

# ICARDA News

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## Seed Convoy on its Way to Afghan Farmers

Aleppo, 1 April: A convoy of 200 trucks carrying some 3,500 tonnes of wheat seed is on its way from Pakistan to Afghanistan, as part of a seed relief effort being implemented by the ICARDA-led Future Harvest Consortium to Rebuild Agriculture in Afghanistan, reports Dr Tony van Gastel, Head of ICARDA's Seed Unit, who just returned from the drought plagued, war-torn country.

The trucks are traveling from Lahore, via Peshawar, to the Afghan capital Kabul, where the seed will be received by the Ministry of Agriculture and loaded on smaller trucks for transportation to outlying provinces, where roads are often not suitable for larger trucks.

The World Food Program arranged the transportation to Kabul, while the ICARDA Afghanistan program staff, led by Dr Nasrat Wassimi and Mr Abdul Rahman Manan, will handle onward transportation. Non-governmental organizations, working jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture, will distribute the seed to farmers.

"All this must be done as quickly as possible, because the spring planting season has almost passed in the lower altitude regions, but there are still opportunities at medium and higher elevations," said Dr van Gastel, who was in Pakistan and Afghanistan with Dr Mahmoud Solh of ICARDA, and Drs. Ray Morton and Dr Larry Paulson of USAID, on 10-19 March to help facilitate the USAID-sponsored-seed relief operation.

In a meeting at the Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture, where the team was received by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mr Mohamed Sharif, discussions took place on future cooperation, the need for assessment studies, and

matters related to seed distribution. The team expressed the commitment of ICARDA and the Future Harvest Consortium to work in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Afghanistan.

Meetings were held in Afghanistan and Pakistan to plan a workshop that will bring together all stakeholders involved in seed distribution to produce a "code of conduct" for seed production and seed importation. The workshop, slated for three days in May in Kabul, is being organized by the Future Harvest Consortium, the Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).



**Seed relief operations organized by the Future Harvest Consortium to Rebuild Agriculture in Afghanistan are in full swing. From left, Dr Tony van Gastel, Head, ICARDA Seed Unit; Mr Abdul Rahman Manan, Chief Advisor, Future Harvest Consortium; Dr Larry Paulson, Agricultural Development Officer, United States Agency for International Development (USAID); Dr Nasrat Wassimi, Executive Manager, Future Harvest Consortium; Dr Mahmoud Solh, ICARDA's Assistant Director General, International Cooperation; and Dr Ray Morton, Senior Policy Advisor, USAID, were in Kabul recently to help organize the effort.**

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*ICARDA ([www.icarda.cgiar.org](http://www.icarda.cgiar.org)) serves the entire developing world for the improvement of lentil, barley and faba bean; all dry-area developing countries for the improvement of on-farm water-use efficiency, rangeland, and small-ruminant production; and the Central and West Asia and North Africa region for the improvement of bread and durum wheats, chickpea, and farming systems. ICARDA's research provides global benefits of poverty alleviation through productivity improvements integrated with sustainable natural-resource management practices. ICARDA meets this challenge through research, training, and dissemination of information in partnership with the national agricultural research and development systems. ICARDA's mission is to improve the welfare of people and alleviate poverty in dry areas of the developing world by increasing production, productivity, and nutritional quality of food, while preserving and enhancing the natural resource base. ICARDA is a Future Harvest Center supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).*

*Future Harvest [www.futureharvest.org](http://www.futureharvest.org) <<http://www.futureharvest.org>> is a global nonprofit organization that builds awareness and support for food and environmental research for a world with less poverty, a healthier human family, well-nourished children, and a better environment. Future Harvest supports research, promotes partnerships, and sponsors projects that bring the results of research to rural communities, farmers, and families in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Future Harvest supports the 16 food and environmental research centers that are primarily funded through the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research [www.cgiar.org](http://www.cgiar.org) <<http://www.cgiar.org>>.*