

Monday 21 October 2013

Daily Digest No. 1

Welcome!

Welcome to Cameroon, welcome to Yaoundé, welcome to the Hilton hotel Yaoundé, welcome to the 3rd Africa Rice Congress!

Over the next 4 days, we will hear about, read about, see and discuss the latest developments in rice research and development aimed at ‘realizing Africa’s rice promise’.

Yaoundé

Yaoundé is the capital of Cameroon, with a population of approximately 2.5 million. It lies in the center of the country at 3°52'N 11°31'E and an elevation of about 750 m above sea level. Most of Yaoundé’s economy is centered around the administrative structure of the civil service and the diplomatic services.

Cameroon

The Republic of Cameroon spans an area from about 2° to 13°N and from about 8° to 17°E. It is bordered by Nigeria, Chad, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of Congo, and has

Today’s program:	
08:00	Registration
08:00	Refreshments available
Opening Ceremony: plenary session	
09:00	Opening Ceremony by Cameroon officials
11:00	Coffee / tea break
11:30	Official opening of Exhibition area
12:30	Lunch
Mini-symposia: parallel sessions	
14:30	Mini-symposia session 1
16:00	Tea / coffee break
16:30	Mini-symposia session 2
18:00	End of first day
19:00	Welcome Reception, including launch of new AfricaRice–CABI book <i>Realizing Africa’s Rice Promise</i>

a coastline on the Bight of Bonny, part of the Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic Ocean. The country is often referred to as ‘Africa in miniature’ for its ecological, geological and cultural diversity. Cameroon is home to over 200 linguistic groups. The official languages are French and English.



Our venue: Hilton Yaoundé

Congress organizers

The 3rd Africa Rice Congress is organized by Africa Rice Center (AfricaRice), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Cameroon Institute of Agricultural Research for Development (IRAD). See synopses of these three organizations at the back of your *Program & Abstracts* book.

Rice in Africa

From a luxury crop, rice has become the most rapidly growing food source in sub-Saharan Africa. It is the leading provider of food calories in West Africa and Madagascar, and the third largest source of food energy in Africa as a whole. Because of its ease of preparation, storage and cooking, low preparation costs, low price and steady supplies (often through imports), rice has become a staple food for the poorest sectors of urban populations. As urbanization continues unabated, so rice consumption will continue to rise across the continent.

In 2009, over a third of the rice consumed in sub-Saharan Africa was imported. This translated into imports of 9.8 million tonnes, worth more than US\$ 5 billion. Such reliance on imports is a risky, expensive and unsustainable strategy. This became painfully clear in 2008 during food riots in major African capitals in protest against high rice prices caused by some traditional exporting countries banning exports.

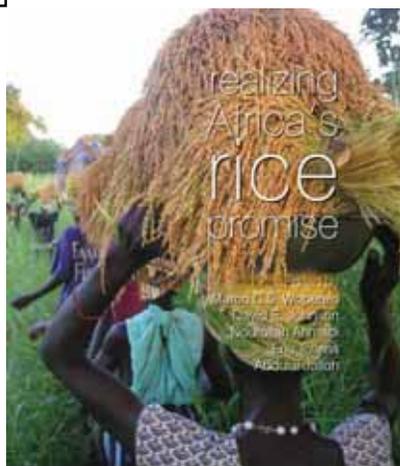
Average rice prices in 2012 were about 2.5 times the price levels in 2000 and rice price has seen tremendous fluctuations. Prices are predicted to remain high and volatile because of declining production capacity in major rice-producing countries in Asia. Increasing rice prices will adversely affect poor and low-income households who spend a larger proportion of their revenue on staple food relative to high-income households. In a region where more than 40% of the population lives below the extreme poverty line of \$1 a day, coping with high rice prices will mean poorer households taking measures such as reducing their intake of essential nutrients and long episodes of food deprivation and malnutrition.

Rice in Cameroon

In 2009, Cameroon grew rice on almost 100,000 ha, of which about 20,000 ha were irrigated, approaching 55,000 ha in rainfed uplands and about 25,000 ha in rainfed lowlands.

Per-capita rice consumption averaged 21 kg/year for the period 2000–2009, increasing at a rate of 9% per year to 30 kg/year in 2009. Meanwhile, calorie value of rice in the average Cameroonian diet averaged 211 kcal/day over 2000–2009, reaching 304 kcal/day in 2009. The share of rice calories in daily intake averaged 9% across the period, reaching 12% in 2009.

Cameroon's self-sufficiency level is low and highly variable, ranging from 9.1% in 2005 to 20.5% in 2012, and generally below 20%.



Join us today at 19:00 for the launch of the new book:

Realizing Africa's Rice Promise

Bouma Hall, Hilton Hotel, Yaoundé

Edited by Marco Wopereis, Africa Rice Center; David Johnson, International Rice Research Institute; Nourollah Ahmadi, Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement; Eric Tollens, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven; and Abdulai Jalloh, West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development

At a time when Africa's food security stands threatened, *Realizing Africa's Rice Promise* provides a comprehensive overview of state-of-the-art research and recommendations for dealing with future challenges. With contributions from the key scientists working on rice in Africa, this volume addresses policy, genetic diversity and improvement, sustainable productivity enhancement, innovations and value chains.

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For more information on the book, visit the CABI website: www.cabi.org



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