

Office of University Relations
315 Burruss Hall (0229)
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-5396 Fax: 540/231-1985
E-mail: VTnews@vt.edu

Office of International Research, Education, and Development garners \$30 million from U.S. Agency for International Development for two global project

By Miriam Rich
(540) 231-4153, mrich@vt.edu

BLACKSBURG, VA., October 13, 2009 -- S.K. De Datta, associate vice president for international affairs and director of Virginia Tech's Office of International Research, Education, and Development, has announced that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has renewed two five-year grants totaling \$30 million.



The work will enhance food and livelihood security globally while limiting negative effects on natural resources through prudent environmental stewardship and conservation agriculture in developing countries in major regions of the world.

Under the terms of the awards, made through the federal agency's Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT) office, Virginia Tech will continue as the lead university and the management entity for significant agricultural research and assistance programs designed to improve crop yields through ecologically sound practices for small-scale farmers globally. USAID uses U.S. land grant universities to promote its development assistance through the Collaborative Research Support Programs (CRSPs). There are nine CRSPs, each with a distinct mission.

Virginia Tech is the only university managing two CRSP projects. One \$15 million grant provides for Phase IV of USAID's Integrated Pest Management Collaborative Research Support Program (IPM CRSP). Virginia Tech also managed Phases I, II, and III for the past 16 years. During Phase IV, Virginia Tech will continue IPM projects chosen through a competitive process for regional pest management programs, as well as for pest management problems of global concern.

The second \$15 million award renews Virginia Tech's leadership of the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program (SANREM CRSP), which it has managed since 2004. The next phase of the program will test the ability of conservation agriculture systems to increase food production on small-scale farms and improve soil quality to promote carbon sequestration, reduce erosion, and mitigate risks associated with climate change through improved water management and productivity.

In managing the two CRSPs, the Office of International Research, Education, and Development has collaborated with 32 U.S. universities and 75 local institutions in 38 countries.

"The research results of these two global programs will benefit the countries involved through increased farm income, reduced pesticide use, greater involvement of women in decision making, and increased conservation agriculture and natural resource management research and education," said De Datta.

"Virginia and the United States will benefit from the lessons by IPM researchers collaborating globally to reduce pesticide residues on imported fruits and vegetables, expanded demand for United States export products as incomes grow in developing countries, and reduced threats from invasive species," De Datta said. "As the lead institution for the SANREM program, Virginia Tech will focus on ensuring food security around the world through conservation agriculture, not only by improving land management, but also by increasing farm family incomes."

Both programs are ecologically based and aim to help people in developing countries worldwide to implement the latest knowledge in managing natural resources and agriculture with the fewest negative impacts, emphasizing management of pests and land-use methods to enhance productivity, food security, and the preservation and enhancement of natural resources.

The IPM program in the next five years will conduct research in Africa (East, West and Southern Africa), Asia (South, Southeast, and Central Asia), Latin America (South and Central America), and the Caribbean region to address pest management problems and to build institutional capacity. The next phase of the SANREM CRSP will develop conservation agriculture technologies adapted to production of staple crops such as corn and potatoes by small-scale farmers in East, West, and Southern Africa, Latin America, South and Southeast Asia, and the Caribbean.

"Virginia Tech's OIRED will focus these two worldwide projects on the discovery, organization, and dissemination of new knowledge in and outside the classroom," De Datta said. "We will complement and reinforce the strengths of our development partners who depend on this knowledge: host country institutional partners, the community of non-governmental organizations and the private sector, the donor community, and our research partners in universities not only in the United States, but also around the world."

"To implement our vision, we have structured our programs around strong researcher, world-class institutional partners, and two excellent project management teams," De Datta said. The two programs also will collaborate with National Agricultural Research Systems and International Agricultural Research Centers around the world.

IMAGE INFORMATION: (Left to right) John Dooley, vice president for Outreach and International Affairs; S.K. De Datta, associate vice president for international affairs and director of Virginia Tech's Office of International Research, Education, and Development; Virginia Tech President Charles W. Steger; and Mark McNamee, senior vice president and provost

##09766##

Invent the Future

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution