

SUMMARY REPORT OF MEETINGS ON SAWAH TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND UP SCALING AT GHANA

September 20, 2016,

By Prof. T. Wakatsuki, Shimane University, Japan, Dr. M.M.Buri, CSIR-SRI, and Dr. J. Ofori, Soil and Irrigation Research Center, University of Ghana

Meeting with Ashanti Regional Director of Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA).

Monday Sept 5, a meeting was held with the Ashanti Regional MoFA Director (Mr Falong) In attendance was Prof. Wakatsuki T. (Japan), Dr. Buri M, M (CSIR-SRI)., a representative of the JICA rain-fed lowland project and the Ashanti regional head of SRID of MoFA.

Prof. Wakatsuki pointed out the need to Sawah scaling out in Ghana, as the technology even though identified as good was, not being adopted as expected. He further pointed out the harm and destruction the defunct IVRDP had done to well established Sawah sites developed by the CSIR/Kinki/Shimane University at Adugyama and Biemso 1 through the construction of dams/weirs that will be of very little use to farmers. He concluded by emphasizing on the need for effective collaboration and greater support from MoFA for the rapid adoption of the Sawah technology to boost rice production.

The MoFA director responded by saying, he was already aware of the good nature Sawah and the contribution the technology can make to boost rice production. He further said he had just taken his position in the region and that he will do everything possible to get the technology disseminated/transferred adequately to farmers. The Regional Director requested for and was provided with information on Sawah (on a pen drive) which may be used to educate staff and public through presentations at meetings/workshops etc.

Meeting with Deputy Minister of Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA)

On 7th September 2016, a meeting was arranged with the Deputy Minister in charge of crops at his office in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Accra. Present at the meeting were the Deputy Minister (Dr. Yakubu Alhassan), Prof. T. Wakatsuki (Japan), Dr. M. M. Buri (CSIR-SRI) and Dr. Ofori (Univ. of Ghana).

The meeting succeeded in getting the minister understand the concept of the sawah (which included the meaning of sawah, the evolution of sawah and sawah technology strategy) farming system and its potential to increase rice production in lowland ecologies. In the process of education the minister on the benefit of Sawah rice farming in Ghana, comparisons were made with irrigation/drainage development technology by government and the type by private

business companies to prove the low cost and easy-to – adopt sawah technology by smallholder farmers involve in inland valleys and floodplain rice farming.

Outlining the purpose of the meeting, Prof. Wakatsuki pointed out that even though Sawah was developed in Ghana, the technology was being transferred to farmers more in Nigeria, Togo, and Benin faster than Ghana. He cited the example of Kebbi state in Nigeria. He expressed his desire to see the technology equally transferred from the research level down to the beneficiaries (farmers) rapidly to increase local rice production for the benefit of the country. He further pointed out the activities of the defunct IVRDP which were negatively impacting on original Sawah sites at Adugyama and Biemso 1.

The minister was made aware of poor lowland infrastructural development by MOFA, funded by African Development Bank (AfDB) which include wrong leveling and bunding technique which has been observed to remove surface soil, and also not taking into consideration the topography of the land, thus making leveling and water management almost impossible.

Dr Buri emphasized on the need for the rapid transfer of the Sawah technology in collaboration with MoFA farmers and suggested working with both MoFA extension and farmers by providing on-the-job training for the smooth and rapid transfer of the technology to farmers. He pointed out the significant gains made by some farmers through increased yields of over 6.0t/ha by Sawah farmers and hence the need for effective collaboration between MoFA and the CSIR. He pointed out that the main obstacle was the effective and rapid transfer of the technology to farmers. Dr. Ofori gave an example of how the technology had just been introduced to farmers in the Volta region and the response has been positive and encouraging.

The deputy Minister thanked the group for the presentation and said the Ministry was all out for such technologies that will increased rice production, help farmers raise incomes and help transform the lives of farmers. He promised to meet and discuss with some directors under MoFA and chart the way forward by which the CSIR and GIDA can collaborate with MOFA for the rapid transfer of the Sawah technology to farmers. According to the Minister, MoFA was in the process of executing some projects (GCAP, GASIP, etc.) on rice production and the Sawah technology can be brought and effectively transferred to farmers to help increase and sustain production. The Minister promised to get CSIR (SRI, CRI) informed at the appropriate time after the discussions. The Minister promised to meet his technical team to kick-start the interaction between the Sawah technical team and the MOFA staff involved in lowland rice development. The meeting highlighted the need for platform to be created for Sawah team to share ideas and possibly collaborate with the MOFA team to enable a more pragmatic approach for sawah technology dissemination in the lowland ecosystems of Ghana.

Meeting with Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA).

Another meeting was held at JICA office, Accra on Sept. 8, 2016. In attendance were Mr Kosuke Nagino (JICA), Mr Joseph Mensah (JICA), Prof. Wakatsuki (Japan) and Dr. Buri M. M. (CSIR-SRI).

At the meeting, Prof. Wakatsuki pointed out that the main purpose for the meeting was to call on JICA to assist in transferring the Sawah technology to farmers and MoFA extension. He indicated that JICA assist in Agricultural development and had projects which were assisting in rice production and therefore a good opportunity for the rapid transfer of the technology to farmers. Dr. Buri pointed out that even though CSIR works closely with MoFA through extension to get information to farmers, that was not enough due to the low numbers of extension personnel on the field. It was therefore suggested that JICA could assist in any of the following ways. (i) Assist research by providing funding for training of MoFA extension and farmers for the transfer of the Sawah technology and (ii) collaborate with research through on-going projects for transfer of the technology through on-the-job training. JICA then asked for clarification on certain issues pertaining to the transfer of the technology which were clarified for their better understanding. JICA then promised to look at the suggestion put forward and respond at the appropriate time.