



FEATURE

ARC SER

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SCIENCE WORLD

(a collection of development-oriented science news briefs that may be used as a column, or as separate items)

CORN WITH LOTS OF PROTEIN

(Approx. 100 words)

Corn is a staple crop for at least 500 million people throughout Latin America as well as in some regions of Africa and Asia. But this important cereal has a low protein content and therefore limited nutritional value.

In the 1960s, researchers at the University of Purdue in the United States, discovered "OPAQUE-2", a gene that considerably increases corn's protein content.

Now, scientists at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), in Mexico, have announced remarkable results following 10 years of research. They have succeeded in incorporating OPAQUE-2 in a hybrid corn, with much increased yields in spite of the different growing conditions found in developing countries.

DRUG-RESISTANT LEPROSY STRAINS RAISE CONCERNS

(Approx. 150 words)

New drug-resistant strains of leprosy, first identified in 1964, are now spreading at an alarming rate.

Workers in leprosy research are concerned that many of the 11 million people suffering from this disease in Asia, Africa and other developing regions will be without adequate treatment.

To check the spread of resistance, researchers are looking for alternatives to dapsone, the sulfone drug discovered in the 1940s. The drug seemed, at

first, to offer the hope of eradicating this ancient affliction. But by the 1960s, some patients being treated with dapsone were showing signs of secondary resistance.

In 1966 one in a thousand cases in Malaysia was resistant. In 1976 the rate in Ethiopia was 190 per thousand.

Although the World Health Organization has recommended treatments combining dapsone with two more expensive drugs -- rifampin and clofazimine -- the extra \$25-\$30 (US) required to treat each patient annually may be too costly for many developing countries.

Researchers fear that dapsone-resistant leprosy may spread before an effective treatment is widely available.

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DIARRHEA JOURNAL

(Approx. 160 words)

Despite recent medical developments such as oral rehydration therapy, diarrheal diseases still kill more people in developing countries than any other disease.

Public ignorance of proper hygiene and sanitation is the culprit. But added to the lack of information at the grass roots is the parallel problem of information flow among researchers trying to solve the problem.

The need for effective information programs for Third World scientists is particularly acute in Asia because library collections are weak, authors have difficulty getting their papers published in recognized journals, and the cost of journals is prohibitive.

To help tackle the problem, the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) in Dacca has launched, with the help of the International Development Research Centre, an information service and documentation centre. One of their offspring is a new quarterly, the Journal of Diarrhoeal Disease Research (JDDR), which published its inaugural edition

earlier this year.

The English-language journal will carry original research articles, letters, and an annotated bibliography of current Asian literature on diarrheal diseases.

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