

SUMMARY

A profound change occurred in the early 1970s that transformed the Korean Government's rural development strategy. From one emphasizing industrial exports, the costs of which were largely borne by the Korean farmers, the strategy evolved into one devoted to improving rural Korean life. The genesis of this approach was both political and economic: a hardening of PL 480 terms and the results of the 1971 election that amply demonstrated that government support had eroded in the countryside. The Korean government responded with a rice pricing policy advantageous to the farmers, the strengthening of the extension service, the formation of the Sae-maul ("New Village") Movement, and a rapid increase in rural infrastructure.

The origins of AID's support to agricultural research are found in the Korean Agricultural Sector Survey (1972) and succeeding documents that advocated a strengthening of research as a primary need. The project, proposed in 1973 and implemented in 1974, provided \$5 million for a tripartite program to strengthen the capacity of the Office of Rural Development of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. It included training of Korean researchers overseas, equipment (including a computer and library materials), and both resident and short-term expatriate advisory services. At the close of the project in 1980, 21 Ph.D. students and 17 M.S. students were trained overseas, while an additional 94 received short-term training and 106 participated in observation tours.

Although there were problems with the English language competence of prospective students, the training aspects of the project were universally regarded as the most successful part of the program. Of notable, but secondary, importance was the provision of equipment and supplies, especially the computer and the library materials. Lagging far behind was the value of resident expatriate assistance, which was of marginal use to the project but was more significant in terms of relieving the AID Mission from continuous monitoring of the project than in providing help to the Koreans. Of greater importance was shorter-term foreign technical advice.

The inchoate goal, from a Korean perspective, was probably rice self-sufficiency--a strategic, political, and economic objective. The project purposes, however, were specified in considerable detail outlining exact yield increases on agricultural experimental stations over a ten-year period in the areas of rice, barley, wheat, and soybeans as well as generalized improvement in potato production and in the cropping systems. Specific increases were also proposed for farm fields for the same time. Since the decade of crop improvement is to end in 1984, this evaluation must be somewhat circumscribed.

The project paper suffered from spurious specificity regarding experimental station crop increases. Before the project began, experimental yields were higher than those indicated in the paper, often by considerable amounts. The research breakthroughs that the project