



System of Rice Intensification for the Cordillera Uplands: An Ecological Way of Growing Crops

by ROBERTO VERZOLA, National Coordinator - SRI Pilipinas

The system of rice intensification (SRI) is a method of growing rice that, if followed closely by farmers, results in a dramatic increase in the number of productive tillers as well as in greater and deeper root growth. The SRI philosophy is based on agro-ecological principles, which treat the rice plant as a biological system within a farm that is also seen as an ecological system. SRI has been tried successfully in most regions of the Philippines, including the Cordilleras, and one in three farmers typically get dramatic results on their first try. By both raising yields and reducing costs, SRI improves farmers' incomes, which enhances food security. Reducing reliance on fossil-fuel-based farm chemicals further adds to food security and helps mitigate global warming while preserving soil and environmental health and producing a healthy rice that enjoys a better price in the market. Because SRI mainly involves a learning process by the farmers, its successful promotion presents a sociological challenge and should be of great interest to social scientists.



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OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Roberto Verzola is the National Coordinator of SRI Pilipinas, a non-profit organization promoting the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) among Filipino Farmers. He is also the President of the Center for Renewable Electricity Strategies (CREST). Verzola's wide interest range from organic farming to renewable energy.