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Wheat is one of the basic food crops for over one-third of the population of the world and probably accounts for more total acreage seeded and more production than any other crop including dehulled rice. There is a deficiency of wheat in the Near and Mid-East, Central America, and all of South America except Argentina. Since it is one of the main staples in the diet of so many people, it merits study on a more intensive scale to increase and stabilize production, to assure normal crops every year and in many areas prevent famine. People actually die from hunger in the Near and Mid-East when crop failures occur.

With the maturing of the Rockefeller Foundation's agricultural operating programs in Mexico and Colombia, the wheat and related programs have been, and are being, turned over to nationals of these countries. The international experience, training and knowlege of some of these scientists from these Rockefeller Foundation programs could be put to wider use in a broadened International Wheat Improvement center where any and/or all phases of science dealing with the wheat plant could be studied. The base should be broadened to include not only research on breeding but genetics, disease resistance studies, soil and water relations, quality, physiology, mechanization etc. One of the most important aspects of the broadened IWIP would be the training of young scientists. It is essential they be granted advanced degrees in order to compete and stay in wheat improvement when they return to their own countries.

The broadened center should be located where:

1) It is connected with a degree granting institution. Degrees from a recognized university would give the returning student prestige and recognition which would allow him a stronger voice in running his wheat program and a better chance to compete for the research funds available.

2) There are strong supporting departments in genetics, plant pathology, biochemistry, statistics, cytogenetics, botany etc. for minor work.

3) Courses are taught in English since the vast majority of entering students, especially from the Near and Mid-East, know English as their second language.

4) There would be relatively easy movement in or out of the country of breeding material, varieties etc.

5) Disease pathogens of a particularly virulent mature could be studied in winter mounths without danger of escape and possible damage to farm crops.

6) Outstanding library facilities are available.

7) Spring, winter and durum wheat studies could be carried out. This implys a winter season.

By examining the needs of the program one comes to the conclusion that the ideal location would be a tie-in with one of the good midwest or western U. S. universitys (such as Minnesota, Wisconsin, Purdue, North Dakota etc.). None of the present facilities in R. F. operating programs neet all of the requirements. On the other hand, the R. F. operating programs in Mexico, Chile, Ecuador, Colombia and India should be used as complementary centers where students could do part of their thesis work, crosses could be made, some disease testing work carried out, second semester crops could be planted to get two crops a year etc.

Sub-stations could be established with cooperating institutions in Argentina, Peru, Pakistan, Egypt, Israel Kenya etc.

What are the needs to accomplish this program?

1) An agreement would be made with a U. S. university. This should be no problem since it would strengthen the university, give them added prestige, additional research facilities, staff and breeding material.

2) Buildings for laboratories, offices, greenhouses etc. probably would have to be constructed. The cost for these could be handled like any grant and are non-recurring.

3) Where indicated, the present R. F. staff in wheat, soils, plant pathology etc. would be transferred to the center. The center could start operations without an increase in staff in the beginning although certain fields such as quality, cytogenetics and perhaps physiology would need strengthening in the near future.

4) Budget. The R. F. is already paying salaries of the present staff and their transfer would not represent an increase in budget. The entire operation would cost no more than one of the present operating programs such as Colombia (counting present staff salaries plus operating budget). If the cards were played right, it is entirely possible that the university concerned would assign their own staff to the wheat center to work either full or part time on quality, cytogenetics, physiology and other fields. Outside support from entities such as the Crop Quality Council, other foundations (such as Ford) etc. could probably be obtained.

5) The center would be cordinated with present R. F. operating agencies. This phase of the program would require travel by the "Center's Staff" but would be nothing new to what is already being done. Thesis problems could be worked out directly with these programs. Both ICA and INIA would accept graduate students to work on problems of mutual interest to the center, students and country. Similar agreements could be arranged with India.

In the past, some objections have been raised about establishing new institutes because of the fixed costs involved. However, any operating program such as Mexico, Colombia, India, Chile or the new ones in Africa also have fixed costs. The value

derived from such a center as proposed would have a world wide impact and be equally as important with no greater cost to the R. F. than the present operating programs. Expanding the present IWIP can be amply justified.

I would like to propose that those concerned meet as soon as possible either in Mexico or here to discuss this fully and them present the recommendations including estimated budgets to New York. The idea might even be expanded to a science center including maize and potatoes if necessary to get support.

Warmest regards.

Sincerely yours,

John W. Gibler

JWG/cq