Policies and cooperation in Mediterranean rainfed agriculture

Erskine W.

in

Cantero-Martínez C. (ed.), Gabiña D. (ed.).
Mediterranean rainfed agriculture: Strategies for sustainability

Zaragoza : CIHEAM
Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 60

2004
pages 323-326

Policies and cooperation in Mediterranean rainfed agriculture

W. Erskine
International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA),
P.O. Box 5466, Aleppo, Syria

SUMMARY – This presentation describes the approach utilized by ICARDA in order to set the priority themes for agricultural research in rainfed agriculture. Thematic networks have also been defined as important tools for undertaking collaborative agricultural research.

Key words: Mediterranean, rainfed agriculture, policies, cooperation.

RÉSUMÉ – *"Politiques et coopération dans le domaine de l'agriculture pluviale méditerranéenne". Cette présentation décrit l'approche utilisée par l'ICARDA afin de déterminer les thématiques prioritaires pour la recherche en agriculture pluviale. Des réseaux thématiques ont également été définis, étant des instruments importants pour entreprendre une recherche en collaboration dans le domaine de l'agriculture.*

Mots-clés : *Méditerranée, agriculture pluviale, politiques, coopération.*

There is very considerable commonality of environments: ecological, social, economic and in policy issues among Mediterranean countries. I will focus on policies and cooperation among Mediterranean Non-EC Member Countries (MNC).

An enabling policy environment is critical to sustainable development in rainfed agricultural systems around the Mediterranean. Policy is a national prerogative. However, there is an important linkage between polices agreed at the global and regional levels under international conventions and agreements and those possible at the national and local level. The World Trade Agreements will increasingly and profoundly affect trade in commodities from agriculture produced around the Mediterranean Sea. Commodity quality will act as a new trade barrier unless the issue is addressed nationally. It will be necessary to find niche markets for Mediterranean products.

ICARDA has been actively researching on policy in the theme of property rights with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) with national partners in the Maghreb and Mashreq Project (ICARDA, 2000). The research aim is to compare the consequences of contrasting property right regimes at the community level over eight MNC particularly for rangelands. Additionally, the effects of various feed price policy options have been modeled. These research initiatives are to inform both the policymaking process and policy makers in the region (Fig. 1). The approach of comparing the effects of different policies over countries is a powerful way of contributing to and influencing the policy debate nationally. The approach requires cooperation over countries.

Given the similarities among MNCs, the next question is: *On which key topics should we cooperate?*

Clearly regional cooperation should focus on high priority themes for agricultural research in rainfed agriculture. In this regard major progress was achieved last year in the AARINENA/ICARDA regional priority setting for agricultural research (Belaid *et al.,* 2003; www.icarda.cgiar.org/ARP_CWANA/ARPS_FINAL_REPORT1.htm). The process involved the four steps of:

(i) Compiling an inventory study of CGIAR activities in Central and West Asia and North Arfrica Region (CWANA).

(ii) Undertaking a questionnaire on agricultural research priority setting.

(iii) Holding sub-regional brainstorming meetings.

(iv) Holding a regional meeting to summarize the outcomes of the sub regional meetings.

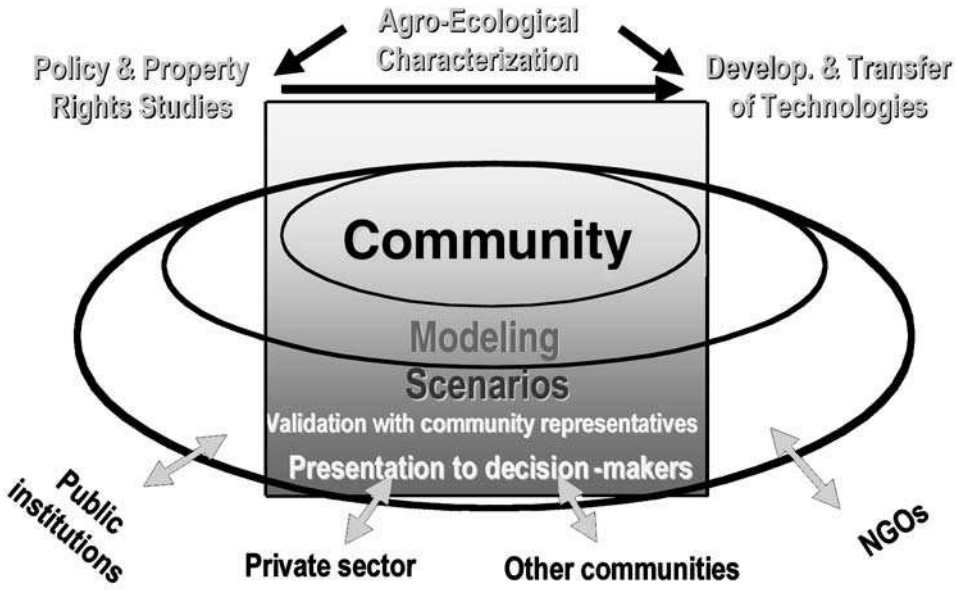

Fig. 1. Maghreb and Mashreq community approach: strategy and methods.

The agreed priorities for agricultural research (both rainfed and irrigated sectors) are summarized in Fig. 2 for CWANA. The regions of West Asia, North Africa and the Nile Valley each have specific agreed regional priorities in Belaid *et al.* (2003).

	Germplasm Management	Natural Resource M'ment	Socio - economics	Cross -cutting issues
Priority 1	Germplasm Improvement and Biotechnology	Water	Technology Dissemination	Human Resource Development
Priority 2	Genetic Resources Conservation	Soils	Marketing/ Commerce and Trade	Capacity Building
Priority 3	Integrated Pest M'nt Seed Production	Range Int. Crop M'ment	Post Harvest Technologies Quality and Value addition Institutional Policies	Information & Computer Technology Bio-safety and Quarantine Intellectual Property Rights

Fig. 2. CWANA agricultural research priorities.

Clearly cooperation should then coalesce around agreed key priorities in rainfed agriculture. The next question is then: *How should the research be organized?* An important mechanism/methodology is to utilize research networks. This was agreed in the above priority setting process as an important approach to undertaking collaborative agricultural research (Belaid *et al.,* 2003). Networks build on knowledge management: learning from successes and failures. Networks exploit the complementarity of members of the network by using the capacity of the strong and knowledgeable to aid the weak.

This is most effectively done through thematic networks. To illustrate the need for this approach I illustrate the diversity of National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in the MNC countries with Fig. 3 of the potential research years in various countries in the region (Casas *et al.,* 1999).

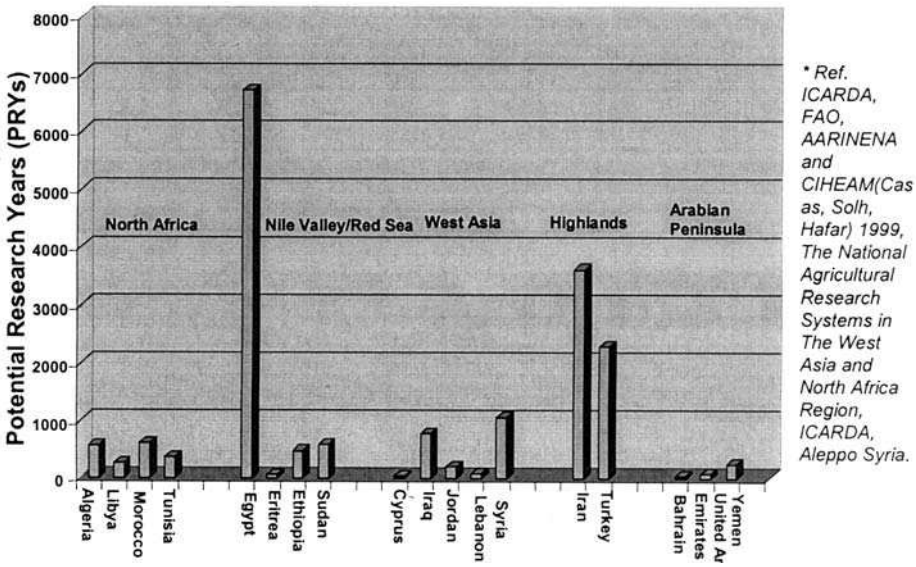

Fig. 3. Diversity in NARS´s of WANA.

Networks in agricultural research usually stem from:

(i) The importance of any specific problem to NARS and NARS scientists.

(ii) A clearly defined problem already supported in existing national programs.

(iii) And in general from agricultural research strategies and priorities of NARS.

Examples of such cooperative networks for agricultural research are shown in Fig. 4.

References

Belaid, A., Solh, M. and Mazid, A. (2003). *Setting agricultural research priorities for the Central and West Asia and North Africa region (CWANA)*. ICARDA/AARINENA/CAC NARS Forum.

Casas, J., Solh, M. and Hafar, D. (eds) (1999). The National Agricultural Research Systems in the West Asia and North Africa Region (ICARDA, FAO, AARINENA and CIHEAM). ICARDA, Aleppo, Syria.

ICARDA (2000). *Integrating Crop/Livestock Production Systems in the Low-Rainfall Areas of West Asia and North Africa: The Mashreq/Maghreb Project*. ICARDA, Aleppo, Syria.

ICARDA International and Regional Networks 1/2

Title	Coordinator	Mediterranean Countries	International Institutions
Drought Mitigation for WANA	ICARDA	WANA	EU; FAO; CIHEAM
International Nurseries Testing Network	ICARDA GP	WANA	CIMMYT
Biotechnological Research in Arab States	ICARDA GP	Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia	-
Sunn Pest Network for West and Central Asia	ICARDA GP	Syria, Turkey	ICARDA U of Vermont, USA CABI Biosciense, UK N R Institute, UK U of Greenwich, UK

ICARDA International and Regional Networks 2/2

Title	Coordinator	Mediterranean countries	International Institutions
SEWANA and WANADDIN Networks	ICARDA	Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Syria, France, Greece, Italy, Spain	France: U de Paris-Sud; ENSA Italy:U of Tuscia; ISC Spain: INIA;U of Cordoba; U of Barcelona; U of Grenada;Center Udl-IRTA; Lleida (CIHEAM)-Zaragosa CIMMYT
Soil Fertility network	ICARDA	Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt,, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey	-
Dryland Pasture and Forage Legume Network	ICARDA	WANA	-
WANA Plant Genetic Resources Network (WANANET)	IPGRI-RO for CWANA ICARDA-GRU	WANA	FAO; ACSAD
WANA Seed Network	ICARDA Seed Unit	Algeria, Morocco, Iraq, Cyprus, Turkey, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Sudan, Libya	-
Agricultural information Network for WANA (AINWANA)	ICARDA CODIS	WANA	CIHEAM, ISNAR

Fig. 4. ICARDA international and regional networks.