

Perhaps the most crucial period in the development of the Project was in early 1969. Although the specific functions of the Project staff and participating institutions were defined well in advance of planting, the task remained of coordinating all activities so that the farmers would have fertilizers when needed. The correct fertilizer materials had to be ordered early, freight cars had to be available to transport the material to Puebla, the shipments had to be received by the distributors and dispatched to subdistributors, and the farmers had to arrange for credit so they could pick up their fertilizers when needed. Problems developed at all points in this chain of events, and continuous contact by the coordinator and a clear understanding of the operation of each institution provided the means to reduce delays to a minimum and to avoid the loss of prospective cooperators.

A total of 2,561 farmers, organized in 128 groups, were assisted in using Project recommendations on 5,838 ha. Although the total fell short of the stated goal for 1969, some 5.4 percent of the farmers in the area did begin using the new technology that year.

During the fall of 1969, regional demonstrations were held at six locations in the area. The average maize yields of organized farmers and all farmers in the area were estimated, agronomic trials were harvested, and the maize recommendations were refined. The Third Annual Meeting was held in early January 1970, attended by political leaders, representatives of agricultural institutions, farmers, and Project staff.

### **Project Operations: 1970**

A principal addition to the Project in 1970 was the initiation of technical assistance to farmers in Zone V (Fig. 1.2). A fifth technical assistance agent was assigned to this zone.

The main thrust of the technical assistance program in 1970 was to increase the use of Project recommendations by (a) informing farmers of the new technology through village meetings and mass communications media, and (b) assisting in the formation of new groups and in helping organized farmers arrange for credit and fertilizers. A special effort was made to increase the participation of the public credit banks by counseling new groups to seek financing from these sources, and by assisting the groups in making the necessary arrangements.

The agronomic research program was expanded in 1970 to include studies on the production of beans and alternative crops for late plantings. The investigations of the production of these crops were made in response to requests from many of the farmer groups that had used the maize recommendations the previous year.

In early 1970, CIMMYT signed an agreement with the United Nations Development Program that led to the participation of the Puebla Project and its advisors in the development of similar programs in other areas (refer to Chapter 13). The Project and its advisors participated

mainly in two activities: (a) the training of professional staff for new programs in the philosophy, organization, and operation of the Puebla Project (refer to Chapter 12); and (b) technical assistance to the staff of new programs in organization and agronomic research. A group of technicians from Colombia and Mexico were in training in Puebla during the second half of 1970. Project advisors traveled to Colombia and Peru on several occasions during the year to assist in planning and organizing programs in those countries.

Project staff and advisors participated in two international conferences held in Puebla in August 1970, to discuss strategies for increasing agricultural production on small holdings. These conferences (English spoken at one, Spanish at the other) drew participants from 15 Latin American countries and 15 international development organizations.

Demonstrations at harvest time, estimations of yield, and adjustment of maize recommendations were conducted as in previous years. In addition, recommendations for the production of bush beans were formulated for parts of the Project area. The Fourth Annual Meeting was held in mid-February 1971.

### **Project Operations: 1971**

The operation of the Project in 1971 was similar to 1970, with one principal difference: a second personal interview survey was conducted during the summer of 1971 to collect data for evaluating social and economic changes in the Project area. Interviews were made of a sample of all farmers in the area and a second sample of those farmers on credit lists.

The technical assistance agents broadened their activities in response to the requests from the farmers for assistance in improving other agricultural activities. Short courses for farmers on the management of orchards were given, with the participation of specialists from other institutions. Demonstrations were held to instruct farmers in the use of small trench silos for preserving maize stover as silage. Several groups were assisted in arranging for long-term loans to finance the drilling of wells, or for purchase of farm machinery.

Technicians from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Mexico were trained in Puebla during 1971. Project staff and advisors provided technical assistance to regional production programs in Colombia, Peru, Honduras, and the States of Mexico and Tlaxcala in Mexico.

The Fifth Annual Meeting was held in Puebla in mid-February 1972.

### **Project Operations: 1972**

In early 1972, the maize breeding component of the Puebla Project was discontinued. Progress in developing higher-yielding varieties had been slow (refer to Chapter 4). Moreover, the maize breeders in CIMMYT felt that this type of research could best be done at a research center