



IFPRI

PERSPECTIVES

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did you know?

Did you know that iron deficiency affects more than 3.5 billion people in the developing world, or well over two persons out of three?

—From *Fourth Report on the World Nutrition Situation* (Geneva: ACC/SCN in collaboration with IFPRI, 2000)



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Agricultural Research and the Poor

Do the poor really benefit from agricultural research? It's a question older than the Green Revolution. Have farmers who work small plots increased their yields? Have the poor gained as consumers of cheaper foods? Has agricultural growth presented the poor with an open door to more jobs and more money?

While the contributions of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and its national partners in food production are well established, the extent to which the poor have benefited from their research remains controversial.

More and more donors are asking the CGIAR whether their investments in the developing world have paid off by reducing poverty. The CGIAR has responded by forming a special panel of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to document the extent to which agricultural research is a sound investment for helping the poor and to determine whether it has bigger payoffs when research priorities are better-targeted to meet poor people's changing needs. The Standing Panel for Impact Assessment (SPIA) requested that IFPRI, on its behalf, develop and coordinate a study to both assess the CGIAR's impacts and help develop means to strengthen capacity for such poverty assessments.

"It's very exciting because it's the first time the CGIAR has conducted a broad-scale impact assessment of the consequences of adoption of agricultural technologies for poor people," says Peter Hazell, director of IFPRI's Environment





Suresh Babu/IFPRI

and Production Technology Division (EPTD) and comanager of the IFPRI/SPIA project, along with IFPRI's Lawrence Haddad.

In the first phase of the project between December 1998 and August 1999, John Kerr, formerly of IFPRI, and Shashi Kolavalli, a consultant, reviewed past evidence on the links between agricultural research and poverty. Their review confirms that while agricultural research can have favorable impacts on the poor, this is not a guarantee. The outcome depends on whether several much-needed socioeconomic conditions exist. Kerr and Kolavalli also found that the poor often benefit substantially from lower food prices and increased job opportunities in the nonfarm economy, and that these indirect benefits often exceed the direct

RECENT IFPRI PUBLICATIONS


 *IFPRI 1999–2000* (annual report). 70 pages.

 *Achieving Urban Food and Nutrition Security in the Developing World, 2020 Focus 3*, edited by James L. Garrett and Marie T. Ruel. A collection of 10 briefs.

Agriculture in Tanzania since 1986: Follower or Leader of Growth? A World Bank Country Study, by Christopher Delgado and Nicholas Minot (Washington, D.C.: World Bank in collaboration with IFPRI and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania). 167 pages.



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 *Integrated Nutrient Management, Soil Fertility, and Sustainable Agriculture: Current Issues and Future Challenges, 2020 Vision Discussion Paper 32*, by Peter Gruhn, Francesco Goletti, and Montague Yudelman. 31 pages.

 *A Meta-Analysis of Rates of Return to Agricultural R&D: Ex Pede Herculem?*, Research Report 113, by Julian M. Alston, Connie Chan-Kang, Michele C. Marra, Philip G. Pardey, and TJ Wyatt. 148 pages.

benefits (or losses) from on-farm technological adoption and changes in agricultural employment. (Kerr and Kolavalli's review is available from IFPRI as EPTD Discussion Paper No. 56.)

The second phase of the project consists of 14 case studies that will examine the effects of CGIAR research on the poor in various countries. Work on the first 7 studies is beginning in 2000, and the other 7 will be conducted when full funding is available.

The planned case studies go beyond the conventional treatment of poverty as solely a matter of sufficient income, expenditure, food intake, or nutritional status. Instead, the studies look at the people's vulnerability to various trends and shocks. "Vulnerability is a big part of poverty," says Ruth Meinzen-Dick, a senior research fellow at IFPRI and coleader of the Social Analysis Team for the project. "When we look at a family's welfare, we're not just looking at how much daily

food they have to eat—we're looking at whether they have secure livelihoods, whether their crop yields can sustain them even through a bad monsoon, and if they have the assets they need to produce for tomorrow or get through a tough period."

As the CGIAR and its national partners increasingly orient themselves toward alleviating poverty, the IFPRI/SPIA project will provide them with the tools to better gauge the relationship between agricultural research and poverty. From there, a clearer vision of how to design research to help the poor will emerge.

"Our hope is that we will finally have the answers to the questions, Who benefited in the past? Who's benefiting now? And how can we make sure more poor people will benefit in the future?" says Hazell. ■

For more information, contact Peter Hazell at p.hazell@cgiar.org.

Raising Livestock Can Raise Incomes in Viet Nam

As the people of rural Viet Nam see the growth of rice production slowing and the income growth of city dwellers outpacing their own, they are looking for new ways to boost and diversify their incomes. IFPRI, in collaboration with the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, is studying how livestock production—involving mainly pigs and chickens—can help them achieve this goal.

As a share of Viet Nam's gross domestic product, livestock production has grown at an increasing rate over the past decade, averaging a healthy 4.4 percent annually. Even though livestock production is growing as rapidly as crop production, it has received much less government support and direction. Livestock and veterinary services account for just 4 percent of the national agricultural budget—far short of the sector's economic importance. Nor does livestock policy reflect the fact that the majority of the farming population is involved in some livestock production.

Potential for growth in livestock production is strong. Although consumption has grown by 6 percent a year, the Vietnamese still eat less meat than their neighbors in China, in the rest of Asia, and in many other developing countries.

As a first step, IFPRI and its collaborators have conducted comprehensive surveys of people involved in and affected by livestock production throughout Viet Nam—from livestock and feed producers and processors to traders and consumers. Preliminary findings reveal a number of obstacles in the way of faster growth of livestock production. Productivity in this




Richard Adams/IFPRI

Negotiating Water Rights, edited by Bryan Randolph Bruns and Ruth S. Meinzen-Dick (London: Intermediate Technology Publications for IFPRI). 394 pages.

Property Rights, Risk, and Livestock Development in Africa, edited by Nancy McCarthy, Brent Swallow, Michael Kirk, and Peter Hazell (Nairobi and Washington, D.C.: International Livestock Research Institute and IFPRI). 433 pages.

 *The Road Half Traveled: Agricultural Market Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Food Policy Report, by Mylène Kherallah, Christopher Delgado, Eleni Gabre-Madhin, Nicholas Minot, and Michael Johnson. 24 pages.

 *Roots and Tubers for the 21st Century: Trends, Projections, and Policy Options*, 2020 Vision Discussion Paper 31, by Gregory S. Scott, Mark W. Rosegrant, and Claudia Ringler. 64 pages.

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sector is low. Markets for livestock products function poorly, and prices of meat and animal feed are high while quality is low. Improved breeds are in only sparse use, and animal health and veterinary services are insufficient. The meat-processing industry is underdeveloped, the extension system is underfunded, and the animal research and breeding system is inadequate. “The cost of livestock mortality alone—about US\$58 million annually—points to the severe inefficiencies imposed by these problems,” says Peter Gruhn, an IFPRI research analyst involved in the project.

In their preliminary analysis, IFPRI researchers have identified a number of steps the government of Viet Nam should consider taking to improve the health of animals, the quality of meat and feed, and the productivity of the sector:

- set regulations to ensure that livestock and livestock products are healthy and to deal with environmental problems arising from commercial livestock production

- foster a competitive market environment in which farmers invest in raising livestock productivity and the private and public sectors supply veterinary services and medicines, livestock feed, and improved breeds
- fund livestock research and extension, ensure that stakeholders participate in developing new breeds and technologies, and integrate livestock with farming systems
- create institutions that allow small-scale producers to be vertically integrated with input suppliers and livestock processors
- provide transitional support to those who need it when markets fail

IFPRI researchers are currently working to quantify the potential costs and benefits of various policy options and help the government formulate an effective strategy for using livestock to promote agriculture-led growth and income diversification. ■

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Spreading the Word on Gender Research

Over the past five years, IFPRI and its research partners have conducted studies to see how inequality between males and females affects the welfare of the entire household. Now, the researchers are taking their findings back to policymakers, academics, and others in four countries through a series of workshops called “Strengthening Development Policy by Looking within the Household.”

Findings on the effects of gender relations have been somewhat different in each country. The first workshop, held in April 2000 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, showed that in Bangladesh assets in the hands of women improve girls’ health more than boys’ and lead households to spend a greater share of their budget on children’s education and clothing. “Participants were keenly aware of these differences,” says Kelly Hallman, an IFPRI research fellow, “but only

recently have they begun to be documented in a systematic fashion.”

Research on the Hogares program in Guatemala—which provides childcare to children of poor mothers in Guatemala City—shows that the program works well and responds to a great need for childcare, although the quality of services varies widely from center to center. The program has greatly improved children’s diets, especially their intake of energy,

protein, iron, and vitamin A. Two workshops to be held this month in Guatemala will describe these results to representatives of donor and research organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and the country's first lady, Mrs. Evelyn de Portillo.

Few countries have undergone the political, social, and economic changes that South Africa has in recent years. A workshop takes place this month in Pretoria to explore how women are coping in this fluid environment.

IFPRI and its collaborators will show that men and women meet the challenges of poverty in different ways in the province of Kwazulu Natal. For women, social capital—the breadth, depth, and quality of an individual's link to other individuals—helps them keep their households from falling further into poverty in the aftermath of an economic calamity. For men, the link to other groups is often the key to moving their households out of poverty altogether.

In mid-December, research teams will meet in Addis Ababa for the final workshop to discuss how control of assets by women and men affects household decisionmaking.

“By holding these workshops,” says Agnes Quisumbing, an IFPRI senior research fellow, “we want to bring the research results back to the people whose lives will be affected by it.” ■

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Investigating How Collective Action and Property Rights Affect Poverty and Environment

Underneath the outward tranquility of many rural communities in developing countries often lies a dynamic and complex system for accessing and maintaining natural resources. The rules governing access to natural resources—who has access, what type of access they have, how much they are entitled to, and when they can exercise their claims—constitute property rights, which are typically founded and supported by collective action. A new grant program is helping researchers discover how property rights and collective action can be brought to bear on the problems of poverty and environmental degradation.

In 1997 the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) launched its System-wide Program on Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRI)—housed at IFPRI—to shed light on how collective action and property rights institutions work, how they change in different contexts, and how they affect rural productivity, ecosystems, and poverty. This improved understanding should help CGIAR researchers and their collaborators craft innovative solutions to natural resource degradation and poverty.

In 1998 CAPRI began offering research grants to support innovative research on issues related to property rights and collective action, especially technology adoption and adaptation, devolution of natural resource management, multiple uses and users of natural resources, feminization of agriculture,

changing market relationships, and genetic diversity of crops.

New support from the Ford Foundation and Government of Italy, along with continued funding from the Government of Norway, enabled CAPRI to fund three projects in 1999. Grants of US\$125,000 each were provided to the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), and the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF). Three new projects proposed by the Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT), the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), and ILRI are being funded this year. Although only researchers based at CGIAR centers may apply for the grants, the program requires

partnership with national research institutions.

Projects funded to date cover such diverse issues as rangeland management, marketing, disease control, and maintenance of agricultural genetic diversity. All projects seek innovative and effective ways to address poverty by learning how property rights and collective action institutions can and do shape the livelihood options of the poor.

In addition to funding projects, the CAPRI program assists other projects related to collective action and property rights with research and policy workshops, literature searches, and exchange of information. ■

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