Nineth Open Session
Report back from the World Café

09:00 hrs, Thursday 5 December 2019
Chair: Kai Hughes, Executive Director, International Cotton Advisory Committee, ICAC

Mike McCue, Director of Communications of the ICAC, noted that in order to continue the conversation and gather more information from participants, the session would focus on an open discussion about the questions asked in the previous day's session of the World Café held on Wednesday, 4 December 2019.

1. Additional Funding

- Dr. Kater Hake noted that participants emphasised that the foundation of the app must be rock-solid. The core advice and guidance to growers on their production systems and diagnosis should contribute to increased profitability and productivity. Validation and testing are also very important in order to get feedback from growers.
- Allan Williams suggested testing the app with the growers and use their feedback to get a better understanding as of where to spend the money in the development of the app.
- The delegate from Pakistan noted that in his country, cotton area is declining and it would be important to identify and understand the specific causes behind the decrease.
- The delegate from India indicated that the app should be user-friendly. He also added that funds could be shared with local bodies for testing the app and reaching out to as many farmers as possible. India has approximately 8-9 million cotton farmers and cotton is produced in many states. It is important that the app can provide recommendations based on the problems of a specific region.
- A participant from Africa noted that the app should be able to monitor the crop in its different stages and provide information on what the farmer should do in those stages.
- The Delegate from Burkina Faso, Mr Jean Pierre Guinko, stated that the cotton sector in Burkina Faso welcomed the idea of the app. Mr. Guinko noted that farmers need basic functions at the beginning and then once it is tested in the field with African cotton countries more feedback can be given to the developers to improve the functionalities the app. The app should be able to provide solutions to the farmers to their real daily problems.

- Mr. Kai Hughes suggested that the C4 countries take the lead on testing the app.

- A delegate from India asked if the app was going to be free for Member countries and how was the ICAC going to control its issue. The second question she asked was if the app was going to be common across different countries. Dr Keshav Kranthi noted that each country could have its own modules. He also mentioned that for India, the ICAC is planning to have separate modules for different regions. The app also has the provision to create communities and to send alerts about a pest or disease that is creating a problem or that is present in more than 20 cotton fields in a region. It was planned that the app will also incorporate an artificial intelligence component, and this could take some months to be ready. He explained that the next step was to involve governments and discuss the best way to promote the of

the app in member countries. Getting feedback from growers and effectively co-designing the development of the app with growers and extension officers was also very important.
- The delegate from Mali mentioned that the app could be a huge training tool to farmers and extension officers. The app should also be able to gather information on the problems affecting cotton production in different locations and it should incorporate weather information.
- Mr. Hughes said that the ICAC will engage with each Member country before implementing the app to discuss exactly what their requirements were and develop the app to those requirements.
- The delegate from Australia asked whether the ICAC should be focusing on the app rather than further development of the Virtual Reality project, due to due to the limitation of funding. Mr. Hughes replied by saying that the VR training module is easier to roll out than the app. He also noted that the app also complements the VR training modules.

2. What kind of organisations should the ICAC consider partnering with to advance these projects?

- Mr. Kai Hughes noted that it is essential that the ICAC engage with growers' associations, national cotton associations and governments.

3. What ideas or applications can the ICAC use to extend the VR training project to cotton consuming countries to attract new members?

- A delegate from the USA said that one of the benefits of the app and the VR projects are its educational components. At the retail level there is a lack of understanding of the structure on how cotton production and ginning processes work.
- The delegate from Taiwan, echoed the suggestion from the delegate of the U.S. She mentioned that the food sector in Taiwan uses Kiosks to educate consumers through videos. They can also trace an origin of a product.

4. What other type of technologies should the ICAC invest on?

- The delegate from Uzbekistan mentioned that augmented reality is also a technology that can be used for training farmers.
- The delegate from Uganda mentioned that training on seed quality for sowing is needed in the region and Virtual Reality could help to training the farmer and show the cost of using fuzzy seeds.
- The delegate from India noted that training on irrigation could be useful for the country, as well as teaching the farmers how to reduce their input costs.
- The delegate from Turkey mentioned that training on water and fertiliser management is also important.
- The delegate from Burkina Faso said that mechanisation for small scale farmers is also essential in Africa.

Doctor Kater Hake closed the session by noting that the feedback received during both sessions of the world café has been very successful because the diversity of experience and perspectives really helped when looking at the potential of the app. He also provided a summary on the main points raised by the delegates:

- Co-develop the app with the feedback from farmers and the help of each government
- The Home Screen needs to be customised from country to country

- The app could be used as a leadership example for future development
- The app could help farmers to adapt to climate change. Weather information is crucial, but it is also important to teach and train farmers how the weather correlates to decision making in the production level.

The chair closed the session by saying that the soil and plant health app has great potential for all countries and that updates of the app will be made in collaboration with all member governments.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:15 hrs.