

# Institutional Activities

## New Medium-Term Plan

To hasten the impact of IRRI's research, the new MTP provides strong bridges between the Institute's research activities and the national agricultural research and extension systems (NARES) of rice-growing countries and IRRI staff posted outside the Philippines.

The new MTP consists of 12 focused projects across four programs. They renew IRRI's commitment to the conservation of genetic resources, improvement of germplasm with classical methods, integrated pest management, integrated nutrient management, and ecoregional research. This research places increased emphasis on the more fragile environments and the associated problems of biotic and abiotic stresses.

The new plan also outlines the Institute's commitment to the new science of functional genomics to solve the old problems of agronomic performance and to address some new opportunities for improving the nutritional quality of rice. As well, it identifies new opportunities and approaches in the effective transfer of technology.

## New Positions

Two critical positions, head of the Plant Breeding, Genetics, and Biochemistry (PBGB) Division and IRRI's first intellectual property specialist, were filled. The appointees are Dr. David Mackill and Dr. Thanda Wai, respectively.

On 31 December 2000, Dr. Gurdev Khush officially retired as head of the PBGB Division and leader of various research programs. He will continue to serve as IRRI's principal plant breeder and as a member of the management team until the end of August 2001. Dr. Khush served as PBGB Division head for nearly three decades. Dr. Sant Virmani is serving as PBGB interim head until the arrival of Dr. Mackill.

## Awards and Honors

The list of awards to individuals was headed once more by Dr. Gurdev Khush, in the year before his retirement. Dr.



Khush received the B.P. Pal Gold Medal and the Padma Shri Award, both from his native India. He also received the Wolf Prize from the President of Israel, and was awarded honorary doctorates from Cambridge University in the U.K. and from Assam Agricultural University in India. Dr. Khush was also made an honorary professor of the University of Tehran, in Iran, and an honorary researcher of the China National Rice Research Institute.

Drs. James Hill and Roland Buresh, both from IRRI's Crop, Soil, and Water Sciences Division, were made fellows of the American Society of Agronomy, and entomologist Dr. K.L. Heong received an honorary doctorate of science from the University of London.

The Prime Minister of Cambodia bestowed a Distinguished Collaboration Award on Dr. Harry Nesbitt, leader of the Cambodia-IRRI-Australia Project, and the Officer Award for Collaboration on INGER coordinator Dr. Edwin Javier and agricultural engineer Joe Rickman.

Entomologist Dr. Alberto Barrion received the Outstanding Local Scientist Award for 2000 from the CGIAR in Washington, D.C. As well, he received the Pest Management Council of Philippines Pest Management Award for 2000 and the Gawad Saka Special Citation from the Philippines' President.

## Intellectual Property

In 2000, the second phase of the Institute's intellectual property management review (IPMR) was completed,

including an IP audit. It focused on the IP implications of germplasm-related technologies deployed by IRRI, functional genomics and bioinformatics activities carried out by IRRI researchers, the new plant type, and use of third-party proprietary technologies to enhance the nutritional value of rice.

The results indicated that IRRI's capacity in trait discovery, in collaboration with its NARES partners, is an important inventive activity.

In considering the IP implications of these issues, the IPMR investigated the extent to which defensive publication or defensive registration might be used to deal with some IP problems. One theme running through the review was the necessity for IRRI to consider its IP management in the wider context of its membership in the CGIAR.

The IPMR identified a need to consolidate the office of the deputy director general for partnerships (DDG-P) as IRRI's "single-door" IP unit, handling all IP issues and acting as a depository of IP documents.

## Knowledge Management and Information Technology

In 2000, IRRI established a task force to explore the creation of a global knowledge system for rice. The question of whether enough people will have access is no longer of concern. Rather, the concern is whether or not IRRI can be ready soon enough, with expertise and leadership, to help its partners integrate into a global knowledge system.

The task force recommended that IRRI should not only plan for a global knowledge system for rice, but it should clearly define its role in such a system. It recommended that IRRI become actively involved with other institutions planning or creating global knowledge systems on agriculture and development and, by doing so, ensure the involvement of its NARES partners.

The task force concluded that, by taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by new information and communication technologies, IRRI can integrate its research and information activities with those of its partners, thus achieving a true science partnership from the rice fields of Asia to the molecular laboratories and supercomputers of the developed world.

### IRRI's Outreach Programs

The International Programs Management Office (IPMO) has made significant progress in improving the day-to-day management and coordination of IRRI's outreach activities, as well as their integration with activities at headquarters in the Philippines.

In 2000, IRRI had substantial research activities in 18 countries and maintained liaison offices in ten countries. However, the full range of its international activities covered more than 70 countries.

### Scientific Publishing

IRRI's four Web sites—the IRRI home site ([www.cgiar.org/irri](http://www.cgiar.org/irri)), Riceweb, Riceworld, and the IRRI Library site—continue to grow in popularity. There were nearly 210,000 visitors to the Web sites during 2000. They made more than 780,000 "hits," or movements within the sites. More than 100,000 files of popular information products were downloaded, including installments of the discussion paper series, stories from the 1999-2000 annual report, and sections of the *International Rice Research Notes* and annual program reports. IRRI-developed software also proved popular. An example was more than 1,000 downloads of the popular IRRISTAT program for statistical analysis.

During the year, the Web sites were enhanced by the addition of electronic versions of the three 2000 issues of the *International Rice Research Notes*, the *Program Report for 1999*, and recent IRRI conference and workshop proceedings. New sections were created for rice genomics, rice bioinformatics, decision support tools, and software downloads.

Sixteen titles were produced and distributed, including seven IRRI books, four installments of the IRRI discussion paper series, and one installment of the limited proceedings series. One of the books, *Redesigning Rice Photosynthesis to Increase Yield*, was a dual imprint with Elsevier Science.

More than 139,000 photographs in the IRRI archives, dating back to 1960, were assessed, classified, catalogued, and indexed. Of these, about 3,500 of the best images were scanned and made available for searching and downloading via Institute computers.

### Public Awareness, Visitors, Exhibitions, and Conferences

After a fire in 1999, the Riceworld Museum was closed for part of 2000 but reopened in time for the Institute's 40th anniversary activities in April. However, the Chandler Hall Auditorium, which was also damaged by the fire, remained closed throughout 2000 and reopened in early 2001.



Dr. Ron Cantrell and Swiss Foreign Minister Joseph Deiss.

During the year, the public awareness unit produced 28 press releases and 27 photo releases, delivered more than 100 broadcasts on "The IRRI Hour" radio show, produced the 1999-2000 annual report, *The Rewards of Rice Research*, and a 2001 wall calendar, "Rice Science for a Better World." The unit also created a new Internet homepage and produced four editions of "The IRRI Hotline."

The Institute also welcomed about 50,000 visitors to its headquarters including ten state ministers, 35 ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps, and 15 representatives of donor and international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and Asian Development Bank.

The 40th anniversary events kicked off with an international rice research conference titled "Rice Research for Food Security and Poverty Alleviation," beginning on 31 March. It attracted 243 researchers from 35 countries. Events culminated with the Fourth International Rice Genetics Symposium in late October, which brought 507 participants from 32 countries. It is believed to have been a record gathering at IRRI headquarters.

### Library

During 2000, more than 8,000 references were added to the rice bibliography database, bringing the total to more than 188,300. The on-line catalog grew to 60,715 bibliographic records. To provide electronic access to rice literature prior to 1970 and to benefit scientists who have no Internet access, the *International Bibliography on Rice Research, 1951-2000*, was published in CD-ROM format in December.

The library added 277 rice dissertations to its collection, most of which came from China and major European countries, and acquired 33 videocassettes for the audiovisual learning center. The main library collection now contains 116,655 monographs and 1,536 active serial titles.