

ICBA launches new community initiative on Zayed Humanitarian Day

Dubai, UAE, 13 May 2020 – On Zayed Humanitarian Day, which is observed every year on the 19th day of the month of Ramadan, the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture ([ICBA](#)) launched a new community initiative in line with the vision of Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founding father of the UAE, to work together with local partners and authorities to boost food security, raise awareness among local communities about agriculture and promote healthy eating habits, especially in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dubbed 3N, or the power of triple noon (*derived from the Arabic letter ن, which is pronounced as noon*), the three Arabic letters of the initiative represent three key actions: grow, harvest and share.

Under the initiative, ICBA will work with local partners and authorities to grow vegetables and forages, distribute harvests to beneficiary households and farmers, build capacities of stakeholders and share knowledge with communities in the UAE.

Commenting on the initiative, Dr. Ismahane Elouafi, Director General of ICBA, said: "We are pleased to launch the 3N initiative (the power of triple noon) to support local communities in these unprecedented times. Under the initiative, we will be sharing some essential tips on how we can grow some vegetables and fruits at home using some simple steps. Moreover, in collaboration with local partners, we will also be sharing some fresh vegetables and fruits in addition to harvests of climate-resilient forage crops that ICBA scientists have identified, evaluated, and developed during the past two decades of research in Dubai."

For her part, Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Deputy Director General of ICBA, said: "We are optimistic that this initiative will provide value to different beneficiaries as in addition to sharing some agricultural produce, ICBA will also be offering virtual training and utilizing online platforms such as social media to raise awareness about the soil and water management techniques, and crops suited for marginal environments."

"We remain to be inspired by the founding father of the UAE, the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, may God have mercy upon his soul, and the belief that the real spirit behind the progress is the human spirit, the able man with his intellect and capabilities, so that they are able to contribute towards civilization-building. Sheikh Zayed's passion for agriculture is elucidated in his famous saying, '*Give me agriculture and I will give you civilization*'," Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi added.

The initial activities under the initiative include distributing to local farmers about 70 tonnes of forages for livestock, produced from various crops like Salicornia, pearl millet, quinoa, and amaranth.

In addition, ICBA will be also distributing about six tonnes of dates from its date palm fields. Since 2001, ICBA has been studying several elite date palm varieties at its research station in Dubai, and over the years, scientists have evaluated over 270 trees of date palm through a series of experiments that have helped to identify varieties that perform well under saline conditions.

As part of the initiative, ICBA will be encouraging about 200 households in the UAE to adopt smart family farming practices by distributing some basic equipment like sandboxes and providing tips and instructions on how to grow food at home.

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About ICBA

The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is a unique applied agricultural research center in the world with a focus on marginal areas where an estimated 1.7 billion people live. It identifies, tests and introduces resource-efficient, climate-smart crops and technologies that are best suited to different regions affected by salinity, water scarcity and drought. Through its work, ICBA helps to improve food security and livelihoods for some of the poorest rural communities around the world.

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