

**REPORT ON SRI TRIALS IN PERU SENT TO ECHO DEVELOPMENT NOTES  
BY PABLO LUTZ, A SUBSCRIBER TO THIS AGRICULTURAL NEWSLETTER:**

Chiclayo, Peru  
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Dear friends at ECHO:

Thanks for all the valuable resources you keep bringing to us. Almost every issue of Development Notes has some item of interest and often something we can use in the work that continues in Peru.

A recent experiment in the jungle with irrigated rice planted according to the SRI plan described in Development Notes raised the interest of hundreds of marginal producing farmers, most of whom have abandoned the usual method of rice production as unproductive.

The dry land rice which was a staple for many years is grown much like dry land wheat. It was planted five grains to a hole made by a pointed stick at intervals of 50 to 80 cm. At harvest time, local birds required 8-10 hour days of scaring to protect the crop. Weather patterns also have changed so that no one season is as predictable as formerly. If production reached 2 t/ha, farmers felt well repaid for their efforts.

Irrigated rice culture was taken from the Peruvian north coast, Chiclayo, to Pucallpa in the jungle. Seed beds were arranged to be watered from a well, replanted at the three leaf stage as SRI recommends, at a rate of 15 plants per mts. sq. Only organic fertilizer was used in preparing the plots. Water for irrigation was channeled from a fish project natural reservoir. Except for the first few days after planting, the plots were not flooded but kept moist.

When the heads developed, they bent down from their weight to be hidden among the leaves, thus alleviating totally the loss of grain to local birds. On the coast they consider a head with 180-210 grains to be excellent. Random gathering and counting the grains in the plots in the jungle averaged 280-360 grains per head. No weeding was necessary as the plants quickly shaded the soil. Harvest averaged 8 t/ha.

After harvest the plants tend to regrowth that on the coast is used to pasture cattle. In the jungle, we decided to let some plants grow as an experiment. Harvest results in 70% of the original production with no investment of seed, soil preparation, fertilizer or hand work, so actually the second crop was more valuable than the first. I have suggested that we leave some plots for a third round of production from the original seeding.