



Lomonosov Moscow State University

Eurasian Center for Food Security

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Photo credit: Anna Kontoboytseva ECFS

In the April Newsletter we discuss Global Food Policy Report 2020 published by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), results of the Coordination of International Research Cooperation on Soil Carbon Sequestration in Agriculture (CIRCASA) 2nd Annual meeting, held March 4-6, 2020 in Wageningen, Taking stock of the current understanding of carbon sequestration in agricultural soils as well as results of the 9th G20 Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS-G20).

A growing number of events are now moving online and give us opportunity to join it from anywhere in the world. You can find the upcoming events in the updated calendar.

Global Food Policy Report 2020: Building Inclusive Food Systems

By Roman Romashkin

The ninth flagship [Global Food Policy Report 2020](#) has been published by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). This year's report focuses on building inclusive food systems to improve nutrition, increase rural employment and incomes, and empower the most vulnerable people and consider their interests.

The study notes that food systems are evolving quickly to meet growing and changing demand, but they are not serving everyone's needs. In this regard, as we modernize food systems to

make them climate-smart, healthy, and sustainable, we must also strive to make them inclusive of small farmers, youth, women, conflict-affected people, and other poor and marginalized people.

These inclusive food systems bring a wide range of economic and development benefits to all people. They create better income opportunities for poor people, thereby reducing hunger and poverty.

They can spark innovation, for example, in the production and consumption of healthy foods,



thus improving nutrition for both producers and consumers and boosting the incomes of producers.

All these issues are addressed in an integrated manner in the IFPRI's report, which uses case studies and research outcomes in selected countries and regions of the world. The overview on Central Asia, prepared by IFPRI together with the Eurasian Center for Food Security of Moscow State University (ECFS), particularly emphasizes the need to address poverty and unemployment issues, especially among women and young people. Creating opportunities for youth and especially for young women will be essential to increasing the income, equity, and nutrition benefits of food systems for rural people. Promoting high-value agrifood sectors, such as horticulture, livestock, and food processing, along with related business activities, such as logistics and storage infrastructure, shows promise for both income generation and nutrition outcomes, especially in densely populated rural areas

The lack of jobs forces many Central Asian workers, especially young men, to migrate to Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and elsewhere. Labor migration affects the inclusiveness of Central Asia's food systems

in at least two ways. First, labor remittances can improve household welfare and access to food. Second, migration of rural men leads to the "feminization" of agricultural labor, which can increase women's decision-making power but can also contribute to agricultural labor shortages and create social issues.

Besides, Central Asia's food systems will continue to face risks related to climate change and commodity price uncertainties as well as conditions in the region's main trading partners (Russia and China). Uzbekistan, for example, is considering joining the Eurasian Economic Union, which help transform the food system in Uzbekistan and throughout the region. Along with Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic have recently updated their development strategies with the aim of transforming food systems, promoting nutrition-sensitive value chains, increasing private-sector investments in the agrifood sector, and expanding employment opportunities. In this regard, across the region, evidence-based policy solutions must be developed to promote inclusive food systems.

It should be noted that food systems are facing a new global challenge this year as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. The fight against this pandemic, while national economies and the livelihoods of the population are destabilized, is likely to lead to worsening food security and nutrition. The poor and vulnerable are likely to suffer the most. Addressing the impacts of this shock—from supply chain and trade interruptions to severe unemployment and rising poverty levels—urgently requires effective, targeted social protection for the most vulnerable in the short term. The actions of many countries of the world show how important and relevant it is to ensure food security and to preserve the foundation for the sustainable and inclusive development of food systems.

The IFPRI report, as well as relevant data and indicators of food security and nutrition for selected regions of the world, is available at the following [link](#).

International Research Cooperation to Work on Arable Soil Carbon Sequestration

By Anna Kontoboytseva



[The Coordination of International Research Cooperation on soil Carbon Sequestration in Agriculture \(CIRCASA\)](#) project, launched at the end of 2017 and funded by [Horizon 2020](#) research and technology development program of European Union (EU), brings together leading soil carbon experts from around the world. Over the past two years, knowledge about soil organic matter and the potential of agricultural soils to absorb atmospheric carbon has been structured and turned into practice and the scientific basis for strategic research agenda has been developed. Furthermore, stakeholders' perspectives on the potential for soil carbon management to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and the sustainable intensification of agriculture and Sustainable Development Goals have been gathered. The knowledge and information system and the [Open Collaborative Platform \(OCP\)](#) have been created for communication between researchers and stakeholders on this topic.

The CIRCASA 2nd Annual meeting "Towards an International Research Consortium" was held on March 4–6, 2020, in Wageningen, the Netherlands. The meeting was attended by 73 European and international experts and was dedicated to the results of the activities of [CIRCASA's work packages](#) and of the leading international projects, initiatives, and research networks.

CIRCASA aims to develop international synergies of research and knowledge exchange in the field of carbon

sequestration in agricultural soils at EU and global levels, with the active engagement of all relevant stakeholders. The project brings together the research community, international organizations, and governments. The guest of honor of the event was the former Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality for the Netherlands and current chair of mission board on "[Soil Health and Food](#)", Cees Veerman. In his speech, he emphasized the importance of integrated efforts within the framework of the new [European Green Deal](#), presented in December 2019 by the European Commission. The agreement provides for a complete cessation of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. To achieve this, the European Union plans to allocate 1 trillion Euros in the next 10 years. In March 2020, a new [Circular Economy Action Plan](#) was published. The document contains new initiatives on the life cycles of products with the aim of modernizing and transforming the economy with mandatory environmental protection.

CIRCASA is currently preparing a 2020–2022 implementation plan for the International Research Consortium (IRC) on soil carbon. Fourteen areas of IRC interaction were identified, including organizations such as satellite operators, greenhouse gas control services, carbon offset organizations, soil partnerships and agencies, farmers and agrifood businesses, including breeding companies, manufacturers and distributors of equipment and machinery, organizations related to fertilizers, organizations related to agricultural and food waste, start-ups and consultants, international organizations and UN conventions, research institutions and universities, representatives of the agricultural service sector, and others.

Special task forces will organize the process of interaction of the IRC with each category. Leading organizations for each task force were also identified during the meeting. Ongoing work on a Science Research Agenda developed jointly with stakeholders

will help harmonize research for the IRC. The initiative "[4 per 1000](#)," the [Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases](#) (GRA), the recently launched [European Joint Programme on Agricultural](#)

[Soils](#) (EJP SOIL), and [the Soil Carbon Network for Sustainable Agriculture in Africa](#) (CaSa) are among the participating initiatives.

Lomonosov Moscow State University (LMSU) also joined CIRCASA's initiative and, together with France's [National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment](#), coordinates the program Managing Carbon Sequestration in Arable Soils of Russia. Russia can make a significant contribution to international initiatives thanks to its vast amounts of agricultural land and its accumulated knowledge about managing soil organic carbon. According to the national report [Global Climate and Soil Cover of Russia](#) (in Russian only), the arable and pasture soils in Russia have the potential for carbon sequestration of about 2.4 billion tons, considering the accumulation of organic carbon by

fallow lands (0.8–1.2 billion tons).

During the meeting, Eurasian Center for Food Security (ECFS) researcher Anna Kontoboytseva reported briefly on Russian organizations, projects, and potential opportunities for IRC participation. The results of the 1st CIRCASA meeting and the 3rd Annual GRA meeting, held February 4–8, 2019, in Cali (Colombia), are published in [ECFS Newsletter #43](#) (March 2019).

If you or your organization is interested in joining the IRC as a researcher, sponsor, or user, please contact CIRCASA representatives at contact.circasa@inrae.fr. All CIRCASA work results and reporting materials are [available](#) on the project website. Presentations from the Wageningen meeting can be found [here](#).

Ninth Meeting of Leading Agricultural Scientists of the G20 Countries

By Pavel Krasilnikov

[The 9th Meeting of G20 Agricultural Chief Scientists \(MACS-G20\)](#), chaired by Saudi Arabia, took place on February 18–19, 2020, in the city of Al-Khobar. The meeting included 65 participants from G20 members, guest countries, and international organizations. Its purpose was to discuss the most challenging problems associated with the development of agriculture and the state of food security in the world.

This year, the results of previously initiated MACS-G20 projects on international cooperation regarding the transboundary migration of plant pests, food loss and waste, and scaling up of climate-optimized technologies and practices for sustainable agriculture were presented. Key global issues covered by the meeting included sustainable agriculture development in drylands; promoting agricultural

productivity and sustainability through a wide range of innovative approaches including cutting-edge technologies; and the water, energy, and food nexus. MACS members recognized the need to co-create tailor-made approaches, adapted to the local needs of farmers, rural communities, value chains, and consumers. Scientists of the G20 adopted a communiqué that will be delivered to the Ministers of Agriculture.

Prior to the formal MACS-G20 meeting, on February 17, a field trip to Al-Hassa Oasis was organized. Participants visited the Saudi Irrigation Organization to observe irrigation maintenance and management activities, the Nada Dairy Company to observe a herd and production factory, and Land of Civilizations (Al-Qara Mountain) one of the most prominent natural tourist attractions in Saudi Arabia.

Event Calendar 2020*

Date	City, Country	Event
Event video from April 7	ONLINE	VIRTUAL LAUNCH EVENT - 2020 Global Food Policy Report: Building Inclusive Food Systems
Event video from April 17	ONLINE	Online Event: Are We Heading toward Another Global Food Price Crisis? (by Center for Strategic and International Studies)
April 13–May 29	ONLINE	XXI April International Academic Conference on Economic and Social Development (by HSE University) Conference is being launched in a distributed online format
May 4–8	ONLINE	EGU (European Geosciences Union) General Assembly Everyone can join the online event here .
May 11–June 12	ONLINE	FAO-UNITAR online course "Trade, Food Security and Nutrition" The online course will be delivered in Russian
May 19–21	ONLINE	Main Direction of the Southern Gardening Development (the website is in Russian only). Abstracts accepted till April 24 in both Russian and English
May 5–7	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC 32) Postponed until further notice
June 1–12	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Regional Training Course (Summer School) on Applied Econometric Analysis . Postponed until further notice and no longer accepting applications
June 1–3	Rome, Italy	The FAO Global Symposium on Soil Biodiversity (GSOBI20) Registration is open until May 22
June 3–5	Online	8th session of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) Plenary Assembly Registration is closed
June 16–19	Montpellier, France	4th International Conference on Global Food Security
June 24–26	Online	IAMO Forum 2020 Digital Transformation: Towards Sustainable Food Value Chains in Eurasia

Date	City, Country	Event
August 7–14	Syktyvkar, Russia	VIII Dokuchaev Congress of the Society of Soil Scientists, and the School of Young Scientists on Soil Morphology and Classification in Russian only. Postponed until 2021
August 15–23	Gorno-Altai, Russia	XIVth International Symposium and Field Workshop on Paleopedology (ISFWP-XIV) Paleosols, Pedosediments and Landscape Morphology as Archives of Environmental Changes
August 24–28	Geneva, Switzerland	EUROSOIL 2020
August 30–September 3	Kraków, Poland	16th International Conference on Soil Micromorphology
September 14–19	Tomsk, Russia	The 7th International Scientific Conference "Reflection of Bio-, Geo-, Antropospheric Interactions in Soils and Soil Cover," held in connection with the 90th anniversary of the Soil Science and Soil Ecology Department of Tomsk State University
September 15–17	Utrecht, Netherlands	ICOS Science Conference 2020 Abstracts are accepted till May 11; registration ends on July 19
September 22	Moscow, Russia	International Scientific and Practical Conference Dedicated to the 200th Anniversary of the Moscow Agricultural Society In Russian only
October 12–16	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Global Symposium on Salt-Affected Soils: FAO event
October 19–20	Moscow, Russia	International Scientific and Practical Conference "Poverty of the Rural Population of Russia: Genesis, Overcoming Ways, Forecast" (website is not available yet, send questions by e-mail: nikonovskie-chtenia@mail.ru)
October 20–23	Rome, Italy	4th GLOSOLAN meeting: GSP Event
November 9–13	Pushchino, Russia	Conference Soil as A Component of the Biosphere: Evolution, Functioning and Environmental Aspects, dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Institute of Physico-Chemical and Biological Problems of Soil Science of the Russian Academy of Sciences In Russian only

* Information is current on April 19, 2020. Check the event's website for updates.