

Basic FRG Approach Training at Adami Tulu

Tesfaye Gemechu
Adami Tulu Agricultural Research Centre

A training on Basic FRG Approach was carried out at Adami Tulu Agricultural Research Centre (ATARC) from February 27 to March 1, 2012 for researchers from research centres and universities in Oromia Region.



Participants during the training

The participants exchanged their experiences on FRG based research and other participatory research activities in the areas of cereals, agricultural machineries, honey bee, fishery, other livestock, and agro forestry. Research design, scientific credibility, and sustainability were the issues discussed and the importance of following standardised research design and creating a sense of ownership among participating farmers through cost sharing were reconfirmed. It was also stressed that research topics should be based on farmers' needs and interests.

The participants also visited members of sweet potato FRG at Aneno Shisho near ATARC. The farmers reported that the FRG introduced a new and important crop that was not cultivated before in their area and can potentially be a solution to their problems. The farmer also explained that working in a group was important not only in gaining individual benefit but also in building their social ties. FRG has brought farmers and researchers closer so that the farmers could gain knowledge and skill on sweet potato production and other interrelated issues.

After the field visit, the participants exercised proposal development in groups, based on which discussion was made on important elements in FRG activities. The training was closed by participants' pledge to use FRG approach in their future research activities and share with others the knowledge and experience they gained from the training.

For further information: Tesfaye Gemechu <gtesfaye3@gmail.com>

PD Method Training at Holetta

Firew Kassa Esho¹ and Taku Seo²
¹Holetta Agricultural Research Centre
²FRG II Project

On June 13th and 14th, 2012, Process Description (PD) Method Training was conducted at Holetta ARC with 28 researchers from different regions. Mr. Firew Kassa of Holetta ARC was a resource person and he introduced the participants to "what PD

method is" followed by how it can be used in daily research activities. PD method is a simple method to prepare manuals with pictorial description and can be applied when researchers convey technical information to extension and/or technical assistants (TAs). The participants also practiced effective photographing skills, which is critical to prepare self-explanatory technical information. The exercise gained through developing samples, all the participants are expected to develop their own PD manuals.

Rice Research Seminar in Bahir Dar

Dr Yoshimi Sokei
Special Advisor, Arid and Semi-Arid Farming Area Division,
Rural Development Department, JICA

Dr Sokei visited FRG II Project between May 30th and June 8th 2012 and conducted a rice research seminar at the Amhara Regional Agricultural Research Institute (ARARI) for 16 researchers from four research centres in the area. The seminar firstly discussed the principle of rice research including growth characteristics, varietal characteristics, seed and fertilizer calculation, seed production, trial treatment, data collection, significant figure, data comparison, data analysis, etc., then discussed practical issues identified from the reports, which the researchers submitted to the FRG II Project.

Despite having limited experience in rice, the participants were enthusiastic and surprisingly quick to absorb new information. Due to the diversity of technical training the researchers were provided by different international institutions and donors, patchy situation of the rice research in the country was prominent. Much of the present rice research is carried out in collaboration with CGIARs; many researchers are taught applied level methodology, which has narrowed down researchers' way of thinking. Without proper understanding of the principle of rice, the research may be conducted applying research methods based on the interest of the funding institutions. Such research methods are understood as standards by Ethiopian researchers, who then apply the methods to other researchers.

A specific example to show the case is a research report containing CV (coefficient of variance) among more than 20 rice varieties. Each variety has different traits so it is quite normal to have larger CV values among different varieties. The researcher explained that the CVs were reported because the statistical software produced CV values each time. Computer software produces numbers regardless to the kind of data being fed into. It is therefore important that researchers have to understand well what each statistical output means.

Due to shortage of time, the participants did not understand well about setting parameters for variety selection, cultivation and fertiliser experiment, and trial designing for research objectives this time. It is necessary for researchers to go through practical training sessions combining research planning according to research purpose, field activities on trial plots, data collection and data analysis.

Common research method should be shared among Ethiopian rice researchers. In order to do so, not applied nor simplified but basics of rice research methods should be acquired by them. The Ethiopian researchers were observed as serious and motivated. Dr Sokei is sure that once they are equipped with the basics, the rice research in Ethiopia will develop rapidly.