

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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TO: Members of TAC, Directors of Centers
FROM: Executive Secretary
SUBJECT: Nutrition

At the close of the Consultative Group session last August 2, Dr. Bernstein, the representative of the United States Agency for International Development, mentioned that he had prepared a short paper suggesting the development of a more systematic effort or strategy to strengthen the nutritional impact of the programs of the international agricultural research centers. A copy of the paper is attached for your information.

Attachment
HG:mcj

Strengthening Nutrition Via Agricultural Research Center Activities

The problem of world food supply involves both quantity and quality -- calories and nutrients. The priorities paper of the Chairman of TAC questions whether enough emphasis is being placed on the quality aspect, particularly protein. The international centers and other research organizations are already doing much important work to breed better protein content into basic grains, and more recently to increase yields of the most nutritious and widely used legumes. However, it is desirable, as the TAC Chairman implies, that TAC and the Institute Directors consider development of a more systematic effort or strategy to strengthen the nutritional impact of their programs.

Measures that might be considered include:

- (1) rationalization of the pattern of the centers' research to give appropriate stress to nutritional objectives;
- (2) strengthened lab and field research capabilities to test for varietal characteristics that will increase consumer acceptance of high protein crops and also for bodily absorption of nutrients from the various varieties; rather than duplicating this capability at all of the centers, it might prove feasible to use a common facility somewhere, particularly for the more sophisticated and expensive parts of the work -- possibly by contracting with existing food technology or biological laboratories;
- (3) professional nutritional representation on TAC;
- (4) inclusion of appropriate nutrition awareness, strategy and technical training in Center training activities, particularly as this is relevant to agricultural research activities;
- (5) assignment of greater weight to the nutritional value of new varieties, balanced against yield and other desired characteristics, in deciding which varieties to release.

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