

***INTERNATIONAL LEARNING WORKSHOP ON
FARMER FIELD SCHOOLS (FFS):
EMERGING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES***

21-25 October 2002, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

I. Introduction

The farmer field school (FFS) approach was first developed in the late 1980s for training rice farmers in Indonesia on integrated pest management (IPM). Based on adult education principles, the FFS has evolved to become a distinct approach for season-long training that builds on processes of group learning and experimentation.

There has been a rapid increase in the popularity of FFS over the last decade, as could be seen from efforts of various programs and organizations to apply and adapt the approach. While already gaining wide popularity, the FFS approach has also been confronted by issues emerging from the evaluation of its impact, coverage and cost-effectiveness. Consequently, there is now greater emphasis on the development of monitoring and evaluation methodologies to better capture the processes and outcomes of FFS. In addition, the widespread use of FFS for various crops, systems, constraints and purposes has led to numerous FFS "variants" that need to be re-examined in terms of their: a) positive contribution to the further development of the approach, b) the extent to which they reflect the core principles underlying FFS, and c) efforts to maintain the quality in implementation.

II. Objectives, Outputs and Participants

The International Learning Workshop aims to:

1. Share and review worldwide experiences in applying, improvising and/or adapting the FFS approach for various agro-ecological, socio-cultural and economic situations.
2. Examine institutionalization, up-scaling, evaluation and related FFS issues.
3. Identify opportunities for the further development of the FFS approach – both to contribute to the global body of knowledge and for the benefit of field practitioners – in light of newer challenges for sustainable agriculture and natural resource management.

The workshop sub-themes include:

1. Adaptation of FFS to various crops/systems/constraints
2. Application of FFS for R&D, training and extension, and other learning purposes
3. FFS institutionalization, scaling up and policy development
4. FFS monitoring and evaluation

The Workshop is expected to produce the following set of outputs:

1. Publication: a) summary of workshop highlights including directory of contacts and resources, b) volume of case papers on worldwide experiences in the innovative application of the FFS approach. Subject to further discussion at the workshop, these publications may also be produced in CD-ROM format and/or posted on relevant websites.
2. Agenda for action: identification of appropriate research, development and policy interventions.

3. Networking: Establishment of formal/informal linkages among professionals and institutions seeking wider experience-sharing and collaborative activities.

To be conducted in English, the Workshop aims to gather approximately 40 participants consisting of: 1) FFS practitioners involved in planning and development, field implementation, and monitoring and evaluation activities; and 2) resource persons to provide inputs on theories/concepts, policy, resource mobilization and related issues.

III. Workshop Organization and Collaboration

The lead organizers for the Workshop are: Rockefeller Foundation, International Potato Center (CIP) through the Users' Perspectives With Agricultural Research and Development (UPWARD) Network, and the Farmers for Innovation in Ecological Livelihood and Democracy (FIELD) Indonesia. The workshop advisory committee consists of:

Dindo Campilan	CIP-UPWARD	Philippines
Elske van de Fliert	CIP-WGPR	Indonesia
Julian Gonsalves	CIP-UPWARD	Philippines
Ruben Puentes	Rockefeller Foundation	Mexico
Russ Dilts	FAO Community IPM Program	Indonesia
Handoko Widagdo	World Education	Indonesia
James Okoth	FAO IPPM Program	Uganda
Janny Vos	CABI	United Kingdom
Conny Almekinders	Wageningen University	The Netherlands
Marco Miagostovich	RECOFTC	Thailand

IV. Further Information

Those interested to learn more about the workshop and its outputs may contact the Workshop Core Team c/o CIP-UPWARD (cip-manila@cgiar.org).