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GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Burma - Union of

Post: Rangoon

New Technologies Aiding Burmese Cotton Farmers

Report Categories:

Biotechnology

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Report Highlights:

FAS/Burma's crop survey in Mandalay, Burma, in October 2010 revealed a successful cotton extension program under which a new cotton variety, Ngwe Kyi 6 a long staple cotton with a BT trait, has been widely introduced and embraced by Mandalay farmers.

On October 19-21, 2010, FAS/Burma conducted a field trip in Mandalay, Burma. The purpose of the visit was to assess the current agricultural situation in the region as Mandalay is Burma's second largest city, it's also a transit point for goods going in and out of China, and a key producer of Burmese upland crops such as sesame, cotton, bananas, beans and pulses and to a lesser degree rice and corn.

In a scheduled courtesy call with the Extension Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, FAS/Burma learned about the Department's activities which included a successful cotton extension program. Under this program, a new cotton variety, Ngwe Kyi 6 a long staple cotton with a BT trait, has been widely introduced and embraced by Mandalay farmers.

Ngwe Kyi 6 Key in Rising Productivity along with Rising Incomes

The official line FAS/Burma got on the genesis of Ngwe Kyi 6 is that the variety was developed in Burma in 2001, and after field trials were conducted at Mandalay's research facilities, the variety was officially released in 2006.

According to the Extension Department, about 75 percent of cotton grown in Burma is long staple and the remaining 25 percent short staple. The officials stated that in the last ten years yields of the short staple cotton have grown at an average of 2.5 percent/year and in 2009 the national average was 0.44 MT/HA. However for long staple cotton, yields nationally have increased by 70 percent since Ngwe Kyi 6 was first grown on a commercial scale in 2007 from 2.2 MT/HA to 3.75 MT/HA in 2009.

Burmese officials believe that between 60-80 percent of long staple growers have switched from conventional varieties to Ngwe Kyi 6. The more successful farmers have seen their yields rise twofold to threefold and their pesticide costs reduced by one third. According to the same officials, incomes have been boosted significantly and long staple cotton can provide three times the income from growing alternative crops in the area such as beans and pulses and sesame, and are higher than incomes obtained by growing rice. However, the limited growing area for cotton, the lack of irrigation and the need for short staple cotton to feed the traditional mills might constrain the ability to see any significant crop substitution towards cotton.

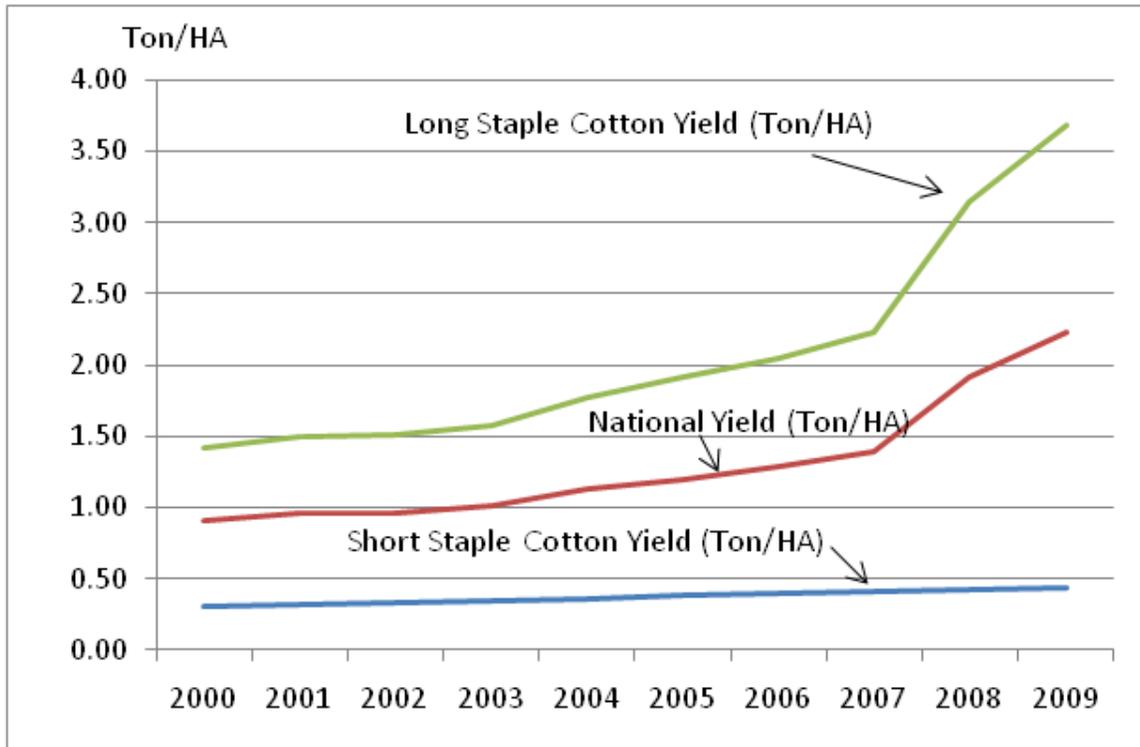


Figure 1: Burmese Cotton Yields

End of Report.