

Rice-Wheat Information Sheet

No.2

Welcome Again!

No Items have been received for inclusion in this edition of Rice-Wheat Information Sheet. During this fortnight, there have been unavoidable delays in getting the future activities of the Consortium cleared. In addition to addressing these blockages to progress, the main activities of the Facilitator have been participation in two workshops, observation of field trials at Consortium sites in India, and interaction with members of the Consortium.

National Conveners

Final arrangements are being made to identify a National Convener for India. Details will be given in the next Rice-Wheat Information Sheet.

National Workshops

Plans for these Workshops have been received from two of the National Conveners. The Facilitator is developing instructions to help the Conveners prepare their documents for the Regional Technical Coordination Committee (RTCC) meeting scheduled for late October. Details for the RTCC meeting are being developed and should be disseminated in the next Rice-Wheat Information Sheet.

All India Wheat Improvement Workshop, Ludhiana, 30 Aug to 2 Sep 1994

The Facilitator participated in this workshop together with Dr. Peter Hobbs and Dr. R P Singh. This was the first All India Wheat Workshop to be held in Ludhiana in 20 years, with rice-wheat systems being given a high profile. The slowing down of production increases in India, and in some cases the reduction in yield at constant input levels, was cause for concern. Reports were presented by the Project Directors of the Directorates of Wheat and of Rice Research on their research results. These included the effect of tillage, seeding methods, and genotype on crop establishment, crop residue management, and nutrient management including the effects of green manuring. Problems such as the shifts in weed populations associated with the system were also reported. The Facilitator was also shown the wide range of rice-wheat trials being conducted in the Agronomy Department of Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) as part of the Cropping Systems Project under Dr R P Singh. This included a visit to some on-farm trials. During conversations with Dr A S Khehra, Vice Chancellor of PAU, Dr P Dixit, Secretary of Agriculture and Cooperatives of the Government of India (GoI), and Dr E A Siddiq, Deputy Director General (Crops), strong support was given by them for rice-wheat systems research.

National Conference on "Sustaining Rice-Wheat Cropping System in Indo-Gangetic Plains", Lucknow, 8-9 September 1994

This was a meeting called by the Secretary of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Government of India, Dr J C Pant and organized by Dr P K Dixit, Agriculture Commissioner, GoI. It brought together senior administrators and research and extension staff from GoI, state and universities mainly from Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Harayana, and Bihar. Participants included Directors of Agriculture, Vice Chancellors, DDGs, Commissioners of Agriculture, Additional Secretaries and Program Directors. International Institutes had representatives from IRRI, CIMMYT, and the Rice-Wheat Systems Consortium. Topics covered included diagnostic surveys, field problems of rice-wheat rotations, production technology, nutrient, water, and weed management, varietal compatibility, IPM technology, post harvest problems, energy use, and the system's stability. The format provided for questions and discussions of these presentations. A recommendations committee listed the following topics: · Early sown paddy - need to ensure power sources at the critical sowing period and suitable varieties of rice and wheat. · Gap between crops - need to develop and introduce better methods to minimize the problems associated with this period. · Imbalanced and inefficient use of fertilizer - need to deal with stress being put on P and K by heavy use of

nitrogen and to develop more effective ways of using organic fertilizers such as green manure. · Varieties for problem areas - particularly for certain rainfed areas and provision of adequate certified and breeders' seed. · Diagnostic surveys - to be encouraged to develop appropriate varieties and practices for each ecoregion. Important to involve farmers in the process. · Technology for each ecosystem - suitable to the resource level of the farmers. Credit levels available to farmers from commercial banks need to be improved. · Recycling and biofertilizers - encourage use of organic fertilizers and check out the value of commercial bio-fertilizers. · Crop protection - new problems with weeds, insects, and nematodes which come with system need to be dealt with. · Rice-wheat is one of the most important systems for ensuring food security. It must be maintained and improved. There needs to be a review of the system at least once a year. The organizers are to be commended for providing the opportunity for interaction and sensitization of this level of management to the value and problems of rice-wheat based systems.