

CIMMYT: Bettering Agriculture

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CIMMYT:

Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maíz y Trigo (International Center for Maize and Wheat Improvement) is a non-profit research and training center headquartered in Mexico.

Mission

To sustainably increase the productivity of maize and wheat systems to ensure global food security and decrease poverty. CIMMYT works to foster global and local food security, helping farmers meet rapidly rising demand from expanding populations and affluence, while addressing the emerging challenges of global climate change and resource degradation and scarcities.

Accomplishments

Wheat varieties bred at CIMMYT and its predecessor organization prevented famine and hunger in South Asia and elsewhere in the world. The benefits of this Green Revolution were recognized through the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize. More nutritious maize varieties developed by CIMMYT won recognition through the 2000 World Food Prize. Recent estimates indicate that wheat varieties developed by CIMMYT and its partners are planted on more than 64 million hectares in developing countries, representing more than 75% of the area planted to modern wheat varieties in those countries.



Objectives

CIMMYT works with and brings together public research and extension organizations, private companies, advanced research institutes, NGOs, and farmer associations in countries worldwide, working pragmatically and apolitically to fight hunger and poverty. The Center applies the best science to develop and freely share: high-yielding, stress tolerant maize and wheat varieties, large and unique collections of maize and wheat genetic resources. Productivity-enhancing, resource-conserving farming practices, while training, informing, and relating to the above.



History

CIMMYT grew out of a pilot program in Mexico in 1943, sponsored by the Government of Mexico and the Rockefeller Foundation. Under the leadership of late wheat scientist Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, the project developed into an innovative, sustained collaboration with Mexican and international researchers. By the late 1950s, Mexico was self-sufficient in wheat production. Mexico's success inspired project researchers to become fierce and effective advocates for the Mexican innovation model in other countries. Around 1965, South Asian cereal production was in dire straights. Population was growing wheat and rice production, and more than 10 million tons of grain were regularly being imported to make up for the deficits. Hunger was widespread, and government leaders in Pakistan and India were desperate to improve national cereal production. The following year, CIMMYT was established as an international center with its headquarters in Mexico. In 1967 India imported 18,000 tons of seed of the improved Mexican wheat varieties, and Pakistan soon began to use them. During 1967-71, the two countries doubled their wheat production. The successes of the new crop varieties, along with improved management practices like the use of fertilizer, sparked the widespread adoption of improved varieties and farming techniques in the developing world a phenomenon that came to be called the "Green Revolution." The social and economic benefits of this movement were recognized worldwide when the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Norman Borlaug in 1970.