations representatives from CFA (Canadian Farmers Association) and UPA (Union des Producteurs Agricoles) from Quebec, through the latter's President, Mr. Laurent Pellerin, as well the IFAP Secretariat, participated in this highly covered event. IFAP's participation was marked by the intervention of Mr. Pellerin, on behalf of the Farmers of the World during the High Level Ministerial segment. In his intervention, Mr. Pellerin highlighted the need to consider climate change in a holistic way as, beyond being a threat for farmers, it is above all, a food security issue. He also insisted on the positive role of farmers to both mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and on their unexploited potential to continue to do so. However, this role needs to be better enhanced and supported by governments and other relevant stakeholders. Farmers need to be systematically represented in such an important arena as the UNFCCC in order to better advocate their needs and expectations. The COP/MOP drew as many as 9500 participants, including 2800 government officials and over 5800 representatives of UN bodies and Agencies, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs.

The meeting, tackled issues such as capacity building, technology development transfer, the adverse effects of climate change on developing countries. The meeting turned out to be relatively successful as participants managed to agree on a process for considering future action beyond 2012 under the UNFCCC.

More: Speech of IFAP (in French only) at <http://www.ifap.org/fr/newsroom/speeches.html>

GFAR Statutory Meetings, Marrakech, Morocco, 1-4 December

The Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) met from 1st to 4 December 2005 in Marrakech, Morocco. Researchers, funding organisations, NGOs and agricultural producers reviewed the regional and international activities of this network, as well as its research programmes. IFAP, represented by Ron Bonnett (Canada), a member of the IFAP Committee on Agricultural Research, described the considerable progress made in the field of agricultural research during the year 2005. In particular, he highlighted the creation of the Committee on Agricultural Research, which is focusing on the systematic involvement of farmers in research, and ensuring that socio-economic aspects are taken into account in current research programmes. Mr. Bonnett also gave details of the action plan of this new Committee, to which IFAP will devote its attention in the forthcoming months. The review of the contributions made by IFAP farmers was well received by members of GFAR, and the Committee on Agricultural Research was perceived as an important step forward for the future. Following the presentations by regional research forums, it was noted that there has been a positive development in the involvement of IFAP farmers in decision-making bodies and in regional programmes. IFAP is highly appreciative of the efforts made in this respect by the regional forums of agricultural research. Today, it is necessary for the IFAP Committee on Agricultural Research to become active at both regional and international levels. Special efforts must be made by all concerned to maintain regular contacts and a high level of exchanges with the regional forums. GFAR appointed Mr. El Beltagy as the new President, starting from May 2006. The General Assembly of GFAR will be held in New Delhi, India, on 6-11 December 2006. The GFAR meetings were followed by the AGM of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), held from 5 to 9 December, and also attended by IFAP.

More: <http://www.cgiar.org/enews/december2005/>

OECD Committee for Agricultural Consultation with CSOs, Paris, 5 December

International civil society organisations were invited by the OECD Committee for Agriculture to give their views on the most important policy issue of interest to their constituency, and actions that could be taken by national governments, or the OECD, to respond to this policy interest. The Committee would take into account these views in establishing its work program for 2007-08. For IFAP, the key policy issue was “market instruments” i.e. appropriate instruments for farmers to make markets work better in a global food system dominated by a few large multinational companies. IFAP Secretary General David King gave examples from member organizations e.g. Australia where dairy farmers were granted an exemption from competition law allowing them to form collective bargaining groups to negotiate with dairy plants on price and conditions included in delivery contracts; in France where government brokered an agreement between farmers’ organizations and retail distribution chains that established a relation between the farmer’s price and the price paid by consumers in the supermarkets; in Canada where national marketing legislation allows farmers to manage the supply and price of certain products to meet national consumer requirements. There was broad support from the Committee to document and analyse the different market instruments that exist in OECD countries and bring together experiences in a policy document. IFAP also requested OECD to examine the instruments that exist in OECD countries to manage risk, and bring these together into a policy paper. There was broad support for this proposal too.

Executive Committee of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ), Berlin, 12 January 2006

The Executive Committee of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) was held in Berlin during the International Green Week. The IFAP Communications Coordinator was invited to make a presentation about the organisation and its policies to the journalists from 30 countries. Both organisations also discussed how IFAP and IFAJ can work more closely together, and have a better collaboration between agricultural journalists member of IFAJ and the IFAP. It was agreed that the publication “World Farmer” will be circulated to each representative of the IFAJ Executive Committee, who will circulate it within their own national membership. IFAP Communications Coordinator invited the journalists to attend the World Farmers’ Congress 2006, next May in Seoul, and also offered to further discuss with IFAJ about a good way to circulate the

news from the Congress to journalists that will not be able to attend this event.

More: website of the IFAJ at www.ifaj.org

Call to member organisations

- Please, return the completed **questionnaire about women’s participation in agricultural organisations** to the IFAP Secretariat **by February 15th** to:

Kareen Holtby at kareen.holtby@ifap.org

Assistant of Fabienne Derrien,

Policy Officer in charge of women’s issue.

The results of this questionnaire will be presented at the 2006 IFAP World Farmers’ Congress.

- Please send your **comments** on the last version of the **IFAP Dietary Guidelines** before **March 6th** to FabienneDerrien@ifap.org

IFAP In Hong Kong

IFAP Family Farmers Conference on International Trade, Hong Kong, China, 12 December 2005

The day before the opening of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, IFAP invited Trade and Agriculture Ministers from the main negotiating groups to give their views to farmers on “Outstanding Issues in the Agriculture Negotiations”. 200 farmer representatives from 30 countries participated, under the chair of the IFAP President, Jack Wilkinson. Speaking for the **G-20**, Brazil Agriculture Secretary Roberto Rodrigues said that more open agricultural markets are critical for development, and that trade-distorting subsidies make competition unfair. He said that proposals by the G-20 were a balanced middle ground. Mr. Rodrigues insisted on a meaningful outcome for agriculture in developing countries, and proposed to restrict the number of ‘sensitive products’ for developed countries to under 1per cent of tariff lines. However, the G-20 was sympathetic to the proposals of the G-10 for flexibility on market access, he said, because they are not exporters and do not distort world markets. **European Union** Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel said that the EU had made its boldest ever offer on agriculture to WTO, based on an ambitious reform of European farm policy. This policy decouples 90 per cent of direct payments to farmers and introduces cross compliance for environment and quality concerns. She said that the Hong Kong Ministerial needed to deliver a ‘real, sustainable development package’, including duty-free and quota-free access for least-developed countries and an acceptable outcome on cotton.

...IFAP In Hong Kong

Speaking for the **African and ACP** countries, the Benin Minister of Industry, Trade, and Promotion of Employment, Mrs Massiyatou Latoundji Lauriano, said that Ministers had agreed to rectify the marginalization of small farmers and take account of the needs of the developing and least developed countries in this Round. She called for the total elimination of cotton subsidies from their 2005 levels, elimination of all export support and the creation of a 'development box'.

Indonesia, as coordinator of the **G-33** group of developing countries (which has 43 members) wanted more than Special and Differential Treatment for the poorest developing countries. Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Chief Agricultural Negotiator, Dr. Delima Azahari said that the G-33 had made proposals for Special Products and a Special Safeguard Mechanism for food security, livelihood security and rural development with indicators based on the particular situation in each country.

The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, Mr. Shoichi Nakagawa, leader of the **G-10** group of developed importing countries, presented a new Development Initiative for Trade in developing countries, similar to the 'one village one product' initiative in Japan. He said that WTO negotiations should narrow the economic disparities between developed and developing countries for all, and not just for the benefit of a few exporting countries. Mr. Iwanaga also insisted that all countries should be able to protect their sensitive products, since that was the basis of co-existence of different agricultures. Expressing the views of the 17-member **Cairns Group** of agricultural exporting countries, the Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs of South Africa, Ms. Thoko Didiza said that the success of the Round would be judged on what it delivered for agriculture in developing countries. It was essential to maintain a high level of ambition in agriculture, she said, and correct the profound imbalances in agricultural trade in a balanced way.

A panel of six **IFAP regional farmer leaders** gave their views on the Ministers interventions. Members were Allan Burgess (NFF Australia), Jacques Bonou (FUPRO Benin), Bob Friesen (CFA Canada), Gerd Sonnleitner (DBV Germany), Raul Montemayor (FFF Philippines), Fernando Lopez (CNFR Uruguay). They stressed that this was a 'development round' with agriculture at the heart, and livelihoods of farmers at the centre. It should empower farmers so that family agriculture has the tools to survive under globalisation. However, development is not only about trade reforms, they said. Farmers need market access but they also need the capacity to meet standards for international trade. And for those millions of farmers not involved in trade, national legislators need to assume their

responsibilities in assuring food security and livelihoods of farm families in their respective countries. Farm leaders also stressed the need for balanced commitments over all sectors of the negotiations, not only in agriculture.

The **Chairman of the WTO Negotiations on Agriculture**, Ambassador Crawford Falconer, wrapped up the Conference. He said that negotiators have the basis for a very solid outcome in agriculture on the table, even though they had not been able to get to full modalities. More time was needed to digest the various proposals, especially those on market access which had only been submitted in the last two months. Ambassador Crawford felt confident that the negotiations would deliver a very significant result from a development perspective. This IFAP Family Farmers' Conference on Trade allowed farmers' concerns to be heard by negotiators before they started their meeting, and provided an important briefing for farmer leaders on the priorities for agricultures of the key negotiating groups.

More: IFAP Report on the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong at <http://www.ifap.org/en/publications/er-wtoconferencehk-12-05.html>

FAO-IFAP-CI side event on "Dialogue with farmers and consumers on agricultural trade issues, food security, the DDR and MDGs", Hong Kong, China, 14 December

For the first time, the FAO side event at a WTO Conference was organised with IFAP and Consumers' International. Opening the event, FAO Assistant Director General Hartwig de Haen said that gains from free trade are neither universal nor automatic, since countries are not all equal partners. It was therefore necessary to have complementary measures to accompany trade liberalisation, such as special and differential treatment for developing countries. IFAP President Jack Wilkinson agreed and said the measures that are needed to deliver development and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in addition to trade rules, should be agreed upon and put in place. For example, he said developing countries are often lacking adequate food safety and traceability systems to enter international markets, they often lack adequate regulatory systems to register new technology, and there is a lack of infrastructure capacity. Further, many farmers suffer from high taxes on inputs (25% on fertiliser in Mali) and taxes on exports (23% on exports of grains and oilseeds from Argentina). Generally, developing countries have not prepared their agriculture to take advantage of trade opportunities. If agriculture is not profitable then it will not be able to attract investment, and farmers will miss out on benefits negotiated in the WTO, said the IFAP President.

Members Activities

Australia: NFF Welcomes Increased Producer Representation on Produce and Grocery Industry Code

After intense pressure from the National Farmers' Federation (NFF), primary producers have finally won an additional three seats on the Produce and Grocery Industry Code Administration Committee (CAC), NFF Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Ben Fargher announced last December. "The appointment of these new members brings the ratio of producers to retailers / wholesalers up from 1:7 to 4:7. Hopefully this will bring in a new, more constructive era for this Code, which apart from a successful dispute resolution procedure, has to date failed to address the concerns of primary producers." Mr Fargher said. The Code Administration Committee is responsible for overseeing the Code of Conduct which covers the relationships between primary producers and those further up the supply chain. The Code aspires to be a key instrument in promoting constructive supply chain relationships. Mr Fargher said farmers wanted to work in a positive way with wholesalers and retailers and the Code should support this outcome. "Unfortunately, too often what we have considered reasonable requests have fallen on deaf ears in this Committee, which led to the Federal Government in 2004 to commit to a new mandatory Code of Conduct for the horticulture sector under the Trade Practices Act," Mr Fargher said. "The mandatory Code will come into effect during 2006 and will automatically lift the bar for the existing voluntary Produce and Grocery Industry Code, particularly regarding contractual clarity between growers and wholesalers. "NFF endorses the positive steps this Code Committee is now taking to address some of the issues primary producers have and we look forward to working in partnership with wholesale markets, Coles, Woolworths and other buyers of primary produce to maximise the value from our supply chain relationships," Mr Fargher said.

Source: NFF press release

More: <http://www.nff.org.au/>

Spain: 6th Federal Congress of UPA, Zaragoza. 24-26 November 2005

Lorenzo Ramos was re-elected Secretary General of UPA (Spanish union of family farmers and cattle raisers) with an 88% majority of the votes cast by the 200 delegates attending the organization's sixth federal congress, held in Saragossa. Federal Executive Commission membership was increased from 15 to 19, with eight of the seats held by women. Moreover, a woman farmer, Montserrat Cortiñas, was elected new Deputy Secretary General, a historical milestone in

Spanish and European agrarian organizations. Ignacio Senovilla and Román Santalla will continue to hold the offices of Secretaries of Farming and of Livestock Raising, respectively, and Marcos Alarcón, responsible to date for international relations, was appointed new Organizational Secretary. José Domingo García was elected to head the new Secretariat for Institutional Relations, with a mandate to heighten the organization's visibility in society at large.

The congress likewise defined the basic lines of action to be followed by the union over the next four years in defence of family farming and cattle raising; these will be geared to UPA's ongoing aim to secure a better re-distribution of agricultural funds, enabling farmers to make a decent living, command the respect of the rest of society and erase their image as a "subsidy-insatiable" sector. The organization will continue its struggle to eliminate exorbitant mark-ups, achieve implement sectoral reform and banish veterinary certificates, among other demands.

International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) President Jack Wilkinson addressed the opening session of the Congress, thanking the UPA for its invitation and encouraging the members present to continue to defend farming. He went on to champion the family farming model represented by the international organization as opposed to the productivity-oriented, intensive model advocated in summits such as the WTO meeting in Hong Kong.

The speakers at the closing session of the Congress included UGT (Spanish socialist trade union) Secretary General Cándido Méndez; the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's Secretary General for Agriculture Josep Puxeu; Franz-Josef Feiter, Secretary General of the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organizations in the European Union (COPA); and José Antonio Guzmán, Secretary General for Technical Affairs of the Regional Department of Agriculture of Aragon. In his adjournment address, UPA's re-elected Secretary General Lorenzo Ramos urged the new members of the Executive Commission, and all the delegates attending the Congress, to convey a message of hope and optimism to the organization's 50,000 members, encouraging them to continue to work from the union for a better future for small and medium-sized Spanish farmers and cattle raisers.

More: Website of the UPA at <http://www.upa.es/>

This page belongs to IFAP member organisations. It provides the opportunity to communicate information from different countries and reflects the diversity of farmers' organisations activities worldwide. The content of this page does not involve IFAP's work directly and does not reflect necessarily its viewpoint.

EDITORIAL: Continued from Page 1

Fundamental to success in the market is meeting food safety and quality standards. IFAP has responded to members needs in these areas by establishing a joint work program on key health issues with the World Health Organisation and consultative relations with the International Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). IFAP now needs to complete its teams of experts from farmers' organisations to respond to the opportunities that these opening offer.

In 2005, IFAP spent much time in positioning farm leaders on regional research networks throughout the work and set up its own Research Committee. Now is the time for these leaders to drive the agricultural research agenda for farmers.

The agenda for 2006 has to be ambitious, since farmers incomes are under severe pressure almost everywhere. Farmers' organisations need the capacity to make the farmer's voice heard. After very encouraging results with its first capacity-building program with AgriCord, IFAP is working to significantly scale up its activities in this regard so that farmers' organisations will really have the means to carry out its members' ambitions.

Finally, 2006 is International Year of Deserts and Desertification. IFAP has established close working relations with the UN Convention on Desertification, as with the other UN environmental conventions, and its Executive Secretary is invited to address the World Farmers' Congress in Korea. Desertification is a plague for farmers. Let us not miss this opportunity to push for programs to rehabilitate desert areas to the benefit of the farming communities that inhabit these difficult zones.

World Farmer is edited by the Secretariat of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers.

This Newsletter is available in English, French and Spanish and can be seen on IFAP's Website www.ifap.org

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FAO

The State of Food and Agriculture in 2005: The FAO released last December its report *The State of Food and Agriculture 2005 (SOFA 2005)* which examines agricultural trade and poverty, seeking to answer the question: Can trade work for the poor? According to *SOFA 2005*, the answer is yes, but trade liberalization alone is not enough. Policies and investments must be put in place to allow the poor to benefit from trade opportunities and to protect the vulnerable against trade-related shocks. "Agricultural trade and further trade liberalization can unlock the potential of the agriculture sector to promote pro-poor growth, but these benefits are not guaranteed."

More: <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2005/1000173/index.html>

Online Export helpdesk

The FAO and the European Commission presented last December to the FAO members the EC's Online Export Helpdesk for developing countries. The project of Export Helpdesk is designed to give a series of practical measures to help developing country exporters benefit properly from the EU preferential trade programme. The Export Helpdesk was initially launched in February 2004 with the goal of enhancing the economic growth of developing countries by facilitating the access of their exporters to the EU market. The online service has been providing free and comprehensive information to exporters from developing countries on how to export a product into the EU. **Helpdesk Web site:** <http://export-help.cec.eu.int>

More: <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2005/1000174/index.html>

WTO 6th Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong

Ministers from the WTO's 149 member governments approved a 44 pages declaration that was described by WTO "as significant progress both since the July 2004 package and after six days of negotiations in Hong Kong". WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy said: "We have managed to put the Round back on track after a period of hibernation." He also said, just after the conference on 18 December, that: "There has been a rebalancing in favour of developing countries, whose interests have now been placed at the heart of our negotiations as we provided for in 2001 when we launched this round. And more importantly, we have built the political energy necessary to advance technically during 2006. We now have enough fuel in the tank to cruise at the right negotiating altitude now." Members agreed to complete "full modalities" in agriculture and non-agricultural market access by 30 April 2006. **More information:**

http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min05_e/min05_18dec_e.htm