

two principal objectives: (a) to convince the leaders of the institutions that recommendations, based on the field experiments, represented the most reliable information available for increasing yields, and (b) to acquaint these leaders with the capability of the Project staff. The field days for farmers sought to demonstrate the results they could expect through use of the recommended practices.

During 1968, audio-visual materials were prepared, using the results obtained in 1967 and the experimental plantings and high-yield plots. These were prepared specifically for use in reaching large numbers of farmers in subsequent years.

Just prior to harvest in 1968, the evaluation specialist determined grain yields of the high-yield plots and of a sample of farmers' plantings. Experimental plantings were harvested in October and November, the data were analyzed, and new maize recommendations were proposed. The Second Annual Meeting was held in December 1968, to inform representatives of the agricultural institutions of the accomplishments during the year.

By the end of 1968, several findings were clear: (a) large increases in maize yields could be obtained throughout the Project area; (b) after seeing the results of agronomic research, the technical assistance to farmers, and the evaluations, representatives of the agricultural institutions were convinced of the value of Project recommendations; (c) the farmers who had cooperated with a part of their land in high-yield plots were prepared to assist other farmers in using the new technology; and (d) the Project staff, farmers, and agricultural agencies could be effectively coordinated in working to achieve the goals of the Project.

Project Operations: 1969

Plans for 1969 called for three major modifications in the operation of the Project: (a) research activities would be extended to cover the entire area; (b) the western three-

fourths of the area would be divided into four zones (see Fig. 1.2), and a technical assistance agent would be assigned to each zone; and (c) a coordinated effort would be made to enlist 5,000 farmers to use Project recommendations on 10,000 ha of maize.

The decision to promote the use of Project recommendations so extensively in 1969 was made after careful study and discussion by the Project staff and state representatives of national agricultural institutions. Expansion of the program to reach 10,000 ha of maize would require credit needed for fertilizer alone amounting to about \$560,000. Discussions with the different institutions led to the proposal that the National Ejidal Credit Bank would finance 2,000 ha, the National Agricultural Credit Bank 1,500 ha, the Agricultural Bank of the South 1,500 ha, and that the Impulsora de Puebla, through its subdistributor, Agrónomos Unidos, would finance 5,000 ha. This proposal was approved at the national level.

The plan to reach 5,000 farmers in 1969 implied a drastic change in operating procedures of the technical assistance agents. In 1968, one technical assistance agent, assisted by the evaluation specialist, had given individual attention to 103 farmers. In 1969, four agents would have to assist up to 5,000 farmers. Such assistance seemed possible only if the farmers organized into groups.

The four technical assistance agents launched a program to inform the farmers in the area about the maize recommendations, and to assist them in organizing into groups and arranging for credit and fertilizers. The field personnel of the credit banks, the National Marketing Agency, and the crop insurance agency, assisted in this work. In their relationships with the farmers, the technical assistance agents made sure that arrangements for credit and fertilizers were always made between the credit institutions and the leaders of the farmer groups. Thus, the responsibility for procuring credit and fertilizers remained with the individual farmer or the group leader.



During the cropping season, field days were held for farmers and representatives of the agricultural institutions. Here the Minister of Agriculture, the Governor of Puebla and other dignitaries listen to an explanation of the agronomic research program.