



Meridian Institute  
Connecting People to Solve Problems

# Agriculture



## meridian institute

Meridian Institute is a non-profit organization that helps people solve problems and make informed decisions about some of society's most contentious and complex issues.

Meridian's mission is accomplished through facilitation, mediation, and strategy development services that include: convening and facilitating multi-party problem-solving and conflict resolution processes; assisting diverse parties in creating alliances and partnerships; and, designing processes that help organizations develop strategic priorities and sustainable policies.

Meridian works at the local, national, and international levels.

Our work focuses on a wide range of issues related to the environment, natural resources, agriculture, science and technology, health, and security.

For more information, please visit <http://www.merid.org>.

## solving problems in agriculture

Meridian Institute staff have worked on issues related to agriculture and food security at the international, national, and local levels for more than 20 years.

Meridian's international agricultural projects have included work on biosafety and biotechnology, plant genetic resources, "open source" approaches for developing agricultural technologies, food security, and agricultural sustainability. Much of this work has focused on bringing together multiple parties to address controversial and complex problems. Meridian has also designed and supported numerous processes focused on the development

of strategic priorities and sustainable policies for institutions. Meridian has, for example, worked extensively in this capacity with the Consultative Group on International Research (CGIAR), individual CGIAR Centers, Inter-Center Initiatives, and Challenge Programs. Meridian Institute has worked on more than 30 agricultural projects at the international level over the past 10 years.

Within the United States, numerous Meridian projects involving farmers, government officials, and industry and NGO representatives have helped decision-makers at federal, state, and local levels make better informed decisions.



For more information on Meridian Institute's Agriculture activities, please visit: <http://www.merid.org/ag>.

Selected agricultural projects are highlighted below. For a more comprehensive review of Meridian's experience with agricultural issues, please visit <http://www.merid.org/ag>.

## African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF)

The African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) is an African-based, African-led organization with a mission of food security and poverty reduction. Meridian assisted in the establishment of the AATF by facilitating consultations and planning meetings among a diverse set of stakeholders regarding the design and purpose of the organization. The participating stakeholders included: major international seed companies; international donors; international agricultural research centers; the national research programs of Kenya, Uganda, Ivory Coast, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi; African scientists in universities; African farmers' unions; government ministry officials; NGOs; and African seed companies. [\[more\]](#)

## Public Intellectual Property Resource for Agriculture (PIPRA)

PIPRA brings together some of the largest holders of agricultural technology intellectual property (IP) in the United States, such as the University of California system, the University of Wisconsin, Cornell University, and Michigan State University, among others. PIPRA is focused on collaborative management of IP for humanitarian uses that help meet food security needs in developing countries and for specialty crop development in the U.S. Meridian facilitated the collaborative design process involving The Rockefeller Foundation, McKnight Foundation, and more than a dozen major universities in the U.S., which led to the creation of PIPRA. [\[more\]](#)

## Bellagio Meeting on Plant Genetic Resources in East and Central Africa

With support from The Rockefeller Foundation, Meridian designed and facilitated a meeting in Bellagio, Italy, that resulted in recommendations focused on ensuring continued access to the genetic materials needed by public-sector scientists in East and Central Africa. Participants included plant breeders and policymakers from the Kenyan Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and Ugandan National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), as well as policymakers, scientists, attorneys, and other experts in the fields of agriculture, economic development, and international trade. [\[more\]](#)

## Open Source Models of Collaborative Innovation in the Life Sciences

"Open source products" such as Linux operating software have been developed by thousands of people collaborating across the Internet in a form of production sometimes referred to as distributed peer production. Meridian facilitated a three day meeting in Bellagio, Italy, to explore the feasibility of applying these "open source" models of innovation to the challenging health and agricultural problems confronting hundreds of millions of poor people in developing countries. [\[more\]](#)

## Generation Challenge Program

The Generation Challenge Program (GCP) is a research and capacity building network that uses plant genetic diversity, advanced genomic science, and comparative biology to develop tools and technologies that enable plant breeders in the developing world to produce better crop varieties for resource-poor farmers. Meridian is working with the Management Team on overall strategy and is assisting with GCP sponsored meetings involving project collaborators and stakeholders. [\[more\]](#)

## Tolerance Reassessment Advisory Committee

A joint federal advisory committee of the US Department of Agriculture and US Environmental Protection Agency, the Tolerance Reassessment Advisory Committee (TRAC) was established to enhance stakeholder input on the implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 (FQPA). Meridian facilitated the meetings of the committee and development of recommendations. [\[more\]](#)

## McDonald's Antibiotics Policy Development

In 2003, McDonald's announced a new policy to address the concern that the widespread use of antibiotics on U.S. farms makes the drugs less effective for human use. McDonald's developed this new policy, which reduces the use of medically important antibiotics in beef, pork, and poultry production, through multi-stakeholder meetings facilitated by Meridian staff. [\[more\]](#)

## Information & Resources

**Food Security and Ag-Biotech News**, published by Meridian, FS-AgBiotech News is a free, daily news service covering the most important global developments related to agriculture and food security, with a strong emphasis on issues related to the controversy over agricultural biotechnology. Food Security and Ag-Biotech News draws information from a diverse range of sources covering topics such as: biotechnology, biosafety, agricultural research and development, intellectual property rights, technology transfer, liability and redress, genetic resources, trade, and economic development.

To Subscribe to Food Security and Ag-Biotech News, please visit: <http://www.merid.org/fs-agbiotech>.

## More Information

To learn more about Meridian Institute, please visit <http://www.merid.org>.

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