



UPLB AND IRRI

The University of the Philippines at Los Baños has always been a firm partner and ally of the International Rice Research Institute in its research mission, hosting IRRI's headquarters and providing a steady and reliable stream of scientists and scientific training since the Institute's founding in 1960.

Even before IRRI's founding, the Rockefeller and Ford foundations had started discussing the possibility of setting up the Institute at the campus of the University of the Philippines College of Agriculture (UPCA), which would later become UPLB. With the strong support of the Philippine government, and because of the UPCA's excellent quality of instruction and research in the agricultural sciences, the campus was selected as the best place to set up IRRI.

In 1959, UPCA leased land to IRRI. The current lease extends to the year 2025. The relationship between the Philippines' top university in agriculture and the life sciences and the world's premier research center on rice continues to flourish and bear fruit.

UPLB and IRRI have a rich common history, packed with milestones that resonate throughout Asia and, increasingly, to other parts of the world in which rice is grown and consumed.

From the Green Revolution in the 1960s to the second Green Revolution that has started brewing in Asia's unfavorable rice environments, IRRI continues to make a difference toward securing food and farmers' livelihoods, and its excellent conduct of science continues to borrow significantly from the expertise that UPLB produces.



IRRI Director General Robert Zeigler and UPLB Chancellor Fernando Sanchez, Jr., breaking ground together for a new research facility at IRRI in January.

A research university

UPLB's strong culture of research and development started after the founding of the UPCA, its first college, in 1909.

UPLB developed many of the country's most important innovations on improving food production and promoting environmental sustainability. The R&D mandate of UPLB is carried out in collaboration with

member institutions of the Los Baños science community that includes IRRI. Both are members of the Los Baños Science Community Foundation Inc. (LBSCFI), a group hosted by the Philippine Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

Highlights of collaboration

- Since 1962, IRRI has supported more than 1,300 UPLB students, faculty members, and staff members—more than half of whom were MS degree students, 29% were PhD students, and 12% BS students, interns, or on-the-job trainees through full scholarships or research support for theses or dissertations and were supervised by IRRI scientists. Almost 1 out of 3 of those supported by IRRI were female.
- Today, around 50 IRRI staff members have been appointed as adjunct faculty members at UPLB, serving in committees for the evaluation of PhD and MS students.
- UPLB, IRRI, and PhilRice have committed to jointly promote and accelerate research and training in rice, rice-based farming systems, and rural development; and to continually improve coordination and management of collaboration in the Philippines.

Collaborative projects

IRRI shares resources, such as farm machinery, with UPLB as needed. It has also donated scientific equipment and vehicles to the university, as well as shared the expertise of its staff members who provide technical guidance and advice to UPLB students.

In 1990, a council was created to strengthen collaboration between UPLB and IRRI and coordinate joint projects, two of which are described below:

- The UPLB College of Environmental Science and Management helped assess IRRI's containment facility for biotechnology research. A special greenhouse for transgenics research is being used by both IRRI and UPLB staff under a genetic engineering program for rice.
- Gender concerns among national agricultural research and extension systems (NARES), were discussed through IRRI's research project on women in rice farming systems, which started in 1986.

Current collaboration

- Strategic research for sustainable food and nutrition security in Asia
(A project funded by the ADB)
- "Gawad patnubay, gawad pag-aaral, tungo sa maunlad na bayan"
(A project funded by the Landbank of the Philippines' College Scholarship Program)

Completed collaborative projects (as of 2014)

- Enhancing profitability of rice farming in Asia through improved nutrient and crop management
(A project funded by IFA, IPNI, and IPI)
- Improved management for rice-maize production system in Pangasinan
(A project funded by IRRI)

UPLB alumni as pillars of IRRI

Some Philippine national scientists have served IRRI as international staff members or consultants, among them Gelia Castillo, UPLB professor emeritus and IRRI consultant; Ben Juliano, cereal chemist; and Ben Vergara, agronomist and administrator.

UPLB alumni who are or have been staff members or consultants at IRRI include Fernando Bernardo, former IRRI deputy director general for international programs; Marcos Vega, former deputy director general or DDG (1971-86) and the first Filipino to be appointed as such at IRRI; Fernando Bernardo, former DDG (1986-99); William Padolina, former DDG for partnerships and operations; and Ben Vergara.

"IRRI is part of UPLB, UPLB is part of IRRI."

Fernando Sanchez, Jr., UPLB chancellor, during the groundbreaking ceremony for the Lloyd T. Evans Plant Growth Facility at IRRI Headquarters (January 2015)

"Rural development, poverty alleviation, and eradication of hunger have been a shared mission of our respective institutions. We have become not just your (IRRI's) host but your partner; you are not our guest but a valued friend; and our friendship will remain stronger as IRRI celebrates its golden anniversary."

Luis Rey Velasco, former UPLB chancellor, during IRRI's 50th anniversary celebrations

"IRRI's location at the UPLB campus has been particularly fortunate, and among IRRI's greatest blessings has been the total and unstinted support of the UPLB chancellor and staff, and of the Philippine government."

M.S. Swaminathan, former IRRI director general

"The joint venture between our two institutions has been mutually beneficial over the years. IRRI's support staff are among the finest in the world, thanks to that UPLB-IRRI connection."

Randy Barker, former head of the IRRI social science division

International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)

IRRI is the world's premier research organization dedicated to reducing poverty and hunger through rice science; improving the health and welfare of rice farmers and consumers; and protecting the rice-growing environment for future generations. Headquartered in the Philippines and with offices in 17 countries, IRRI is a global, independent, nonprofit research and training institute supported by public and private donors.

IRRI breeds and introduces advanced rice varieties that yield more grain and better withstand pests and disease as well as flooding, drought, and other harmful effects of climate change. The Institute develops new and improved methods and technologies that enable farmers to manage their farms profitably and sustainably. IRRI recommends rice varieties and agricultural practices suitable to particular farm conditions and consumer preferences. Finally, IRRI assists national agricultural research and extension systems (NARES) in formulating and implementing national rice sector strategies and programs.

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