

15th Triennial Symposium of the International Society for Tropical Root Crops

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations from Oral Presentations

Session I

Global scenario on production, utilization and marketing of roots and tuber crops

Moderators: G. Thiele and D. Campilan

Gregory Scott provided an update on the situation on roots and tubers in Latin America. This provided a closer look in one key geographical area of the trends described by Mark Rosegrant in the morning and the underlying drivers. Potato production is trending up whilst sweetpotato is declining. There were some surprises compared to earlier predictions including increases in cropped area in Mexico and Brazil.

Guy Hareau examined the adoption of two CIP related varieties Canchan and Amarilis in Peru. There has been adoption on about 30% of area. The paper revealed the unpredictability of innovation processes. Canchan was adopted on a much larger area than predicted but because resistance to late blight was overcome benefits were lower than expected. Overall the rate of return to investment was about the same. The paper also showed the importance of post harvest factors in driving varietal change. The high returns demonstrate the value to investment in breeding. One question from the audience concerned the relative value of investment in conventional breeding at CIP compared with transgenic approaches. But in the absence of ex post information about the use of transgenic materials it is not possible to give a good answer.

Dindo Campilan reported on sweetpotato consumption in Orissa, India's major producer of sweetpotato, i.e. the state accounts for one-third of total national production. The presentation analyzed how local sweetpotato consumption patterns determine opportunities for introducing orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) as part of a food-based strategy for Vitamin A nutrition improvement. The paper concludes that OFSP research and development efforts would significantly contribute to reaching millions of children and women most vulnerable to Vitamin A deficiency. At the same time, it concludes that the key strategy needs to be based on dietary diversification with OFSP as a component.

Mary Taylor presented the diverse range of root and tuber crops of the Pacific, a vital component in the livelihoods of over 9 million people. There are threats to their consumption through the introduction of nutritionally poorer foods. But increasing food

prices and the need to respond to climate change provides an opportunity to strengthen their production and consumption. They are considering the value chain as a way to enhance demand for root and tubers.

Huang Zhenglin presented an overview of the consumption and use of potato in Chongqing. A large amount of potato is used for animal feed and starch production. There are some interesting uses of new technology including blight forecasting method from Belgium, the use of rice straw, milling and production under plastic sheets. There has been a fast development of processing with different models of interacting with industry including key farmers, extension and associations. The company does its own research on development and processing. It produced around 120,000t a year into 20,000t of starch and noodles. A question from the audience concerned establishing contracts with small farmers. The answer was flexibility in pricing linked to changes in market prices.

In general, the session presented an overview of regional trends in potato, sweetpotato and roots and tubers around the world, though a regional perspective on Africa was missing.