

Inaugural Address

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Distinguished Guests and Participants,

On behalf of the Symposium Organizing Committee of the Tropical Agriculture Research Center, I have the honor and privilege to open the International Symposium on Virus Diseases of Rice and Leguminous Crops in the Tropics sponsored by the Tropical Agriculture Research Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan.

Above all, I would like to extend my cordial welcome to all the participants, in particular to those who have come over to Japan from abroad.

The Tropical Agriculture Research Center was established in 1970 with the objective of contributing to the development of agricultural technology in the tropical areas in undertaking research programs in a spirit of international collaboration. The basic principle of our research activities is to work together with overseas scientists on a partnership basis to solve technical obstacles which hamper the agricultural development of the tropical countries. The activities of the Center cover a fairly wide range of research fields such as crop production, soil fertility, plant protection, forestry, pasture and animal production, agricultural engineering, etc.

One of the major activities of the Center is to send research scientists from Japan to overseas research institutions located in the tropical countries to conduct collaborative research work in agricultural fields. About 40 staff members of the Center with long-term assignments are engaged each year in such collaborative activities in many parts of the world, mainly in the Asian countries and partly in the Latin American and African countries.

An other important activity of the Center is to hold international symposia for exchanging information and views among different countries and among scientists concerned. Since 1967 the symposia have been held every year, covering such subjects as crop diseases, animal production, methods of crop breeding, optimization of fertilizer effect, water management in paddy fields, silvicultural technologies, tropical soybean, pesticide use, etc.

The present symposium, the nineteenth of its kind will give the opportunity to consider various aspects relating to the incidence and control of virus diseases affecting rice and leguminous crops in the tropics.

It is a well known fact that the occurrence of virus diseases is a major constraint to the cultivation of rice and leguminous crops such as soybean, groundnut, bean, etc. which play a significant role as a source of protein in human nutrition, particularly in the developing countries of the tropical zone.

On the other hand, great progress has been achieved in the identification and epidemiology of a large number of the diseases affecting these crops. Also the major viruses causing the diseases have been isolated, purified and their morphological, biological and physical properties have been determined by the use of electron microscopy, immunological methods and molecular biology techniques.

Also the main vectors of the viruses, chiefly insects have been identified and their ecological characteristics are being studied along with the mode of transmission of the viruses.

However, it appears that the control of the diseases still requires a considerable effort in research. Indeed, the complexity of the interaction between virus, vector and plant makes it

difficult to devise effective methods of control which are presently centered on the use of pesticides to eradicate the vector combined with cultural practices and the development of crop varieties resistant to both the vector and the virus.

I am convinced that the discussions in the present symposium will further contribute to the enhancement of research in these fields.

I sincerely hope that the symposium will be successful and useful in contributing to the development of effective methods for controlling virus diseases of rice and leguminous crops.

I also hope that our friendship and cooperation will be further strengthened through our joint effort in reaching this common target of immense importance.

Thank you