Usually by the time the second quarter in the year comes around, most of us are fully in the groove of getting stuff done, even if we have resigned ourselves to realizing our personal resolutions. Next year. For IICA Canada it was a mix of emotional and mental energy. It was during this time that we bid Brandy a teary Adieu and welcomed Charles. There was no time to do more than exhale, having worked at a feverish pace to see projects funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada successfully executed in the first quarter. It is said that the penalty for a job well done is more work! So the team was not totally surprised with the good news that our project proposal submitted to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) was shortlisted. This meant that the office was involved in the review and revision of not one but two project proposals during the period. Not bad at all considering this is a new realm for IICA Canada! Hosting the Annual Accountability Seminar against the backdrop of a fresh and beautiful Spring took the tedium out of the preparations. Bold changes were made, and while modifications to the format paid off, stakeholders made it quite clear that they wanted more time to engage with us. The international agenda was also quite full. We managed to keep abreast of hemispheric discussions such as the OAS General Assembly held in Cochabamba, Bolivia and the Rio +20 Meeting in Brazil as well as the Codex Food Labeling Committee meeting and The Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases (GRA) meeting held in Ottawa and Saskatoon respectively, challenging though it was. So that we didn’t get “battle fatigue”, the team took time out to pet farm animals at fundraising BBQ… This was nothing short of therapeutic!

**ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY SEMINAR**

A year after presenting the Technical Cooperation Strategy for Canada 2011 – 2014, the IICA Canada team invited partners, beneficiaries, friends— from the Diplomatic Corps, public and private sector, development agencies, academia and non-governmental organizations to hear how we progressed against our targets, and of our plans for the current year. Hosted at the Sheraton Hotel on May 2, guests participated in-person and via webinar. While the webinar is a great way to have the involvement of stakeholders who are not able to attend in person, glitches were experienced with the technology, resulting in intermittent transmission. Presentations and videos were therefore dispatched post haste to all webinar participants. Notwithstanding the hiccups, the event was well received. The Director General was spot-on in his opening address, where he pointed to the synergies between Canada’s Americas Strategy and IICA’s mission. *Continued on page 2*

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**REPRESENTATIVE’S CORNER**

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Two short video productions provided pertinent and instructive information, underlining the magnitude and complexity of the Food Security problem. The Representative provided a report card on achievements of the office during the period, demonstrating the dynamic, responsive and results-based nature of the team. Of notable mention was the market scoping exercise which resulted in the one-of-a-kind publication presenting market and trade opportunities for agricultural commodities, inputs, paraphernalia, and services between selected countries in Latin America & the Caribbean and Canada. Favourable testimonials from Mr. Louis Pare of Développement International Desjardins and Dr. Danielle Donnelly of McGill University helped to illustrate two very different aspects of IICA Canada’s activities while adding to the geniality of the affair. The “new kid on the block”, Charles Kounkou, demonstrating pluck, presented the 2012 Work Plan without a hitch, a mere two weeks after joining the IICA family. Noting that his interest and forte are in the ambit of performance measurement, Charles’ inclusion on the team midway IICA’s programme period is strategic! The comfortable ambience and the excellent, albeit light fare, had guests lingering to discuss aspects of our programmes and to network. The evaluation exercise conducted confirmed that IICA Canada is on the right track towards meeting the expectations of local stakeholders and furthermore that there is increasing confidence in the role of the institution in the hemisphere.

**The Regional Fund for Agricultural Technology**

The Regional Fund for Agricultural Technology (FONTAGRO) is a consortium of Latin American and Caribbean countries specifically designed to finance research and innovation of regional interest. From 21 to 25 May, Dr. Hugo Li Pun, Executive Secretary of FONTAGRO visited Ottawa to meet with officials from Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the International Research and Development Agency (IDRC) and IICA Canada. During these meetings Dr Li Pun not only made presentations on the Fund but also explored opportunities for cooperation between Canada and FONTAGRO. The Fund aims at reducing poverty, promoting competitiveness of agriculture and food chains and sustainably managing natural resources. During its first 12 years FONTAGRO funded 73 projects for a total of close to 67 M USD and leveraged more than five times its investments, while maintaining the value of its capital. FONTAGRO results and impacts are worldwide since many findings are replicated beyond the Americas. Ex ante evaluation of the projects supported in the first three calls for proposals showed an estimated Internal Rate of Return of 28.6% and cost benefit ratio of 1:3.3. There is no doubt FONTAGRO is one of IICA’s partners of choice in the quest to make agriculture competitive and sustainable in the Americas. For more information on FONTAGRO, please visit: www.fontagro.org/en/que-es-fontagro

“**This is a new way, like a new culture**”, said Mr. Danilo Herrera, Value Chain Specialist for the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) at the Value Chain Innovation Forum. This was hosted by the Value Chain Management Centre and Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, on April 3 and 4 in Mississauga, Ontario. The Forum exposed leaders from the agriculture and food industry to leading edge innovative approaches to business development, and allowed them to explore possibilities for implementing strategic alliances from farm through to retail. Profitability, production efficiencies and market strategies were the main focus. In his presentation, Mr. Herrera expressed the view that one of the main aims of the new approach was to achieve more competitive agri-food value chains, which could be achieved through a “Competitiveness agreement” among stakeholders and representatives of the chain links, with the governments support. The IICA Specialist shared challenges experienced when trying to introduce value chains management approach in South America and the Caribbean. Reluctance on the part of small and medium producers to actively participate in the management of the value chain remained a concern. Some solutions being applied include improving methodologies for the analysis of value chain competitiveness and designing modern instruments to foster participation among the producers, as well as applying new proven instruments. For a copy of his presentation or more information on the Forum, please visit www.vcil2012.com.

**Latin America holds 42% of the world’s agriculture expansion potential**

-Dr. V. Villalobos

– Director General

for IICA/ MercoPress
From May 15 to 18, Dr Jaime Flores, IICA Specialist in Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) for the Andean Region, and Acting IICA Representative in Venezuela accompanied four (4) participants sponsored through the “Promotion of the Participation of the Americas in Codex Alimentarius Committees” project to the 40th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling held in Ottawa. The project, which received AAFC’s financial support as well as mentorship and technical guidance from IICA, sponsors officials from IICA member countries (excluding the US and Canada), who belong to the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) to participate in various meetings of Codex standards sub-committees. Such Support provided to this initiative over the years has had proven impact in ensuring more effective participation of the hemisphere in Codex committee meetings. At the end of the 40th session on food labelling, the Committee was able to report advances on matters for adoption by the 35th Session of the Commis-

**IICA AHFS SPECIALIST NETWORKING IN OTTAWA**

Dr Flores’s visit in Ottawa was an opportunity for IICA Canada to arrange side meetings with various Canadian partners to discuss current status of Agricultural Health and Food Safety in the Andean Region and identify opportunities for technical cooperation with the member countries. These discussions were well received notably by CFIA and Health Canada. Follow up discussions are already underway with CFIA who has a shared interest to achieve scientific cooperation in Latin American Countries.

**40TH SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING**

On Tuesday May 29, 2012, three IICA Canada team attended an informative seminar for trade representatives in developing countries. The seminar was organized by the Trade Facilitation Office Canada (TFO) in cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and was held at DFAIT headquarters.

TFO Canada is a not-for-profit NGO supported by the Canadian International Development Agency, and which provides Canadian market information to exporters and trade support organizations from developing countries and emerging economies. The seminar featured a two panel of experts: Canadian Government Panel as well as a Service Provider Panel. Information gained was very instructive to IICA Canada staff since the office had made the commitment, as part of its 2011-2014 Country Strategy, to identify commodities where collaborations with IICA Member Countries in research, production, value added products and health benefits could foster win-win relationships.

**KEEPPING AAFC & DFAIT UPDATED**

In an effort to maintain close relationships with our key stakeholders and keep them up to date regarding activities, past and present, IICA Canada hosted its first quarterly meeting of 2012 on Thursday April 19th with members from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT). The time was well spent as IICA Canada discussed progress on the work plan and highlights of the Market Scoping Study. Participants were also updated regarding special meetings at headquarters which would be taking place throughout the remainder of the year as well as IICA Canada’s plans to commemorate the 70th Anniversary. The group also received a preview on aspects of the Annual Accountability Seminar. Members shared perspectives on the upcoming G20 meeting and the OAS and General Assembly and offered to keep IICA Canada apprised of developments. The continued support of AAFC and DFAIT is important to the success of the Technical Cooperation Strategy.

For more information on CTA, please visit: www.cta.int/
On Friday June 1st, 2012, the IICA Canada Team took a lunch break and attended for its second year in a row the eighth Annual Food Aid Day BBQ at City Hall in Ottawa. Food Aid is a program at the Ottawa Food Bank (OFB) where money raised goes towards purchasing and processing beef from local farmers to feed families in need. The program was established in 2005 and has since raised close to $1 million dollars. This year, all donations will be used to provide 1,700 pounds of beef per week, for the whole year to those in need. The IICA Canada Team was thrilled to have the opportunity to participate in this program again. Not only does it help add protein to the diets of families who need it but it also supports our local farming community. After a busy second quarter it was nice to enjoy some delicious burgers, live entertainment including a milking competition and play with some fuzzy and cute animals.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:
UPCOMING EVENTS FOR QUARTER 3

JUL  ►  10: 2012 Regular Meeting of the Special Advisory Committee on Management Issues (SACMI), San Jose, Costa Rica
17: Quarterly meeting with Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) & Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT), Ottawa, Canada
24-26: Symposium on Functional Genomics of Early Livestock Development, Banff, Alberta, Canada

AUG  ►  SUMMER BREAK

SEP  ►  17-21: Vth World Congress of Agronomists and Agrologists, Quebec, Canada. Please note that IICA’s Director General, Dr. Victor Villalobos will be travelling from Costa Rica to participate in this event.
21: IICA Canada commemorates the 70th Anniversary of IICA by hosting an exhibit at the Canada Agriculture Museum in Ottawa, ON. Please SAVE THE DATE as we look forward to seeing everyone there.