

Matter for forthcoming "IARI News"

- from IARI, regional station, Wellington

A new farm developed at IARI regional station, Wellington for research on Wheat based cropping systems suited in hilly Tamil Nadu and southern Karnataka

IARI, Regional Station situated at Wellington in the Nilgiri hills of Tamil Nadu was established during 1954 under "Coordinated Wheat Rust Disease Control Scheme" of Govt. of India. This station played a very significant role in carrying forward the green revolution in India as seeds of CIMMYT, dwarf wheat varieties brought first time from Mexico were multiplied here in summer of 1962 and the same seed was used for laying out small scale demonstrations in 1962-63 rabi season at Delhi. Because of availability of inoculum of wheat rust diseases and favourable climate for wheat cultivation throughout the year, the wheat scientists of all agricultural universities in India and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) now use this station to screen their materials for disease resistance, advancing generations, initial seed multiplication of important strains of future wheat varieties and for making fresh crosses. In due course of time, this station has therefore, blossomed into an excellent off – season nursery center for wheat and several other winter crops for the entire country. Famous international wheat scientists like Dr. Norman E. Borlaug (Nobel prize winner), Dr. R. G. Anderson, Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, Dr. R. A. McIntosh, Dr. Watson, Dr. Roy Johnson, Dr. S. Nagarajan etc. have been regular visitors to this station. Recently, station has contributed enormously to Indian wheat improvement programme by incorporating disease resistance genes in majority of the high yielding wheat varieties of India.

A piece of 7.3 acres of slopy and barren land profusely infested with abnoxious Lantana weed, useless shrubs and deciduous trees at this station have been now converted into a farm having well labeled and tractor accessible/ploughable terraces. The existing farm area at this station could cater the need of summer nursery facilities and our research programmes targeted to develop rust resistant varieties for Indian conditions in general and developing short duration, less water requiring varieties for hilly Tamil Nadu and southern Karnataka. In due course of time we realized that vegetable cultivation especially potato and cabbage have become very favorite of Nilgiri farmers. But being part of the custodian of wheat research system of our country, we wish that Nilgiri farmers, as has been in the past must also continue with wheat cultivation and contribute in meeting national target of producing 109 mt by 2025. We don't want to disturb their passion

for cash crops like potato and cabbage but at the same time we insist upon them to cultivate wheat by following Wheat – potato or wheat – cabbage intercultures. But before doing that we need to evolve suitable farm technologies and the available arable land at this station was not sufficient. Hence to fulfil this dream we required to have additional research farm area and that is why this new farm has been created.

This newly created farm area measuring about 7.3 acres at IARI, regional station, Wellington was inaugurated by honorable Director IARI, Dr. H.S. Gupta in presence of honorable District Collector, Nilgiris (Tamil Nadu) and honorable Joint Director, IARI, Prof. K.R.Koundal on 18th August, 2009.



A view of new farm facility created at IARI regional station, Wellington



Director IARI, New Delhi, Dr. H. S. Gupta (front right) being shown the new farm area developed at IARI regional station, Wellington by the Head of the station, Dr. Jagdish Kumar (front left), Joint Director (Research), Prof. K.R. Koundal (back right) and Dr. M. Sivasamy, Sr. Scientist and farm incharge (back left) also seen