



ISSCRI International Cotton Research Conference "Rationales and evolutions of cotton policies"

Second Announcement

Background and objectives

The dispute about cotton policies recently has emerged at the international arena. It derived firstly, in 2002, from the Brazilian complaint before the WTO against some measures of the Farm Bill in the USA. It was relayed in September 2003 by the Cotton Sectoral Initiative introduced by four African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali) during the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Cancùn (Mexico). This African Initiative, consisting of demanding the total abolition of cotton subsidies, notably in the USA and in the European Union, has contributed to capture the international attention about the unfairness of the competition in the cotton world market. Since the Cancùn episode, the resolution of the African Initiative has led to open the "Cotton Dossier" whose treatment has become part of the conditions to move forward the conclusion of the WTO Doha Round.

From the researchers' perspective, the current dispute is confusing, frustrating and misleading.

There is commonly confusion in the discourse about cotton support policies and cotton subsidies which are only a particular form of support measure. It is not clear enough whether the demanded abolition concerns only specific subsidies or global support measures to cotton.

The current situation is frustrating to scientists as they contribute to the debate, indirectly, and only through the estimation of price distortion linked to cotton subsidies. Scientists hence are at best behind the curtain, when their research works are related to the assessment of the effects of cotton subsidies on the world price. The exclusive attention to this price effect is leading to totally put aside all other studies on other socio-economic effects related to the implementation of cotton policies worldwide. This situation is clearly frustrating to many scientists who are addressing these effects, furthermore when the estimation results of price distortion can vary a lot and have risen up great controversy. A neutral organization like FAO has pointed out many shortfalls in correctly estimating the price effect linked to the implementation of cotton subsidies.

Finally, the prevailing situation is misleading in totally overlooking the dynamic feature of cotton policies in all countries which have been implementing them. No attention is really paid to the attempts to carry out new measures, based upon new economic mechanisms to achieve better effectiveness and efficiency for the related countries, with reduced impacts on other countries. In other words, the current dispute is following a radical approach of total and abrupt elimination of cotton support policies while such an approach could hardly be acceptable to many countries.

In spite of existing cotton conferences on regular basis and enjoying international calibre, scientific exchanges specifically on cotton policies seldom gain real attention. The annual Beldwide Cotton Conference is US-Organized and mainly US-oriented. The World Cotton Research Conference, occurring every four years, actually has achieved international stature, but social sciences are still occupying minor place till recently and it is not yet providing specific forum for discussion on cotton policies.

The "Conference on Cotton Policies" is organized by ISSCRI (<http://www.isscri.org>) to compensate the lack of addressing more globally the various effects of cotton policies, from the social, economic and environmental perspectives. The Conference is designed to provide additional information about a broad range of impacts on the cotton sector caused by government support policies.

Conference venue and languages

The Conference will take place in Montpellier, in the south part of France, from May 13 to 17, 2008, the last day being devoted to field trip and/or sightseeing tour.

The Conference will be hosted by CIRAD (<http://www.cirad.fr/en/index.php>), a research centre devoted to international cooperation in research for development.

The conference language will be mainly English, papers could nevertheless be submitted both in English and in French in relation with the targeted journals for publication of the best contributions.

Details on list of hotels for accommodation will be provided in the earliest. Please visit regularly the specific page on our website: (http://www.isscri.org/conference_may_08/accommodation).

Eligible papers

The Conference will provide a combination of two types of papers and communications selected from researchers' proposals. The first type of papers will deal with the evolution of cotton policies in a selected group of countries (namely India, Pakistan, China, Turkey, Syria, Brazil, Paraguay, Mexico, USA, European Union and African countries) which have been implementing support policies to cotton. All of these papers will offer historic and economic perspectives in explicating the policy rationales and in analyzing the effects obtained.

The second type of selected papers will deal with the assessment of various effects of cotton policies. Although proposals dealing with the assessment of price distortion will be examined, the Conference Committee will favour communication proposals addressing other effects related to cotton policies and coming from various countries. Analysis of the economic mechanisms responsible to the effectiveness/efficiency being observed will retain particular interest of the Conference Committee. Other themes of interest are, but not exclusively:

- Cotton policies and direct economic impacts to producers
- Cotton policies and various indirect impacts to producers and non-producers
- Cotton policies and competitiveness promotion
- State and its regulation roles in cotton sectors
- State and multi-stakeholders process to define and implement cotton policies
- State and its role in promoting devices to follow-up the impacts of cotton policies

Papers format, submission deadlines

Only papers for oral communications are accepted.

Paper proposals are selected through extended abstracts of 3 pages maximum, justified text in font size of 12pt, in Times New Roman, single spaced with 6pt between paragraphs. Abstract should show a meaningful title and should not include figure, table or references.

Potential authors are warmly invited to visit the related webpage (http://www.isscri.org/conference_may_08) and declare their intention to submit papers by emailing to michel.fok@cirad.fr.

The deadline for abstract submission is fixed at December 20, 2007.

The authors will be informed of the results of the review process by January 31, 2008.

The authors of the retained abstracts will be invited to submit their finalized papers by March 15, 2008. They must comply with the instructions given in this purpose and which is downloadable at http://www.isscri.org/conference_may_08/papers_deadlines

Scientific Committee

A Scientific Committee is set up to review the proposed abstracts. It is upon constitution, with most of the following persons yet contacted:

Dr. Michel FOK (CIRAD, France)

Pr. Konstadinos MATTAS (Aristotle Univ. of Thessaloniki, Greece)

Prof Konstadinos Tsimpoukas (Athens Agricultural University, Greece)

Dr. Manuel Arriaza (IFAPA, Spain)

Dr. Denis Sautier (CIRAD, France)

Dr. Michel Benoit-Cattin (CIRAD, France)

Dr. Geert Van Vliet (CIRAD, France)

Mr. Jean-Pacal Pichot (CIRAD, France)

Pr. Philippe Lebailly (Faculty of Gembloux, Belgium)

Pr. Kees Burger (Wageningen University, The Netherlands)

Pr. Michael Weber (Michigan State University-Department of Agricultural Economics)

Pr. Pan Yotopoulos (Univ. of Florence, Italy)

Pr. (Ms) Machiko Nissanke (School of Oriental and Asian Studies, London, UK)

Dr. Abdul Razaque Soomro (Indus Publications, Pakistan)

Proceedings and publication

A CR-Rom containing all communications will be distributed to all participants.

The most relevant communications will be submitted for publication in various Journals. Agreement for publication is yet obtained with the Journal of Agriculture and Food Economics, published in India. Similar agreement has been obtained too with the **Indus Scientific Publications (ISP)** notably its **Life Sciences International Journal (LSIJ)**, published in Pakistan. Procedures are engaged with **Cahiers Agriculture**, a journal mainly in French published by John Libbey.

Registration

Registration fees will cover the CD-ROM of the Conference papers, the welcome cocktail, the seminar dinner, refreshments and lunches during the seminar and the one-day field trip.

Early registration fee, till February 29, 2008: €200

Normal registration fee, from March 1st 2008 onward: €300

Registration payment will be made possible through Internet via ISSCRI website.

The Conference Committee is exploring the possibility of securing some fellowships that will facilitate the participation of young researchers or colleagues from developing countries. Persons requiring financial support are asked to inform (michel.fok@cirad.fr) at the earliest, although the expected support funding will be of limited scale.