The International Exchange and Testing of Cassava Germ Plasm in Africa

Proceedings of an interdisciplinary workshop held at IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria 17-21 November 1975

Editors: Eugene Terry and Reginald MacIntyre

Cosponsored by the International Development Research Centre and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
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Appendix 3

A Note on the IITA Training Program

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To facilitate communication and understanding, and for planning purposes, the Training Office of IITA has defined its areas of responsibility and activity in the following terms.

**Seminars**

Weekly seminars are held at which trainee and IITA staff present results of their research, thus providing a means for trainees and others to become familiar with the work of the Institute as a whole and to learn of the activities of scientists working in other areas of the humid tropics. Conferences and workshops are also held at the institute and trainees are encouraged to attend those of direct interest and concern to them.

**Postdoctoral fellowship**

Fellowships are offered each year to selected young scientists who have recently qualified for advanced degrees (doctorate level). These fellowships are offered for three reasons: (1) to affirm the research skills and orientation of young scientists by affording them the opportunity to work with experienced research scientists on relevant problems of crop production in the lowland humid tropics; (2) to assist the institute to achieve its research goals in priority areas where insufficient regular staff is available; and (3) to assist in the identification and training of staff for the institute or for one of its cooperative program contracts.

**Research training**

Under the supervision of members of IITA's scientific staff, trainees work on research problems that permit the acquisition or perfection of needed research skills. All programs or projects are tailored to meet individual needs and all are planned in such a way as to contribute to IITA's research effort.

Training in research is arranged both for postgraduate degree candidates and for those seeking degrees. Cooperative arrangements have so far been made with 18 universities of Africa, Australia, Europe, and North America for postgraduate degree candidates to conduct the research portion of their degree requirements at IITA. The institute has also provided non-degree research training for employees of 19 research institutes, universities, and departments of agriculture in 12 countries of Africa and Asia.
Research scholars from many countries, including those shown from Zaire and Korea, are studying cassava diseases and pests at IITA.
Crop production technology and extension training

This training leads to a thorough familiarity with one crop as well as with the methods of conducting an accelerated production campaign for that crop. The activities are designed to create production specialists who have a high level of competency in five areas: (1) Technical competency  Knowledge and understanding of the production practices involved and the physical environment. This must include the ability to diagnose correctly and treat, if possible, typical problems and abnormalities of plants growing in the field. (2) Economic competency  Ability to weigh alternatives of production input and marketing strategies, and to make recommendations in the light of economic relationships within the reality of the physical and socioeconomic systems in which the farmer operates. (3) Scientific competency  Basic understanding of the philosophy of science and the ability to conduct simple replicated field experiments which objectively test whether an innovation is worthy of adoption under farm conditions. (4) Farming competency  Willingness and skills to perform the range of physical tasks involved in producing crops. Once the production specialist has acquired these four skills, a fifth becomes vital in his role of change agent. (5) Communication competency  Ability to plan, prepare, and present adequate messages for the farmer, the credit agency, the input retailer, the market, or even the consumer.

The broad objective of crop production technology and extension courses is to prepare extension leaders to promote, organize, and conduct crop production training courses for extension agents and others, thus multiplying the effects of their training at IITA.

Training is done on a group basis, with emphasis on in-the-field experience. Adequate time is allowed in the classroom for lecture and discussion.