

Rice-Wheat Information Sheet

No.19

News

Regional Technical Coordination Committee (RTCC) Meeting

The RTCC will hold its fourth meeting in New Delhi 25-26 November, 1996, as decided at the Islamabad meeting.

Satellite meeting and poster display during ICSC

The International Crops Science Congress (ICSC) Secretariat has allocated time (half-day) for the Consortium to hold a Satellite meeting on "Issues related to Rice-Wheat Cropping Systems" on 20 November, 1996 at the ICSC venue in New Delhi. We are in the process of identifying speakers for the meeting that will be a Symposium. The RTCC also recommended that Consortium organize a panel display depicting the activities and achievements of the Consortium during the ICSC sessions. We have already requested the four National Coordinators to initiate action on this.

ICAR constitutes Committees for Project Development

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has constituted three Groups to develop pre-proposals in the following areas:

- Modeling for developing land use planning
- Regional salt and water balance in northwest India in relation to current and alternative water management strategies
- Enhancing on-farm water use efficiency in eastern India including reclamation of alkali soils

After the pre-proposals are developed, the Facilitation Unit will help ICAR to develop full project proposals to obtain funds from donors.

More communication links

The Facilitation Unit now has access to Internet and a new e-mail address. To keep in touch, send e-mail messages to abrol@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in.

List of e-mail addresses

A list of e-mail addresses of the partners involved in Consortium activities is attached for information. Please send any amendments and new addresses to : rcw@cgnet.com. We also urge the everyone to make more liberal use of e-mail facilities.

Happenings

ICAR launches pilot demonstration project on urea super granules (USG) application in rice

Rice-Wheat cropping systems accounts for more than 50% of the total chemical fertilizers used on farms in India. The poor efficiency of nitrogen (N) use in rice has been of major concern to researchers. A large number of experiments conducted during 1980-90 have conclusively shown that USG, when placed 8-10 cms. below the soil surface 8-10 days after transplanting can result in a 15-20% saving of applied N. USG placement was found superior to the broadcast application of prilled Urea under conditions of poor water management and rain water surface flow, and under conditions of wetting and drying.

The USG technology has not been widely adopted due to non-availability of granules that are not manufactured in India because they cost more than the local formulations and there is a lack of suitable USG applicators.

In order to test the efficacy of USG on a pilot scale, 100 demonstrations have been conducted in Baragaon Village in Karnal district of Haryana in the current *kharif* season. In each demonstration, the conventional method was used on 0.5 ha. and on the other 0.5 ha USG were

placed 8-10 days after sowing. This project was initiated in a collaborative mode where:

- IRRI-CREMNET met the cost of developing a prototype dye and supplying USG applicators to the farmers;
- Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperatives (IFFCO) manufactured 20 t of USG for the experiments;
- Central Soil Salinity Research Institute (CSSRI), Karnal manufactured the USG applicators;
- Haryana Agricultural University (HAU) is responsible for soil fertility surveys; and
- Department of Agriculture, Government of Haryana is organizing demonstration and extension activities.

Observations

Results of soil testing showed that most fields selected for demonstration are not deficient in Zinc (Zn) and Phosphorus (P), so these were not applied in the demonstration plots, although farmers had routinely been applying them. Rice is usually transplanted randomly by contractual labor, i.e., not in lines or rows. During this season, the labor requirements for USG application were increased by 2-3 days per acre. Hence, there is a need to use a rice transplanter to achieve the desired plant population. The laborers were trained to apply USG in just 2 hours. The plunger on the applicator had a few problems that were corrected when the farmers filed it with emery paper. The cost-benefit of the USG application will be worked out after the harvest season in October.

Social Science Research

As a follow-up to the Kathmandu meeting, the National Centre for Agricultural Policy (NCAP), New Delhi organized a meeting in which scientists from ICAR and ICRISAT participated. A proposal for funding research on "Overarching Issues" was developed. The proposal, as developed, has the following objectives:

- Develop overall perspective of rice-wheat cropping systems vis-a-vis other alternatives
- Analyze productivity changes to test the two hypothesis; (a) productivity of rice-wheat cropping systems is stagnating or declining, and (b) past sources of growth may not continue in future.
- Quantify determinants of past sources of growth (technology, policies, institutions)
- Analyze the implication of sources of growth on sustainability of natural resources
- Determine future sources of growth and assess their contribution
- Develop strategies to meet future needs in enhancing agricultural productivity and improving sustainability of natural resources.

NCAP has submitted the proposal to the ICAR for funding.

Planning ahead

National IPM Workshop in Nepal

The Entomology Division of the Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC) plans to hold a national-level IPM workshop during 15-16 August, 1996 in Kathmandu. The workshop will bring out the background, objectives, issues, solutions, and future research work plan on rice-wheat IPM with specific reference to Naldung and Bhairawaha sites in Nepal.

Food for thought

"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity." - *George S. Patton*

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