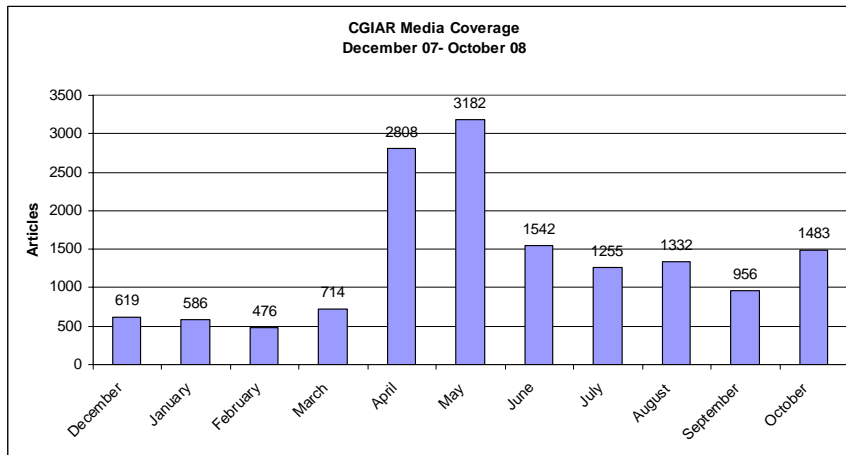




## Update on Communications and Outreach (December 2007 – December 2008)

**Media:** Media coverage of the CGIAR reached new highs in 2008, with increased coverage driven by growing interest in agriculture due to rising food prices and a more proactive media approach. From January through mid-October 2008 the CGIAR research Centers received coverage of at least 12,750 media stories (see graph). Specific story promotions carried out in partnership with Centers addressed topics including: the food price crisis, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, the Enola bean patent claim, seed aid, the impact of New Rice for Africa (NERICA<sup>®</sup>), the use of wastewater in urban and peri-urban agriculture, the bushmeat trade and banana production and conservation.



Media promotion related to the opening of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in February focused on the smoothly coordinated shipment of tons of seed of some 200,000 crop samples from CGIAR genebanks to the vault, which was built by the Norwegian

government to serve as a safeguard of last resort for the genetic heritage of world agriculture. About 10 wire services wrote stories, and dozens of reports appeared in broadcast, print and online media. Because the release was heavily promoted with the Mexico City press pool and with other media in Latin America, coverage in that region was especially strong.

In April, the CGIAR Secretariat organized an *audio press conference on the food price crisis* to brief journalists about the drivers behind the crisis, the role of agricultural research in this context and possible solutions to resolve the crisis. Moreover, the press briefing aimed to position the Centers supported by the CGIAR as primary sources of information about global agriculture and food security. The briefing took an interesting format with participants across the world calling in to the audio conference. The session consisted of statements from three Directors General -- Joachim von Braun, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); Carlos Seré, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI); and Robert Ziegler, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) -- followed by a moderated question and answer period.

Twenty-one reporters from top media – such as the *Financial Times* (UK) and *Scientific American* – took part in the briefing. The briefing generated a significant response with wire service stories on: Agence France-Presse (AFP); Associated Press (AP); Reuters and United Press International. There was extensive print media coverage, including stories in the *Bangkok Post* and *San Francisco Chronicle*, as well as heavy pick-up by online news sites (e.g. ABC News Online, WashingtonPost.com, TIME Magazine Online and many more). Additional print coverage highlights included Christian Science Monitor and East African (Kenya).

An Africa focused briefing on the food crisis took place in May with participation from Dennis Garrity, Director general of the World Agroforestry Centre, Papa Abdoulaye Seck, Director general of the Africa Rice Center and from Marianne Banziger, who leads maize research at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT). Top media covered the briefing such as AP, *Business Day* (South Africa), the *New York Times*, *East African* and *Le Monde* (France), Radio France International, Inter Press Service, Reuters and United Press International.

**System wide capacity building and collaboration:** A Story Development Workshop was held in mid-April at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) Addis Ababa campus, bringing together 25 communicators from 10 Centers. The workshop identified 18 new story ideas for promotion on topics ranging from increasing rice production in Africa to protection of date palms in Iraq to more refined mapping of the impact of climate change on specific crops. Workshop participants honed their skills for writing press releases, pitching stories and creating media strategies.

**CGIAR Presence at International Events:** Various CGIAR exhibitions on the value of agriculture research and thematic work on topics such as climate change were displayed at: the World Bank Sustainable Development Network Week, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV), the Convention on Biological Diversity COP-9, the FAO High Level Conference on Food Security and Agriculture, the 2008 UN General Assembly and the Hibiya Park Festival organized by the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS). A CGIAR sponsored exhibition at the British Science Museum on “Future Foods” opened in December 2008 and will run through May 2009. Three public debates on issues related to GMOs, sustainable seafood, and agriculture and climate change will be held in 2009 in conjunction with the exhibit.

**Change Management Communications:** A communications strategy in support of the ongoing CGIAR Change Management Initiative was launched, including a website, newsletter and blog on progress within the process. The following statistics reflect audience reached as of September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008: **The Change Blog** has received 4,906 visitors, with up to 448 visitors per day; on average, there are 1,530 visitors to the **Change Management website**; and six issues of the **Change Management Update** have been produced with initial circulation of 4,100 people – individual Centers determine internal dissemination of the Updates to their staff, so the reach could be much greater.

**Parliamentarian Outreach:** Parliamentarian engagement consisted of a video conference briefing for African Parliamentarians on the findings of the 2008 World Development Report relevant to Africa implemented in partnership with the Parliamentarian Network on the World Bank (PNoWB). In late November, PNoWB will hold its annual conference with the theme “Navigating Food, Fuel and Financial Crises and Climate Change to Ensure Growth and the Delivery of Effective Aid”. The CGIAR organized a session entitled “Addressing food security and climate challenges in Africa” at this event that engaged parliamentarians from 100 countries.

**Information Dissemination:** The CGIAR.org website has been updated with a few new features, including a newsroom with a newsfeed for all Center and system office press releases as well as a newsfeed of current media coverage of the top 20 stories updated every two hours.

**Publications:** Corporate publications in 2008 included: the CGIAR Annual Report *Research Within Reach* ([http://www.cgiar.org/Publications/annual/pub\\_ar2007/index.htm](http://www.cgiar.org/Publications/annual/pub_ar2007/index.htm)); three editions of CGIAR eNews with several stories contributed from Centers, a new corporate brochure; and partnership booklets for CIDA, IDRC and Portugal. A new book featuring the work of CGIAR-supported Centers in Africa entitled *Passion Beyond Normal* was launched at AGM08 (<http://www.cgiar.org/Publications/secretariat.html>).