



National Workshop on Saffron: Production, Processing, Quality Control, Marketing

A National Workshop on Saffron will be held in Herat on 14-16 November. The workshop is being organized by DACCAR and ICARDA, as part of the Research in Alternative Livelihoods Fund (RALF) Program in Afghanistan. It will include presentation and discussion sessions in Herat city, as well as field visits to Pashtun Zarghun and other nearby districts.

RALF is a 3-year research program, funded by DFID-UK, and aimed at finding sustainable alternative livelihoods for rural communities in Afghanistan. The saffron project in Herat is one of eleven RALF projects being implemented in 17 provinces, by ICARDA, DACAAR, and 20 other international NGOs. The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI) plays a key role in guiding and monitoring these projects. The projects also aim to strengthen national R&D capacity in partnership with Afghan universities and MAI Provincial Departments.

Saffron is being promoted as a new, high-value crop in Herat province and elsewhere in Afghanistan. In addition to DACAAR's pioneering research on saffron, several other organizations have tested saffron, with varying degrees of success.

The objectives of this workshop are to:

- share research findings and lessons learned on production, processing, quality control and marketing of saffron
- identify market opportunities, and link saffron farmers with buyers and other stakeholders
- assess the impact of saffron on livelihoods (including women's livelihoods)
- plan how to coordinate research and market development in the future.

Participants at the workshop will include MAI staff, saffron growers, four Afghan universities (Herat, Kabul, Kandahar and Balkh), the Ministry of Counter Narcotics, FAO, NGOs, donor agencies, and others.

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About ICARDA: Established in 1977, ICARDA (www.icarda.cgiar.org) serves the entire developing world for the improvement of barley, lentil, and faba bean; and dry-area developing countries for the on-farm management of water, improvement of nutrition and productivity of small ruminants (sheep and goats), and rehabilitation and management of rangelands. In the Central and West Asia and North Africa (CWANA) region, ICARDA is responsible for the improvement of durum and bread wheats, chickpea, pasture and forage legumes and farming systems; and for the protection and enhancement of the natural resource base of water, land, and biodiversity.

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) (<http://www.cgiar.org>) is a strategic alliance of countries, international and regional organizations, and private foundations supporting 15 international research centers that mobilizes cutting-edge science to promote sustainable development by reducing hunger and poverty, improving human nutrition and health, and protecting the environment.