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News Release

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Today, thirteen promising scientists from developing countries won the opportunity to strengthen their research skills while working to address some of the most pressing challenges agriculture currently faces. Each will receive a grant of US\$11,000 from IFAR to work on issues ranging from disease and pest management for crops such as wheat, yams, potatoes and groundnuts to water use policies designed to help farmers adapt to climate change.

IFAR, a foundation that promotes scientific excellence through awards and partnerships, offers 13 grants each year to enhance the professional development of promising scientists in developing countries. Nominees for these awards must be sponsored by one or more of the Centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and the work programs proposed by applicants must be closely linked with the program of a CGIAR Center.

Among the grants are the Wilfried Thalwitz Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of CGIAR Chairman Wilfried Thalwitz by his family, and the Ravi Tadvalkar Memorial Scholarship, which is awarded to the youngest female scientist among each year's IFAR grant recipients. The winning scientists represent 11 countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Central, East and South Asia.

Selected from a pool of 54 nominees, the 2008 IFAR award recipients were chosen based on the careful evaluation and recommendations of an international panel of reviewers, with the endorsement of the IFAR Board of Directors.

The 2008 winners of the IFAR grants, their work programs and collaborating CGIAR Center are as follows, in alphabetical order:

Mengistu Alemayehu, Ethiopia

Study on traction ability of Sheko steers in the medium to high tryps challenge area of the Ghibe valley, Ethiopia, with the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

Mohamed El-Sayed Mohamed El-Boushy, Egypt

Assessment of the impact of common zoonotic and food borne bacteria on fish and human health and proposed control measures, with the WorldFish Center

Yagya P. Giri, Nepal

Analysis of the impact of pests, especially the expansion of the non-indigenous and highly invasive potato tuber moth (*Phthorimaea operculella*), in Nepal in terms of losses in agricultural production and environmental contamination and human health due to pesticide use, with the International Potato Center (CIP by its Spanish Acronym)

Nelli Hovhannisyan, Armenia (Ravi Tadvalkar Memorial Scholarship)

Conservation and assessment of wild wheat for disease resistance in Armenia, with Bioversity International

G. Kalyani, India

Development and evaluation of transgenic groundnut plants for resistance against foliar fungal diseases (Late leaf spot and rust), with the International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

Charles Lung'aho Shem, Kenya

Assessment of the genetic diversity of potato cultivars in Kenya using molecular markers, with the International Potato Center (CIP)

John Manful, Ghana

Transferring knowledge about one genotype of rice in West Africa, *O. Sativa*, to another, *O. Glaberrima*, to enable evaluation of quality in African rice and creation of a database containing genotype and phenotype of *glaberimma* accessions for four traits of rice quality, with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)

Marie Noël Y. Toualy, Cote d'Ivoire

Development of a rapid and simple virus-detection test (*Dioscorea spp.*) as part of certification programs in West Africa to control viruses affecting yams by selecting healthy yam seeds, with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)

Shokalu Olumide, Nigeria

Evaluation of advanced breeding lines of soybean resistant to Rust (*Phakpsora pachyrhizi*) in Nigeria, with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)

Boaz Shaban Waswa, Kenya

Increasing agricultural water and nutrient use efficiency to meet future food production: An application of decision support tools and nuclear techniques, with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)

Thomas Yatich T.B., Kenya

Evaluation of the magnitude and geographical distribution of ecosystem services, value of agricultural production and Malaria in the face of climatic variability in Western Kenya Highlands, with the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)

Changbin Yin, China

Utilization of chromosome segment substitution lines in genetic study and plant breeding, with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)

Oleg Znay, Uzbekistan (Wilfried Thalwitz Memorial Scholarship)

Improve water allocation policy and prepare an adaptation plan through the simulation of water allocation scenarios in Syr Darya River, under different driving scenarios of climate change, with the International Water Management Institute (WMI)