Rice in India

Rice is India’s pre-eminent crop. Its rice harvesting area is the largest in the world, covering 44 million hectares. India is also one of the largest producers of white rice, accounting for 20% of global rice production. Rice production increased from 54 million tons in 1980 to 75 million tons in 1990, a 39% increase over the decade. In 2011-12, production reached a record high of 104.3 million tons.

Rice is the staple food of around 60% of India's total population and accounts for 40% of their food production. Rice-based production systems provide the main source of income and employment for more than 50 million households.

IRRI’s key achievements in India

- **Breeding of stress-tolerant rice.** These varieties are helping enhance and stabilize rice productivity under India’s changing climate.
- **Building of institutional capacity.** From 1962 to 2017, a total of 1,668 Indian researchers participated in IRRI education and training programs.
- **Conservation and exchange of rice germplasm.** India has contributed over 18,000 rice varieties to the International Rice Genebank, including traditional and modern varieties and wild relatives.
- **Delivery of new varieties, management practices, and technologies.** IR8 sparked a partnership that has produced more than 400 improved rice varieties, streamlined rice production practices, and intensified information exchange with Indian scientists.
- **Improved roll-out of hybrid rice.** With IRRI’s support, India now ranks second only to China in commercial production of hybrid rice.
- **Developing research advancements.** IRRI is helping India accelerate research on climate change impact and environmental sustainability, management of soil and water, and measuring methane gas emissions of rice production.

Rice statistics in India (2009)

- 44,100,000 hectares Total harvested area of rough rice (paddy)
- 148,260,000 metric tons Rough rice production
- 85,430,000 metric tons Milled rice consumption
- 2,500,000 metric tons Rice exports
International Rice Research Institute

IRRI aims to improve livelihoods and nutrition, abolishing poverty, hunger, and malnutrition among those who depend on rice-based agri-food systems. In doing so, IRRI’s work protects the health of rice farmers and consumers, and the environmental sustainability of rice farming in a world challenged by climate change. IRRI’s work promotes the empowerment of women and supports opportunities for youth in an equitable agri-food system.

July 2018