



## Press Release

12<sup>th</sup> December 2008

### SFIAR awards Swiss agricultural research for developing countries

The current global food crisis is increasing poverty in developing countries. Research can contribute to improving the situation: scientists can propose to small farmers how they can produce food sustainably and also increase their income. In Switzerland many institutions are involved in agricultural research for development. This year the Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research (SFIAR) has launched an annual award to honour the best project. The winner of the SFIAR Award 2008 is a team from the Swiss College of Agriculture. They have developed a widely applicable tool to evaluate the sustainability of agricultural production at the farm level and to identify key levers to improve it.

Switzerland has a long and distinguished agricultural heritage, and is an internationally significant contributor to development programmes in agriculture through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Switzerland also hosts more than 100 research institutions which contribute in various ways to agricultural research with applications for development.

In today's economic climate it is particularly recognised that the development of sustainable and productive agriculture is essential to address poverty alleviation and economic development in developing countries<sup>1</sup>. Agricultural development addresses 6 of the 8 Millennium Development Goals (see annex).

SFIAR has, in 2008 initiated its annual award to recognise the valuable contribution to international development priorities of Swiss agricultural research institutions and scientists.

#### The SFIAR Award

Having solicited, received and considered a substantial number of proposals for the award (worth SFr10,000 to a team), the SFIAR award committee made a recommendation at the recent SFIAR meeting which was approved. The award ceremony is held at today's conference "How to ensure food security today and tomorrow?" at ETH Zurich.

#### The 2008 SFIAR Award Winner

Christoph Studer, and his team of Fritz Häni, Hans Porsche, Andreas Stämpfli and Christian Thalmann, all from the Swiss College of Agriculture, Zollikofen, ("SHL") have won the 2008 prize for their project "Response-Inducing Sustainability Evaluation ("RISE") – Improving the Sustainability of Agricultural Production" (<http://rise.shl.bfh.ch>).

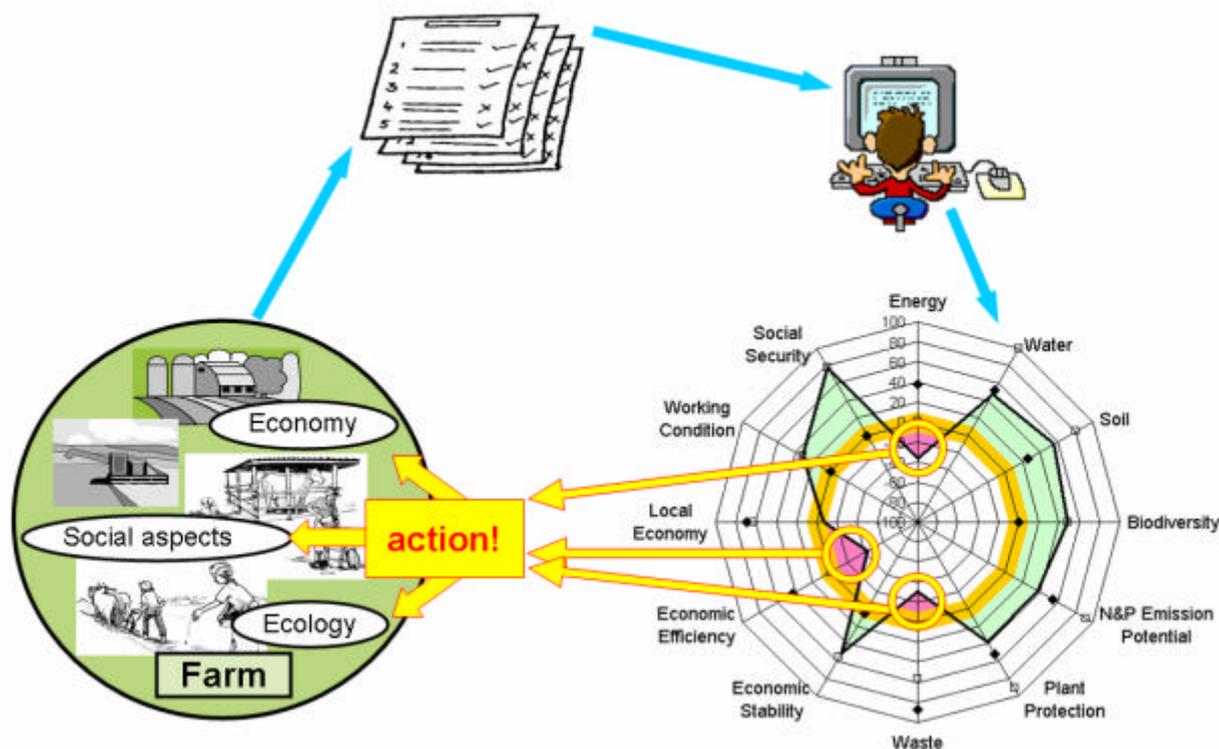
#### The 2008 Winning Project

"Response-Inducing Sustainability Evaluation ("RISE") – Improving the Sustainability of Agricultural Production" is a computer-based tool developed at the Swiss College of Agriculture, that allows assessment of the sustainability of agricultural production and production trends at the whole-farm level. The holistic sustainability assessment applies a systems approach and covers ecological, economic and social dimensions. The sustainability evaluation is based on data collection at farm level using a comprehensive questionnaire. Computer-aided calculation of twelve indicators identifies strengths

<sup>1</sup> For example see World Bank's "World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development" at: [www.worldbank.org/wdr2008](http://www.worldbank.org/wdr2008)



(potentials) and weaknesses (risks) with regard to sustainability, thereby providing the farmer with a testimonial on the one hand and the identification of intervention points for improvement on the other. RISE not only aims at diagnosis, but also at initiating reflection on ways and measures to improve the sustainability of agricultural production. Because RISE can depict the effects of specific interventions *ex ante* (scenario evaluation) and visualizes tradeoffs across all three dimensions of sustainability it can also serve as a holistic tool for strategic (whole-farm) planning.



### Principle approach for a Response-Inducing Sustainability Evaluation RISE

[More detailed project description: [http://www.shl.bfh.ch/fileadmin/docs/Forschung/KompetenzenTeams/Nachhaltigkeitsevaluation/RISE/Model\\_en.pdf](http://www.shl.bfh.ch/fileadmin/docs/Forschung/KompetenzenTeams/Nachhaltigkeitsevaluation/RISE/Model_en.pdf)]

### Comments

Matthew Cock (current President of SFIAR, and Regional Director, CABI Europe - Switzerland) said:

*“By awarding this prize, SFIAR is raising awareness, especially within Switzerland, of the impact that Swiss agricultural research has on internationally sustainable agriculture in a development context. Productive agriculture is essential to food security and poverty alleviation, and all elements need to be sustainable. All submissions were of a high quality, and all who submitted are thanked for their proposals, and their continuing work. The award committee, and SFIAR membership, were impressed with the excellent work represented by Christoph Studer’s teams project, its wide appeal, and its great potential for broad Swiss influence in development agriculture”*

Christoph Studer on behalf of his SHL team said:

*“It is gratifying to have our project recognised for the value demonstrated using RISE together with more than 300 farmers in 16 countries, including our home base in Switzerland.”*



### **Award ceremony**

The SFIAR Award 2008 is formally presented at a Meeting in the Auditorium Maximum, ETH Zurich, on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2008: "How to ensure Food security today and tomorrow? Agriculture in the face of new and urgent global needs".

This meeting, jointly sponsored by the North-South centre of ETH and the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, is described more fully at [www.foodsecurityconference.ch](http://www.foodsecurityconference.ch)

### **SFIAR**

The Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research (SFIAR) is an informal multi-stakeholder group of Swiss institutions and private individuals interested in agricultural research for development ('ARD'). Members come from research institutions, NGOs, the private sector, farmers' organisations and public agencies. The goals and objectives of SFIAR are:

- a) Sharing information between ARD stakeholders in Switzerland
- b) Promoting the visibility of Swiss ARD
- c) Playing an advocacy role at policy level
- d) Serving as a national partner in international initiatives
- e) Promoting collaboration between actors in Swiss ARD

More information on the SFIAR is available on its website: [www.sfiar.ch](http://www.sfiar.ch)

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## Annex: Millennium Development Goals

**marking** = *Agriculture plays a major contribution*

**marking** = *Better nutrition, from improved agriculture, plays a major role in improved immune system response, less disease, and better mental capacity development.*

### **Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

- Target 1: Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
- Target 2: Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

### **Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**

- Target 3: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling

### **Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**

- Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

### **Goal 4: Reduce child mortality**

- Target 5: Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five

### **Goal 5: Improve maternal health**

- Target 6: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio

### **Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

- Target 7: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Target 8: Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

### **Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**

- Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources
- Target 10: Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water
- Target 11: Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

### **Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development**

- Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
- Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries
- Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing States
- Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term
- Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth
- Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
- Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications