



Australian Government

Australian Centre for
International Agricultural Research



Research
to feed
the world

PARTNERS

IN RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT

WINTER 2006
www.aciar.gov.au

TAMING WILD WHEAT

Global wheat breeding research aims to increase yields to meet rising population-driven demand

PIGS AND SWEET POTATOES

Enhancing a traditional village-based food system in PNG and Papua province

SHOULDERING THE BURDEN

Vietnamese and Thai women are increasingly taking on the role of farm managers as economic pressures cause men to seek off-farm work

Cultivating good research

In its earliest form, agricultural research dates back to harnessing the production potential of crops and animals through rudimentary selection and breeding – the start of early civilisations. In modern times, agricultural research continues to underpin societal and economic growth by lifting food and fibre production. The right mix of proactive government policies and enthusiastic farmers has helped to lift production levels that have so far kept global food production in step with population growth. However, as populations continue to rise rapidly, substantial research is again needed to ensure food production continues to expand.

Although research is often conducted to meet the demands of national agricultural sectors competing for market share, there are also research centres that work on the international stage for public good.

The Australian Government has contributed to the funding of such centres, along with a range of multilateral organisations such as international development banks, United Nations development programs and international health and environmental initiatives.

Building research skills takes time. Since the late 1960s, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) has led efforts to deliver this expertise. Australian investment in CGIAR and other non-aligned centres complements ACIAR's work that links effective international agricultural research with aid.

Since 1992, ACIAR has administered the Australian Government's contribution to the CGIAR and other research centres. ACIAR allocates about 20 per cent of its total appropriation – A\$10 million a year – to fund international agricultural research centres (IARCs). This takes two forms: as non-project specific funding to support the work of IARCs with a comparative advantage in the Asia-Pacific region, and allocations to projects led by the centres. Projects involving IARCs cover the full range of agricultural research that ACIAR undertakes – economic/farming systems, cropping systems, natural resource management and livestock systems. IARCs are engaged to lead projects in cases where a bilateral project (involving an Australian institution as project leader and a partner country or countries) does not present the most effective means of delivery.

The structure of CGIAR and non-aligned centres focuses each centre on a particular area of agriculture, such as a specific crop (for example, the International Rice Research Institute), climatic region (International Centre for Agriculture in the Dry Areas), sector (Centre for International Forestry Research) or theme (International Food Policy Research Institute).

PARTNERS IN RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT

Partners in Research for Development presents articles that summarise results from ACIAR-sponsored research projects, and puts ACIAR research initiatives into perspective.

Technical enquiries will be passed on to the appropriate researchers for reply. Reprinting of articles, either whole or in part, is welcomed provided that the source is acknowledged.

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ISSN 1031-1009

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Coretext Pty Ltd, www.coretext.com.au

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Cover: Brad Collis
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International collaboration

4 TAMING WILD WHEAT: A global wheat breeding research project is working on increasing wheat yields to help meet rising population-driven demand.

6 PEANUTS: The breeding of more drought-tolerant genotypes could increase yield and minimising aflatoxin contamination offers health benefits.

8 APOMICTIC RICE: Researchers mount an ambitious project to create asexual hybrid rice varieties in which desirable agronomic traits can be 'locked in'.

9 RURAL WOMEN: Vietnamese and Thai women are increasingly moving from unpaid family worker to farm manager, as economic pressures push men to seek off-farm work.

10 CHINA'S WATER: Building the necessary policy framework to reallocate water in China to boost agricultural production.

11 FISHING FOR INFORMATION: The UK-based not-for-profit publisher CABI has compiled an *Aquaculture Compendium*.



12 PIGS AND SWEET POTATOES: A project in PNG and Papua is enhancing a traditional village-based food production system.

15 CASSAVA'S POTENTIAL: Improving yields of this staple crop in East Timor and Indonesia will improve food security and open up commercial opportunities.

16 PEARL MILLET STRAW: Researchers are working to boost livestock production from this hardy crop suited to the most extreme conditions.

17 MAPPING THE FUTURE: Forecasting the impacts future knowledge will have on food security, rural development and sustainability through scenario modelling.

CONTENTS



BRAD COLLIS

18 **'OUTGROWERS':** Community partnerships for plantation forestry are enhancing rural incomes from forestry in eastern Indonesia and Australia.

20 **FRUIT FLY BAIT:** In Vietnam, a fruit fly bait made from reprocessed Foster's beer waste is producing significant results for fruit farmers, while being environmentally safe.

24 **FARMER-MANAGED FISHING:** Soon communally managed fishing operations may be the way rice farmers in Sri Lanka and Vietnam supplement their income.

26 **MODELLING FISHERIES:** Aquaculture is an integral part of the world's food system but has only recently been incorporated into analytical models used by policy-makers.

27 **AUSTRALIAN AID:** A White Paper released by the Australian Government in April maps out how aid funding will increase and how it will be spent.

Around ACIAR

28 **AROUND ACIAR:** Latest news about people, publications and projects.

A Cambodian villager harvests rice: the International Rice Research Institute and Australian researchers are aiming to create one-line hybrid rice varieties to help boost yields (page 8).

Front cover: Improved rice varieties, such as this one under development in Cambodia, help developing countries increase food security and build a more commercially competitive rice industry.

Back cover: a young Vietnamese boy at a durian market in the Mekong Delta, south of Ho Chi Minh City.