



Nepal farmers like rust resistant wheat

For the past two years, farmers in Lalitpur District, Nepal, have been conducting successful trials on superior varieties of wheat as part of a participatory varietal selection (PVS) program. These trials have shown that with organization, small-scale farmers can successfully produce and market quality seed. To promote their success, an event was jointly organized by leaders of the Nepal Agriculture Research Council (NARC), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), and CIMMYT-Nepal, aiming to generate awareness, answer questions, and disseminate information about new varieties and available technology.



On 14 May 2012, at Tikathali, Changathali Village Development Committee Centre (VDC) in Lalitpur, around 30 participants from MoA, NARC, seed companies, and CIMMYT were joined by 61 farmers (43 female, 18 male) and several graduate students and technicians. The event also saw active participation from senior district agriculture development officers from Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, and Kathmandu as well as the Crop Development Directorate of Nepal and the Seed Quality Control Center.

After a brief introduction, the farmers were led on a field tour by Maiya Maharjan Saligram, the head of the Loktantrik Integrated Pest Management Group in Changathali. Here they were shown the wheat plots and given detailed information about the characteristics of each variety, such as maturity class, yield potential, and disease resistance. They were split into four groups and

asked to evaluate six varieties and two checks, which they then ranked one to eight according to individual performance.

Back at the VDC, NARC's senior plant pathologist Sarala Sharma said that with active awareness among farmers, wheat breeders, and pathologists, Nepal is fully prepared to face the possible arrival of the stem rust race Ug99 because resistant varieties are already in farmers' fields. She also described how positive the PVS approach has been over recent years; not only has there been a rapid increase in adoption rates of new varieties, but there has also been a remarkable reduction in yellow rust.

Madan Bhatta, chief of NARC's germplasm division, also endorsed the PVS approach, while Dilaram Bhandari from Seed Quality Control suggested that small-scale farmers

should work together to develop an effective seed producers organization. The farmers were further encouraged by Suroj Pokhrel, director of the Crop Development Directorate, and Yubak Dhoj G.C. from the Plant Protection Directorate, who assured them that their suggestions are extremely important.

The farmers themselves were very happy with the event, saying that by sharing experiences with each other, they were building confidence in their own ability to manage wheat diseases, seed production, and profitability. They were particularly enthusiastic about strengthening their groups to share new technology and seed varieties, with the female farmers especially motivated. Through PVS, farmers have widened the coverage of rust resistant varieties, tested new options, and gradually replaced older, lower-yielding varieties, thus increasing production and productivity. With the new varieties, the farmers expected a 10% yield increase.

Other participants included Hira Kaji Manandhar from the plant pathology division at the National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI) of NARC, NARC scientist D.B. Thapa; NARC crops and horticulture director Yagya Prasad Giri; CIMMYT's regional wheat breeder Arun Joshi; and lead farmer Dhana Maharjan. ¶¶

Honing skills in scientific writing for publishing

Have you ever wondered why the papers you have written on a piece of innovative research are rejected by your target peer-reviewed journals, or why your colleagues in similar projects are publishing with less difficulty? It could be that you are not writing in a style that is acceptable by the journals. For this reason Insect Resistant Maize for Africa (IRMA) and its sister project Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) have been conducting annual scientific writing workshops for their project scientists and students based in Nairobi. This year's IRMA/WEMA Writing Workshop, which was attended by 15 participants, was held in Nakuru, Kenya during 07–11 May 2012.



The objectives of the workshop were to: train the participants on how to write scientific papers; demonstrate how to write technical papers in English; break down the process of journal choice, submission, reviews, and publication; provide assistance in completing manuscripts; and to draft new technical papers.

Stephen Mugo, principal scientist, Global Maize Program (GMP) and the IRMA/WEMA team leader, notes that publishing is the most effective way to disseminate research findings to fellow researchers, extension and development agents, and farmers. It is the best way to advance science and also provides an opportunity to account for resources provided by donors. GMP scientists are encouraged to publish at least one or two articles per year.

Reiterating the importance of publishing, maize breeder Biswanath Das of the Improved Maize for African Soils (IMAS) project stated, "Considering that we are working in public institutions, we have an obligation to share our research findings." He was one of the scientists outside the IRMA and WEMA projects who were attracted to the writing workshop. There are plans to expand participation in the workshop to include more scientists from other CIMMYT projects in Kenya.

Mugo noted that the workshop is particularly important in training young professionals and students in scientific writing. This kind of retreat is a sure way of getting publications out in the shortest time possible.

Indeed, the number of papers published in peer reviewed journals is steadily increasing, from six in 2010—when the projects held their first writing workshop—to 16 in 2011. By the end of April 2012, seven papers had been published. Another six papers have been submitted to various journals, while 23 more are being drafted with authors promising to submit by the end of July this year.

For Murenga Mwimali, a PhD student, the workshop provided him with an opportunity to sharpen his skills in scientific writing. It was also an opportunity for him to consolidate data findings and to write papers based on research done within the IRMA/WEMA projects.

The workshop was facilitated by Stephen Mugo and Liz Lucas, consulting copy editor. They would like to thank Hugo De Groote for his work in compiling resources for these workshops. ¶¶

Genetic resources information and analytical system (GRIS) for wheat and triticale

GRIS (www.wheatpedigree.net) is designed to study the diversity of wheat through analysis of pedigrees, and provides information services for breeding and research programs. The database contains pedigree and genetic allele information on 160,000 genotypes (varieties and breeding lines). All data are accompanied by standardized reference citations.

The author of the GRIS database, Sergey Martynov of Vavilov Research Institute, and programmer of the web application Dmitriy Dobrotvorskyi, recently met in Istanbul with a group of CIMMYT scientists involved in the development of [Wheat Atlas](#), [Rust Spore](#) and [IWIS-bib](#), to discuss collaboration on further development of these web-based tools. The key outputs of the meeting were agreements on (1) incorporation of the GRIS search into the Wheat Atlas and (2) further development of web-based modules to broaden the use of GRIS to conduct various genealogical and statistical analyses. Compatibility of GRIS with external statistical



From left to right: Petr Kosina, Dmitriy Dobrotvorskyi, Alexei Morgounov, Sergey Martynov, David Hodson, Paul Moncada, Thomas Payne.

software (ANOVA, various algorithms of cluster analysis, etc.) is also considered essential in order to extend the opportunities for use of GRIS.

Thanks go to the CIMMYT-Turkey office, and to Alexei Morgounov in particular for facilitating this meeting. ¶

CIMMYT growth in Mexico

To satisfy demands for additional research plots and additional, secure housing for CIMMYT staff in Mexico, on 18 May 2012 the center purchased 8.52 hectares of land in Tlaltizapán and 9.32 hectares adjacent to El Batán (part of the San Bartolo Ranch; the lot is directly southwest of La Redonda). Both are being prepared right now for planting with maize and wheat trials. New housing facilities will eventually be built at El Batán. ¶



CIMMYT Headquarters, El Batán, Texcoco.



Experimental Station Tlaltizapan, Morelos.



A lot is happening at Agua Fría

Staff at CIMMYT's Agua Fría experiment station have been busy over the past three months. On March 08 2012, they hosted a group of 33 farmers from Fundación Produce, who attended a training session on how to make crosses and select seed, as well how to produce more on less land. On 19 April students from Universidad de Tuxpan visited to receive training on field activities.

On 28 March, staff and local farmers came together to take a course in preventive maintenance of crop machinery, held at the station and taught by experts of the company Tractores Rivera.

To say goodbye to superintendent and irrigation assistant Noé Agustín Andrés, and superintendent Raymundo López, farewell lunches were held for both, on 23 March and 04 May respectively. ¶¶



Welcome Rajasekharan and Andrés

Rajasekharan Nelloli

will join CIMMYT as director of International Human Resources on 01 August 2012 at El Batán. Raj has thirty years of professional experience with multinational organizations in both for-profit and non-profit sectors. Most recently he was director of Human Resources at ICARDA (the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas), Aleppo, Syria. He holds an MSc in Human Resources Management and a BSc in Zoology with minors in Chemistry and Botany. His areas of expertise are business strategy; governance; organizational design; policy development; management and administration; change management; HR strategy and systems; process automation; performance management; leadership development; global reward management; business process reengineering; and regionalized/matrix management. Raj was previously based in Mexico while working on HR projects for the CGIAR. Welcome back.



Andrés Álvarez

will join CIMMYT El Batán as corporate counsel on 1 June 2012. He has 15 years of professional experience, including as senior contracts manager at PepsiCo Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. His areas of expertise are commercial and corporate law; contracts; agreements; tax law; international trade and customs; negotiations and sales; and financial and real estate operations for public and private entities.



Andrés has a Master of Business Administration (2010) from IPADE, an executive diploma from the Program of Instruction for Lawyers of Harvard Law School, diplomas on telecommunications and on legal matters related to international trade from ITAM, and a certificate on unfair international trade practices in Mexico, United States, Canada, and NAFTA, from the College of Mexico, as well as his law degree from ITAM. ¶¶

Members of the CWC bid farewell to the Fergusons

The group gathered at the El Batán guesthouse on 16 May 2012 to say goodbye to Andrea and Scott Ferguson, who are leaving Mexico. On behalf of the CWC, Johanna Braun thanked Scott especially for introducing the ‘spouse employment program’, which has helped many spouses to get back to work. She also said that “Andrea’s organizing and cooking skills will be missed at Thanksgiving. It was always the highlight of the year.”



Scott Ferguson, former DDG of Corporate Services, also sent a goodbye note to the CIMMYT community. “Andrea and I thank you and your spouses for your support and kindness over the past three and a half years,” he said. “My experience at CIMMYT is one I will cherish, thanks to you. I have never met, or worked with, a more interesting, diverse, and talented group of people.”

“I hope to meet up with you in the future, and wish each of you the very best.” ¶¶

Celebrating Africa Day

Today, 25 May, is Africa Day, and we’re marking the event with a new CIMMYT in [Africa webpage](#). Here you can find brand new stories and videos relating to Africa, as well as the latest events, publications, and more.



All too often seen as a food security problem, Africa and Africans are a critical part of the solution. Agriculture is key to the region’s future—and Africa, with its enormous potential, will play a decisive role in the future of agriculture and global food security. Today and every day we celebrate CIMMYT’s work in Africa and the vital role and vision of African scientists, policymakers, and farmers.

Congratulations and happy Africa Day to everyone, especially our African colleagues and friends! ¶¶

Newcomers



Cenobia (Chelo) Moreno Corona, auxiliary services assistant, CS/CENDI, 12 May.



Emma Quilligan, science writer/project editor, Corporate Communications, 14 May.



Ana Karen Munguía Manilla, research assistant B, Conservation Agriculture, 11 May.

Monica Fisher, senior scientist, Socioeconomics Program/Ethiopia, 14 May.

Wilfred Mwangi, consultant, Global Maize Program/Kenya, 01 May.

Ron DePauw, consultant, Global Wheat Program/Canada, 24 April.

Paul Brennan, consultant, Global Wheat Program/Australia, 13 April.

Daniel Danial, consultant, Global Wheat Program/Netherlands, 24 April.

Departures

Hans Wullaert, consultant, Conservation Agriculture, 14 May.

Isabelle Francois, consultant, Conservation Agriculture, 23 May.

Eduardo Mejía Gómez, general services head, CS/Administration, 18 May.

Alejandro Hernández García, program accountant senior, Global Wheat Program, 18 May.

Birthdays 26-31 May

Felipe Herrera 26; Stanley Gokoma 26; Velu Govindan 27; Pawan K. Singh 27; Daniel Santiago 28; María del Carmen Corona 28; Agustín Ramírez 28; Nele Verhulst 28; Frédéric Baudron 30; Raymundo López 30; Fernando Valle 30; Fernando Rodríguez 30; Fernando Delgado 30; Ángel González 31; Jorge Manuel Montoya 31.