

# What's New

March 2013



## New Coordinator for Latin American operations

Summer Allen has joined the COSA team as Coordinator for Latin America operations. Her extensive international work experience with agencies such as the FAO, the US Environmental Protection Agency, and the Economic Research Service of the US Dept. of Agriculture contribute a global perspective on the complex issues of agricultural sustainability.

Dr. Allen is the recipient of several awards and research grants including: the Hemispheric Institute of the Americas Research Grant; International Agricultural Development Fellowship from UC Davis; Jastro Shields Research Scholarship; and multiple awards for outstanding work with the US EPA. She holds a MS in Agriculture and Resource Economics, a MS in International Agricultural Development (both from University of California at Davis), and a PhD from the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development of Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany.

## Annual Science Meetings in Senegal

COSA's Annual Science Meetings gathered a team of research experts from around the globe in Dakar, hosted by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). It was the first such



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event to take place in Africa and featured a select group of experts and researchers gathered to further COSA's spirit of mutual learning. Scientists reviewed the methodology and approaches taken by COSA Partner institutions in different applications around the world. The open discussions and outcomes stand to improve the processes of sustainability research and analysis for all partners, while also defining the tactical plans for COSA's future work in the region.

## Ghana cocoa: a second round

COSA and its esteemed partner, the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana are conducting hundreds of field surveys in cocoa regions to better understand the effects of distinct sustainability efforts undertaken there. The work, conducted between January and April is expected to not only provide substantial



learning about the multi-year impacts but also to serve as a sound basis for discussion with the United Nations Development Programme, COCOBOD, and leading firms that operate there.

### **Member of COSA Advisory Panel receives international recognition**

The Blue Planet Prize, one of the world's premier environmental awards, was recently presented to Mathis Wackernagel (President, Global Footprint Network and Member of the COSA Advisory Panel) and to Dr. William Rees, co-creators of the "Ecological Footprint" concept. The Blue Planet Prizes are awarded annually for outstanding achievements in scientific research and its application in helping to solve global environmental problems. The prize is considered one of the most prestigious in the field of conservation. It is presented by Japan's crown Prince Akishino and the Asahi Glass Foundation.



COSA deeply values Dr. Wackernagel's work, and congratulates him for placing sound sustainability metrics at the center of reasoned discussion and action on an international level. Drs. Wackernagel and Rees developed the Ecological Footprint that has become the world's premier resource accounting system to track humanity's demands on nature.

The FORD Foundation, an institution that is "Working with visionaries on the frontlines of social change worldwide" has granted COSA a 2.5 year grant to lead work on the development of improved metrics for the sustainability of domestic food crops. The result is expected to increase the global capacity to better manage projects and investments for tangible sustainability results.



### **COSA and Grameen Foundation to collaborate in two new projects**

The Grameen Foundation, although best known for their microfinance work and their founder's Nobel Peace Prize, is also a world-leader in the development of technology to collect rural data. COSA will collaborate with them to further advance our mutual field technology work on several fronts. First, in the coming months, COSA and Grameen will co-host meetings with a group international representatives that includes tech giants (eBay, Google), leading donors (Gates, Packard, Rockefeller), and leading practitioner organizations (Source Trace Systems, IFPRI, WB). These meetings will be for the purpose of...



Working with Grameen further, COSA and the Grameen Foundation will work together to integrate some of our best indices of development into our mutual work. The Grameen

Foundation will pilot an integration of COSA indicators and questions into their research, while COSA will further the integration and use of Grameen's PPI (Progress out of Poverty Index) in a current Nicaragua project.

### **Strengthening Cocoa Producers in Colombia**

In collaboration with CRECE, our Colombian Partner, and Swisscontact (a leading NGO) COSA has begun work on building the monitoring and the impact assessment for a new cocoa project integrating over 3,000 farmers in 3 regions of the country. The project is undertaken by Swisscontact in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the National Cocoa Council, and Proexport with funding from SECO. It is designed to increase the competitiveness of cacao producers and better link them to international markets. The project includes training in agricultural practices, post-harvest handling, organizational capacity, and finance for investments. Using a robust sample of cacao producers and groups over a period of time will allow a solid understanding of the impacts of the various interventions that are undertaken. With Swisscontact, COSA and CRECE will also create the local capacity to conduct more effective sustainability assessments.

