RESEARCH PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES TO THE YEAR 2000

As a result of the Strategic Planning Study, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture has made fundamental choices concerning research priorities within and between programs. These include the decision to increase the proportion of funds allocated to resource management research. This shift reflects the critically important need to conserve the natural resources of the tropics for sustainable agricultural production.

The primary commodities in International Institute of Tropical Agriculture’s research program will be cassava, maize, rice, and cowpeas.

In addition, small, focused improvement programs comprising maintenance breeding of soybeans, the application of biotechnology to both yams and plantains, and research designed to control the black sigatoka disease of plantains will be continued.

Research on cocoyams has been terminated and it is proposed that the Technical Advisory Committee transfer the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture’s global mandate for sweet potato improvement to the International Potato Center (CIP).

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RURAL INFORMATION CENTER

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Library (NAL) and Extension Service (ES) have jointly established a Rural Information Center (RIC). The Center is designed to provide information and referral services to local government officials working to maintain the vitality of America’s rural areas. The center serves as an information source for local government officials working to maintain the vitality of America’s rural areas. RIC is targeted to public officials who research, develop, support, and implement our nation’s rural development programs.

RIC combines the technical, subject-matter expertise of extension’s nationwide educational network with the resources of the largest agricultural library in the free world. Through RIC, the NAL will expand its national collection by identifying and acquiring new books, journals, program manuals, audiovisual materials, and computer software in the areas of rural and economic development. After these acquisitions are entered into AGRICOLA, the library’s online bibliographic database, collection materials will be available nationally through interlibrary loan.

The information and services available through RIC are easily accessible to local government officials through extension’s network of county and state offices. A telephone computer network has been designed to link these offices with RIC’s headquarters at NAL in Beltsville.

The RIC supplies information on maintaining a competitive rural economy; local efforts to deal with structural changes; the natural resource base; and rural services, facilities, and support. It offers four different services: information and referral, consultation, annotated bibliography, and future trends.

A pilot system was tested in three states from November to April and national operation began in May 1988.

For additional information about RIC, please contact Patricia John Coordinator, Rural Information Center, Room 304, National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, MD 20705, phone 301/344-2547; or Robert Lovan, National Program Leader, Natural Resources and Rural Development, Extension Service, USDA, Room 3869 South Building, Washington, DC 20250.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Experiment Station Letter 1907

TROPICAL PRODUCTS TRANSPORT HANDBOOK

This is a handbook of recommendations to maintain the quality of fruits and vegetables, live plants, and cut flowers from tropical and subtropical climates during transportation. The handbook also outlines USDA requirements for importing pest-free foreign fruits, vegetables, and plants. A copy of the handbook is available free of charge from the Export Services Branch, Office of Transportation, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1405 Auditors Bldg., Washington, DC 20250; phone 202/653-6317. A Spanish version of the handbook will be available in May.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Experiment Station Letter 1923

Send items of interest to Timothy E. Crocker, Dept. of Horticulture, Univ. of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.