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Report #8
Report of GARD Consultancy
Training
Federico Poey

April 26-May 3, 1986

MISSION REPORT

Date: May 12, 1986
From: Dr. Federico Poey, AGRIDEC, INC.
To: Dr. Kenneth Shapiro, GARD Project
Assignment: To contribute to organize the FSR/E teams and review seed proposal in GARD Project in The Gambia

Duration: April 26 - May 3, 1986

WORK DONE: Following the FSSP financed FSR/E workshop at Banjul, where I participated as instructor and resource person, a program was organized to interview key personnel including a two-day visit to the SAPU Station upland.

Persons visited:

Elon Gilbert, GARD Team leader
Tom Hobgood, AID
John Caldwell, Consultant
Mr. Bojang, Director Extension
Sompo Ceesay, Director Research
Ibrahima Diallo, GARD
Chris Elias, GARD
G.O. Gaye, Yundum
Solomon Owens, Yundum, Maize
Saihou Taal, Yundum, Soils
M.O.S., Banjul, PPMU
Jamba, Banjul, Livestock
A. Jagre, Banjul, Extension
Jens Christenssen, FAO
Omar Sonko, SAPU, Administrator
Albert Cox, SAPU, Cereals
Tom Singhore, SAPU, Senior Agronomist
Duncan Boughton, SAPU, Economist
Alfu Maron, SAPU, Rice
M.M. Dabo, SAPU, Seed Unit
Alie Secke, SAPU, Seed Lab.
Jiri Cerych, World Bank
Alain Seznee, World Bank
Josh Posner, Dakar

Travel Schedule:

- April 26-29 - SAPU Station, Yorktown rice farms and Hally Pachard Irrigation Project
- April 30 - May 2 - Banjul, Yundum St., FAO, AID, Ministry of Agriculture
- May 3 - Dakar

Accomplishments:

FSR/E team organization-

Through individual and collective interviews, jointly with John Caldwell and Ibrahima Diallo, a detailed suggestion of a bi-level FSR/E teams structure was presented with a general acceptance by all consulted. Copy of the proposal strategy which was discussed and distributed to all concerned in The Gambia is included in Annex A. In summary the strategy calls for two senior FSR/E teams operating from Yundum and SAPU that each would coordinate and back up four FSR/E field teams at the district level. An immediate pilot program was suggested to start at two selected districts for each senior team. The immediate field work plan is to handle the trials already programmed for those districts and adding a few more to complete 12-15 trials in each district that would include 1-2 defined and designed at the FSR/E workshop ended the previous week. Both level teams are to be as interdisciplinary as possible including extensionists at both levels.

On my return trip I stopped in Dakar to inform Josh Posner of these activities.

The Yundum group discussed and agreed on two locations and tentative team constitutions were defined. At SAPU, the senior staff was to meet on May 6 to define the program there.

Review of ODA seed report-

Comments and suggestions based on the ODA seed report were discussed in an informal work session with World Bank and GARD representatives on May 1st. A summary of those viewpoints was delivered to Elon Gilbert who considered them in a formal work session with World Bank and government representatives. Some of those viewpoints were:

The suggested privatization concept of the seed industry is adequate but needs to consider a "cottage industry" approach dependent on selected farmers in the communities that could be assisted by the Seed Unit and could realize a profit selling to neighbors.

Limitations to a more commercial approach considering a prime contractor who contracts production to seed growers and later sells to farmers include: the lack of consistent seed demand that does not offer a price margin to account for incentives for both the seed growers and the prime contractors, and the necessary financing and storage costs. Furthermore, the certified seed quality does not necessarily offer higher yields to farmers, but higher varietal purity and germination that for the subsistence farmers' criteria it is not appreciated or necessary. Only when a new variety is offered can a demand be created.

The suggested mechanisms through "organized demand" as non-government organizations, cooperatives, Licensed Buying Agents, etc. should also be pursued. In these cases, the available margin should favor the prime contractor over the seed growers.

The report did not consider a transition phase that would be necessary to implement.

CONCLUSIONS:

Existing conditions offer excellent possibilities for an effective implementation of a station and field research organization with a sound multiplication effect of available human resources to achieve in 2-3 years a nation-wide FSR/E program. The following components already exist:

1. Experience and personnel knowledgeable in setting on-farm trials.
2. An operational relationship between extension and research.
3. A critical mass of FSR/E trained national senior and field staff.

The FAO resident Jens Christensen and ODA Ag. Economist assigned at SAPU, Duncan Boughton, have led a remarkable program of implementing on-farm non-replicated trials that are planted and monitored by extensionists. Each extensionist of the more than 250 in the country is assigned at least one trial. Although the program does not have the FSR/E approach, it is indeed a significant step, in the right direction. Drs. Christensen and Boughton understand this and through the suggested organization the GARD project should be able to channel this and other valuable human resources for a rapid and successful implementation of an effective and efficient research and extension project in The Gambia.

A N N E X A

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STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN THE FARMING SYSTEMS APPROACH TO
RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

BACKGROUND:

An efficient on-farm research-extension linkage process has been implemented through the allocation of one demonstration/trial to each extensionist or agricultural Yamarla (AY) in the country. A more limited system has been devised for field level experimentation through the DEC fenced plots in each district headquarter. On the stations, commodity programs have identified a number of research alternatives that require refinement and evaluation under farmer's conditions. The DEC research program is thus the key link between the station and extension programs.

OBJECTIVES:

The strategy outlined below seeks to strengthen the on-farm research activities presently assigned to the DEC's through the establishment of multidisciplinary teams that would consolidate the Farming Systems approach to research and extension already initiated. Specific objectives include:

1. To regionalize research-extension activities for more orderly diagnosis of farmer's constraints and maximization of resources in designing and implementing research alternatives.

2. To substantially increase the number and types of exploratory and refinement on-farm trials.
3. To establish permanent and self-motivated mechanisms of two-way interaction among extensionists, station researchers, and related programs and institutions to interpret and solve farmers' agricultural constraints in a more bottom-ups manner.

METHODOLOGY:

A clearly defined organization of two FSR/E station teams (Yundum and Sapu, respectively) of senior staff would each coordinate activities of various FSR/E field teams of a multi-disciplinary nature permanently based in selected districts (see Diagram). The two senior FSR/E teams would interact through the SECRETARIAT of the National Agriculture Research Board (NARB). Both teams would interact with the commodity programs of both stations, and with all other related programs and projects for scientific and logistics support.

FSR SENIOR TEAMS:

These are composed of senior level staff from research and extension at each station (Sapu and Yundum). A steering committee of each team coordinates and conducts the basic activities of the team in backstopping the activities of the corresponding FSR/E field teams. Together, the senior and field teams, with the added specific support of other selected individuals from the Ministry or other related programs and institutions, collaborate in diagnosing the target area, preparing work plans, and monitoring and analyzing trial

results. The field teams take full responsibility for the execution of the work plan. The senior team supports this and the other field teams under its jurisdiction in the same manner.

FSR/E FIELD TEAMS:

These are composed of representatives of research, extension, livestock, socio-economics, NGO and other institutions and departments. Each should have a technical coordinator and an administration coordinator. Each also needs to have adequate mobility and physical resources to conduct on-farm trials in the assigned region from a permanent in-situ headquarters. Team members should number 4 or 5 each and can be identified for each location within available personnel in the Ministry or NGO institutions. Typically, each should include a research specialist, an extensionist, a socio-economic person, and specifically region related specialists from livestock, irrigation, or horticulture.

IMPLEMENTATION:

In its final stage, two or three years from now, the system should include between 6 and 9 field teams through programmed expansion of action area and addition of new regions, which should cover the whole country.

Considering the proximity of the planting season and the completely finished workplan for 1986 a pilot implementation project is suggested that contemplates a minimum of disturbance of already approved plans. All extension activities already programmed, including demonstration/trial implementation, should proceed as planned. The only intervention is to occur

in the DEC's replicated trial program in a maximum of two districts each in the areas of influence of the Sapu and Yundum stations respectively.

Presently, each DEC has been assigned 2 to 4 replicated trials. These will be conducted by the assigned field team. The team would also add 10 - 12 trials of the same design as those assigned to the AY, plus one or two more previously designed by FSR/E workshop participants. The new workload of 12 - 14 additional trials would be distributed among the field team members who on a team basis would locate, plant and handle data collection, harvesting, analysis and interpretation of results.

Close interaction of the field team with nearby AY's should benefit both groups.

The only affected position in the extension organization would be the DES who would be expected to participate in the field team on a part-time basis, equivalent to the time that he had originally programmed to carry on the replicated trials in the DEC plot.

In year 2, new field teams could be organized around selected individuals from this year's teams.

ISSUES:

The following aspects deserve special consideration upon implementing the suggested pilot project:

1. Transport, funding, and maintenance;
2. Administrative and technical management;
3. Allocation of field team members and redistribution of previous workload;
4. Adapting the pilot project to the Training and Visit program.