

Rice-Wheat Information Sheet

No. 11

Greetings

We are pleased to report on what is going on. Don Faris, our Interim Facilitator has gone back to Canada. He had initiated the publication of the Rice Wheat Information Sheet (RWIS) to keep the Consortium members informed. We have informal feedback that the RWIS is being well received. We intend to continue it. Many of you who have known and interacted with Don might wish to keep in touch. His address is:

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Through this newsletter, we wish to record our sincere appreciation to Don Faris for getting the Consortium on the rails.

Facilitation Unit

The communication systems of the Facilitation Unit are now perfectly in place. The new E-mail link has been established and we can be reached through RWC@CGNET.COM and the ICRISAT Delhi Office mailbox (ICRISATND-T@CGNET.COM) could be used as a second option, just in case of any problems.

A request

While it is our intention to keep up the tradition of keeping you informed through the RWIS, we have a request to make to the members of the Consortium - our partners from the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) and the International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs). We believe this forum needs to be used increasingly by our partners to tell what is new by way of their thinking, planning, research activities, technologies, farmers views, etc., in so far as these concern the focus of the Consortium "Sustainability of Rice-Wheat Cropping System related Production Systems". We know there is plenty of information with each of them which the others might be looking for. All that is needed is to take some time out. Raising a question could trigger off some ideas. We also believe this will (and should) lead to more informal contacts amongst scientists pursuing similar objectives. We want this to happen and look forward to your active participation.

Follow up on Regional Technical Coordination Committee (RTCC) recommendations

The Regional Steering Committee meeting held in Colombo, 23-24 January 1995, had suggested several follow up actions for the RTCC recommendations.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

A Workshop was held 26-29 Apr 95 at ICRISAT, Hyderabad to develop this proposal. Representatives from all Consortium countries and IARCs participated. The proposal has now been circulated among the Consortium partners and potential donors for their comments. On receipt of their comments, we will follow up with donors for funding.

Water Management

For developing a proposal on Water Management, we are working together with Dr Ramesh Bhatia of the International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI). We have suggested to each of the Consortium countries to develop an "issues-paper" in respect of water management research priorities that are important for enhancing sustainability and productivity of Rice-Wheat cropping system based production systems. We have feedback that this exercise is well on its way. Based on these papers, regional issues will be synthesized in a document, which in its turn will form a basis for developing a funding proposal. We also believe that the issues paper developed by each country can be a starting point for developing national proposals for funding from national/bilateral sources. The new dates for the Workshop are 21-23 Aug 95. The venue is Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) Dhaka. For finalizing the

Workshop arrangements, we are in touch with Dr M A Razzaque, Director, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute. He can be reached for any arrangements at CIMMYT Dhaka (E-mail: CIMMYT-DHAKA@CGNET.COM)

Nutrient Management

The Steering Committee had suggested that International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) take a lead in developing a unified proposal. IRRI has identified Dr Kevin Bronson to work with the Consortium for developing and planning activities in this area. Dr Bronson will be visiting India in the first week of July at which time we hope to draw out a 'plan of action'.

Tillage and Crop Establishment

Rice-Wheat Cropping Systems have specific tillage and crop establishment problems. Past research efforts have given important leads in developing alternate management strategies. These efforts require strengthening the linkages with other research areas. CIMMYT (Peter Hobbs) has taken an initiative and developed a proposal outline for funding. It is planned to develop this proposal further with inputs from the national systems.

Regional Technical Coordination Committee (RTCC) Meeting

We have just now received confirmation from Zhang Lijian, Vice President, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences agreeing to host the next Regional Technical Coordination Committee (RTCC) Meeting at Nanjing in the Jiangsu Province, Peoples' Republic of China. We have suggested 30 Oct to 4 Nov 95 as the dates for the Meeting. On receiving confirmation, we will proceed with firm plans including field visits to the Rice-Wheat cropping areas.

Rice-Wheat Information Sheet (RWIS)

The Regional Steering Committee (RSC) observed "as more contributions to the Information Sheet are received from outside and research results are generated it might be appropriate to expand the scope of the publication and appoint an editorial board". Do our readers have comments? Our mailing list will have to be expanded among NARS researchers. Please give your suggestions.

Facilitator's Visits

I travelled with R K Gupta of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi to the G B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, 10-12 May 95. The main purpose was to acquaint ourselves with their current research efforts in relation to R-W production systems. Although Rice-Wheat is the major cropping system, sugarcane is an important crop influencing overall management strategies by the farmers. Some issues needing our attention are as under:

Residue Management

We observed that most farmers continue to burn the wheat residue left after the combine harvesting of wheat. According to farmers, burning sugarcane trash was extremely helpful in the control of 'black bug' an important pest. Although there have been considerable studies on management options for crop residues, it is time to take a fresh look at the available information and plan future strategies.

Agroforestry

Agroforestry offers a range of benefits, particularly, to the small farmers. We observed that Poplar was being grown extensively in R-W belt. Many farmers were inter-cropping wheat in 4-5 years old Poplar fields and harvesting 4 t or more of grains. Apparently there was little adverse effect of poplar trees on wheat because it sheds its leaves during winter. It was the impression of some farmers that Poplar leaves were adding to soil fertility. Many farmers were growing sugarcane as an inter-crop in the initial 2-3 years after planting Poplar. Do you have some thoughts that you would like to share? Write to us.

Rats

Many farmers agreed that there were significant wheat grain loss (10-15%) due to rats. There was also a feeling that the incidence of rats was somewhat less severe this year. Incidence of rats was normally more severe when the harvesting of sugarcane was delayed and the burning of sugarcane trash tended to reduce this incidence. I recall that the diagnostic surveys carried out by the CIMMYT and G B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology scientists had also ranked rats as a serious problem in Rice-Wheat production system. There appears a need to take a fresh view of some of these problems and look for solutions considering the totality of ecological situations.

Rice Transplanter

Rice transplanting is a labor- intensive operation requiring some 150-200 man-hours ha⁻¹. In view of high labor requirements optimum plant population is not achieved. Due to labor scarcity transplanting is further delayed reducing yields of both rice and the subsequent wheat crop. To overcome these pressing problems scientists at the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana have developed a 6-row manually operated rice transplanter. The scientists have fabricated some 100 pieces of the equipment for large-scale testing this season. We now plan to bring a group of two scientists, an agronomist and an agricultural engineer, each from the three Consortium countries (Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan) to view these demonstrations for possible follow-up in their respective countries. The visit is planned for 10-12 Jul 95.s

Erratum

Please note that the correct expansion of BARC is Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council and not as published in the last RWIS. We apologize for any misunderstanding this may have caused.