

BROADENING BOUNDARIES IN AGRICULTURE:
IMPACT ON HEALTH, HABITAT AND HUNGER





International Potato Center

Apartado 1558

Lima 12, Peru

email: cip@cgiar.org

www.cipotato.org

CIP. 2001. *Broadening boundaries in agriculture:
Impact on health, habitat and hunger. International
Potato Center Annual Report 2001.* Lima, Peru

© 2002, International Potato Center, Lima, Peru

ISSN 0256-6311

Press run: 2,000

August 2002

BROADENING BOUNDARIES IN AGRICULTURE:
IMPACT ON HEALTH, HABITAT AND HUNGER





FROM THE
DIRECTOR GENERAL

RISE TO THE CHALLENGE Challenge is a word that looms large in my mind as I look back on 2001. During the year, as we celebrated CIP's 30th anniversary, we were faced with challenges far beyond those envisaged in our founding charter.

CIP and the other Future Harvest Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) were being asked to increase our relevance as agents of sustainable development by significantly expanding our impact on poverty and the environment. At the same time, we were experiencing shortfalls that reflected a tilt away from agricultural research in the development funding balance.

Yet we were determined to rise to the challenge. In the words of our Chairman, Ian Johnson, "Put simply, sustainable development is . . . not just a moral imperative. . . Rather, it has become a global strategic priority for the survival of our planet."

At the system level, we began to forge new, high-impact research programs targeting complex issues of global and regional importance. Appropriately named Challenge Programs, these are founded on innovative partnerships linking the Future Harvest Centers among themselves, as well as with numerous other actors. CIP has taken the lead in formulating two of these programs, while actively seeking ways to contribute to others in areas where we have relevant expertise.

Meanwhile, CIP staff and management were assessing our achievements over three decades to extract the lessons on which we would base our institutional strategy for moving forward. This Annual Report presents several illustrative examples from work under way in 2001. *Insects feel the heat* (page 45), for example, illustrates how CIP's strong linkages and our expertise in integrated pest management, steadily developed over the years through research on intensive potato and sweetpotato production systems, are allowing us to nurture new systemwide efforts to deal with climate change.

Waste not, want not (page 37) shows how our research on root and tuber products and processing, firmly grounded in participatory processes, and our collaboration with other Future Harvest Centers on issues ranging from water management to waste disposal, are coming together to make a difference in the lives of urban dwellers and farmers.

In *Heading for the Summit* (page 27), we see how support to new institutional approaches in the Andes and alliances with diverse partners to unravel the complexities of mountain ecosystems have made us the CGIAR's center of choice to convene the Global Mountain Program. And *Pesticide poisoning* (page 17) shows how the powerful data gathering and analysis tools designed to support decision making in complex mountain environments not only are helping to curb serious damage to farmers' well-being, environments and incomes; they also have wide potential for application across the world's fragile—and vital—mountain ecosystems.

Tapping into biodiversity (page 55) demonstrates how CIP's germplasm collections, at the heart of our research, continue to be a key source of impact. CIP-generated potato varieties have spread throughout China answering urgent food and income needs for hundreds of thousands of people (*Cooperation pays*, page 65). And our experience with crop conservation and improvement have helped us to turn the hardy, yet often disparaged, sweetpotato from a last-choice subsistence crop into a vital weapon in the battle to end micronutrient deficiency in Sub-Saharan Africa (*Nutritious and delicious*, page 9).

As we evaluate these achievements we are confident, but not complacent.

Experience has shown us that the challenge of sustainable development will not be met with a simple sum of accomplishments, no matter how impressive these are. If we are to respond effectively to the "global strategic priority" described by Ian Johnson—generating concerted impact on the

interrelated issues of poverty, hunger, health and environment—we need to use formulas that will greatly increase the power of our successes to produce change.

Two crucial questions continue to emerge: How are we to produce this wide impact with ever-narrowing resources and in a more tightly focused research environment? How are we, with our mission to conduct agricultural research of excellence, to broaden our boundaries without stepping out of our bounds?

We have found our answer in convergence.

Our future actions—much like our achievements in the past—must be solidly founded on partnerships that will allow us to take our research further, broaden its scope or complete its cycle. In this way, we can have an impact in areas that are otherwise beyond our reach and we can close the gaps that would allow our technologies to fall through the cracks somewhere along the food or policy chain.

By cultivating innovative alliances we can ensure not only more food, but more purchasing power through value-adding activities, less dependence on external inputs and greater local competence. By building on complementarities and avoiding redundancy, we can translate increases in soil productivity and curbs on degradation into more secure habitats with healthier, more productive people, capable of making the decisions that will bring them out of subsistence into self-reliance.

The challenge may, at times, seem daunting. But through partnership we hope to turn sustainable development from an admirable concept into an attainable goal.



Hubert Zandstra
Director General