

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

December 2014

Dear colleagues,

“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.” So we had said in December last year and so it turned out to be most of the time! This year has been marked by prolonged stability in world grain markets, with good crops boosting inventories and ample export supplies protecting world grain prices from excessive volatility and price shocks. A similar prospect is likely to prevail in 2015 – fingers crossed!

Over the past twelve months, while continuing its core work, the FAO Grains Team further increased its contribution to the work of the [Agricultural Market Information System](#) (AMIS). In October, we organized the sixth session of the AMIS Global Food Market Information Group; having earlier in the year helped in coordinating its fifth session in Mexico while, in March, it contributed to the organization of the third session of the AMIS Rapid Response Forum in Canberra, Australia. November 2014 saw the FAO Grains Team play a major role in the Expert Meeting on Stocks Management, held in London jointly by International Grains Council (IGC) and DEFRA of the United Kingdom. Furthermore, the group continued to coordinate the monthly releases of the [AMIS Market Monitor](#), which is emerging as a regular market information source on the four AMIS commodities (wheat, maize, rice and soybeans).

Given its experience in AMIS, the team was invited to address the first meeting of the [Mediterranean Agricultural Market Information Network](#) (MED-Amin) in Paris at the start of the year in January. It also contributed to its second meeting in November, which took place in Izmir, Turkey. Among other major events to which the team contributed by participating as speaker include the [International Grain Trading Conference](#), organized by the Russian Grain Union in Turkey, the workshop on wheat market development in Latin America and the Caribbean region organized by FAO’s regional office, and the thirty-ninth session of the [IGC](#) in London.

Despite all the new initiatives, the traditional activities have not been forgotten. In 2014, FAO’s oldest technical committee, the [Committee on Commodity Problems](#) (CCP), met for its seventieth session in October. The Grains Team addressed the Committee and was also present at [Ministerial Meeting on Governance and International Commodity Markets](#), held in Rome back-to-back with the CCP. Early this year the 100th [Monthly News Report on Grains](#) was published while the [Cereal Supply and Demand Briefs](#) and [FAO’s Food Price Indices](#) continued to be produced on a monthly basis. The Grains Team further oversaw the production of the bi-annual [FAO Food Outlook](#) reports and contributed to the [OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook](#).

The FAO Grains Team has been strengthened this year by the arrival of Natalia Merkusheva. A national of the Russian Federation, Natalia has been able to represent the team at various events concerning grain market development in the Black Sea region.

While 2014 has seen the team's commitments widen and the scope of its work increase, your dedicated group looks forward to continuing its core activities in 2015 with a view to strengthening its impact on global food security through improving market information and transparency.

As in the past we look forward to your continuing support and please do not hesitate to send us any feedback and suggestions you may have.

Wishing you all the best for the New Year.

FAO Grains Team:

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