

International Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture and Balanced Fertilization in China

By Liu Congmeng

Benefits to China from international cooperation range from increased funding and introduction of new technology to improving management skills and understanding agricultural development techniques. The Balanced Fertilizer Demonstration Program (BFDP) of Canpotex Limited has been a model involving foreign governments, private enterprise and the Ministry of Agriculture. The BFDP has had a large impact on China's agriculture and the economic well-being of farmers.



International experts discussing policy issues at a 1995 conference.

Since the initiation of reform and opening-up of China, international cooperation in agriculture has resulted in extensive utilization of new farm technologies, improving agricultural development and the rural economy. Of particular importance are achievements in:

- **Injection of foreign funds into agricultural development.** These are indispensable to China's agricultural development as they have filled the financial gap resulting from limited domestic funding.
- **Human resource development.** Agricultural development requires scientific research and technology transfer. Management of this development depends on highly qualified personnel. International cooperation has played an extensive role in developing this human resource base both by out-of-country and in-country training of Chinese scholars. With their views broadened, information exchanged and thinking liberalized, many have become the backbone of technical and management changes in China.
- **New technology and equipment.** These introductions have occurred across agriculture and include soil fertility, animal husbandry and fisheries. These technologies have become examples for others.
- **Policy and rural economic reform accelerated.** Through extensive international exchanges, technical and management personnel from various agricultural departments have a better understanding of current problems, solutions and lessons for

agricultural and rural economic development. With this knowledge, integrated rural enterprises have sprung up that produce products of international quality.

International cooperation in agriculture has promoted the introduction and implementation of new technologies, new varieties and new management styles. These have increased the rate of development in the agricultural sector and substantially improved the rural economy.

One of the important technologies introduced was balanced fertilization. Inorganic fertilizers have helped increase grain yields by 30 to 50 percent, but these costly inputs must be used efficiently to maximize production and economic benefits. Also, when used in a balanced manner to improve soil fertility, they help maintain or enhance the environment by conserving soil and water resources.

The BFDP has been a model of successful international cooperation among the Government of Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan, PPI/PPIC and Canpotex Limited on one side and the Ministry of Agriculture and its affiliated organizations on the other. BCI

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The People's Republic of China has about 22 percent of world population and about 7 percent of world cultivated land. International cooperation is important in implementing new technologies for continued success.