

SRI in IRAQ

The latest information on SRI in Iraq has sent by Prof. Norman Uphoff, Cornell University.

Iraq is 27th Country to Report SRI Benefits with Adaptations

Dr. Khidir Hameed at Al-Mishkhab Rice Research Station near Najaf in S. Iraq has reported on SRI adaptation studied in 2006. Because labor scarcity makes transplanting difficult in this country, a "parachute planting method" has been introduced, throwing young seedlings onto a shallow-puddled field, where they establish themselves without being pushed into the soil.

The average yield increase across all trials was only slightly positive, but this included trials where yields were constrained by improper nursery management, lack of water control, and high water salinity. Where SRI elements were conjoined effectively, yield increases of 20-26% were achieved with reduction in water requirements, important in this area. SRI concepts have led researchers to pay more attention to use of organic matter, instead of relying entirely on chemical fertilizer, with promising results. Researchers plan to establish committees in all rice-growing provinces of Iraq for further SRI trials and demonstrations in 2007.

Formal committee for extension of SRI methods in Iraq

A meeting was held in Al-Mishkhab Rice Research Station (MRRS), which included Mr. Flayeh Abed Jaber, director of MRRS; Khidhir Abbas Hameed from MRRS; and Ali Abdul Hadi from General Company for Horticulture and Forestry to deliberate about the best ways for extension of SRI research and demonstration in farmers' fields in this difficult situation and to attempt a sharing of staff of Departments of Agriculture in rice-growing provinces for supervision and continuation.

Ali has had good experience with production of organic matter. We will be take advantage of his experience for extension of SRI in Iraq. Introduction of mechanical transplanting will contribute to extension of SRI methods that are useful for reduce cost and save time. This will arrive in Iraq this year from Japan, according to Flayeh. After introduction of mechanical transplanting, we need to import improved weeders (rotary hoes) and manufacture them in Iraq for weed control, to contribute to reducing the environment pollution, Khidhir added.

In the meeting it was discussed also forming an SRI committee which will oversee SRI methods as a formal committee, leading up to establishment of an SRI project. Duties and work of this SRI committee were recorded for season 2007 with some projection for the future.

As for financing of MRRS activities in present time, Khidhir will send the results of the meeting to Prof. Norman Uphoff, Cornell University. A copy of the decision of establishing an SRI committee will also be sent to Ministry of Agriculture. We will move widely in all directions, hoping SRI will become "national project"

(Reported by Khidhir Abbas Hameed; Al-Mishkhab Rice Research Station, Najaf-Iraq)

