**First meeting of the CIMMYT Nutrition Learning Initiative**

3 July 2017 (8:30-10AM Mex time)

Participants: Natalia Palacios (chair), Jenny Nelson (secretary), Carlos Guzman, Martin Kropff, Kevin Pixley, Olaf Erenstein, Bruno Gerard, Bram Govaerts, Santiago Lopez, Jon Hellin, Hugo deGroote, Thanda Dhliwayo, Gideon Kruseman, Velu Govindan, Thokozile Ndhlele

Sent regrets: Frederic Baudron, Felix San Vicente, Marianne Banziger, Hans Braun and Prasanna

**AGENDA:**

1. General presentation of the group (Why, how, who) (5min- Jenny)

2. Presentation of everyone mentioning in which nutrition related projects have you worked in the past year; nutrition relevance, link between nutrition and agriculture (2 min each, total approx. 40-50 min)

3. Define and agree on the scope of the group (10 min)

4. Brainstorm on short and medium term activities/actions (20 min)

**SUMMARY OF MEETING:**

This is a first meeting of the CIMMYT Nutrition Learning Group, a new initiative for institutional learning and coordination around issues of nutrition in maize and wheat and the ecosystems and value chains in which we work. Proposed objectives for this group:

- Learn what each other is doing and develop shared definitions of concepts

- Share and develop ideas in the ‘nutrition space’ 🡪 agri-food systems for health and nutrition

- Serve as internal peer-review group for manuscripts, communications, etc.

- Coordinate proposal development

Natalia to chair the group, Jenny to serve as the facilitator and secretary.

Participants introduced themselves and described what they are working on in nutrition:

**Natalia,** head of Maize Quality Lab:

- Biofortification

- Processing and nutrient retention studies

- Zinc fertilization

- Collaboration with various universities

**Kevin,** PD, Genetic Resources Program:

- Biofortification breeding

- Potential of gene bank for nutrition

- Hosting of Univ Wisconsin course in August – can do a mini-symposium on nutrition topics?

**Olaf,** PD, Socioeconomics Program**:**

- QPM evaluation

- Markets and value chain studies

- Foresight and targeting

**Bruno,** PD, Sustainable Intensification Program:

- Specific commodities

- Looking at the weak link between production and nutrition

- Putting nutrition in the rural landscape context

- Legumes in maize/wheat systems

- Quality vs quantity and diversification of diets

- More holistic aspects of nutrition, such as the work in F. Baudron’s recent paper

**Bram,** Regional Rep for Latin America:

- In addition to what was already mentioned by Bruno, are doing work looking at linking diversification and production

- Working with food industry on responsible sourcing and nutrition aspects

**Jon Hellin**, economist, SEP:

- Maize landraces and market approaches, including looking at the nutritional value of maize landraces

- Review paper with Johns Hopkins University collaborators (also with Gideo) on major themes in nutrition in maize and wheat production systems

**Carlos,** head, Wheat Quality Lab:

- Industrial quality

- HarvestPlus and Zinc concentration

- Bioavailability

- Trying to build partnerships on fiber and phenolic components and resistant starch research

- Writing papers on wheat and health (with Julie Miller Jones) with Bimbo support

- Hosting 2 grain quality conferences in 2018 (Latin American Cereals Conference, and the International Gluten Workshop: see <http://cereals2018.cimmyt.org>)

**Hugo,** economist, SEP:

- Harvard project

- Project with King’s college in London

- Agronomic biofortification and (something else I didn’t hear)

- Biomarkers: ETHI (?) and Harvard

- Experience in different cereal mixtures

- Natural and synthetic fortification: testing with consumers and willingness to pay

- Hermetic storage and effects on food security

- WUR and impacts studies

**Gideon,** economist, SEP:

- Looking at dietary change and nutrition

- [connection was poor so we couldn’t hear much]

**Velu,** breeder, GWP:

- Breeding for enhanced Zinc in wheat

**Thanda,** breeder, GMP:

- Maize breeder developing Pro-vitamin A-rich hybrids targeting Southern Africa

- Doing similar to what Velu described

**Thoko,** breeder, GMP:

- Breeding for Pro-vitamin A for Southern Africa

- Elite white lines, using MAS to select Pro-vitamin A

- Providing technical backstopping

**Martin,** Director General:

- Appreciate this initiative

- We need to show more to donors what we are doing in these spaces

- We need to work more with the food sector

**Ideas from the group about what we can do:**

- Blog for posting relevant research articles and news items

- There is a range of expertise we don’t have at CIMMYT, and we should explore partnerships with those organizations that have this expertise: Helen Keller International, Johns Hopkins University, etc.

- To be able to mobilize resources, we need these partners; CIMMYT is the less experienced partner in these types of collaboration. But we do know that many of these are looking for crop expertise, which is our niche.

- Who will be able to coordinate this initiative and how will we resource it?

- Nutrition is featured in the CIMMYT strategy but it is not very granular

- We could develop an internal white paper on nutrition in maize and wheat systems, as a first step towards better linking of our own work and also to focus our efforts towards a longer-term strategy in nutrition. Could get a consultant to lead this work? Since the Johns Hopkins study sounds similar, let us ask Gideon if he will present an overview/outline of that paper.

- We need to involve mainstream breeding programs. There isn’t much interest yet in nutrition and GxM.

- We need even to raise awareness at CIMMYT of the nutrition work that is ongoing and the need to do - more.

- Could take advantage of the Univ of Wisconsin visiting course on Global Health, Agriculture and Nutrition to have a mini-symposium of presentations by Sherry Tan, Veronica Lopez, and some CIMMYT scientists.

- We believe in indirect pathways to enhancing nutritional outcomes too, so we need to do more in this area.

- Within MasAgro we should include different ways of cropping, for instance.

There are investment trade-off discussions we need to explore as well: is if better to invest in intensified production or in diversification?

- We could ask PMU to find which donors are interested in these nutrition topics and try to meet with them.

- General concern that there isn’t enough time or resources for our scientists to focus on the internal coordination that is needed. But could program managers be used to assist with such initiatives?

- Need to be clear at CIMMYT what we want to do in nutrition, and we should include those ideas in proposals and develop project proposals specific to those ideas.

- Better internal visibility of our ongoing work would help with our visibility to partners.

- We can sell ourselves as the crop specialist partner to ecology- and public health-focused partners.

- We have to break the “For us at CIMMYT, nutrition means biofortification only” mentality.

**NEXT STEPS:**

For additional learning:

- Gideon to present overview of collaboration with Jessica Fanzo and JHU on nutrition and maize and wheat

- Bram to present on current collaborations with food industry actors

- Try to hold mini-symposium at CIMMYT with Univ of Wisconsin course, both for interest of the students and to attract CIMMYT scientists to the topics (and thereby foment discussion and new ideas)

- Next time we will ensure a better Web connection for those calling in!