



The continuing discussion on LEISA and Masipag organic rice production.

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KADAMA: recreating lost biodiversity

KADAMA farmers' organisation was founded in 1991 as a confederation of five farmer organisations: DIWA, UGNAYAN, LIKHA, PMK and KADAMA. It has about 1500 members.

Cooperation between farmers dates from 1981-1984 when the Agency for Community Education Services (ACES Foundation), a rural development NGO, facilitated participatory assessment of Green Revolution technologies on small farmers in four communities.

A consensus was created on the need to unite with other farmer groups in the interests of change and the development of alternative technologies. Similar assessments were organised in other communities and, in 1985, four 'BIGAS' follow-up conferences were organised, three at regional level and one national conference. Here farmers described their negative experiences with HYVs and related technologies and programmes and were able to recommend alternatives (Modina and Ridao, 1987).

In 1986 the 'MASIPAG' Centre (*Mga Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pagpapaunlad ng Pang-agrikulturang Agbam* = Farmers and Scientists for Agricultural Science Development) was set up in Jaen, Nueva Ecija. Facilitated by ACES Foundation, it started to cooperate with farmers in eight communities where DIWA was active. This Centre was the first of thirteen envisioned for the various provinces and aimed at stimulating grass-root change. Its programme was intended to enhance direct cooperation between farmers, scientists and development workers. MASIPAG focused on collecting and evaluating traditional rice varieties (TRVs); breeding improved traditional varieties (ITRVs) appropriate to local soils and cli-

mates; alternative pest management using locally produced pest traps; biological pesticides; resistant varieties and diversified farming techniques; organic farming using organic fertilisers; and training farmers in rice breeding and documentation.

The farmers established community seed banks in farms managed by each federation and at the same time maintained at least five varieties on their own farms. Varieties were not only characterised and multiplied but were also subjected to variety adaptability trials. Interested farmers chose parent materials for breeding from the pool of locally adapted varieties and, after some training, they made their own crosses (Basilio, Razon and Estrella, forthcoming).

KADAMA's involvement in the MASIPAG programme and the support of ACES Foundation ended in 1994. MASIPAG now focuses on Mindanao and Negros where it has become very successful.

A new impulse

Twelve members started to test the MASIPAG package. It consisted of traditional and improved traditional varieties, chicken manure (at a rate of 90 sacks i.e. 4,500 kg/ha.) straight planting (40x40) facing an east-west direction and 2-3 seedlings per pocket. After a few seasons about 200 farmers were involved in testing.

The KADAMA federation aimed to enhance farmer cooperation, spread the use of MASIPAG technology and organise the marketing of MASIPAG rice. Marketing was unsuccessful, however. Farmers were forced to sell their rice to local traders who paid them lower prices for TRVs and ITRVs. This problem and because there was no crop assurance for farmers using the MASIPAG package, made many

KADAMA members lose interest even though their production costs were lower and there had been no negative effects on the environment or community. Some of the more motivated farmers, however, continued to use organic fertilisers and ITRVs.

In 1996 the ILEIA Research Programme gave a new impulse to experimenting with alternative/ LEISA rice production. PTD experiments provided strong evidence that soil fertility management with chicken manure produced results equivalent to local practices based on chemical fertilisers at reduced cost (see Abon p 29). ITRVs also proved as productive as the commonly used HYVs.

KADAMA is giving high priority to recreating the biodiversity lost through rice production and has launched a new ITRV selection and breeding initiative. It plans to continue PTD experiments on soil fertility management and on such new approaches as the rice intensification system (SRI) developed in Madagascar (see ILEIA Newsletter Vol 15 No 3 & 4, Dec. 99).

Summarised from: Melencio F. Razon, Domingo S. Ramos, Victoriano Bautista, Aurelio P. Estrella, 1999. **The evolution of sustainable agriculture in the KADAMA organisation. Internal report of the ILEIA Research Programme.** KADAMA, 30 Bernardo District, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, Central Luzon, The Philippines.

References:

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- Modina RB and Ridao AR, 1987. **IRRI rice: the miracle that never was.** ACES Foundation Inc. Quezon City, 140 pp.