

Rice-Wheat Information Sheet

No.3

Hello

It is three weeks since the last RWIS was sent out. I must confess that the proper date for the putting out No.3 slipped past without my realizing it. Sorry. I hope you like the new format. The Information Management Exchange Program (IMEP) at ICRISAT have agreed to publish the sheet for the Facilitation Unit (FU). I wish to thank them.

New Steering Committee Chairman

Dr R S Paroda took up his duties as Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) on 21 Sep 1994 replacing Dr V L Chopra. He, therefore, becomes the new Chairman of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) until the Committee's next meeting, scheduled for December. Dr. Paroda showed a deep interest in R-W systems when he was with the FAO Regional Office, and we look forward to his continuing input. Welcome Dr. Paroda.

National Conveners

Dr S Nagarajan, Director of the Wheat Research Project at Karnal, Haryana has been nominated as the Interim National Convener for India. We welcome him.

National Workshops

The Indian National Rice-Wheat Workshop to prepare the documents for the Regional Technical Coordinating Committee (RTCC) Meeting has been tentatively set for 18-19 Oct 1994 at Karnal. Other National Conveners are working to hold their Workshops but as yet their final plans have not been received.

Regional Technical Coordination Committee (RTCC) Meeting

Plans are well under way for this meeting. It is to be held in the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Conference Room in New Delhi 31 Oct-2 Nov 1994. The Meeting is being held in India because of the short time available to organize it. All National Conveners outside India were sent fax messages on 16 Sep giving all the details and a letter was mailed to them. Although initially there was difficulty in making contact with some of Conveners, I understand that they all now know about it. Conveners will be given 45 minutes to present the reports from their National Workshops to the RTCC and have been asked to bring 20 copies of their reports to the Meeting. The RTCC will consider the research on R-w in each country under the following six generalized project headings laid out by the first RSC meeting that was held in Delhi in May this year. 1. Productivity trends 2. Crop establishment 3. Soil fertility maintenance 4. Water management 5. Ecological consequences 6. Policy options The participants will break into six group to discuss and develop a document for each project. The Committee members will pass a finalized strategic document on 2 Nov before they leave. The FU is in the process of making all the travel arrangements to enable the Convener plus one other resource person from each country attend the Meeting. Besides discussing the contribution and interactions among the four countries in the Initiative, the Meeting will have the purpose of bringing together the international institutes and organizations in the region interested in contributing to this Initiative. It is hoped to rationalize the input from these international groups so as to put little time stress on national scientists by coordinating their activities with the national projects and with each other. For this reason about 8 groups have been asked to send participants. The FU will do everything in its power to make the Meeting as useful as possible within the constraints of the time available.

Facilitation Unit

It is pretty well finalized that the FU will remain at the ICRISAT Office in New Delhi. This will save the Initiative the cost of rent and the ICRISAT Office will be able to provide useful logistical backup. A secretary and a driver have been appointed to serve in the FU, and should be reporting by the middle of Oct. This will greatly improve the efficiency of the Unit.

Facilitator's Visits

The Interim Facilitator continued to maintain close contact with Drs I P Abrol of ICAR, Y L Nene of ICRISAT, and P R Hobbs of CIMMYT to benefit from their valuable guidance. Thanks. On 13 Sep the Interim Facilitator accompanied Dr C Johansen and Dr N P Saxena of ICRISAT to discuss with various administrators and scientists ways of collaboration within ICRISAT's new Rice-Wheat Legumes Ecoregional Project, and its relationship with the Sustainable Rice-Wheat Based Cropping Systems Initiative. This included a visit to Dr V Pal Singh, IRRI Agronomist who already has input into the Indian Rice-Wheat Project supported by the World Bank (WB). This Project has ten sites in India. Also visited were S K Sinha, Director of IARI and the Water Technology Centre (WTC) and Dr Renu Khanna-Chopra, Physiologist, WTC, Dr Y P Abrol, Director, Dr B Baldev, Emeritus Professor, and Dr K C Bansal, Biotechnologist of the Physiology Division, and Dr C S Saraf and Dr I P S Ahlawat of the Agronomy Division, IARI. Scientists at IARI are involved in the WB-supported India Rice-Wheat Project. It was not clear as to how closely their research is coordinated with other groups working in this Project. This might be a point to discuss at the RTCC Meeting.

From 19 to 22 Sep the Interim Facilitator was in Nepal. With Peter Hobbs he met the Executive Director of the Nepal Agriculture Research Council, Mr Shiva B Nepali, Dr D N Manandhal, Director of Crops who has been the R-W Convener in Nepal, the Chiefs of Agronomy, Agricultural Botany, Agricultural Engineering, Pathology, and Soil Science at the Research Centre who are all active in R-W research in Nepal, Mr B K Gyawali, the Site Coordinator at Naldung the Mid-hill R-W Site, Mr G S Giri the Site Coordinator, Mr R N Devkota the Wheat Coordinator and Farm Manager and the two Breeders, the Soil Scientist, Agronomist, Engineer, and Outreach staff associated with R-W research at Bhairahawa which is the Terai Site. Good discussions were held with all these groups. They were just starting their periodic monitoring activity at both sites. Arrangements had been made to analyze the survey results and prepare a finished report immediately by hiring a local consultant to work with the survey teams. We had a chance to visit trials on farmers' fields. These trials were of high quality and well supervised. At each site there were trials on three major conditions set off mainly by elevation differences. This appears to be a very strong and well conceived program. The next R-W Information Sheet is planned for 14 Oct.