Over the past decade, the GIAHS Initiative has been designating thirty-two sites around the world. Currently, there are eleven GIAHS sites in China, more than any other country in the world. China’s enormous success is attributed to their active engagements with a variety of stakeholders at the global, national and local level.

At the global arena, China has been actively participating in international and regional conferences. China has also enhanced the knowledge platform and capacity building among FAO member countries by organizing training course. Nationally, the China National Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (China-NIAHS) was established in support of the GIAHS Initiative. In collaboration with national research institutes, the mechanism of agricultural heritage protection has been strengthened in China. Last but not least, China promotes capacity building at local communities. The concept of agricultural heritage protection is introduced not only to farmers, but also younger generations.

This issue will provides an account of progress made in the implementation of the GIAHS Initiative in China, in a hope to share experience gained and lessons learned with other countries.

The information was collected from the Chinese Newsletter of Agricultural Heritage Systems, issues of 2014 (1-6).

GIAHS Sites in China

- China, Rice-fish culture, 2005
- China, Wannian Traditional Rice Culture, 2010
- China, Hani Rice Terraces, 2010
- China, Dong’s Rice Fish Duck System, 2011
- China, Aohan Dryland Farming System, 2012
- China, Pu’er Traditional Tea Agrosystem, 2012
- China, Kuaijishan Ancient Chinese Torreya, 2013
- China, Xuanhua Traditional Vineyards System, 2013
- China, Jiaxian Traditional date Gardens, 2014
- China, Xinghua Duotian Agrosystem, 2014
- China, Fuzhou Jasmine and Tea Culture System, 2014
Active Participation at Global Arena

- Participation in International and Regional Conferences
  19 September 2014: Minister of Agriculture attended the Third APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security in Beijing
  The Beijing Declaration on APEC Food Security, paragraph 19 states: “We agree that APEC should promote rural development policies that enhance the economic, social and cultural well-being of communities and support FAO’s work on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems.”

- Enhance the Knowledge Platform and Capacity Building among FAO Member Countries
  13-28 September 2014: China held the “First High-Level Training course on the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems – “Think Globally, Act Locally” in Beijing
  23 participants from 12 countries in Asia and the Pacific attended the GIAHS Symposium and the training lectures on the GIAHS initiative, followed by field trips to the GIAHS Sites in China

- Partnership Building on Agricultural Heritage Protection
  6 July 2014: Recalled recommendation from GIAHS Forum 2013, a twinning programme has been started between the “Jasmine and Tea Culture” of China and the “Association Campaigning for the Inscription of the Climates du Vignoble de Bourgogne”
  Under the twinning programme, both sides will cooperate in promoting conservation of agricultural heritage and its agro-products and agritourism.

- Financial Support to the Development of GIAHS
  1 February, 2015: China has established a trust fund of $2 million at FAO to support the GIAHS Initiative

Systemic Development of GIAHS & China-NIAHS

- Establishment of the China National Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (China-NIAHS)
  13 March 2012: The Ministry of Agriculture’s (MoA) Town and Township Enterprise Bureau began selection of NIAHS. 39 sites have been designated nationally.

- Cooperation with National Educational and Research Institutions
  November 2014: “Agri-cultural Heritage Systems-Branch of China Association of Agricultural Science Societies” (AHS-CAASS) was formed.
Capacity Building at Local Communities

- Strengthen the Recognition of the GIAHS and China-NIAHS Sites in China:

  Regular domestic research conferences and field trips: promote mutual sharing and learning opportunities among designated and potential GIAHS and China-NIAHS sites

  Bi-monthly Chinese newsletter of Agri-cultural Heritage systems: domestic and global news, activities and experience on the GIAHS and China-NIAHS, and updated academic articles and books on the development of agri-cultural heritage systems in China

  April 2014: Ministry of Agriculture and Chinese Academy of Sciences jointly initiated a series of book to promote GIAHS

  November 2014: A series of documentary named “China’s Agricultural Heritage system” was launched by CCTV-7 to introduce 39 sites of the China-NIAHS

  25-28, October 2014: Exhibition of “GIAHS in China” was held in the 12th China Agriculture Trade Fair

  2014: Sign stone was set up for Agricultural heritage sites e.g. Xuanhua Traditional Vineyards System

- Trainings of Agricultural Heritage Protection at Local Communities

  October 2014: Agricultural Bureau of Puer held workshop to introduce “Pu’er Traditional Tea Agrosystem”, one of the GIAHS sites, to 150 farmer representatives

  The workshop introduced “Pu’er Traditional Tea Agrosystem”, its application to GIAHS, current protection and development measures as well as challenges it faces.

- Spread the Concept of Agricultural Heritage Protection with Younger Generation

  Summer of 2014: Several Chinese universities organized student groups to conduct investment and research on GIAHS sites. Students investigated and researched on the mechanism of traditional agriculture, agricultural heritage protection, the development of agricultural tourism and rural development at local communities. By utilizing social media including blog and Wechat, students tracked and promoted GIAHS progress with the public.

  September 2014: The city of Xuanhua held educational activity of “Xuanhua Traditional Vineyards System”, one of the GIAHS sites, at primary schools

Other Development Areas

- Strengthen legislation of agricultural heritage protection

  April, 2014: Fujian has implemented the “Regulation of FuZhou Jasmine Tea protection” within the province

- Further explore the potential of marketing of GIAHS products

  2014: Ministry of Agriculture released an assessment on the estimated brand value of China’s agricultural products

    “Xuanhua Grape” ranks the top among national grape brands with the value of 1.81 billion

- Further explore the potential of agro-tourism

  Ministry of Agriculture reported that agro-tourism has attracted 0.5 billion tourists with 150 billion income between January and June 2014, which is benefited to 30 million rural people
Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) are defined as "Remarkable land use systems and landscapes which are rich in globally significant biological diversity evolving from the co-adaptation of a community with its environment and its needs and aspirations for sustainable development."

The overall goal of the global initiative is to identify and safeguard Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems and their associated landscapes, agricultural biodiversity, knowledge systems and cultures.

For feedback, comments or suggestions please contact us at: GIAHS-Secretariat@fao.org

We are on the Web:

Vision

Dynamic conservation of all agricultural heritage systems and their multitude of goods and services, for food and livelihoods security, now and for future generations.