

Integrating Agricultural Research and Extension

Research and extension play important roles in technology transfer, a matter of vital importance for enhancing agricultural productivity. It is essential that these two support services be integrated properly if the technology transfer process is to be effective. In many instances, however, research and extension activities are undertaken by different institutions with little coordination. For this reason, there has long been a felt need for an integrated agricultural research and extension system to enhance farm productivity further.

To review recent developments in agricultural research and extension in member countries and to seek ways of integrating them for more efficient dissemination of improved farming technologies and practices, the APO organized a study meeting on “Integration of Agricultural Research and Extension” in Manila, the Philippines, 18-22 March 2002. The program was implemented by the Productivity and Development Center of the Development Academy of the Philippines. Sixteen participants from 13 member countries took part.

The meeting had five resource persons who spoke on: 1) Recent developments in agricultural research and extension in Asia and the Pacific; 2) Organization linkages in agricultural research and extension; 3) Human resources development in research and extension in agriculture; 4) Mechanisms for transfer of technology among countries in Asia and the Pacific; and 5) Effective networking of research and extension through information technology. For their field studies, the participants visited research and extension institutions in Los Baños, Laguna, and Lipa City, Batangas Province.

At the close of the study meeting, the participants recommended the following: 1) There is a need to move toward a farmer-centered research-extension system that is demand-driven rather than supply-driven, with a “bottom-up” approach rather than a “top-down” one. 2) Operational/functional research-

extension integration should focus on the district/municipal level rather than the national level. 3) Efforts by local governments should be supported by the national government, financially as well as technically. 4) In the context of trade liberalization and economic globalization, a multi-agency extension system should be promoted. 5) It is necessary to reduce the gap between the technologies available and those actually adopted by farmers. 