

ILEIA

NEWSLETTER

july 1995
volume 11 no.2



The ILEIA Newsletter is a publication of the Information Centre for Low-External-Input and Sustainable Agriculture (ILEIA), Kastanjelaan 5, PO Box 64, NL-3630 AB Leusden, Netherlands. Tel. +31-33-943086; Telex 79380 ETC NL, Fax +31-33-940791; e-mail ileia @ antenna.nl

SUBSCRIPTIONS Individuals and organisations in the Third World and students: US\$ 13.75 or DFL 27.50/year. Others: US\$ 27.50 or DFL 55/year. Payment by direct bank transfer to RABO Bank Leusden, Account No. 3359.44.825 (or to this account via Postal Account No. 27.61.35), or by cheque (if European, in DFL) made payable to ILEIA, mentioning "ILEIA Newsletter". Third World organisations may ask to receive the Newsletter free of charge.

CONTRIBUTIONS Articles, short communications and news items should be written in easy-to-read English. Articles should be less than 1200 words long, and should include at least 2 illustrations. Authors of published articles will be paid DFL 165 per printed page. A guideline for preparing articles can be obtained from ILEIA.

EDITORIAL TEAM Carine Alders, Wietsje Bruinsma, Maria Fernández, Wim Hemstra, Ingrid Huijbers, Maja Kooistra, Clive Lightfoot, Coen Reijntjes, Laurens van Veldhuizen, **RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ISSUE** Coen Reijntjes, Margreet Moolhuijzen (guest editor) and Carine Alders **TYPING** Marika van der Brom and Lila Felipe **ADMINISTRATION** Regina Ruane, Marika van den Brom, Lila Felipe **DESIGN & LAYOUT** Jan Hiensch, Leusden **PRINTING** BDU Barneveld **ISSN: 0920-8771**

ILEIA (Information Centre for Low-External-Input and Sustainable Agriculture) was established in 1982 by the ETC Foundation and is funded mainly by the Netherlands Ministry of Development Cooperation. Project funds are assured till early 1999.

ILEIA's long-term objective is to contribute to a situation in which Low-External-Input and Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA) is

- widely adopted as a valid approach to agricultural development, complementary to high-external-input agriculture,
- recognised as a means to balance locally available resources and local knowledge with modern technologies requiring inputs from elsewhere,
- valued as a useful perspective in planning and implementing agricultural research, education and extension,
- developing and consolidating its stock of knowledge and scientific basis.

LEISA is agriculture which makes optimal use of locally available natural and human resources (such as climate, landscape, soil, water, vegetation, local crops and animals, local skills and indigenous knowledge) and is economically feasible, ecologically sound, culturally adapted and socially just. The use of external inputs such as mineral fertilisers, pesticides and machinery is not excluded but is seen as complementary to the use of local resources and has to meet the above-mentioned criteria of sustainability.

ILEIA seeks to reach these objectives by operating a documentation centre; publishing a quarterly newsletter, bibliographies, resource guides etc; holding workshops; and supporting regional networks in the Third World.

The opinions expressed in the articles do not necessarily reflect the views of ILEIA.

Readers are encouraged to reprint or translate articles with acknowledgement. Please send a copy of any reprint or translation to ILEIA.

CARTOON by Eddie Handono, Studio Driya Media, Indonesia

COVER PHOTO: Gilles Nicolet

DEAR READERS

Do today's research and development methods fit farmer's complex reality and the need for sustainability? Which methods can better deal with, for example, the increasing diversity of farming conditions, interactions between micro and macro scales, different stakeholders and economic assessment? Or do we need more fundamental decisions about values and objectives to reorient agriculture? Insight in the nature of sustainability and its demands has to increase, but how? Our ignorance and scientific uncertainty about the complexities of sustainable agriculture make that participatory learning as well as scientific rigour are needed.

This issue presents examples of learning processes in which scientists and farmers try to match participatory with scientific methods and try to dig deeper in the methodological and practical consequences of ecological and cultural diversity and sustainability. These issues pose huge challenges to researchers and development workers. Clearly the articles in this Newsletter are not the final words to be said on this. We look forward to receiving your experiences and opinions on these matters.

Our challenge for this issue was to write about these complex issues in understandable words. Research, experimentation and innovation are as much a concern of farmers and development workers as they are of scientists. If the expertise of all stakeholders is to be used, communication has to be improved. Please let us know if you think we have not succeeded.

Something that really worries us is the decrease in the number of articles written by non-Western authors. Are we on the wrong track, are we getting too much involved in the academic debate? Or do we use the wrong channels to request articles? We simply cannot believe that the 6000 non-Western readers of the ILEIA Newsletter have nothing to contribute to the exchange of practical experiences on development of sustainable agriculture. Do not hesitate but write, the ILEIA Newsletter depends on you!

The Editors

