

## **End-of-Year Message from the Secretary of the FAO Intergovernmental Group (IGG) on Grains**

**December 2013**

What a difference a year makes! 2013 emerged as one of the best in terms of fewer uncertainties, improved supplies and more affordable prices for grains. Thanks to this development, the FAO Grains Team, which had been much stretched in its efforts to meet the ever-increasing requests and responsibilities over the past few years, could finally put more time and effort into improving its activities for both FAO and the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS). In 2013 the team continued to publish its monthly reports; namely the [grain news reports](#), [Cereal Supply and Demand Briefs](#) and [FAO's Food Price Indices](#). It also managed the production of the bi-annual [FAO Food Outlook](#) reports and contributed to the [OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook](#). More notably, however, the team coordinated the publication of [AMIS Market Monitor](#) reports and organized several AMIS conferences/meetings, including one in Washington DC in February, one in Paris in April and another in Rome in October. A good overview of the main activities under AMIS over the course of the year can be found [here](#). As in the past, the team also participated in international conferences and contributed to numerous requests from other organizations, civil society and the media.

In spite of many responsibilities and increased exposure which have added to the requests made of the team, the FAO Grains Team remains a small group of professionals with a strong commitment to serving the international community. A newcomer to our team is Ms Estefania Puricelli, who joined us during the second half of the year, coming as an expert in grain markets given her many years at the Bolsa Cereales of Argentina.

Dear colleagues, as we start the tenth anniversary of the Monthly News Report on Grains (MNR), we are pleased that the work that is provided to you continues to be of interest and that, although intergovernmental meetings are taking place far less frequently than in the past, we still manage to communicate and keep you abreast of major developments concerning world grain markets. Obviously, the establishment of AMIS has taken much time and resources from our small team but we truly believe that through AMIS, we have managed to improve our analysis and reach out to a wider public. AMIS has also promoted inter-agency collaboration, one of the successes of the AMIS initiative which also contributes to the quality of the outputs for which the grains team is responsible in FAO.

I sincerely believe that the hard work of the last few years has helped this team to be more confident in its market assessment activities. We expect 2014 to be another calm year from a market point of view, barring any unexpected weather developments hampering crops in major producing countries. With the hope that this prediction will come true, the FAO Grains Team wishes you all a prosperous and healthy new year.

**FAO Grains Team:**

[Abdolreza Abbassian](#) (Secretary of AMIS and FAO IGG on Grains); [Rita Ashton](#) (Food Outlook production manager); [Valentina Banti](#) (administrative support); [David Bedford](#) (MNR manager); [Concepcion Calpe](#) (foodstuffs outlook team leader); [Claudio Cerquiglini](#) (database manager); [Denis Drechsler](#) (AMIS project manager); [Shirley Mustafa](#) (economist), [Philippe Paquotte](#) (AMIS database coordinator); [Estefania Puricelli](#) (market analyst).