



CGIAR in the News

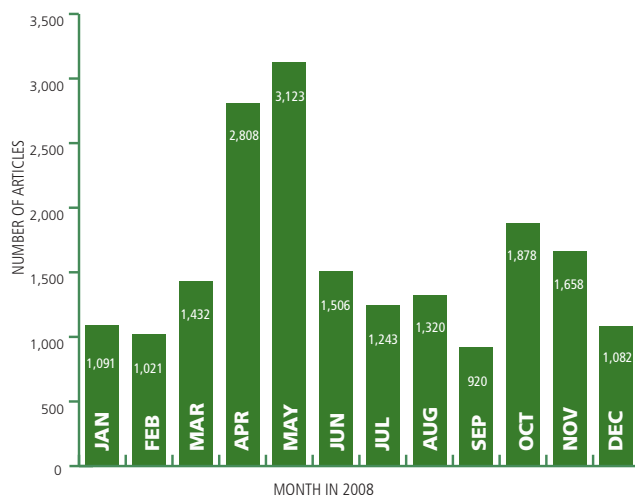
2008

The CGIAR maintained a strong media presence during 2008, as more than 19,000 news articles referred to the CGIAR and the Centers it supports

Media coverage of the CGIAR and the 15 research Centers reflected growing global interest in agriculture leveraged by communicators and researchers using a strategic and collaborative approach to media promotion throughout the CGIAR. Building on successful efforts in 2007, which increased the CGIAR's media presence tenfold, the CGIAR Centers and Secretariat Communications Unit continued working together to amplify public awareness about the relevance and impact of agricultural research.

April and May saw a sharp spike in CGIAR and Center coverage coincide with a period of heightened concern about the food price crisis, with more than 3,000 news stories published in May alone (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
CGIAR Press Hits in 2008



Source: Meltwater News, 2009

The following are the key CGIAR stories promoted with the media in 2008.

SVALBARD GLOBAL SEED VAULT (FEBRUARY)

Of major media interest was the smoothly coordinated shipment of tons of seed of some 200,000 crop samples from CGIAR genebanks to a facility built by the Norwegian government to be the guarantor of last resort for the genetic heritage of world agriculture. About 10 wire services wrote stories, and dozens of reports appeared in broadcast, print and online media worldwide.

ENOLA BEAN PATENT CLAIM REJECTED (APRIL)

In 1999 the United States Patent and Trademark Office granted patent protection for a yellow bean variety that had been cultivated in Mexico for many years, raising profound concerns about biopiracy and abusive intellectual property claims on plant materials originating in the developing world. In response to a legal challenge led by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, the Patent and Trademark Office reversed its decision in April 2008 and definitively rejected all patent claims. The decision was covered by *El País* in Spain and *El Colombiano*, *El Herald*, *La República* and *El Tiempo* in Colombia.

DRIVERS OF THE FOOD PRICE CRISIS (APRIL-MAY)

An audio press conference brought together the directors general of three CGIAR-supported Centers to brief journalists from top media such as the *Financial Times* (UK) and *Scientific American* on the drivers of the food price crisis and the role of agricultural research in providing solutions. The briefing aimed to position the Centers as primary sources of information about global agriculture and food security. It generated significant coverage, including stories in the *Bangkok Post*, *Christian Science Monitor* (USA), *East African*



(Kenya), ABCNews.com, WashingtonPost.com and Time.com. A similar briefing held in Nairobi and involving three other Centers was well attended and resulted in wire service stories by Inter Press Service, Reuters and United Press International.

IMPACT OF NEW RICE FOR AFRICA (NERICA) (MAY)

A story on this subject was promoted in connection with the Fourth Tokyo International Conference for African Development. It led to substantial coverage, including wire service stories by Agence France Presse, Deutsche Presse-Agentur and Reuters; articles in print media such as *New Scientist* and *New Vision* (Uganda); and radio interviews with Africa Rice Center staff broadcast by BBC Network Africa and Radio France International. Numerous news websites carried the story as well, notably ABC News, La Croix (France), *Tribune de Geneve* online (Switzerland) and *Scientific American* online.

TOWARD MORE EFFECTIVE SEED AID (MAY)

Research carried out by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture has shown that much emergency seed aid that is intended to help the poor and vulnerable recover from disaster has in fact created a culture of dependency and undermined local markets in more than 15 African countries. These findings were covered by diverse media outlets, including *Asian News International* (India), *Nature* (USA), *Hindustan Times* (India), and *New Vision* (Uganda). Radio listeners throughout Africa heard the story through BBC Network Africa and South African Broadcasting Corporation's Channel Africa.

WASTEWATER USE IN URBAN AGRICULTURE (AUGUST)

A 53-city survey conducted by the International Water Management Institute documented the widespread use of wastewater for irrigation in urban and peri-urban agriculture, which is vital for the urban poor but gives rise to serious health concerns. The report received major coverage, including stories by more than 20 global and regional news agencies, such as Agence France Presse, Asian News International, Associated Press, Reuters and Xinhua (China). More than 25 stories appeared in print media, such as *Le Figaro* (France), *Gazeta Mercantil* (Brazil), *The Guardian* (UK), *Miami Herald*, *New Scientist* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Germany). In addition, BBC News, Economist.com, *National Geographic* online and *Newsweek* online ran original stories on their websites.

BUSHMEAT CRISIS IN CENTRAL AFRICA (SEPTEMBER)

A report from the Center for International Forestry Research on policies related to the bushmeat trade in Central Africa received wide coverage in African and global outlets, including *Algemeen Dagblad* (Netherlands), *East African*, *Le Jour* (Cameroon), *Le Monde* (France), *New Scientist*, *The Post* (Cameroon), *The Star* (South Africa), *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Germany), BBC News, *Daily Telegraph* (UK), *Discover* magazine, *El Mundo* (Spain), *National Geographic* (USA) and *Nature* (USA). Radio interviews with BBC World Service, Radio France International, and South African Broadcasting Corporation's Channel Africa radio aired stories reaching millions of listeners across Europe and Africa.

BANANA (OCTOBER)

Promotion of the first ever pan-African conference on bananas, in Mombasa, Kenya, resulted in widespread coverage across the continent (see page 29). Several international and regional wire services ran stories, including Xinhua (China) and the Pan African News Agency. Print articles ran in the major dailies of at least a half dozen African countries and in *East African Business Week*. In addition, various African national radio programs, Voice of America, Radio France International, and BBC's World and French Service aired radio interviews with conference spokespersons.

BEST-BET RESEARCH INVESTMENTS (DECEMBER)

The CGIAR's 2008 Annual General Meeting provided an important focus for media outreach. A key theme of the coverage was a set of best-bet research investments, on which the International Food Policy Research Institute had recently conducted an analysis of potential impacts. At least 18 interviews were arranged before or during the event with CGIAR spokespersons, and more than 15 journalists attended a press briefing on opening day. Highlights of the media coverage include 14 stories from key news agencies such as Agence France Presse, Agencia Lusa (Portugal), Xinhua and the African Press Agency. Several leading African newspapers ran stories, including *Business Day* (Nigeria) and *Daily Nation* (Kenya). Various online stories were posted as well, including one in *Nature News*.