

## PROJECT PROGRAM: 1970

The technical assistance program was expanded in 1970 to encompass the entire Project area. A fifth technical assistance agent was assigned the responsibility for Zone V, the eastern part of the area.

The first 3 months of 1970 were devoted to an intensive campaign to increase the number of farmers using Project recommendations. Meetings were held in the villages throughout the area to explain Project recommendations and show the results obtained in previous years by farmers using the new technology. Again the Project-produced film, "Would You Like to Increase Your Maize Harvest?", was very useful in this promotional effort and was projected in 116 communities with an attendance of 9,900 farmers.

The farmers were encouraged to form new groups and to increase the membership of groups already functioning. Groups with very large membership were urged to divide into smaller groups, to simplify administration and allow more farmers an opportunity to participate in a leadership capacity. Operating procedures of the different credit agencies were explained to the groups and they were assisted in presenting their requests for credit and in complying with the requisites of the agencies.

During the maize planting and vegetative development periods, the technical assistance agents concentrated on helping the farmers to use the new technology correctly. As in previous years, demonstrations were held at planting time and field inspections of high-yield plots were made during the early part of the growing season. During the summer, there were eight interchanges among groups of farmers, with 610 farmers from 62 communities participating.

Farmer meetings continued to be held throughout the year to provide information on crop production practices, the organization of groups, the operating procedures of service agencies, etc. Approximately 500 farmers were assisted in attending a field day at the Chapingo research center of the National Agricultural Research Institute. Regional demonstrations were held in Zones II, III, IV, and V just prior to the maize harvest, with an attendance of 1,300 farmers.

By early 1970, the technical assistance agents were beginning to receive requests from the farmers for information and guidance in improving their production practices for crops other than maize, particularly from farmers who had used Project recommendations the previous season. One of the first requests was for recommendations for the production of beans. This request was transmitted to the rest of the Project team and research on bean production was initiated by Project technicians during the 1970 season.

## PROJECT PROGRAM: 1971

In 1971, the technical assistance program continued to promote greater use of Project recommendations by the farmers, to instruct the farmers in the correct use of the new technology, to assist organized groups in arranging for credit and fertilizers, and to provide information on a variety of subjects of interest to the farmers. Project recommendations were available in 1971 not only for maize, but also for bush beans and alternative crops for maize (in years when plantings are delayed until late June or early July).

A total of 192 meetings were held in 91 villages with 3,686 farmers in attendance in 1971. Movies were projected for 1,576 farmers in 60 villages. Ninety-three demonstrations of planting techniques were held in 75 communities, with 1,389 farmers participating. Interchanges among groups of farmers were arranged in two communities. Radio programs were broadcast each Sunday morning at 7:30 from March through December.

During 1971, the farmers continued to bring pressure on the technical assistance agents to assist them with a variety of production activities. These requests were communicated to the other members of the Project team. Most of the requests, however, required resources and expertise not available in the Puebla Project, which was funded primarily to increase maize production. Thus, the technical assistance agents began to search for ways to mobilize resources from outside the Puebla Project for use in responding to the farmers' requests.

As a result of this work, short courses on the management of fruit orchards were organized and were attended by about 1,000 farmers in six communities. These courses were presented by specialists in fruit culture, employed by the Mexican state and federal governments. Specialists of the National Extension Service also participated in demonstrations held at four locations to show how small trench silos are used to preserve maize stover in the form of silage.

## PROJECT PROGRAM: 1972

As in past years, the technical assistance program focused primary attention on increasing the efficient use of Project recommendations. A total of 382 meetings were held in 107 villages, attended by 7,875 farmers. There were 187 demonstrations of the planting techniques and the second application of nitrogen in 86 communities, with 3,121 farmers participating. Eight regional demonstrations were held just prior to the maize harvest, with a total attendance of 771.

The technical assistance agents continued to assist farmers with other activities whenever possible. Farmers in 58 villages were assisted in constructing 119 trench silos for the preservation of about 1,280 tons of stover. Farmers in Zones I and II were given help in arranging for 3,600 fruit trees and establishing 12 ha of orchards. Women in a few villages were aided in acquiring sewing machines and organizing sewing centers.