

# SRI lectures at Al-Muthanna Province Iraq, 2008

Khidhir Abbas Hameed and Flayeh Abed Jaber  
Al-Mishkhab Rice Research Station  
Najaf - Iraq

With support of IOM and CHF, 16 SRI lectures were held April 20–May 6, 2008 in Al Muthanna Province, covering 1,600 rice-growing farmers in Rumatha District and Warkaa, Majd and Najmi Sub-Districts. Following up the lectures, SRI methods were applied at 16 sites as demonstration fields. Khidhir Abbas Hameed and Flayeh Abed Jaber from MRRS delivered all these SRI lectures. We will be arranging practical application and observations for 1,200 farmers also. Color lectures with pictures were printed and given to all farmers to be referred to by them. The lectures covered rice-growing problems in Iraq, SRI principles, and how to produce organic manure on the farm (see pictures below):





### **Rice-growing reality in Al-Muthanna Province**

Rice cultivated areas at Al-Muthanna province total 4,505 ha (3.6 % of the total rice-growing area in Iraq), with 2,462 rice farmers in total (see table below):

Province	Location	Rice-growing area (in hectares)	No. of rice farmers
Al-Muthanna	Rumatha	2312.5	1,080
	Warkaa	900	600
	Majd	537.5	170
	Najmi	755	612
Total		4505	2,462

After water supply from rivers has declined due to water shortages in the volume arriving to Iraq in the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers from abroad, irrigation by pumps has become difficult for farmers due to high cost of pumping in addition to reduction in nutrient elements in the water and in water quality compare with previous supply.

Various problems confront rice farmers: increasing costs of production, especially for chemical fertilizer, use of the dry-and-wet method of cultivation which requires a large amount of seeds, use of traditional varieties, and reduction in soil fertility. All these problems lead farmers to search for other livelihood sources, and farmers are looking for new methods for solve their agricultural problems: to restore soil fertility, save water, find promising varieties, and introduce modern techniques.

### **SRI system suits the rice-growing reality in Al-Muthanna Province**

We think that the SRI system will be contribute to solve all of the rice-growing problems in Al-Muthanna Province, but we need to be using mechanical transplanting instead of manual transplanting. From the meetings with rice farmers when lectures were held, we felt that farmers have a great desire to apply SRI practices using promising varieties.