



Left: Seed Science Center and BIGMAP Director Manjit Misra (left), AGRA President Namanga Ngongi (center), and BIGMAP Distinguished Fellow David Lambert (right) discussed seed and biosafety issues in Nairobi, Kenya, in September.



DELEGATION PAVES THE WAY FOR FUTURE COLLABORATIONS

BIGMAP Distinguished Fellow David Lambert and Seed Science Center and BIGMAP Director Manjit Misra traveled to Africa September 13-19 in response to an invitation from Namanga Ngongi, President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

Joined in Africa by BIGMAP Policy Associate James Aketch Okeno, the delegation visited key institutions and stakeholders in Kenya and Ghana.

The main focus of the trip was to promote sustainable agricultural development by exploring collaborations on seed technology and biosafety issues. Of special importance to the mission also, was furthering collaborations between AGRA, the University of Nairobi, and Iowa State University.

According to Misra, the Seed Science Center's interest in working with AGRA was sparked in October 2008 when Ngongi visited the Iowa State campus to present the keynote address at the dedication of the Center's expansion. During the event, Iowa State President Gregory Geoffroy and Ngongi participated in a ceremonial seed exchange. Later in his address, Ngongi highlighted the work

that AGRA was doing in Africa and cited the Seed Science Center's work in over 30 African countries. "The Iowa State University Seed Science Center is known as one of the best seed laboratories in the world," said Ngongi. "The Center can assume a leading role in setting seed systems, policy, and biosafety."

Misra noted that the dialogue between the two groups quickly began to center around mutual aspirations. "When President Ngongi visited us, we realized that we had some very important goals in common," he said. "We both have the conviction that to improve the livelihoods of African farmers, we must first provide them with access to high quality seed."

In addition to meeting with representatives from AGRA and the University of Nairobi, the Iowa State delegation visited with individuals from the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), the Kenya Plant Health Inspection Service (KEPHIS), the African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA), the Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK), the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI), the University of Ghana, and other seed dealers and institutions.



Above: During a visit to the University of Ghana, Manjit Misra (pictured at right) discussed the plight of the African farmer with (from left) Kwame Offei, Dean of the School of Agriculture; Eric Danquah, Director of the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI); and Charles The (WACCI).

A representative from the Kenya Plant and Health Inspection Service (second from left) met with the Iowa State delegation in September.

DISTINGUISHED FELLOW

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Lambert was appointed by President Clinton as a Foreign Agricultural Service Counselor to the United Nations U.S. Mission in Rome in 1999. He served in the position until 2003 where he promoted U.S. policies on global food security, nutrition, food safety standards, and agricultural trade policies to the UN and other international agencies. Since that time, Lambert has been a regular member of the U.S. Delegation to the United Nations Codex Alimentarius Commission in Rome and Geneva, has represented the United States at the UN World Food Summit, and has served on several humanitarian missions throughout Asia and Africa.