

Report on SRI workshop in Iraq, May 2011

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A workshop on SRI was held at the Ministry of Agriculture, 19 May 2011, for discussion of SRI activities in Iraq during the past five years, and how to support and extend SRI to rice farmers' fields.

I presented the SRI system to those in attendance (including the Senior Undersecretary Dr. Mahdi Dhamad, Ministerial Consultant Dr. Faisal Nasser, the Director of Planning, and personnel from several Departments in the Ministry, many agricultural specialists from Najaf, Diwaniya, Muthanna, Kut and Thi Qar provinces, and representatives of other institutions of our Ministry.

My SRI presentation covered: what is SRI?, how it came to Iraq, SRI principles, SRI goals, justifications of SRI application in Iraq, our SRI planning for the future, and finally a proposal for supporting SRI by the European Union.

At the end of this presentation on SRI, I received congratulations due to the substantial work done on SRI to solve water scarcity, soil fertility decline, and conserving of the environment in rice-growing areas. All in attendance who learned about the SRI work had great desire to apply SRI system in their provinces, but using transplanting machines rather than doing transplanting by hand, given labor constraints.

I showed an SRI documentary film to them, and this film had a good reception from all. At the end of the presentation, the Minister decided to meet with us, and when I asked him about establishing an SRI Ministerial Committee for planning and managing the SRI system in Iraq, he directly agreed. I am very happy for this important meeting, which will give us a thrust forward in the future toward wide extension of SRI by scientific ways.

In the presentation, I asked the consultant to agree for printing an SRI bulletin which I have prepared in English and Arabic languages. I think it will be useful for rice farmers. I have written this bulletin with many options of application, to give farmers room to choose in which way they can use SRI methods depending on their situation.

The Senior Undersecretary asked me to contribute more materials for publication on SRI activities in Iraq. I will be the first person who publishes about the SRI system in this website. Maybe in the future I will ask him to open a window on SRI in the Ministry of Agriculture website. Reports on the meeting and the SRI workshop are published in the Ministry website.



Meeting with Iraqi Minister of Agriculture after SRI workshop



Presentation on SRI in Ministry



**Left: Senior Undersecretary Dr. Mahdi Dhamad
Right: Ministerial Consultant Dr. Faisal Nasser**