

The agricultural research project ended in 1980. Its targets of increases in agricultural yields are to be achieved by 1984. Seven trainees sent abroad under the project are still overseas; those who have returned have done so only recently and cannot be expected to have made a major contribution at the time of this report. This evaluation is thus circumscribed by these factors.

Agricultural research was an appropriate intervention for AID. The project materially assisted in the development of the institutional infrastructure of the Office of Rural Development which was already well-established. It provided, however, only limited benefits. The most important benefits were: first, training; and secondly, equipment, including a computer and library materials. Resident expatriate technical assistance was of marginal utility, although short-term expert advice was more important. The project provided little that was innovative. The multidisciplinary research team concept was only a modest improvement on the existing structure. Assistance in fostering agricultural research could have resulted from a simple training and equipment project, with short-term advisory services as required.

If the project was more complex than necessary, the project paper was simplistic in its design and somewhat misleading in its data. In spite of a comparatively comprehensive data base, it underestimated existing yields in the experimental stations and the farms. It called for breakthroughs on research resulting in higher yields, but the major innovations occurred prior to the project. The reliance on average experimental yields was a convenient, but spurious, concept.

The areas of project concentration were rice, barley, wheat, soybeans, white potatoes, and cropping systems. Rice was a critical and appropriate concern, being paramount in national policy terms. In spite of inconsistencies in government grain support prices, barley was also important. Cropping systems were another critical area, but little was done in this field. Concentration on soybeans might have been useful, but here again little was accomplished. Potatoes and wheat research was minor, both because of extensive imports of wheat and the marginal value of potatoes in the Korean diet. Given already apparent trends in Korean migration, labor supply, and cropping patterns, attention should have focused on vegetable production and mechanization as well as rice, barley and cropping systems. Even in those priority areas, the contributions of this research project to Korean agricultural growth are necessarily blurred. The project was useful, indeed overall beneficial, but certainly not critical.

Trends showing a decline in barley, wheat, potato and soybean hectarage were apparent before the project began. Although project goals may be reached in some of these crops by 1984, statistically aggregate yields are likely to continue to drop. Thus, national goals will probably not be met although a relatively small number of individual farmers may benefit. Rice production may reach its targets by that date, but if this is accomplished it is likely that it will