

## **PHILSURIN signs MOU on variety improvement**

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PHILSURIN signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on sugar variety improvement with sugar research agencies in Southeast Asia) on November 13, 2000 in Makati City, Philippines.

With its designation as Project Executing Agency (PEA), Philsurin has been recognized as the leader of sugar research and development in the region.

The cooperating research institutions are the Thailand Office of Cane and Sugar Board (OCSB), Indonesian Sugar Research Institute (ISRI), Bangladesh Sugarcane Research Institute (BSRI), and the Malaysian Marditech Corporation SDN.BHD.

The project aims to increase and help stabilize the productivity of sugarcane in the Southeast Asia and Pacific region through a concerted regional effort on genetic enhancement, variety improvement, dissemination, and exchange of improved sugarcane varieties and other genetic materials. The sustainability of sugarcane improvement shall be ensured through a collaborative network for exchange, testing/evaluation, and dissemination of improved varieties; their systematic improvement through conventional and biotechnology-assisted breeding; and increased national capabilities to absorb, adopt and utilize new and emerging bio- and information technologies for sugarcane breeding applications. Specific results expected are the accelerated development, introduction, dissemination, and adoption of improved sugarcane varieties with increased productivity potential and resistance to major diseases and pests; core national collections/pools of elite sugarcane varieties that are freely available to participating member countries and accessible to other sugar producing countries; and increased capability to undertake and sustain national and regional efforts on sugarcane breeding and biotechnology. Immediate beneficiaries are the national sugarcane programs in participating countries of the region with spillover benefits to national sugarcane programs in Latin America and Africa through availability of improved varieties. The ultimate beneficiaries are all sugar producers and consumers. The estimated total cost of the project is US\$ 2.104 M. The Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) will provide a grant of US\$ 1.422 M while the rest will be counterpart contributions of participating countries.

Project duration is five years under the supervision of the International Sugar Organization (ISO) and the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC).