TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

NEW THIRD WORLD AGRICULTURE EFFORT

AMSTERDAM, The Netherlands—Companies and research institutions in industrialized countries plan to make available proprietary technology to research institutes in the developing world.

A new venture to promote the application of agricultural biotechnology in developing countries was announced at a recent conference on Biotechnology and Farmers' Rights held at the Free University of Amsterdam in April. Details of the project—the International Biotechnology Coordination Programme—were given by Jasper Veldhuyzen van Zanten of the Sandoz Seeds subsidiary, Zaadunie (Enkhuizen, The Netherlands). The programme is funded by the Hitachi Foundation (Tokyo) and the Resources Development Foundation (RDF, Washington, DC).

The institutes will apply the technology locally, avoiding crops and markets in which the companies have commercial interests. Non-governmental organizations which often have important networks in developing countries may also be involved.

The prime mover behind the Programme is Clive James, a former

deputy director general of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre in Mexico. During the past year, he has been canvassing support from international development agencies, companies, and research institutions. James's "honest brokering" has drawn in organizations such as Monsanto, Plant Genetic Systems (PGS, Ghent, Belgium), Zaadunie, the John Innes Institute (Norwich, U.K.) and the Max-Planck Institute (Köln, Germany). Monsanto's technology for coat protein-mediated resistance, for instance, is being applied in Mexico against virus X and Y disease in local potato varieties and against virus diseases of peppers. PGS is involved with a project sponsored in Thailand on bioinsecticides to combat malaria-transmitting mosquitoes. Other projects include diagnostics for bacterial diseases in cabbage (Taiwan) and virus resistance in tomatoes (Egypt).

One main criticism of the Programme is that it does not address the problems of subsistence farmers. The countries targeted by RDF for support—Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, The Philippines, Brazil, Mexico, Costa

Rica, Egypt, Zimbabwe, and Kenya—are among the most developed. The farmers most likely to benefit will be cash croppers, a group for whom there is significant economic, infrastructural, and political support.

But it was another, less privileged group, the resource-poor small-scale farmers of developing countries, that was the main focus of the Amsterdam conference. The Netherlands' Minister for Development Cooperation, J. Pronk, announced that his ministry would be using a new project assessment method, the "Interactive Bottom-up Approach" (IBUA) developed at the Free University of Amsterdam, in deciding how to allocate its development funds in biotechnology. In IBUA, technical and social scientists mobilize both high technology and the know-how of indigenous small-scale farmers. Importantly, IBUA considers the prevailing social, political, and economic conditions of resource-poor farmers in implementing innovation.

—David King

David King is with The Genetics Forum, 258 Pentonville Rd., London N1 9JY, U.K.

LEAK-FREE ELECTROPHORESIS

Unique Dual Mini-Vertical Chamber

- Thick, break-resistant glass plates.
- Bevelled notched glass plate has 1mm spacers attached.
- Removable silicone U-shaped gasket eliminates the need to seal with tape or agarose.
- Patented pressure platen holds the gel in the chamber without clamps.

SERVA

BIOCHEMICALS • SEPARATION TECHNOLOGY
50 A & S Drive • Paramus, New Jersey 07652
Phone: (201) 967-5900 and 800-645-3412
Telex # 275658 Serv • Telefax # (201) 967-8858

Circle No. 245 on Reader Service Card

High Purity CHIRAL AMINES

Grams – Metric Tons

R-α-PHENETHYLAMINE
*Developmental quantities
from stock*

RACEMIC
AMINE

CELGENE AMINE
>99.8% R-ISOMER

R = H, MeO, HO, halo, alkyl, etc.

For these, other chiral amines, or brochure, contact:

CELGENE CORPORATION, DEPT. CA
P.O. BOX 4914, 7 POWDER HORN DRIVE
WARREN, NJ 07059, USA
TEL: (908) 271-1001 FAX: (908) 271-4184

Circle No. 251 on Reader Service Card