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INTSORMIL REPORT OF MARY FUTRELL TO HONDURAS, May 23-June 8, 1981

Mary Futrell from Mississippi State University visited Tegucigalpa and Choletuca, Honduras, May 23-June 8, 1981, for the purpose of initiating her research project. She was accompanied by Eunice McCulloch, a sociology graduate student and Robert Jones, a nutrition graduate student who will remain in the Choletuca area until August. While in Tegucigalpa, personnel from the AID Honduras Mission, Honduran Ministry of National Resources, Peace Corps and the National Nutrition Planning Office (SAPLAN) were visited. Discussions were held on the proposed research and a favorable response was received. Suggestions on suitable locations for research in the Choletuca area were discussed and appropriate maps were obtained for the selection of sample populations. Two areas were selected, both in the state of Choletuca. One area chosen is located in the mountainous area and will provide data on the sorghums grown at a higher altitude. The other area is located in the valley and will provide a different type of data. The surveys were begun and the two graduate students will collect data for two months. They will return to these same areas at harvest time to secure a complete cycle of planting, growing, harvesting, storage, etc. of the sorghum crop.

A special strength of the Sorghum and Millet CRSP is the integration of socio-economic research into the fabric of a generalized, commodity-oriented, development program. From the initiation of the INTSORMIL program, this has been one of the main objectives of our project entitled "An Interdisciplinary Approach to Nutrition Improvement of People Consuming Sorghum and Millet as the Staple Food." An attempt will be made to determine whether there are any

regularities in terms of cultural beliefs, practices, and social institutions in countries using sorghum and millet. Also, the types and amounts of participation by women in the household, agriculture, community and other economics spheres will be studied in the developing countries.

This approach will provide a body of sociocultural data that can be used by technical advisors and host country agencies in the design and implementation of active programs which are aimed at increasing nutritional levels among the poor. A questionnaire has been prepared which includes family structure, farming practices, marketing arrangements, communication and institutional structures and the social organization of villages. These questionnaires will help us to determine which socio-economic factors affect the food consumption patterns and to determine the role of women in household, agricultural, community, and economic activity and decision-making. The varieties of sorghum planted, plant diseases, plant pests, storage problems, food consumption patterns and food preparation methods are also investigated on the questionnaire. This survey in Honduras will provide data that can be used by all scientists in the INTSORMIL program in the development of research and practical applications that will be technologically sound for the region studied. If this survey provides the knowledge anticipated, the INTSORMIL team in Honduras would like to use this same model in other countries to provide a basis for appropriate scientific inputs by other INTSORMIL members.

Another objective in the research now under way in Honduras is studying the role of women in agriculture. Robert McNamara in an address to the Board of Governors of the World Bank stated "...the prevailing image of women distorts

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their full contribution to society. Women are esteemed - and encouraged to esteem themselves - in their role as mothers. Their economic contribution, though it is substantial in a number of developing societies, is almost always understated." It is also important that the contribution of women scientists in the United States not be overlooked.

As the INTSORMIL program expands and the scope of the CRSP shifts to work in developing countries, many of these women will become involved in research, training, and graduate programs. The main objective will be to guarantee that the women from developing countries will be involved in the decision-making process. The goal is to research those problems that the women themselves have identified and then work together to find solutions that will alleviate some of the inequities that the women are now bearing.

Another important aspect of this research project in Honduras is the nutritional status of the sorghum consumer. This data will be a base line study to be used as a yardstick for assessing agricultural development progress. As the breeder, plant pathologist, entomologist and food scientists becomes involved in the same villages and introduces improved varieties, future nutritional status studies will reveal whether the diets of these people are actually improved. The INTSORMIL scientists are using methods of assessing malnutrition by simple arm measurement, weight, height, and head circumference. Also, the presence of anemia, infant mortality, and infant feeding practices will be recorded. Nutrient intake of households will be recorded and analyzed. If severe malnutrition is found to exist, intervention programs such as weaning foods, education programs, etc. will be devised.

Data will be compiled on consumer preferences of grain to be used by the agronomist in the breeding program for persons involved in quality testing

and toxicology studies. Methods of preparation will be compiled, and all recipes standardized as to measurements. Other work in Honduras will be specifically related to the quality and digestibility of the sorghum tortilla. The data will be precoded and information should be available to INTSORMIL scientists in the fall of 1981.

A copy of the questionnaire which has been translated into Spanish or French is available from Mary Futrell's office or from Dr. Leng, who has English and Spanish copies on file.