

WELCOME TO PARTICIPANTS

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Rector Rapee, Khun Sompote and friends from abroad, colleagues from Kasetsart University and the Department of Agriculture participating in the Thai National Corn and Sorghum Program, it is a great pleasure for me to be with you today for the inauguration of this important "Strategy" meeting on the control of the downy mildews of corn. Both personally and on behalf of the Rockefeller Foundation I welcome the participants from abroad and from Thailand to this timely conference.

The history of the identification, spread, distribution and importance of the some nine species of downy mildew fungi that infect the corn crop around the world is well known to this group. It has been documented in the reports of the Workshop held in India in 1969 and the Symposium in Japan in 1974.

Downy mildew is high on the list of factors limiting attempts to increase corn production in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of Asia and the new world. Through a perusal of the reports of the previous meetings it is immediately apparent that much progress has been made through collaborative research efforts to reduce losses caused by the downy mildews. Meetings of this type have stimulated a very productive international research network. I trust the field trips, informal conversations and deliberations of this meeting will help to still more clearly focus research efforts toward the most efficient mildew control procedures.

The development and use of mildew resistant varieties has given most promising results to

date. You will undoubtedly be looking at techniques to speed the development of host resistance for those areas where levels of resistance are still not satisfactory, as well as, setting priorities for research needed to further fill in the lacunae of our knowledge of the pathogens themselves. Since the need for effective mildew control is so great in the overall effort to increase food and feed production I would urge you to review each of the research goals identified in Japan two years ago and to develop definite step by step plans for your future research efforts to meet both immediate and long range requirements. In spite of encouraging accomplishments so far the battle against downy mildew will definitely be a continuing conflict requiring varied approaches to control.

In concluding I would like to assure you that the Rockefeller Foundation has had a continuing interest in the downy mildew problem since the time it first became apparent during collaborative efforts for the improvement of maize production in Asia. We are pleased to have been a participant and you can count on our continuing support in this joint effort aimed at reducing losses from downy mildew below economics levels. I wish you well in these deliberations and look forward to seeing the concrete plans for future work that will be produced here.

Again, I welcome you. Please feel free to call upon me, Dr. Renfro or other members of the Foundation staff if we can be of assistance to you. Thank you.