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FOREWORD

The Workshop on Research Priorities in Tidal Swamp Rice, held 22-25 June 1981 in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, marked a departure from the international rice research community's usual approach to tidal swamp rice culture. In previous conferences on submergence-prone rice, tidal swamp rice sessions were ancillary to the broader approach to deepwater rice. But increasingly scientists have begun to recognize the tidal swamps as a unique environment, and to consider the rice culture practiced in those areas as important enough to merit a workshop exclusively on tidal swamp rice. The workshop was unique in another way as well. It was the first international scientific conference to be held in South Kalimantan.

The best rice growing areas are, of course, those in which water can be efficiently and economically controlled. And those land resources have received the greatest priority in research efforts over the last few decades. But only one of four rice farmers are fortunate enough to live in such favored environments. The other 75% must make do in a diversity of adverse environments.

Farmers in the tidal swamps of Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam face problems different from those encountered by farmers in more favored environments, among them uncontrolled water regimes, soil acidity, and mineral deficiency. By identifying the problems unique to the tidal swamp areas, the workshop attempted to identify new technologies that, by a concerted research effort, could be generated for the fragile environment of those tidal swamps.

Land is a shrinking resource for agriculture and we must learn to produce more food from lands now considered marginal in production potential. The demands of an ever increasing population make it necessary to increase our capability to produce rice and other food crops on lands such as tidal swamps. The workshop enabled us to review our knowledge of tidal swamp rice, to identify research priorities, and to formulate collaborative programs.

The Agency for Agricultural Research and Development (AARD) of the Government of Indonesia, with whom IRRI cosponsored the workshop, deserves special recognition for undertaking the workshop in an area where logistics were difficult, but the rewards were great.

The workshop organizing committee consisted of B. S. Vergara, chairman, S. K. De Datta, and D. V. Seshu, all of IRRI headquarters; J. R. Cowan, IRRI liaison scientist for Indonesia and Malaysia; B. R. Jackson, IRRI representative for Thailand; and B. H. Siwi, H. Anwarhan, and H. Noorsyamsi, AARD. The workshop papers were edited by W. H. Smith, editor, with the assistance of Gloria S. Argosino, assistant editor.

M. S. Swaminathan
Director General

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