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## **Agriculture in the Twenty-first Century: Challenges and responses**

# A new instrument for Sharing Knowledge

As the specialized agency of the Inter-American System for the promotion of agriculture and rural well-being, IICA attaches strategic importance to the task of creating, sharing and applying knowledge.

Access to information and knowledge, continuous learning and the efficient use of resources and communication technologies are therefore among the Institute's main endeavors.

The sharing of knowledge has become one of the chief services provided by the Institute. It is what has led it to gradually modernize the technical cooperation it provides through the use of various information technology tools to profit from experience gained, facilitate the work of its professionals and increase continuous exchange among countries.

Through the exchange and transfer of knowledge, we have been building a common base from which the Institute can deploy activities at all levels: national, regional and hemispheric.

A very important part of this process has been the development and strengthening of instruments used to transfer information and knowledge, such as the IICA Web portal <http://www.iica.int>; Infoagro.NET; Intranet; videoconference centers; institutional libraries; in-person and virtual discussion forums; the Agricultural Information and Documentation System for the Americas (SIDALC); a variety of electronic bulletins; and virtual communities or thematic networks.

Today, the launching of COMUNIICA online, represents part of this effort. COMUNIICA online is an electronic medium for sharing knowledge on agriculture and rural life in the Americas. The Institute has a long and rich history in the publication of specialized journals –one need only mention the highly regarded *Turrialba*. The appearance of the new COMUNIICA marks a second stage, since some years ago, IICA published a journal bearing the same name, which was also technical.

In this challenging 21st century, COMUNIICA online seeks to promote knowledge of the strategic importance of agriculture and rural life, not only for economic and social development, but also because of its contribution to democratic stability, governance and peace. Also, it seeks to foster an exchange of experiences and horizontal cooperation by providing information on successful projects.

COMUNICA online targets decision makers, specialists in governmental and non-governmental organizations, international and regional cooperation, financial and research agencies, academia, farmers' organizations, opinion makers and journalists in the mass and specialized media in other words, all those directly or indirectly associated with agriculture and rural life.

It will be published each quarter in Spanish and English (four editions a year).

In this first edition, we present an overview of the different challenges facing agriculture and rural life from the perspective of IICA's areas of focus.

We would like to have your opinion on this new institutional initiative, which we are most pleased to make available to you. Please contact me at [mario.seixas@iica.int](mailto:mario.seixas@iica.int) or the Editor-in-Chief at [patricia.leon@iica.int](mailto:patricia.leon@iica.int).

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