

ABNETA

Agricultural Biotechnology Network in Africa

"Strengthening Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources"

September Alert

September 2006

Partnership forged to spur Africa's Green Revolution

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A partnership between two key donor agencies aims to spark an African 'green revolution' by addressing farm productivity and training the next generation of agricultural scientists.

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa will address the key issues of soil fertility, irrigation, farm management practices and financing as well as access to markets and new seeds.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation will initially invest US\$150 million in a programme to improve seed varieties in areas with harsh environmental conditions, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Program for Africa's Seed Systems (PASS), based in Nairobi, Kenya, will invest in national programmes that use local crop breeding techniques to develop seeds that are more resistant to pests, diseases, local rainfall patterns and soil properties...[MORE](#)

Biotechnology, Breeding, and Seed Systems for African Crops Conference



The conference will be held during 26-29 March, 2007 in Maputo, Mozambique, and will be co-hosted by The Rockefeller Foundation and the Instituto de InvestigaçÃo AgrÃria de MoÃambique (IIAM). All applicants should submit their conference abstracts by **01 December 2006**.

We are looking forward to an exciting and informative gathering, and sincerely hope that all The Rockefeller Foundation grantees working on the genetic improvement and seed systems of African crops, plus many other individuals, who are interested in this work, will be able to attend.

[Africa-wide facility to fund science takes shape](#)



Africa's science ministers will be presented with a menu of options for financing research on the continent next month.

They are expected to narrow this selection down to a single practical approach and present it to their heads of state for approval at next January's African Union (AU) summit.

Yet despite a public consultation on the matter, members of the continent's scientific community appear to have heard little of the initiative..[MORE](#)

Promoting the Drought-Tolerant Maize in Eastern Kenya



In the war against drought each victory is very hard-fought. Stress tolerant maize will make a difference.

For years CIMMYT has been developing maize that is better suited to the harsher, drier weather conditions many Africans face today. Ever more drought-tolerant maize developed by CIMMYT and its partners is a major scientific success. The recent drought that affected Kenya and neighboring countries would seem to be the perfect crucible in which to test the capacity of this maize to make a difference in people's lives.

That's what the people of the Wikwatyo Self Help Group, a small farmer's group in the village of Kaasuvi in Makueni, south-eastern Kenya, thought as well. The region has perennial food shortages which increasing drought has been making worse. The [African Medical and Research Foundation \(AMREF\)](#), an international NGO, provides emergency food relief on a regular basis in the region...[MORE](#)

New Research Award for Cassava Genome Sequencing

The International Laboratory for Tropical Agricultural Biotechnology and Danforth Plant Science Center in St. Louis, have received a research grant from the U.S. Department of Energy Joint Genome Institute (DOE JGI) to sequence and characterize cassava genome over the next year...[MORE](#)

Biotech GRAPEVINE ready for field trials

Scientists at the Institute for Wine Biotechnology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, have developed several lines of transgenic grapevine (*Vitis vinifera*) plants with increased resistance to fungal pathogens. These lines will be tested in the field to determine the stability of the transgene, and to perform ampelographic, viticultural, and vinicultural evaluations. The transgenic plants will be grafted on year-old non-transgenic rootstocks. In order to avoid dispersal of the transgene to the environment, the flowers of the transgenic plants will be bagged to contain the pollen, and the grapevines will be covered by a net to prevent seed dispersal.

For more information about the trial visit:

http://www.sun.ac.za/news/NewsItem_Eng.asp?Lang=2&ItemID=10831. To find out more about the research initiatives at the

Institute for Wine Biotechnology visit:

http://academic.sun.ac.za/wine_biotechnology/research_programmes.htm

New alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa

The Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) are forming a new Alliance to improve agricultural productivity and the welfare of small scale farmers in the African continent through research funding and development work. To this aim, two organizations have been created: Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and Programs for a Green Revolution in Africa (ProGRA).

AGRA will contribute to poverty alleviation through agricultural development for resource poor farmers, while ProGRA will serve as a supporting organization for redistribution, to improve the productivity and profitability of small-scale farming in Africa. The first major initiative of ProGRA will be a Program for Africa's Seed System (PASS) that will operate in 20 African countries.

"The original Green Revolution was a huge success in many parts of the world," said Judith Rodin, president of the Rockefeller Foundation. "Unfortunately, in Africa, while there are many positive efforts, momentum is going the other way. Over the past 15 years, the number of Africans living on less than a dollar a day has increased by 50 percent. Working with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and with African leaders, farmers and scientists, we're committed to launching an African

Green Revolution that will help tens of millions of people who are living on the brink of starvation in sub-Saharan Africa.â

For more information visit:

<http://www.rockfound.org/Agriculture/Announcement/218>. Read the complete press release at: <http://www.rockfound.org/Library/agra1.pdf>

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