

Farmers to get rice-growing advice via text messages

July 9 2010

Farmers in the "texting capital" of the world—the Philippines—will soon have nutrient management advice tailored specifically to their rice crops delivered to their mobile phones.

Dr. Roland Buresh, part of the International Rice Research (IRRI) team that has joined the Philippine Department of Agriculture to establish the system, says that after responding to a series of simple questions about their rice paddy, farmers would receive an automated text reply recommending what amounts, sources, and timings of fertilizer are needed for profitable [rice production](#) in their paddy.

In Rice Today July-September 2010, Buresh explains the technology and what they hope to achieve.

In Cambodia, farmers are further advancing technology adoption of mechanical harvesters and dryers, better storage techniques, among other postharvest technologies. In this issue, we hear how the technologies are spreading and being embraced by Cambodian rice farmers to reduce labor, save money and time, and improve the quantity and quality of grain available at the end of the day.

Rice Today also delves deeper into the controversial topic of "land grabs" for rice production, exploring the potential benefits and downsides to this approach to increasing global rice production.

Land grabs will also be one of the themes at the 3rd International Rice

Congress 2010 (IRC2010), which will be held in Hanoi, Vietnam, 8-12 November 2010. IRC2010 is the world's largest gathering of rice scientists, researchers, and technology experts and is expected to attract thousands of international delegates. IRC2010 follows the Africa Rice Congress 2010, held in Mali in March this year—Rice Today reports on the Congress and its recommendations to boost Africa's rice sector, including a "Marshall Plan" for capacity building.

Aside from being IRRI's 50th anniversary year, 2010 is also the International Year of Biodiversity. Rice Today explores the challenges farmers face in finding the perfect biodiversity balance in their paddies to minimize losses due to pests and weeds, reduce labor, supply additional food sources, and deliver ecosystem services such as nectar for bees.

Just keeping up production in the MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market) region of South America responsible for 85% of the continent's rice production is a challenge this season, with adverse weather conditions causing production to drop an average of 8% since last season. The weather is also upsetting North American rice production, where rains in California are predicted to reduce the crop there.

Despite changes in rice production, "In the last few months, global rice prices have fallen by more than 25%," according to Dr. Sam Mohanty. In his Rice Today article, Mohanty provides some insights into the market and the ongoing need to boost rice yields by 1.2-1.5% every year to ensure food security in Asia.

To help understand changes in rice production, IRRI's mapping team, led by Dr. Andy Nelson, has published a map of rice-growing regions in South Asia for this season. They will compare maps from different years to identify new rice production areas and areas where rice is replaced by other land uses.

And, in a final farewell, this issue's Pioneer interview is with Dr. Michael Jackson—who recently retired from IRRI after 19 years. He joined IRRI to lead the International Rice Genebank where he applied scientific best practice and harnessed the skills of staff to build the Genebank into one of the world's best. He then applied his "systematic way of doing business" to improve project and contract management, and donor relations.

Provided by International Rice Research Institute

Citation: Farmers to get rice-growing advice via text messages (2010, July 9) retrieved 8 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-07-farmers-rice-growing-advice-text-messages.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.