

IRRI Releases Two New Rice Varieties In Burundi

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<http://www.asianscientist.com/in-the-lab/irri-releases-two-new-rice-varieties-burundi-ir77713-ir79511/>

AsianScientist (Jan. 3, 2012) - A collaboration between the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the African country of Burundi has resulted in farmers having two new rice varieties that are set to boost rice production.

The African country of Burundi has been ranked as one of the five poorest countries in the world, with more than 90 percent of the population depending on agriculture for food.

Rice was first introduced in 1890 but only took off as a major food crop and staple in the 1980's. However, the country's farmers were not able to grow enough rice to keep up with demand.

Based on a collaborative effort with the Philippine-headquartered IRRI that began in 2008, farmers in Burundi will soon have two new rice varieties, IRRI's IR77713 and IR79511, which were chosen over Burundi's local grown varieties because they produce more rice, have higher grain quality, and taste better.

These two varieties can produce one and a half tons more rice than local varieties and they mature two to three weeks earlier, meaning that farmers can grow two crops in the same season.

“I am happy that the varieties I selected are now released. I would like to get seeds now, to be among those who will multiply seeds, so that my income can increase,” said Ms. Scolastique Simbandumwe, one of the farmers who helped pick the new varieties.

The rice varieties were released by IRRI-Burundi ahead of schedule, only after four growing seasons. These varieties are targeted to be planted in the low lying areas around the country in hopes of boosting food production and matching farmer and consumer needs.

“We do, of course, still have a long way to go. We will actively assist Burundi's Ministry of Agriculture to multiply the seed of these new varieties so that they can reach farmers as soon as possible,” says Mr. Joseph Bigirimana, IRRI's liaison scientist and coordinator in Burundi.

Source: [IRRI](#).

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