

Joint Research Group Plenary Meeting

Palais de Congres de Versailles, Versailles, France

2 March 2011

Meeting Report

OVERVIEW

Following on from separate meetings of each of the Research Groups of the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases that took place from 1-2 March 2011 in various locations in France, a joint meeting of the three Research Groups took place on the afternoon of 2 March. The meeting was part of a week of events comprising the second Senior Officials Meeting of the Alliance (other meetings are reported on separately). It was chaired by the Netherlands (Dr Martin Scholten, Wageningen UR).

This report is a summary of the key discussions and outcomes of the plenary meeting and should be read in conjunction with the reports of each of the Research Groups.

PARTICIPANTS

The meeting was attended by 79 participants, representing 29 Alliance member countries and four observers. For a full participant list, please refer to Appendix 1.

- Alliance Members attending: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, UK, Uruguay, USA, Viet Nam.
- Alliance Members unable to attend: India, Russia,
- Observers attending: Brazil, China, European Commission, Republic of Korea.
- Observers unable to attend: South Africa.

MEETING OUTCOMES

The meeting achieved the following outcomes:

- Presentation and discussion of individual Research Group stocktake results, and the long and short term goals (action plans) that had been developed by each Research Group;
- Presentation on the EU Joint Programming Initiative; and
- Discussion on identified cross cutting and “interface” issues, and how they should be handled across the Research Groups.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

1 The Chair or co-Chair of each Research Group gave a presentation on what had been discussed in the individual Research Group sessions. Each presenter provided information on the stocktake results for each Research Group, observations on the stocktake results, the short and long term goals that had been agreed, how the Group was going to be organised, and what cross cutting issues had been identified. (See the individual Research Group reports and the PDF presentations for each Group for further details.)

EU JOINT PROGRAMMING INITIATIVE

2 Jean-François Soussana of INRA gave a presentation on the EU Joint Programming Initiative (JPI). The presentation outlined the objectives of the JPI, its governance arrangements, and discussed how the JPI and the Global Research Alliance were linked. The JPI was established to provide a consistent framework for research across the EU member states and to provide a basis for funding decisions. It was noted that the JPI's goals are broader than that of the Global Research Alliance but that the Alliance fitted with theme 5 of the JPI which focused on climate change mitigation.

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

3 Each Research Group had identified a number of cross cutting issues.

- Croplands/arable
 - Agro-forestry
 - Mixed systems : livestock and arable
- Paddy Rice
 - Soil carbon sequestration – organic matter management, re-use of byproducts and monitoring methodologies.
 - Nitrous oxide emissions and nitrogen cycling
 - Modelling of greenhouse gas emissions – source/sink of CO₂ equivalent
 - System approach of integrated rice/upland crops/livestock system for mitigation.
 - Methodologies for life cycle assessment and carbon footprinting
 - Inventory development – partnership with IPCC emissions factor database
 - Standardisation of measurement.
- Livestock
 - C and N cycles in soils
 - C footprint analysis (LCA, land use etc)

– Methods for measurement and emissions factors

4 The Livestock Research Group had also identified what were described as “interface issues” which included:

- Guidelines for publications (which was the responsibility of the Governance Group);
- Manure application in croplands and rice fields (the responsibility of both the non-ruminant subgroup of the Livestock Research Group, the Croplands Research Group and an agreed cross-cutting issue); and
- Mixed farming systems – for example, application of by-products, and livestock production in croplands and rice fields. (This was identified as a potential cross cutting issue in the future).

5 Following on from the individual Research Group presentations there had been a general discussion about the similarity of some of the action points that had been identified by each Research Group and the potential for synergies between the Groups.

6 It was agreed that some of the topics identified could be merged. Three topics were identified as being genuinely of interest and concern to all Research Groups. Two of these topics (carbon and nitrogen cycling, and improvements in national inventories) mirrored the cross cutting issues that had been agreed at the first Senior Officials meeting in April 2010. However, a third “cross cutting issue” was also identified – life cycle assessment.

7 The identification of life cycle analysis as an important research topic by each Research Group was discussed. While the importance of life cycle assessment was acknowledged as a means of both understanding the trade-offs that might need to be made between such things as productivity, water use and greenhouse gas emissions, and as a means of providing farmers with information, it was noted that this topic was covered in other international fora. The question was raised as to how the Global Research Alliance could add value to the work already underway.

8 In addition, it was identified that all three Research Groups are developing protocols for measurement of emissions. While some methodologies were specific to an individual Research Group there were also similarities in measurement techniques that could be shared across the Groups.

9 It was noted there was also interest in assessing mitigation options from the approach of an integrated agricultural system. It was identified that this could be a priority for an additional research stocktake in the medium term. There was also discussion about how these issues would best be handled across the groups – how would duplication of effort be avoided and what mechanisms needed to be put in place to ensure that interactions occurred and information exchange happened? A work flow example for carbon and nitrogen cycling was presented that highlighted similarities of action and joint activities that could be possible.

APPENDIX 1: Participants List

Country	Attendees
Alliance Member Countries	
Argentina	Laura Finster, INTA (lfinster@cnia.inta.gov.ar) Guillermo Berra, INTA (gberra@cnia.inta.gov.ar) Miguel A. Taboada, INTA (mtaboada@cnia.inta.gov.ar)
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Observers	
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