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GLOBAL BIOTECH AREA BREAKS 100 MILLION HECTARE MARK

Biotech crop adoption increased to 12 million hectares or 13 percent to reach 102 million hectares in 2006 – breaking the 100 million hectare mark for the first time and achieving the second highest growth in the last five years. Growth for the period 1996 to 2006 registered an unprecedented 60-fold increase, the highest adoption rate of any crop technology. The number of farmers planting biotech crops also increased to 10.3 million farmers, up from 8.5 million farmers in 2005. These were forwarded in a report by Dr. Clive James, chairman and founder of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA).

The growth of biotech crop adoption was also substantially higher in the developing world at 21 percent versus the industrialized nations where adoption grew 9 percent. This growth is expected to continue in the second decade of commercialization.

The press release about the report is available in English, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, German, and French, while the Executive Summary is available in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Thai, and Bangla. Other language editions (i.e. Chinese, Swahili, Hindi, and Korean) of the press

release and Executive Summary will be released on dates to coincide with national media launches. Visit <http://www.isaaa.org> to download these documents.

STATUS OF BT COTTON CONFINED FIELD TRIALS IN KENYA

<http://www.aatf-africa.org/publications/BtcottonKenya.pdf>

Bt cotton confined field trials in Kenya have enabled the efficacy on the African bollworm and semi-looper to be established. It was also proven that there is no impact of the Bt cotton on key natural enemies and other arthropods. Dr. Charles Waturu, Center director of the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute-Thika, gave these highlights in his presentation in Nairobi during the Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa. He reported on the field evaluation of transgenic Bt cotton varieties DP448B and DP404BG for efficacy on African bollworms and its impact on non-target species.

LIBERIAN PRESIDENT AWARDED HUNGER PROJECT PRIZE

<http://www.africaprize.org>.

H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia and the first woman elected president of an African nation, received The Hunger Project's 2006 Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable End of Hunger. The award, referred to as the Nobel Prize for Africa, is given to African leaders who "exhibit remarkable courage, vision, and commitment to the well-being of Africa's people".

The Hunger Project is an international NGO that works in partnership with people across Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin to sustainably end hunger.

PROGRESS IN SOUTH AFRICAN BIOTECH REVIEWED

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tibtech.2006.10.009>.

In a review published in the journal Trends in Biotechnology, researchers at the University of Pretoria wrote that the investments of the South African government to develop its biotechnology sector are now paying off. There are several biotechnological innovations now available commercially.

However, to further encourage the growth of the sector, the review by Thomas Cloete and colleagues cites that South African researchers should develop their entrepreneurial drive. This is needed to increase the small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) in the country and help provide employment opportunities to many.

One reason why South African university researchers just publish their results instead of patenting and commercializing their product is the high cost of registering foreign patents. The review said that the South African government can help by simplifying access to research funding and increase support for public research and development efforts.

UN AGENCIES CONVENED TO SUPPORT NEPAD

<http://www.uneca.org/>.

At least 20 United Nations agencies and departments convened recently in Ethiopia to devise ways of working jointly in an effort to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The Partnership was designed to address issues such as escalating poverty level, underdevelopment, and the continued marginalization of Africa. Participants of the meeting agreed to coordinate action for Africa's development, in accordance with a "cluster system". By working as a cluster, the capabilities of each UN agency are fully utilized.

"This meeting is a bold attempt to resuscitate the UN cluster system, and to give direction to the joint work of the agencies with regard to NEPAD," said Abdoulie Janneh, UN Under-Secretary General and Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Executive Secretary. As a convener of different agencies working in support of NEPAD, ECA will host the UN/NEPAD secretariat of the regional consultation mechanism and will act as an agent for crosscutting issues.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF NIGERIA UNVEILED

http://www.nigeria.gov.ng/aso%20rock%20news_agriculturalresearchcounciltakesoff.aspx.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the launch of the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria, which would coordinate agricultural research in the country, provide effective linkage with production in agriculture, and promote food security. "I believe the Research Council can do a lot to bridge the gap between research and food production, and we will hold them responsible for this. They have to be practical and realistic and establish the appropriate connections necessary for success", he stated.

The project aims to establish a self-sustaining system of production, distribution and utilization of farmer-preferred varieties of (TC) banana packaged with suitable micro credit component, and to strengthen its distribution network, orchard management and post harvest utilization.

In 2002 it was voted third best project during the 7th KARI Scientific Biennial Conference. It also won the First Place Medal in the Global Development Network (GDN) Awards for Science and Technology for Development, an initiative of the World Bank and the Government of Japan in 2000.

FARMERS VISIT Bt COTTON FIELD TRIALS IN BURKINA FASO

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The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), in collaboration with INERA (the Institute for the Environment and Agricultural Research of Burkina Faso), and INSAH (l'Institut du Sahel), recently organized a travel tour to visit two Bt cotton field trials in Burkina Faso. The workshop's main objective was to provide the opportunity to farmers and journalists to see by themselves the performance of genetically modified cotton in the fields. Bt cotton is genetically engineered to protect the plant against the damage by bollworms. The event was attended by farmers and journalists from Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin, Senegal and Togo.

"In view of the results obtained in the field trials, we are ready to embark in the planting of Bt cotton in Burkina" said Sessouma Tinder, farmer from the Kéné Dougou region. "There is a clear difference between the Bt cotton fields and the conventional varieties, as transgenic plants carry more capsules. In addition, the transgenic fields receive only two pesticide treatments instead of six, which results in an important reduction in the cost of the pesticides. My main worry now is that the transgenic seeds become available, at a good price".

Burkina Faso is the only country in West Africa that has adopted a legal biosafety regulatory system, and field trials in the country are currently in their fourth year. The Bt trait has been transferred to local Burkinabe cotton varieties, and local scientists have carried out extensive biosafety and socio-economic studies. Burkina Faso is expected to commercialize Bt cotton next year, representing the first country in the region to adopt a biotech crop.

\$250 MILLION FOR SAFE MANAGEMENT OF PESTICIDES IN AFRICA

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About US\$250 million has been set aside to improve pesticide management in Africa. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) regional representative Dr. Kwame Koranteng said the money donated by the African Development Bank, Global Environment Facility, the Netherlands and Canada, would initially benefit seven African countries, including South Africa, Mali, Ethiopia, Morocco, Tanzania, Nigeria and Tunisia.

The WWF official made this announcement during the Conference of Parties to the Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and their disposal, at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya. Koranteng said poor pesticide management had affected agriculture, human health, environment, water quality, biodiversity and soils. Most hazardous wastes are industrial and obsolete pesticides. Kenya's Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources George Krhoda said Kenya had 10,000 tons of obsolete pesticides and that some like DDT had found their way back into the country illegally through Tanzania.

SCIENTISTS URGED TO APPLY R4D CONCEPT TO FEED AFRICA

http://www.iita.org/cms/details/news_feature_details.aspx?articleid=544&zoneid=342.

Why do people still go to bed hungry in Africa? Why is it that Africa still depends on food importation and food aids to meet local demands? These are just some of the questions scientists at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), collaborators, and partners attempted to offer solutions to at a strategic planning activity held last week. DG Hartmann, IITA Director General, challenged the scientists to articulate the Research-for-Development (R4D) concept in their research design as against Research and Development (R&D). This R4D concept puts farmers at the center of scientific research planning and design.

The week long activity enabled IITA scientists and research administrators to brainstorm on the justification for the Institute's involvement in R4D, to determine the benefits and deliverable International Public Goods (IPGs), comparative advantage of IITA's involvement in development issues and partnerships with both public and private sectors of the economy, scaling out and exit strategies.

ROLE OF BIOTECH IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWED

<http://www.academicjournals.org/AJB/PDF/pdf2006/4Dec/Okonko%20et%20al.pdf>

Biotechnological tools have been used to provide food and contribute to socio-economic advancement and national development, says Nigerian scientists Iheanyi Okonko and colleagues.

Their review, published by the African Journal of Biotechnology, provides an overview of the status of plant, animal, and microbial biotechnologies, as well as possible applications in developing countries.

Okonko and colleagues stressed that biotechnology innovations have specifically contributed a lot to food processing. Among its contributions include the enhancement of product quality and safety, and in providing improved ingredients and raw materials.

However, some of the issues in developing countries need to be addressed. These include intellectual property rights, cultural factors, and the appropriateness of the technology in a developing country setting. More importantly, developing countries should weigh up their investments in biotechnology against other potential uses of these resources.

NIGERIANS STAND TO GAIN A LOT FROM BIOTECHNOLOGY

<http://www.iita.org>.

Biotechnology could easily provide good jobs for millions of unemployed Nigerians under the biotechnology bioresources programs, said Sam Wuyep a director at the Nigerian Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA), Abuja, during a biotechnology awareness workshop in December, 2006. Bamidele Solomon, Director General of NABDA added that the government should as a matter of priority initiate steps to explore the use of biotechnology for the benefit of Nigerians and thus ensure that the country becomes one of the global leaders in the field.

Most importantly, modern agricultural biotechnology applications are an essential tool for agricultural development for food security, income generation and poverty alleviation. Christian Fatokun, from the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), explained that in spite of several years of research work it has become impossible for IITA and other advanced laboratories to develop improved cowpeas and cassava resistant to certain pests and diseases through conventional breeding. Fatokun added that IITA has acquired the knowledge to use biotechnological tools to improve cowpea and other crops without the use of environment unfriendly pesticides.

WORLD BANK GIVES CGIAR \$10 MILLION GRANT

<http://www.cgiar.org>.

The World Bank has approved a US\$10 million grant to support gene banks in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) system. "Of the many investments needed, none is more fundamental than support for gene banks, which safeguard the crop diversity on which

food security depends," noted Katherine Sierra, Vice President of the World Bank's Sustainable Development Network and CGIAR Chair.

More than 600,000 plant samples are kept in 11 gene banks which "represent the most important international effort to conserve genetic resources of staple crops, forages and agroforestry species," said CGIAR Director Francisco Reifschneider.

The Centres will use the new grant to further improve work on collections, increase collaboration, and contribute to the development of a global system for conservation and use of crop genetic resources.

CULTIVATION OF GM POTATO IN THE EU A POSSIBILITY?

<http://www.gmo-compass.org/eng/news/messages/200611.docu.html#73>.

Genetically modified potato EH92-527-1 could be the first genetically modified plant to be approved for cultivation in the European Union since 1998, if the European Commission (EC) accepts the proposal of the Commissioner for the Environment Stavros Dimas for the cultivation of this biotech crop under certain conditions.

The Swedish company Amylogé HB, now part of BASF Plant Science, developed the potato to produce only amylopectin in its tubers. Pure amylopectin, compared with conventional starch composed of amylose and amylopectin, is more easily applied in certain industrial processes such as paper making. The EC has already requested that commercialization of this GM potato be accompanied by post market monitoring by BASF in order to detect unanticipated adverse environmental effects which may arise.

TURNING WASTE INTO PAPER THROUGH BIOTECHNOLOGY

<http://www.ird.fr/us/actualites/fiches/2006/fas252.pdf>

The sugar refining industry produces a great volume of fibrous waste-product known as bagasse. A part of the waste produced is recycled as raw material for paper manufacture, but the industrial processing required to break down lignin and for the bleaching of the resulting paper pulp can be damaging to the environment. Research scientists from the IRD and INRA turned to biotechnology for an alternative, biologically based, solution.

From a culture of the filamentous fungus *Pycnoporus cinnabarinus*, scientists have recovered a delignifying enzyme known as laccase. This enzyme breaks down the lignin in the fibers of bagasse, transforming this waste product, after mechanical refining, into paper pulp. The pulp obtained becomes bleached as the lignin progressively disappears. *P. cinnabarinus* naturally synthesizes only small amounts of laccase when it grows on bagasse; it is therefore necessary to add volatile agents such as ethanol, in order to increase production of the enzyme under these conditions. Preliminary laboratory trials show that this integrated bioprocess can be adapted to other potential fiber-yielding materials such as wood, bamboo, reeds, and cereal straw, opening up promising applications for the paper industry.

A FUTURE POWERED BY FUEL FROM PLANTS

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v444/n7120/index.html#bnf>

The notion of living plants as "solar cells" intended to capture the infinite energy of the Sun seems ideal; the problem is that plants are not as efficient as solar cells in storing a watt or two of electricity. But plants make up for that inefficiency with their low cost and their benefits to the environment. Plants use up carbon dioxide throughout their development and convert the carbon, along with the Sun's energy, into stable organic compounds. This means that the Sun's energy is made available at a later date when the Sun isn't shining. Although plants may never be the total answer to our global energy problems, they have substantial potential as a source of carbon-neutral fuel for the transportation sector.

The scientific journal *Nature* is devoting this week's *Business Feature* to biofuels, to explore their contribution to global energy needs in three different areas. Emma Marris examines a biofuel success: the Brazilian sugar-cane ethanol industry in "*Sugar cane and ethanol: Drink the best and*

drive the rest". The second feature, *"US biofuels: A field in ferment"* by Katharine Sanderson explores the role of other widely untapped sources of cellulose such as farm waste and poplar plantations that can also be utilized for the production of ethanol and other alcohols. In the third feature *"Liquid fuel synthesis: Making it up as you go along"* Heidi Ledford analyses a different approach to biofuels – the thermochemical route – to produce fuel from biomass, and specifically, liquid hydrocarbons from solid coal.

CEREAL PRICES HIGHEST IN DECADE

<http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2006/1000459/index.html>

Prices of cereal grains such as wheat and maize have surged to highest levels not seen in the last decade, says the Food Outlook report from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This is attributed to poor harvests in major grain producing countries and an increasing demand for biofuel production.

Production of coarse grains in 2006 currently stands at 981 million tons, a decrease of 2.1% from 2005 figures. World wheat production went down by 5.3% of 2005 figures. No growth was registered by rice production which was affected by natural calamities worldwide.

FAO predicts that higher prices will probably encourage more plantings in 2007. However, with grains being used for industrial purposes such as ethanol, prices may continue to remain high.

GOOD AGRI PRACTICES ENABLE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO COPE WITH GLOBALIZATION

<http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2007/1000475/index.html>.

Changing international and domestic food markets, and different sets of standards and codes are becoming a challenge for developing countries in penetrating markets in developed countries. However, they also create opportunities for improvement. Good agricultural practices (GAP) can help developing countries cope with these globalization realities. These views were shared by experts from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The term "good agricultural practices" is commonly used to designate codes of agricultural production methods for implementation at farm level, which are promoted by many public and private sectors said FAO expert Anne-Sophie Poisot. It can help promote sustainable agriculture and contribute to a better environmental and social development at both national and international levels. For example, improvements in agricultural practices, such as integrated production and pest management, can lead to substantial improvements not only in terms of yield and production efficiencies but also in health and safety of workers added Paola Termine from FAO's Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development Programme.

NOTICE BOARD

4 – 15 February 2007 - The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will organize in collaboration with the Agricultural Genetic Engineering Research Institute (AGERI), an Introductory Course in Bioinformatics to be held at AGERI, Giza, Egypt. UNCTAD will select and sponsor up to 20 scientists from African countries. For additional details, contact Ms. Marie-Elise Dumans at marie-elise.dumans@unctad.org or Mr. Mongi Hamdi at mongi.hamdi@unctad.org.

13 - 15 March 2007 - The Biotechnology Business Forum, organized by the Institute for International Research (IIR) South Africa, will be held on March 13-15, 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The forum is a case study-driven event focused on operational strategies, technologies, regulatory changes, manufacturing production and process development. Participants will gain extended insight into biotech funding opportunities and their implications, find out about Biotechnology business development strategies, discover biotechnology opportunities and challenges, and

debate biotechnology regulation and legislature and its effect on biotech businesses. For more information, visit <http://www.iir-conferences.co.za/eventInfo.php?e=1244>.

- 15 – 17 March 2007** - The University of Agricultural Sciences, GKVK Bangalore, the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore and Iowa State University, Ames, USA are jointly organizing an International Conference on "21st Century Challenges to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems, Biotechnology, Environment, Nutrition, Trade and Policy" at Bangalore, Karnataka. The conference will bring together education leaders, researchers, and specialists in extension, policy makers, agri business and development practitioners to draw up a strategy and action plan for dealing with the issues of sustainable agriculture. For detail information, contact: Prof PG Chengappa at chengappag@gmail.com or visit <http://www.sustainagri.org/>
- 20 – 23 March 2007** - A conference entitled "CANOLA – Growing Great 2015" will bring together various sectors of the canola industry will be held in Victoria, BC, Canada. The event aims to map out the future for canola as food and fuel and determine a strategic action to profitably grow all segments of the canola industry. The expected participants include canola input suppliers, processors, exporters, researchers, regulators, marketers and retailers. More information on this event: <http://www.canola-council.org/conference/index.htm>
- 22 - 25 March 2007** - The 49th Annual Maize Genetics Conference is scheduled to be held at St. Charles, Illinois, U.S.A. on 22-25 March 2007. The annual activity brings together researchers and students to discuss progress in maize research areas such as genetics, plant breeding, biotechnology, and genomics. The deadline for the submission of abstracts is on 2 February 2007. Details about the program and information on how to obtain financial aid for student attendees are available at http://www.maizegdb.org/maize_meeting/2007.
- 23 – 27 March 2007** - The 2nd International Conference on Plant Molecular Breeding (ICPMB) will be held in Sanya, Hainan province, China. This event will focus on applied plant genomics and molecular plant breeding in view of the increasing need to use new molecular approaches and mine novel gene resources. Important aspects of plant molecular breeding and related transgenic ecological risk and intellectual property right (IPR) will be covered in several sessions and satellite workshops. For more information, visit <http://www.icpmb.org/142.html>.
- 5 – 30 March 2007** - The FAO Electronic Forum on Biotechnology in Food and Agriculture will have its 14th email conference. The provisional title is "Coping with water scarcity in developing countries: What role for agricultural biotechnologies?". FAO's biotech forum aims to provide quality balanced information on agricultural biotechnology in developing countries and to make a neutral platform available for people to exchange views and experiences on the subject. Registration is free and is open to everyone. For more information and for instructions on how to register please visit <http://www.fao.org/biotech/forum.asp>.
- 8 – 10 May 2007** - The International Islamic University Malaysia will be organizing the International Conference on Biotechnology Engineering (ICBioE '07), scheduled on May 8-10, 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The theme of the conference is Harnessing Nature to Enhance Quality of Life, and topics such as biomolecular engineering, biopharmaceutical engineering, agricultural and natural biotechnology products, food and process engineering, and bioenergy will be covered. Submission of papers for the conference is until December 15, 2006. For more, contact through icbioe@iiu.edu.my or visit http://www.iiu.edu.my/icbioe/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=44.
- 21 – 23 May 2007** - The annual World Seed Congress will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand. The international congress provides opportunities for trade, debate, policy-setting and networking, and also plays a fundamental role in sustaining the present and future success of world seed industry. For more information please visit <http://www.conference.co.nz/index.cfm/worldseed2007/Home>.
- 21 May – 29 June 2007** - A training program for plant genetic resources researchers and gene bank managers will be conducted on 21 May 2007 to 29 June 2007 in Wageningen, The Netherlands. The training aims for participants and facilitators to exchange experiences and to explore practical applications for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources in agriculture. Six two week courses are

offered which are parts of two overlapping training programs: a) Contemporary and participatory approaches in plant genetic resources conservation and use, and b) Advanced management practices towards sustainable use of plant genetic resources. Each two week course in each program will provide independent and comprehensive training. A course that will discuss the applications of biotechnology to the study of genetic diversity and plant breeding will be held on 18-29 July 2007. For details on the individual courses within the program, and for fellowship application please visit http://www.wi.wur.nl/UK/newsagenda/agenda/Conservation_sustainable_use_of_plant_genetic_resources.htm.

22 May 2007 - The 59th International Symposium on Crop Protection will be held on 22 May 2007 at the Faculty of Bioscience Engineering of the Ghent University, Belgium. The symposium will focus on new developments in all aspects of crop protection. The program will include a plenary session with two invited papers and parallel sessions with submitted papers related to phytopathology, entomology, nematology and acarology, pesticide residues, biological and integrated control of pests, diseases and weeds. More information is available at <http://www.iscp.ugent.be/>.

17 – 21 June 2007 - The Asia Pacific Conference on Plant Tissue Culture and Agribiotechnology will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia under the auspices of the Asia Pacific Association of Plant Tissue Culture and Agribiotechnology and The Academy of Sciences Malaysia. The conference will cover various areas in biotechnology such as plant cell and tissue culture, aquaculture and animal biotechnology, biotechnology in horticulture and forestry, pharmaceuticals and health-care products, environmental biotechnology, industrial biotechnology, and bioinformatics and systems biology. Deadline for the submission of abstracts is on Feb. 28, 2007.

For more information, visit <http://ns.aimst.edu.my/apacpa2007/index.htm>.

2 – 5 July 2007 - The Annual Conference of the European Federation of IT in Agriculture and the World Congress on Computers in Agriculture (EFITA/WCCA 2007) conference will examine the role and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in three key areas of rural and agricultural sustainability: ICT supporting on-farm business; ICT supporting rural sustainability; and ICT supporting environmental sustainability. The event will take place in Glasgow, Scotland. For more information visit: <http://www.efitaglasgow.org/>

24 – 28 September 2007 – A biosafety course will be run in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. It is primarily aimed at Latin American professionals who will be in a position to review applications for the deliberate release of GM crops. The workshop aims to discuss the near term evolution and challenges in GM biosafety, namely the developments of GM crops expressing complex phenotypes, non-food applications, and gene-restriction constructs. The workshop will comprise formal lectures on biosafety, and several sessions of hands-on exercises as in actual regulatory review process. Requests for information and applications directly to Dr. Leila Oda. E-mail: secretaria@anbio.org.br or l.oda@uol.com.br.

7 – 9 November 2007 - The BioAsia 2007 conference will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, with the theme, "Technology for self-sufficient agriculture in Asia". The event aims to bring together agricultural scientists in Asia to share research experiences. The focus of the conference is to emphasize on addressing science and community aspects assuring the long-term survival of local, healthy, secure, sustainable food and energy in Asia. Topics for discussion include biofuels, phytobioremediation, biopharming, and cassava biotechnology. For more information, visit <http://www.biotech.or.th/BioAsia2007/home/conference.asp>.

27 – 31 October 2007 – The African Crop Science Society (ACSS) and Faculty of Agriculture, Minia University, Egypt is calling for abstracts for the 8th African Crop Science Society Conference. The conference will be held in El-Minia, Egypt. The conference theme is "Crop research, technology dissemination and adoption to increase food supply, reducing hunger and poverty in Africa". Among the topics to be discussed at the conference include: crop improvement and physiology, biodiversity and natural resources management, post harvest handling and food sciences, crop protection, crop genetics and biotechnology, and environmental sciences. For more information see <http://www.africancrops.net/News/july06/acss8.htm>.

ONLINE DISCUSSION ON PESTS AND DISEASES - The African Crops Message and Discussion Board will be holding an online discussion on the control of pests and diseases

afflicting African crops. The discussions will be hosted by the Pests and Diseases Forum and everybody is invited to participate. The discussion will run for 6 weeks, and a summary with full acknowledgement of contributors will be prepared and disseminated. Topics selected for the discussion include integrated pest management, crop husbandry and indigenous knowledge, post-harvest crop losses, managing resistance and its development among transgenic crops, technology transfer, biopesticides and effects of intercropping in the spread of pests and diseases. For more information about the discussion visit www.africancrops.ipbhost.com, or contact the Moderator by email: jmsonga@africaonline.co.ke or the Board Administrator, africancrops@wananchi.com.