

# **Rice-Wheat Information Sheet**

## **No.8**

### **Welcome to the Consortium**

- We apologize for the lateness of this issue of the RWIS
- As you can see the name 'Rice-Wheat Consortium for the Indo-Gangetic Plains' (RWCIGP) has been chosen by the Regional Steering Committee with the understanding that the Consortium is working for the sustainability of rice-wheat based cropping systems for the Indo-Gangetic Plains.
- To those who have enquired: Yes, RWIS No.7 was published in 1995.
- Please welcome Mr Ramakrishnan C Iyer, who started work as the Assistant Administrative Officer in the Facilitation Unit on 1 Feb 1995.
- The Unit has also received a new computer.
- We now have a direct e-mail link [ICRISATND-T@CGNET.COM](mailto:ICRISATND-T@CGNET.COM) that complements the link through ICRISAT Asia Center at Patancheru

### **Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting**

The RSC meeting 23-24 Jan at International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI) chaired by Dr R S Paroda. The meeting was moved to Sri Lanka because of the unsettled conditions in Bangladesh. Committee Members from Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, IARC and Donor Representatives' and the Interim Facilitator all attended. Resource people from three countries, plus CIMMYT, IRRI, ICRISAT, and IIMI participated. The participants from Pakistan were unfortunately unable to attend at the last minute.

The following actions were taken.

- The Initiative was given the shortened working name 'Rice-Wheat Consortium for the Indo-Gangetic Plains' (RWCIGP)
- Dr I P Abrol, DDG (Soils), ICAR, New Delhi was chosen as the new Facilitator. Clearance was obtained by phone from Pakistan for this choice, and for Dr P R Hobbs to travel to Pakistan on behalf of the Facilitator when necessary. Dr Abrol expects to assure how new position at the beginning of Apr 1995.
- The RSC recommended that the Facilitator overlap for 4-6 weeks with the Interim Facilitator.
- The RSC suggested follow-up actions to the RTCC recommendations:

**Soil Fertility** IRRI to take the lead in developing a unified proposal with help from Bangladesh to bring the group together. IRRI will provide one staff member and one PDF, ICRISAT 25% of one staff member for soil fertility research. Sub-issues should be assigned to different lead centers. IRRI staff will visit all NARS then put together a draft proposal for consideration by the planning group.

**Water Management** IIMI will work with NARS with FU support to develop a proposal. IIMI may involve existing IRRI and CIMMYT sites in Pakistan and Nepal.

**Integrated Pest Management** The FU, Dr Nagarajan, other NARS partners, and ICRISAT will put together a proposal. A 5-day planning meeting led by Marian Fuchs-Carsch from IIMI was suggested to prepare a technical proposal for presentation to donors. This document could follow the template for the other two proposals.

**General** In preparing proposals NARS scientists will take the planning lead with IARC scientists acting as consultants and writing up the proposals for group acceptance. The Facilitator should be involved throughout. These proposals should be in place before the cropping season begins in June.

- Studied the budget sources. The figures shown are tentative and have yet to be confirmed:
  - Based on the original \$2 million indicative budget, 1% or \$200,000 was identified for transactional activities (FU). TAC sanctioned \$100,000 in 1994 (yet to be received) to reimburse expenses incurred by ICRISAT for FU activities.
  - IFAD also provided \$4,000 through the FU to NARS to help them hold national R-W meetings to develop plans for the RTCC Meeting.
  - IRRI has received \$380,000 from IFAD to support the FU that was expected to be located at IRRI. Of this amount 60% is being moved to ICRISAT after 20% deductions are made for administrative costs. This leaves about \$200,000 over 3 years for the FU.
  - Support for CG activities (IRRI-CIMMYT-FU) was expected to be \$400,000. It was learned that the donors are requiring IARCs to support their R-W Consortium activities from their core budgets. The RSC recommended that IIMI and IFPRI each be given \$30,000 each per year as this is an unexpected new activity for them.
  - The original \$2 million budget over 4 years, that includes funding for collaborative activities, will be put forward by ICRISAT with an indication of NARS and IARC contributions to RWCIGP activities.
  - It was realized that even if TAC sanctions this budget, it is not clear whether the necessary funds can be raised. However, the consortium plans to develop proposals for consideration by donors.

- Subsequently ICRISAT received an extraordinary contribution of \$306,900 from Sweden for the R-W Consortium.
- Endorsed ICRISAT's proposal that is to be submitted to TAC to sanction funding for RWCIGP's collaborative activities.
- Accepted with delight China's offer to host the next RTCC meeting in Oct 1995 in Nanjing. The themes will be crop establishment and organic matter recycling.
- Invited China to be an Associate Member of the RWCIGP, and offered to pay their expenses to participate in the RTCC, and at a later date to consider the possibility of their membership on the RSC.
- Considered upgrading the RWIS to a newsletter and constituting an editorial board when research results become available and more contributions are made to the newsletter.
- Noted the following activities of interest to the Consortium
- Sustainability definition Good documents defining sustainability exist but their definitions should be reexamined when planning and reviewing projects.
- GIS Workshop in Thailand At AIT Bangkok, 20 Feb-7 Mar 1995. Will include GIS analysis of the R-W system as related to edaphic conditions using participants' own data bases.
- Integration of legumes in the R-W cropping system A proposal has been received from John Duxbury of Cornell University that interested participants should include food and fodder legumes in R-W cropping systems.
- Regional R-W-legumes project ICRISAT has shaped this Project to fit R-W systems. ICRISAT was encouraged to go beyond its mandate legumes.
- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institute (APAARI) May have a place in the future.
- Regional R-W activities CIMMYT is arranging, with the NARS, exchanges of R-W scientists between eastern India and Nepal, and Nepal and Bangladesh.
- The next RSC meeting was scheduled for 8-9 Jan 1996 in Bangladesh.

- Dr M S U Chowdhury was chosen as Chair and took over from Dr. Paroda. The Consortium is now ready to move forward into its next phase of activities, carrying forward existing research activities and developing proposals to fill priority research gaps.

## **Thanks**

Our thanks are due to Dr Barker, Dr J Kinje, Mr M Abayasekara, and all the staff at IIMI for the superb arrangements for this meeting. Also to MR G J Michael of ICRISAT for his constant attention to detail, and all the others involved in making arrangements to bring the group together.

## **National Conveners**

Welcome to Dr Velayutham who has been chosen to be the full-time Convener for the R-W Consortium in India. Dr Velayutham who presently ADG (Soils) at ICAR, will replace Dr Nagarajan the Interim Convener. We wish to thank Dr Nagarajan for the time he has taken out of his busy schedule as Director of the Wheat Research Directorate to make such a valuable contribution to the R-W Consortium.

## **Facilitator's Visits**

The Interim Facilitator and Dr Hobbs made the following visits:

**To Dr B P Ghildyal**, the IRRI India Representative in Delhi. We discussed the importance of accessing the very large amounts of in-country funding that are presently not being utilized. A major difficulty appears to be scientists' reluctance to prepare the necessary documentation because they are not familiar with the procedures. It was suggested that the R-W Consortium through the FU consider funding a Workshop on writing project proposals for its membership.

**To Dr M Loevinsohn**, Principal Program Officer of IDRC in Delhi. We learned that IDRC is cutting back its operations and that Dr Loevinsohn will soon be leaving IDRC. The original notional amount of \$200,000 that IDRC promised to the Consortium may be reduced in line with the downsizing of IDRC, but IDRC is still interested in considering funding specific proposals that bridge farmer/researcher understanding using a broad systems approach. Extending farmer monitoring in Nepal to provide a framework for an analysis to understand sustainability issues might be one candidate. The proposal would be strengthened if input from other countries could be identified. Understanding why farmers make decisions could also add to the strength of the proposal. A 3-5 page initial proposal should be prepared first. Examples are available.

**To Dr R B Singh**, the new Director of IARI, Delhi. He expressed great interest in having IARI become involved in the Consortium. It was pointed out that they are already in R-W research and could contribute a wide range of expertise and resources to the Consortium activities.

**Dr J P Srivastava**, Principal Agriculturist at the World Bank (WB) in Washington visited the FU. He is working to raise the awareness of the staff at the WB of the importance of the R-W Consortium. Dr Srivastava is also

seeking ways to encourage cooperation among the WB Country Programs to support R-W bilateral activities in the Indo-Gangetic Plains. Part of his strategy is to encourage the R-W Facilitator to make direct contact with the four WB Country Representatives involved, to discuss Consortium activities. Following this line he stressed the importance of increasing NARS awareness at all levels of the importance of R-W Consortium activities, and encouraging them to effectively use for R-W research the bilateral funding already available to them. He finally stressed the importance of identifying a strong Facilitator to provide effective linkages and technical support to the R-W Consortium. He was clear that the FU and Consortium is not a program to fund R-W in-country research, but he is pleased with the progress of the Consortium.

**At ICRISAT Asia Center** the Facilitator presented a progress report to the Technology Exchange Committee of ICRISAT's Governing Board. The full Board reviewed and cleared the document for presentation to TAC in mid-March.

## **Mail**

Dr K Syers, Director of Research, IBSRAM has indicated that he would like to flag IBSRAM's strong interest in several topics in the soil fertility component of our Strategic Plan, particularly the identification of indicators of sustainability, organic matter dynamics, monitoring of soil trends, and on-farm research. IBSRAM is willing to assist the program, and particularly IRRI who IBSRAM understands have been designated the leader for the soil fertility theme. IBSRAM would also be interested in participating in the Workshops on Standardization of Data Collection and Organic Matter.

**Dr S D Dhiman**, Senior Agronomist, CCSHAU, Kaul sent the following summary of the recommendations from a symposium on 'Sustainability of Rice-Wheat Systems in India' held at CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Regional Research Station, Karnal, 7-8 May 1994.

### **A. Research Issues**

1. Develop varieties of rice and wheat suited to the R-W System, particularly for direct seeding of rice and zero/minimum tillage in wheat. The varieties should have high yield potential with improved harvest index and disease resistance.
2. Give special emphasis to developing varieties for export (durum wheat and basmati rice).
3. Develop tillage techniques to improve wheat crop establishment particularly in heavy soils and late sown conditions.
4. Encourage efficient water management through irrigation scheduling, land leveling, and improved drainage.

5. Restructure fertilizer recommendation to meet the system's requirement, soil status, available nutrients sources, and external effects.
6. Improve organic content of the soil by residue management and green manuring. Techniques are to be standardized for easy adoption by farmers.
7. Optimize technology (quantity, time, and method of application) to improve the efficiency of herbicides, test new herbicides to break the resistance in *Paspallum minor* and control new weeds emerging in both the crops.
8. Standardize techniques of integrated pests/diseases management and transfer them quickly to the field for adoption.
9. Conduct on-farm monitoring research for adoption pattern of rice-wheat cultivation technology and production constraints.
10. Develop production technology for direct seeded rice (DSR).

**B. Administrative and Social Issues**

1. Regulate canal water according to the needs of the crops.
2. Regulate power use for tube well pumps in areas where water table decline is fast.
3. Avoid transplanting rice before 15 Jun and/or two rice crops in sequence.
4. Diversify the Rice-Wheat System on marginal lands.
5. Restructure canal water/electricity charges for tube well pumps to control misuse of water/over irrigation.
6. Fix rice and wheat procurement prices at levels that provide a profitable margin to the farmers, particularly for basmati rice and durum wheat.

We look forward to receiving more mail from our readers.