

NRCS International Programs Division

June 30, 2013

This is a brief overview of international development activities undertaken by NRCS staff during the first half of 2013. Partnering institutions included the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI), USAID/Pakistan, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection's Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences (NIES), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the U.S. Peace Corps/Federated States of Micronesia (PC/FSM), USAID/Haiti, and the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program (PRT) in Afghanistan.

Project Development and Design – FAS and USAID/Pakistan

China-U.S. Rural Environmental Research Cooperation – NIES

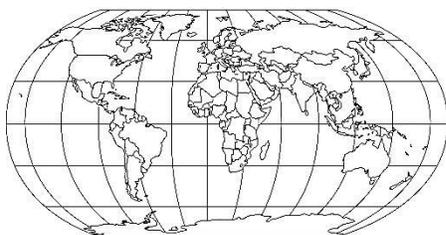
Improved Gardening Techniques – Peace Corps/FSM

U.S. – Pakistan Strategic Dialog on Water Initiative – USAID/Pakistan

Haiti Soil Survey Pilot Training Project – USAID/Haiti and FAS

Soil Testing Training for Agriculture – Logar PRT Program, Afghanistan

Related Internet Resources



For additional information on these and other NRCS international activities, please contact IPD:

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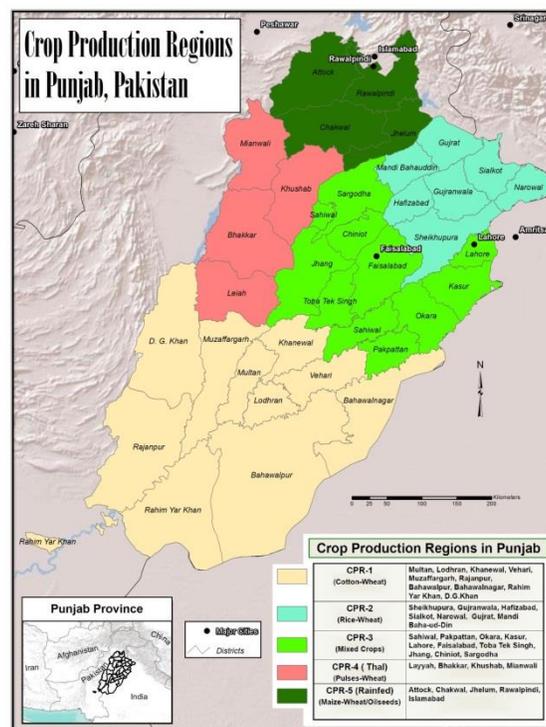
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<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/alphabetical/international/>

Project Development and Design – FAS and USAID/Pakistan

In January 2013, Dr. Thomas Reinsch, NRCS National Leader for World Soil Resources, and Dr. Otto Gonzalez, FAS, Office of Capacity Building and Development



(OCBD), traveled to Pakistan for a new USAID/Pakistan technology transfer project /

initiative –“*Improving Soil Fertility Through Extension*”. They met with representatives of the FAO as well as representatives from key Pakistani institutions in Islamabad and Lahore that were involved in soil management, soil testing and extension.



Meeting with representatives of potential partner institutions

The team identified activities from existing Pakistani institutional practices as well as appropriate globally recognized activities and initiatives to promote in the new project.

They promoted the ‘4Rs’ - *the right product, at the right rate, the right time, and in the right place*, as a best management practice for achieving optimum nutrient efficiency, and to increase soil organic carbon.

Drs. Reinsch and Gonzales returned to Pakistan in April to further refine the project and identify potential partners. They met with Pakistani agricultural officials and experts from Pakistani institutions working on soil fertility in Sindh Province and nationally; they met with representatives of prospective partner organizations (the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas - ICARDA, the FAO and the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International - CABI); and they asked perspective partners to develop project implementation budgets for consideration by USDA. Project implementation is expected to start in the first quarter of FY2014.

China-U.S. Rural Environmental Research Cooperation – NIES

In January 2013, LeRoy Duvall, NRCS International Programs Specialist, International Programs Division, participated in a three-day mission to Nanjing, China. The three-person American team was led by Dr. Sylvana Li from EPA, and Gerald Smith of FAS.

The mission built on earlier discussions between the EPA and the Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection’s Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences (NIES). The meetings are laying the groundwork for eventual preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for future EPA-USDA-NIES collaboration.



EPA-FAS-NRCS Research cooperation workshop participants

Improved Gardening Techniques – Peace Corps/FSM

NRCS Resource Conservationist Arlene Rosenkrans arrived at the Pacific island State of Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in late February 2013. Starting a three-year assignment, she will be working closely with the U.S. Embassy mission, local government, and non-profit partners, providing technical assistance to private farmers and other partners.

The NRCS/Pohnpei office was established in 1992. The Peace Corps and Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) have been active in FSM since 1966. During the 2012-2013 school year, PCVs established two very successful school gardens - prompting a request from Peace Corps/FSM to develop a

specific home gardening skills training module for the incoming 2013-group of 19 PC trainees.

Arlene's main effort will be Conservation Planning, focusing on promoting conservation practices on farms to improve water and soil quality. With over 3,000 small piggeries on the island, many streams are now polluted because of the washing of pig waste into local streams and lagoons, creating serious water quality and human health concerns. Compost is also



Peace Corps trainees visiting University of Hawaii compost vs. commercial-fertilizer trials

needed on small farms where soil degradation from clearing has impacted soil health. Dry-litter-composting of pig waste has been and will continue to be promoted as a way to address both problems. Invasive species control in forest management is also an important activity undertaken in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service's Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, the Conservation Society of Pohnpei and local government.



Peace Corps trainees examining an improved home garden

The U.S. – Pakistan Strategic Dialog on Water Initiative – USAID/Pakistan

John Fripp, Civil Engineer with the NRCS National Design, Construction and Soil Mechanics Center, Ft. Worth, TX, traveled to Pakistan in April 2013 to join Dr. Otto Gonzales, FAS/OCBD, in discussions with Pakistani counterparts in the USAID/Pakistan-funded “*U.S. - Pakistan Strategic Dialog on Water*”. Jon provided expert consultation to FAS/OCBD, FAS/Islamabad, and prospective implementing partners, proposing activities, topics and types of Pakistani agencies, organizations and institutions to be included in the forthcoming *Pakistan Water Dialogue Project*.

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI)¹ will be the lead implementing partner for this project. Project implementation should start in the first quarter FY2014.

A secondary objective was to meet with ICARDA to discuss the status of the on-going “*Watershed Rehabilitation and Irrigation Improvement Pakistan: Demonstrating and Disseminating the Best Practices and Technologies to Help Rural Famers*” project. The team shared copies of training materials developed by the Water Management Training and Research Institute, Government of Punjab, discussed final reporting for the demonstration activities developed under the project, and discussed private sector involvement.



Meeting with IWMI technical staff

¹ a member of the CGIAR Consortium, formerly the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

Haiti Soil Survey Pilot Training Project – USAID/Haiti and FAS

USAID/Haiti and FAS approved the *Haiti Soil Survey Pilot Training Project* proposal in May, 2013. NRCS proceeded with recruitment of NRCS technical staff for project implementation. Planning is underway for a one-week orientation in Washington, DC in August for senior Haitian officials and technical staff, and a subsequent two-weeks of training for the technical staff in Lincoln, NE. The training is being planned in collaboration with FAS's Cochran Program, NRCS Headquarters staff, and technical staff at the National Soil Survey Center in Lincoln. Field activities in Haiti are expected to commence in August, shortly after the Haitian technicians return to Haiti following the training in Lincoln.

Soil Testing Training for Agriculture – Logar PRT Program, Afghanistan

NRCS soil scientist Drew Adam, on detail to the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Afghanistan, is serving as the Senior USDA Agriculture Advisor for Wardak and Logar Provinces in Afghanistan. Drew recently worked with the NRCS National Soil Survey Center in Lincoln, FAS/OCBD and NRCS's International Programs Division, to secure six basic LaMotte N-P-K soil testing kits for use by the Pul e Alam Agricultural and Vocational High School in Logar, Afghanistan.

In June Drew led a soil testing laboratory training workshop. Participants included the school's deputy principal, and selected faculty and students, and Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) Extension agents and program staff.

The workshop gave an overview of the relationship between essential nutrients and plant growth, and the importance of organic matter in soils. The training included soil collection methods, and processing a soil sample using the lab test kit. The test sample showed that levels were low in nitrogen, high in potassium and moderate in phosphorus. All participants were able to view the soil test results and compare the results in the test tubes to the accompanying chart. Soil recommendations were discussed and suggested by the instructor.



N-P-K soil test kit contents

Drew worked with the Director of the Logar DAIL and the school's deputy principal and concluded a MOU where the high school will provide soil test analysis and recommendations to farmers using soil samples collected from their farms by the DAIL Extension agents. The farmers will be charged a nominal fee in order for the school to be able to maintain soil testing materials in perpetuity. An initial fee of 50 Afghanis (=US\$ 1) has been proposed.



Soil test kit training session

In addition to the six LaMotte soils test kits (each sufficient for testing 250 soil samples) the Lincoln National Soil Test Lab donated one brass No.10 sieve for soil preparation, and 1,000 plastic soil collection bags.

Related Internet Resources:

CABI - <http://www.cabi.org/>

Conservation Society of Pohnpei - <http://www.serehd.org/>

FAO (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) - <http://www.fao.org/home/en/>

The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) - <http://www.icarda.org/>

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) - <http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/>

Nanjing Institute for Environmental Sciences (NIES) - <http://www.nies.org/>

USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) - <http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/main.htm>

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) - <http://www.fas.usda.gov/>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) - <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home/>

USDA NRCS National Design, Construction, and Soil Mechanics Center - <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/ndcsmc/>

USDA NRCS National Soil Survey Center - <http://soils.usda.gov/contact/nssc/>

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - <http://www.epa.gov/>

United States Peace Corps/FSM - <http://www.peacecorps.gov/learn/wherepc/pacificislands/micronesiaandpalau/>

USAID/Haiti - <http://www.usaid.gov/where-we-work/latin-american-and-caribbean/haiti>

USAID/Pakistan - <http://www.usaid.gov/where-we-work/afghanistan-and-pakistan/pakistan>

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