



Iran and IRRI

History of collaboration

Rice is one of the main foods consumed in Iran, along with wheat, sugar and honey, and fruits, and is grown on about half a million hectares. The average Iranian consumes about 30 kg of rice annually, and most consumers prefer rice that has high grain quality and is aromatic. In 2010, Iran produced about 2.3 million tons of rice with rice farms producing an average of 4 t/ha.

Iran and IRRI's collaboration started in 1976 with a memorandum of agreement between the Iranian government's Research Organization of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and IRRI. In 1990, a one-year work plan was signed for scientific and technical cooperation between the Iranian government, through this organization of the Ministry of Agriculture, and IRRI.

IRRI scientists have since visited Iran to monitor existing projects in the country and several work plans have also been signed to support these collaborations and capacity-building partnerships.

In a visit to IRRI in April 2010, Deputy Minister of the Jihad-e-Agriculture of Iran and head of the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization, Dr. J. Pourhemmat, made an agreement with IRRI Director General Robert Zeigler to open the regional hub at RRII in Rasht, in close cooperation with IRRI in strategic rice research and training.

In September 2010, IRRI's head of research, Dr. Achim Dobermann, and a team of IRRI scientists (Dr. Jauhar Ali, Dr. Melissa Fitzgerald, Dr. Casiana Vera Cruz, and Dr. Arvind Kumar)



visited the Rice Research Institute of Iran (RRII) to strengthen rice research cooperation and promote collaborative ties with Iran.

RRII established an international training center called the Regional Rice Research and Training Hub for the Central and West Asia and North Africa region, with full endorsement from IRRI and Guilan Province Governor General R. Ghahramani, who cut the ribbon in the inaugural ceremony on 18 September 2010.

Following that, a training workshop on commercialization of hybrid rice seed production in Iran, jointly organized by

IRRI and RRII, was held and attended by 40 researchers, seed growers, seed certification officers, and policymakers from provincial agricultural organizations from different parts of Iran.

IRRI has also been honored by awards given by Iran. The first was in August 2000, when Dr. Gurdev Khush, IRRI's principal plant breeder, received a Plaque of Appreciation and Gold Medal from Dr. Issa Kalantari, who was then Iran's minister of agriculture. In February 2004, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami gave Dr. Khush the Khwarzimi International Award for Agriculture.

Key achievements in Iran

- **Shared rice:** Via INGER (the International Network for Genetic Evaluation of Rice), Iran has received 11 varieties of rice for further research and breeding. Iran has also contributed 11 varieties of rice for conservation to the International Rice Genebank, while IRRI has released a total of 1,035 samples to the country.

- **Built capacity:** A total of 53 Iranian scholars pursuing doctorate and master's degrees, as well as interns and fellows have been trained at IRRI, as well as 101 nondegree trainees in short training courses.
- **Financed rice research:** Since 1976, Iran has contributed around US\$2.8 million to CGIAR to support international agricultural research, including the research of IRRI.

IRRI's current research and development activities with Iran

Developing better varieties: IRRI and Iran are developing molecular markers to enable selection against chalk in rice to improve rice quality. Existing projects also seek to produce salt tolerance to help the salt-affected rice areas in the country and help create resistance of rice to sheath blight disease, as well as develop high-yielding rice with "Sadri" quality.

Understanding rice: IRRI and Iran are embarking on understanding the genetic diversity and traits of Iranian rice.

Improving rice management: IRRI and Iran are developing site-specific management best practices for the irrigated rice system in northern Iran.

International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)

IRRI is a nonprofit, independent organization that, through rice research, aims to:

- reduce poverty and hunger
- improve the health of rice farmers and consumers, and
- ensure that rice production is environmentally sustainable.

IRRI develops new rice varieties and rice crop management techniques that help rice farmers improve the yield and quality of their rice in an environmentally sustainable way.

We work with our public and private sector partners in national agricultural research and extension systems in major rice-growing countries to do research, training, and knowledge transfer.

Our social and economic research also informs governments to help them formulate policy to improve the equitable supply of rice.

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