



Making a difference in Asia and the Pacific



Special issue - October 2008

Supporting agricultural research through grants

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Message from the Grants Coordinator

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*Making a Difference in
Asia and the Pacific*

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Islands

**Issue 21: June-July
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Food security in the
context of increasing
commodity prices

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Rural infrastructure

IFAD is supporting a number of regional grant programmes in the Asia and the Pacific region that aim to:

- develop and disseminate sustainable agricultural technologies that are directly relevant to IFAD's target groups and their household food-security strategies, with particular reference to the special challenges in remote, risk-prone and marginalized areas
- pilot innovative approaches and test new mechanisms that can enhance the livelihood strategies of IFAD's target groups
- build and strengthen the capacities of national research centres and other partners in development, including participants in IFAD-supported projects.

Support to agricultural research and technology is an important component of IFAD's grant programme. It can provide poor rural people living in remote and marginal areas with the knowledge and innovations they need to increase the productivity and sustainability of their production systems.

IFAD provides grants to institutions to support pro-poor agricultural research activities. Often, these institutions fall under the **Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research** (CGIAR), a strategic partnership including 15 international centres generating cutting-edge science to foster sustainable agricultural growth. Such growth benefits poor people through stronger food security, improved human nutrition and health, higher incomes and improved management of natural resources. Pro-poor sustainable agricultural research strengthens the technical and institutional capacities of national research systems linked to agricultural and rural development. It also promotes farmers' participation and adopts multidisciplinary approaches to technology generation, validation and dissemination.

This year, two issues of the newsletter will be entirely dedicated to describing a selection of regional grant programmes, some of which are still in progress.

This issue provides an overview of the agricultural research carried out by CGIAR centres in IFAD-funded grant projects in different sub-regions of Asia. It also presents the results that can potentially alleviate poverty, sustain a healthy environment and provide alternative livelihoods to poor rural people.

Another issue of the newsletter on grants will be published in December 2008.

rural infrastructure

Issue 19: January-February 2008

Rural finance

Issue 18: December 2007

Forestry

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Water

Issue 16: June-July 2007

Managing risks and reducing vulnerability to natural hazards

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- Sustainable natural resource management

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beyond the resource allocation system

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New groundnut variety brings hope to poor farmers in India


A new variety of groundnut (ICGV 91114 or 'Anantha Jyoti') has generated hope among poor, rain-dependent groundnut farmers in the district of Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh. Among its many benefits, it produces higher yields of fodder and tolerates droughts. The variety was introduced by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) through the 'farmer participatory on-farm varietal selection approach'. IFAD supported ICRISAT through a US \$1.3 million grant entitled Programme for Farmer-Participatory Improvement of Grain Legumes in Rainfed Asia (2002-2007).

Anantapur is the largest groundnut-growing district in southern India. About 1 million hectares of land are devoted to growing groundnut. The area is characterized by erratic and uneven rainfall, frequent droughts, gravely fields with poor and shallow soils, and resource-poor farmers. In these conditions, crops fail in three out of five years. The average yield of groundnut in the rainy season in the district is only 400 kg per hectare. Groundnut can survive dry spells better than other crops. During crop failure, groundnut can at least provide some fodder for farmers' livestock.

For these reasons, the cultivation of groundnut is expanding. Until the 1960s, groundnut covered only 20 per cent of the district's arable area. Currently, it covers more than 70 per cent. Nevertheless, farmers are using a very old groundnut variety – TMV 2, released in 1940. It is low-yielding and susceptible to diseases and pests.

The Programme for Farmer-Participatory Improvement of Grain Legumes in Rainfed Asia has



A farmer demonstrating ICGV 91114  a new hope for rainfed-agriculture farmers in India

Issue 12:
September/October 2006 - Communication for poverty reduction and rural development

Issue 11: July/August 2006 - Working with UN agencies at the country level

Issue 10: May/June 2006 - Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities

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September/October 2005 - Gender & MDGs

Issue 5: July/August 2005 - Partnership

played a crucial role in providing farmers with new varieties of groundnut. The varieties respond to farmers' preferences, which are based on their perceptions of what they consider most important. For example, in Anantapur farmers highly value drought tolerance and fodder quantity and quality.

The programme worked with organizations such as the Rural Development Trust, Agricultural Research Station, Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University, and farmers to find a replacement for TMV 2. It conducted trials with nine improved groundnut varieties. A participatory evaluation conducted by the programme showed that among the nine varieties tested, farmers preferred ICGV 91114 because of the following characteristics:

- higher pod and haulm (fodder) yields
- early and uniform pod maturity
- higher shelling turnover and larger seed size
- tolerance to mid- and end-of-season droughts
- better digestibility and palatability of its haulms.

Farmers have benefited from cultivating ICGV 91114. Their additional income from producing and selling this improved variety ranged from INR 3,500 (US\$ 83) to INR 4,375 (US\$ 104) per hectare in 2007/08.

In 2006 the Andhra Pradesh State Seed Sub-Committee approved the release of ICGV 91114 for general cultivation in the district.

Mrs Shyamamma, a farmer from West Narsapuram village, multiplied the seed of the improved variety on 0.63 hectares of irrigated land during the 2003-2004 post-rainy season. She produced 1,200 kg pods (1,920 kg per hectare) and sold her seeds to other farmers who planned to plant them during the rainy season in 2004. During the post-rainy season in 2007/08 farmers produced 9.6 tons of seed of ICGV 91114 from 46 hectares of land. This year during the rainy season, they plan to produce seed of this variety on 480 hectares of land.

The gains made through the programme are being consolidated and scaled up at both original



Gravelly fields with poor and shallow soils dominate in the Anantapur district

Issue 4: May/June 2005

- Rural Finance

Issue 3: March/ April 2005

- Donor Harmonization

Issue 2: January/ February 2005

Issue 1: November/ December 2004

Upcoming events and missions:

IFAD

The IFAD Executive Board approved the following projects/programmes during its 94th Session on 10-11 September:

Indonesia – IFAD Support to the National Programme for Community Empowerment in Rural Areas

Kyrgyzstan –

and new locations under another IFAD-supported grant programme, the Programme for Harnessing the True Potential of Legumes: Economic and Knowledge Empowerment of Poor Farmers in Rainfed Areas in Asia (2007-2012). The US\$ 1.4 million programme supports poor farmers in India, Nepal and Viet Nam.

In India, the programme is promoting the local production of improved seeds to ensure that they are available for farmers in areas covered by two IFAD-funded projects in three states –the Jharkhand-Chattisgarh Tribal Development Programme and the Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme.

Based on the collaboration with the Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology in Bhubaneswar, in 2008 the Orissa State Seed Sub-Committee released ICGV 91114 (marketed as '*Devi*') for cultivation in the state. ICGV 91114 has shown a pod yield superiority ranging from 3 to 42 per cent over traditional varieties, and is especially popular among tribal farmers.

ICGV 91114 is also performing well in trials in Karnataka and is likely to be released there soon. The Akshay Seed Tech Company, a private seed company, is marketing ICGV 91114 as '*Akshay Prabhat*' in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The farmer-participatory approach in agricultural research and development is providing a powerful tool for personnel involved in research and development, particularly in rainfed agriculture. Through this approach, solutions are being found to constraints that have been persistent.

S. N. Nigam, Principal Scientist (Groundnut), ICRISAT

Read more about:

- [Rural Poverty in India](#)
- [IFAD in India](#)
- [ICGV 91114 – a new variety of groundnut](#)
- [International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics \(ICRISAT\)](#)
- [Jharkhand-Chattisgarh Tribal Development Programme](#)
- [Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme](#)
- [Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology](#)

Agricultural Investments and Services Project

Afghanistan

Design completion and quality assurance mission – Rural

Microfinance Project, 1-14 November 2008

Bangladesh

Annual review of COSOP, Dhaka, end of September

Supervision mission – Finance for Enterprise Development and Employment Creation Project, 20-30 November 2008

Bhutan

Mid-term review mission – Agriculture Marketing and Enterprise Development Programme, October 2008

Cambodia