

## ICBA to host open day for UAE farmers, agri-businesses

**Dubai, UAE, February 14, 2019** – To mark 20 years of service to and collaboration with farmers and other agricultural stakeholders in the UAE, the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture ([ICBA](#)) will host a big open day for UAE farmers and agri-businesses at its headquarters in Dubai on 20 February 2019.

Titled the UAE Farmers Day, the event will bring together around 100 leading farmers and representatives of agri-businesses from the seven emirates of the UAE: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, and Fujairah.

The event aims to showcase a wide range of crops and technologies suited to the local conditions, as well as recognize the effort and initiative of the UAE farmers who have worked with ICBA to take research results to the fields.

Dr. Ismahane Elouafi, Director General of ICBA, said: “We are excited to host farmers from all seven emirates of the UAE. The main objective of the UAE Farmers Day is to demonstrate the best farming practices and showcase the best examples and innovations that work in the UAE conditions. Furthermore, this open day will be a great opportunity to learn from UAE farmers’ experiences.”

“As we are celebrating ICBA’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019, our center will be organizing several national and international events throughout the year to highlight ICBA’s achievements over the last 20 years and discuss and enrich our next 20-year plan,” Dr. Ismahane Elouafi added.

Established in 1999 by the visionary leadership of the Government of the UAE and the Islamic Development Bank, ICBA has been working with farmers in the UAE to introduce crop varieties and technologies that have performed well during trials under local conditions.

For example, one crop that shows a lot of promise in the UAE is quinoa. Thanks to a major program led by ICBA in collaboration with national partner organizations, the number of farmers cultivating quinoa in the UAE is steadily increasing. Under this program, ICBA scientists have collaborated with local partners since 2016 to select and distribute quinoa seeds to 12 pioneer farmers in the emirates of Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Sharjah and Fujairah.

There are also a number of halophytic, or salt-loving, plants that have proven themselves in studies as good alternatives for forage production and rehabilitation of salt-affected lands in the UAE. They produce higher yields than some traditional grasses like Rhodes grass and help to save more water.

Some of the suitable technologies include inland and coastal modular farms that use reject brine and seawater for irrigation. The inland modular farm uses desalinated water for vegetables, reject brine for fish, and aquaculture effluents for halophytic plants, while the coastal modular farm uses seawater for fish and aquaculture effluents for halophytic plants like *Salicornia*.

Over the past two decades, ICBA has accumulated extensive applied experience and developed tailor-made solutions to the problems of salinity, water scarcity and drought.

During the UAE Farmers Day, visitors will be able to learn more about these solutions and network with scientists and experts.

The UAE Farmers Day is open to all UAE-based farmers and agri-businesses. Inquiries and requests for participation should be directed to: [icba@biosaline.org.ae](mailto:icba@biosaline.org.ae) or +971 4 304 63 00.

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**About ICBA**

The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is an international, non-profit research-for-development organization that aims to strengthen agricultural productivity in marginal environments through identifying, testing and facilitating access to sustainable solutions for food, nutrition and income security.

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