



Syngenta Media Releases:

Syngenta and IRRI collaborate to benefit Asia's rice farmers

Singapore, September 7, 2009

Syngenta and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate in undertaking rice research, build scientific capacity, and establish a Scientific Know-how Exchange Program (SKEP). The public-private partnership aims to help deliver technology-driven solutions to rice farmers and the rice industry in the face of climate change and global food security challenges.

The SKEP will allow Syngenta and IRRI to pool their expertise and resources and focus on a number of areas such as characterizing the genetic diversity of rice, marker-assisted breeding applications, and dealing with rice productivity constraints.

"Syngenta has significant expertise in rice research, the use of marker technology and in the development of holistic approaches to crop production and performance," says Dr. Robert Zeigler, director general, IRRI. "This compliments the strengths of IRRI which include conserving the world's largest collection of rice, numerous breeding programs available to farmers worldwide, and expertise on all aspects of sustainable management for the key rice production systems. We will work together on disseminating new crop management and postharvest technologies in key rice-growing regions, including water-saving irrigation and site-specific nutrient management."

"Our collaboration with IRRI including the SKEP is an important next step in our close working relationship", says Peter Pickering, Syngenta Head of Seeds for the Asia Pacific region. "It is entirely consistent with Syngenta's very strong commitment to rice in the region and to improving outcomes for rice farmers."

Future areas of research collaboration on the agenda may include insect resistance monitoring and management, newly emerging diseases, grain quality, weed management in dry-seeded rice, water quality and ecosystem services, and alternative forms of irrigation. Public awareness events on rice and scholarships for educating a new generation of rice scientists are also scheduled to be part of the SKEP agreement.

On hand to witness the signing was Syngenta Chairman Martin Taylor who was in the region visiting several of Syngenta's rice and research facilities.

In 2010 IRRI celebrates its 50th anniversary. Since its establishment IRRI has fostered many partnerships with the private sector and others that have increased IRRI's capacity to deliver on its mission to improve the welfare of rice farmers and consumers – particularly through higher rice yields.

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