

Press release, 8 December 2017

## Presentation of the SFIAR Research Awards 2017

### Better forecasts for Peruvian farmers

With their Climandes project, MeteoSwiss and the Peruvian weather service SENAMHI have developed customised weather and climate services for farmers in the Andean region of Peru. For their work they will be presented with this year's research award of the Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research (SFIAR). The SFIAR will also honour Sebastian Mengel for his master's thesis submitted to BFH-HAFL on the livelihoods, viewpoints and aspirations of rural youth in Morocco

Smallholders play an important role in food security worldwide. However, their livelihoods are increasingly threatened by extreme weather events, especially in developing countries. If farmers take preventive measures in good time, they can reduce negative impacts. But often they lack access to relevant and timely weather information about an upcoming weather event. With their Climandes project, the Federal Office of Meteorology and Climatology MeteoSwiss, the Peruvian weather service SENAMHI and other partners<sup>1</sup> aimed to develop customised weather and climate services for the rural population in the Andean region of Peru. To this end, they analysed this population's needs. The findings showed that people often misunderstand climate information. Therefore, the weather services developed forecasts customised to the needs identified. They defined specific indicators, such as plant-specific frost days. As a next step, the project partners will discuss lessons learnt with farmers in the form of farmer field schools. Farmers should then be able to interpret forecasts correctly and to implement appropriate measures to deal with climate risks.

### Aspirations of young people in rural Morocco

The future of agricultural production is only assured if the younger generation is actively involved and inspired to take over. However, especially in dry areas like Morocco more and more young people are migrating from rural to urban areas. To counter this trend, it is necessary to understand how young people envision a future in farming. Only when the realities and aspirations of rural youth are established does it make sense to consider how to reduce the gap between the two.

Against this background, Sebastian Mengel conducted numerous interviews with young women and men in the rural Moroccan province of Midelt. The discussions showed that young people's perception of rural life and farming is not per se negative. Many young men have the ambition to manage their own profitable farm, while young women tend to prefer access to education and training. But current realities make it difficult to implement such plans: production resources, infrastructure and educational opportunities are very limited. Only improvements in these areas can give young people positive prospects for their future in a rural region.

### Awards ceremony

By engaging with rural populations, both projects provide valuable insights into how their difficult situation can be improved. Therefore, the SFIAR honours Climandes with its Team Award of CHF 10,000 and Sebastian Mengel with its Master Thesis Award of CHF 1,000. SFIAR President Yuan Zhou (Syngenta Foundation) will present the awards on Monday 11 December 2017 (4.15-6.30pm) at BFH-HAFL in Zollikofen as part of a public event entitled "*Smallholders – Big Actors? Including farmers' perspectives in Agricultural Research for Development*".

<sup>1</sup> Climandes is financially supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and coordinated by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

### **SFIAR Research Awards**

Since 2008 the Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research (SFIAR) has been honouring innovative Swiss projects with annual awards. With this engagement, SFIAR wants to support the efforts of numerous Swiss institutions in the area of agricultural research for development. The award is sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture.

Further information about the award ceremony and the projects together with photos can be found at [www.sfiar.ch/award](http://www.sfiar.ch/award).

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