



In recent years, the world economy has exhibited an amalgam of phenomena in the areas of energy, food and finance. These phenomena, which are mutually reinforcing, produce amplified effects on national economies and, especially, on agrifood systems. The lines between the different phenomena are increasingly blurred, which makes it difficult to have a grasp of all the factors that trigger these phenomena. Added to this is climate change, which poses multiple challenges for which the countries must find solutions as a matter of urgency to mitigate their effects.

In this scenario, the role of the agrifood and rural sectors is unequivocally quite different from that which existed some months ago. The argument that agriculture should play a preeminent role in a world where at least 800 million people continue to be affected by food insecurity is gaining momentum. Given this context, it is imperative that we review the paths and strategies we have chosen and reflect on new development patterns and models that will achieve the best results, especially

as we meet head-on clearly defined global goals, such as the Millennium Development Objectives (MDO).

Failure to come up with new alternatives and instruments and continuing to do the same thing in contexts and scenarios that are vastly different will probably end up in Defeat in terms of reaching these important goals, notably, reducing poverty and hunger by half and ensuring environmental sustainability.

In its capacity as a coordinating body having a role to play in hemispheric integration, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is engaged in ongoing dialogue with all stakeholder groups in the region regarding the topic of food security. In so doing, it presents various proposals for consideration by actors in agricultural and rural development as well as decision-makers in the countries.

The new edition of *COMUNICA* shares with readers a number of experiences bearing on the connection between small- and



medium-scale producers and these new and unpredictable market dynamics. Invaluable experiences such as those of Colombia, Peru and El Salvador will serve as a basis in addressing the imperative need to increase the connection between producers and the markets.

In the article “Agricultural Insurance: A Powerful Tool for Governments and Farmers”, the topic of agricultural insurance in the hemisphere is discussed. In essence, it reviews some of the concepts related to this important policy instrument intended to avoid shortfalls in the capital of agricultural producers and enable them to ward off the adverse effects of nature, such as hurricanes, desertification, frosts and floods.

Brazil’s experience with its current rural system is introduced and the need to institute an efficient system as a safeguard against the risks of pests and climatic events in that country is discussed under the topic, agricultural insurance.

This edition also includes an article on Paraguay’s potential to produce biofuels. This means that strategies could be identified for revitalizing the agricultural sector and mitigating the effects of the energy crisis.

Finally, in celebration of International Year of the Potato, a background explanation of experiences with FONTAGRO innovative projects with this important crop from the Andean Region is included. This is a highly valuable strategy that is designed to promote further responses to the global food security problem.

This entire effort at systematizing experiences and presenting innovative panoramas on topics such as the linkage between farmers and markets, innovation in production, agricultural insurance and the production of biofuels has been added to the significant collection of documents and technical publications that are part of the electronic magazine **COMUN//CA** and the web page www.iica.int.