

**Report on the  
Regional Workshop “Save and Grow”: Promotion of Conservation Agriculture and Efficient Plant  
Protection Methods**

The Regional workshop “Save and Grow”: Promotion of Conservation Agriculture and Efficient Plant Protection Methods held on 4-6 December 2012 in Silence Beach Hotel, Antalya, Turkey. The workshop was organized by SEC in cooperation with REU with the objective to discuss the outcomes of the two studies: (i) “Status of Conservation Agriculture (CA) in Central Asia and Guidelines for policymakers on promotion of CA”; and (ii) “Status of Plant Protection in Central Asia”. The first study was undertaken in cooperation with CIMMYT and ICARDA, and national experts.

From each Eastern Europe and Central Asia (REU) country three participants, senior staff and decision makers on crop husbandry and plant protection, particularly qualified women, representing the Ministry of Agriculture, were invited to the workshop. The workshop attracted 60 participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Belorussia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Colleagues from FAO HQ, FAO-Tunisia, FAO International Consultants as well as regional managers and technical experts from CIMMYT and ICARDA were invited to the workshop as speakers. Three machinery companies based in Turkey (Altynoz, Ozdoken, Cansa ) who manufacture direct seed drills for Conservation Agriculture were also invited to the workshop and display equipment.

Mr. Mustapha Sinaceur, FAO-SEC Sub-regional Coordinator and FAO Representative, opened the workshop, welcomed the participants and provided brief information on FAO’s recent reforms, decentralization, strategic thinking and objectives for further cooperation with the countries in the region. Dr. Alexey Morgounov, Head, CIMMYT Office in Turkey and Dr. Jozef Turok, Head, PFU-CGIAR and Regional Coordinator, ICARDA-CAC also welcomed the workshop participants, thanked the organizers and expressed interest in future cooperation.

The first day of the workshop was devoted to the review the study on “Status of Conservation Agriculture (CA) in Central Asia and Guidelines for policymakers on promotion of CA”.

An introduction to the workshop and the detailed presentation on “Save and Grow”: global adoption & promotion of CA was given by Mr. H. Muminjanov, Plant Production and Protection Officer, FAO-SEC. Dr. J. Turok, Head of PFU-CGIAR, presented outcomes of the sustainable land management research carried out by ICARDA in Central Asia and Caucasus. Dr. A. Morgounov, Head, CIMMYT-Turkey made a presentation on breeding wheat for Conservation Agriculture and crop protection in view of climate change. Dr. S. Loss, ACIAR presented the results of promotion of CA in Iraq and Dr. D. Feindel, ICARDA, made a presentation on CIMMYT and ICARDA activities on CA. Subsequently, Dr. Amir Kassam, FAO, presented the outcomes of the study on status of CA in Central Asia and elements of guidelines for policymakers on promotion of CA.

Adoption and promotion of CA in Kazakhstan, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan were presented respectively by Dr. Murat Karabayev, CIMMYT/KazAgroInnovation, Mr. Irfan Gultekin, Konya Research Institute, Turkey, Dr. Aziz Nurbekov, ICARDA-CAC and Dr. Imran Jumshudov, Azerbaijan Agrarian Center. The participants from Eastern Europe countries also presented the status of CA in their countries. Then the participants in four working groups discussed and reviewed the issues related to adoption and promotion of CA in the region. The results of discussions in the working groups were presented on the following second day of the workshop.

The working groups noted that the need to: reverse degradation and inefficient resource use (e.g., degraded lands, saline soils, low water productivity etc.); formulate basic national policy (strategic plans, amendments in legislations of the countries, effective institutional alignment etc) ; and

improve the availability of agricultural equipment and machinery can facilitate the introduction and spread of CA in the region. However, lack or insufficiency of financial resources (to purchase direct drills and sprayers and inputs such as herbicides and fertilizers), insufficient research study of the topic (insufficient information for irrigated systems, lack of long-term data), farmers' risks (possible temporary decline of yield at the initial stage of adoption of CA in compact or poor quality soils), lack of information and awareness among the farmers (guidelines on CA), and difficulties in changing mind-set (replacing conventional tillage systems with CA systems) are some of the key factors currently working against CA uptake and spread. The main challenges that need to be addressed were identified as raising awareness among farmers on advantages of CA systems, government and institutional support through subsidies, credit and leasing mechanisms, manufacturing of local/own equipment for CA in order to lower costs, and flexibility to select crop species to diversify rotations. Further, to create opportunities for CA uptake and spread there is a need for establishment of CA farmer associations, generating experiential and research knowledge, disseminating information (networks, platforms and others), improving legislative framework to support agricultural producers at the initial stage (mitigating risks) and establishment of support services responsible for introduction and wider uptake. Also, national policies (legislative framework which determines the terms for supporting farmers at the initial stage in order to create risk mitigating and stimulating measures) need to be developed as well as on-farm and on-station applied and adaptive research on CA need to be established to inform extension programmes to move forward with adoption and spread of CA.

Based on working groups' presentations, Dr. A. Kassam summarized the proposals for next steps and suggested that each country in the region should take follow-up action in the formulation of a national strategy and action plan on the adoption and promotion of CA over the coming years. Mr. J. Jumaliev, Head of Crop Department, MoA, Kyrgyzstan, expressed strong interest on behalf of the workshop participants and requested FAO to provide technical assistance in formulation of such national strategies and action plans.

On the second day of the workshop, the report on "Status of Plant Protection in Central Asia" was discussed and reviewed. Dr. Alfredo Impiglia, FAO Tunisia, presented, in the context of "Save and Grow", the application of efficient plant protection techniques. Mr. H. Muminjanov presented the outcomes of the monitoring and surveillance study of cereals pests and diseases conducted in SEC countries in 2012. Dr. Ramazan Kedici and Mr. Taha Asikoglu, FAO-SEC, presented the progress made on the promotion of FFS and IPM in Turkey. Ms. Olga Lavrentjeva, FAO Consultant, briefly presented an overview report on the status of plant protection in Central Asia.

The representatives of three machinery companies Mr. Ziya Altynoz ("Altynoz"), Mr. Sadat Duman ("Ozdoken") and Mr. Tarkan Kemalci ("Cansa") presented the information of the manufacturing of field machinery for CA and distributed CDs, booklets and leaflets to the participants. Moreover Mr. Sadat Duman from "Ozdoken" Company demonstrated two no-till drills – mechanical and pneumatic – that were specially transported to the hotel for the workshop.

The workshop participants reviewed the status of plant protection in the region in the working groups. Representatives of Armenia and Georgia briefly presented the status of plant protection in their countries.

On the third day, workshop participants visited the greenhouses that have adopted the application of IPM methods in tomato production and familiarized themselves with progress that has been made in this area in Turkey.

In the afternoon the working groups presented the outcomes of discussions on status of plant protection in the region. They have noted that training of farmers and agriculture specialists on IPM principles, improved legislation on phytosanitary and plant protection, regular update of the lists of

quarantine and non-quarantine pests, monitoring of pests and diseases, prognosis of disease and pest development and providing information on application of control measures on time can reduce crop damage by pests and diseases and facilitate sustainable crop intensification. However, lack of qualified IPM experts, lack or insufficiency of financial resources for carrying out research on plant protection, lack of information and awareness among the farmers on modern and efficient plant protection techniques, underdeveloped pesticide quality control and certification system, lack of registration system for pesticides and pesticide applying equipment, availability and access to pesticides (quality, price, etc.) and lack of legislation on plant protection at the national and regional levels are some of the key factors currently working against efficient control of plant pests and diseases. The main challenges that need to be addressed were identified as improving legislation on phytosanitary and plant protection as well as on registration of pesticides and pesticide applying equipment, government and institutional support to extend research on control of pests and diseases and improving facilities for plant protection. For further creation of opportunities for promotion of efficient plant protection techniques the legislation need to be improved, FFS and extension services to be established and developed. Moreover, the policy documents and strategy on promotion of IPM should be developed and Governments should provide financial support as incentives for application of environmentally friendly and efficient plant protection measures.

The consensus was that the regional workshop was a very successful event that allowed a strategic review of the status of CA and plant protection in the countries of the region. The workshop also demonstrated a close cooperation between FAO, CIMMYT and ICARDA as well as national experts in adoption and promotion of CA in the region that should be continued and strengthened. It was agreed by the workshop participants that FAO should facilitate the provision of technical assistance to the countries in the region on the formulation of the national strategies for adoption and promotion of CA.

The report on the Status of CA in Central Asia and Guidelines for policymakers as well as the Report on Status of Plant Protection in Central Asia should be finalized shortly and sent to the countries in the region.