

## Editorial Work...At An International Agricultural Research Center

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## Editorial Work...At An International Agricultural Research Center

### Abstract

Positions are open for experienced agricultural editors and communication specialists who want to live and work abroad - particularly at the International Agricultural Research Centers.

# Editorial Work...

## At An International Agricultural Research Center

**Thomas R. Hargrove**

Positions are open for experienced agricultural editors and communication specialists who want to live and work abroad—particularly at the International Agricultural Research Centers.

In the early 1960s the Ford and Rockefeller foundations established the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippines, and the International Center for Maize and Wheat Improvement (CIMMYT), Mexico. The rapid farmer adoption of the new semidwarf varieties developed at IRRI and CIMMYT prompted widespread use of such terms as *green revolution*, *miracle rice*, and *miracle wheat*. By 1980, about 30% of the world's rice land and 40% of the wheat land was planted to semidwarf varieties.

Today 13 International Centers (see list at end of article) are funded through the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research, a consortium of government and private funding agencies that support research in developing nations. IRRI's international staff comprises about 60 scientists from a dozen nations; the total staff members about 2,000.

All of the Centers have information programs. In October 1981 at least four Centers were recruiting professional

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**Hargrove has been with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) for 9 years, first as editor and since 1979, as head of the Office of Information Services.**

agricultural communicators for their permanent staffs. Several others offer sabbatic opportunities. Experiment station and extension editors at U.S. land grant universities have excellent backgrounds for those positions.

Information responsibilities vary among Centers. I feel qualified to address only the information programs and professional needs of IRRI, which are handled by four senior (international) editors (all ACE members)—Walt Rockwood, Bill Smith, LaRue Pollard (on a 1-year sabbatic), and me. The editors are backed up by an excellent local staff of about 50 assistant editors, audiovisual specialists, artists, designers, typesetters, photographers, and printers.

We also have about 15 student assistants from the neighboring University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB). The students help with everything from collating to computer coding for our mailing system. We give students in Development Communication first priority for IRRI jobs.

Pressure at IRRI currently is greatest for the editing and production of scientific publications, primarily for scientists in national rice research programs in Asia. Tight, clear editing is essential; English is a second or third language for most of our clients (both readers and authors). After the first edit, IRRI manuscripts are generally entered into our word processors. After the final edit, the WP disks are converted to typeset copy through our phototypesetter. We acquired the AMI word processing-phototypesetting system less than a year ago. We're still learning.

IRRI now has about 50 "active" book titles in circulation—mostly conference and workshop proceedings and monographs. Another 40 titles are in production or planning. We generally print 3,000-5,000 books per press run. We distribute about 34,000 copies a year; 94% of our total distribution is in developing nations. About 25% are distributed free, mostly to libraries in developing nations. Book publishing is a self-sustaining operation, with sales paying for future publications. In developing nations, we sell our books at a 60% discount. That barely covers typesetting, printing, and paper on a per-book basis.

Our serial publications are the 500-page *IRRI Annual Report; Research Highlights* (a 100-page interpretive condensation of the *Annual Report*); the *IRRI Reporter* (15,000 copies/issue, 4 issues/year); the *International Rice Research Newsletter*, to which scientists anywhere in the world can contribute summaries of their research results

(15,000 copies/Editorial Work...At An International Agricultural Research Center Subject Index), and the *IRRI Research Paper Series* (IRRI authors only, about 20 issues/year, 8,000 copies/issue).

*Research Highlights*, the *IRRI Reporter*, and various general information brochures are examples of our interpretive research reporting—to keep donors, policymakers, and the public informed of our objectives, progress, and problems. Future demands for this type of editorial service will probably increase as international funding for agricultural development gets tighter.

The working language of IRRI (and its publications) is English. But we design certain publications to facilitate their translation and republication as local editions. IRRI publications have appeared in at least 18 languages. We do not take royalties for local editions published and distributed in developing nations.

Sixty-one self-instructional or audiotutorial modules on the identification and solution of specific rice-production problems and on research methodology have been developed. A new series of 42 modules on rice-based cropping systems was recently initiated. Each module consists of a set of 60-80 color slides, a cassette tape narration, and an instructional booklet in which both the slides and the narration are reproduced. Originally intended as self-study training aids to support IRRI's rice production training programs, we now duplicate the AT modules for use in national programs. In countries such as China, Indonesia, and Vietnam, national programs use the AT modules as training aids for English courses for agricultural workers.

We prepare almost all of our materials "camera-ready," then contract the printing of major books, usually in Manila but sometimes in Seoul or Hong Kong. We print periodicals in house. Slides are sent to the USA for mass duplication.

National research and extension programs currently are swamping IRRI with requests to provide training in agricultural communication for their staffs and to advise in the establishment of their own information programs. We see a strong need for one International Center, or another organization, to establish an ongoing short-term training program to which all Centers can direct potential communicators for practical, "hands-on" training in agricultural communication.

Hadley Read, Illinois, served as an IRRI information consultant in 1979, training staff and helping set up an information section at the Central Research Institute for Agriculture,

Indonesia. John Brien, an Aussie ACE member, spent a 3-month sabbatic from the University of Sydney in 1980 studying training needs for agricultural communicators in Asia.

Three graduate students are conducting thesis research through IRRI and taking M.S. and Ph.D. course work in Development Communications at UPLB. IRRI senior staff are eligible for affiliate faculty appointments at UPLB.

IRRI has a continual sabbatic-editor position, with a fresh opening every August. IRRI sabbatic editors do mostly experiment station-type editing. For sabbatic editors, IRRI provides half of the editor's salary (the home organization or another agency must pay the other half), plus round-trip air transport for the editor and immediate family, schooling for dependents, and a rent-free apartment and car.

Our 1981-82 sabbatic editor is LaRue Pollard, of the Iowa State journalism faculty. Past sabbatic editors have included Debrah Jefferson and Don Esslinger, Missouri; Alan Fletcher, Georgia; Ev Metcalf, Washington; Dick Disney, Iowa State journalism faculty; and Bob Cowell, now in graduate college at Wisconsin. Specialists in audiotutorial design, production, and use who have spent sabbatics working with the AT program are Floyd Nordland and Bob Hurst of Purdue University and Howard Hagerman of Michigan, currently with us.

Both regular and sabbatic editors have periodic opportunities for travel while at IRRI. LaRue Pollard went to Beijing (Peking) in October 1981 to handle proceedings of a joint IRRI-Academia Sinica symposium on the use of tissue culture in cereal crop improvement. Debrah Jefferson rode a 747 cargo jet loaded with 105 tons of new rice seed to Korea in the spring of 1981 to do a feature article, then went on to Japan to consult about editing a joint IRRI-Kyushu University publication. Don Esslinger covered a deepwater rice workshop in Bangkok in 1976. Walt Rockwood went to Bangkok in November 1981 to edit the proceedings for an international workshop on deepwater rice. Bill Smith has been on recent assignments to Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India. In 1982 I plan to participate in the first International Agricultural Research Center Book Exhibition in China, sponsored by IRRI and the China National Publication Import and Export Corporation.

Some editors are concerned about losing contact with professional colleagues while abroad. This can happen, although most IRRI editors show up periodically at annual

ACE Home & Editorial Work. At an International Agricultural Research Center  
with a new group of professional colleagues. IRRI's editorial staff, for example, was instrumental in the establishment of Communicators in Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD), a Philippine organization with objectives similar to those of ACE. I am active in the Book Development Association of the Philippines, an organization of local book publishers, printers, authors, and distributors dedicated to the improvement and promotion of book publishing in the Philippines.

A background in both agriculture and journalism is essential for IRRI editors. Editorial experience carries more weight than advanced degrees. Other advantages are a yen for travel and an understanding family whose members don't object if you're periodically sent for a few weeks to Indonesia, China, or Bangladesh.

Spouses with careers of their own are often frustrated by a lack of professional opportunities while on overseas assignment. Others who are accustomed to running a home find it difficult to suddenly cope with having a maid. Cultural shock should be expected on any long-term overseas assignment.

Salaries may be slightly higher than in the U.S. land grant system, and Americans have recently been given a tax break. All CGIAR-supported Centers offer a yearly 30-day home leave, with transportation provided for the editor and family.

At IRRI, the permanent staff pays rent for housing (about 12% of monthly salary). Cars are provided; we pay for gasoline and maintenance (except for official use).

Work at International Centers is intense and fast. But it's close work that is generally appreciated by the scientists. There is a certain sense of satisfaction in knowing that your work is meaningful—that the materials produced at the International Centers are being used to help develop and spread the improved agricultural technology needed to feed a hungry world. It's exciting work. I love it and have no regrets about my decision 10 years ago to work abroad.

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**Institutions Supported by the Consultative Group  
on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)**

CIAT	Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical Apartado Aereo 6713, Cali, Columbia
CIMMYT	Central Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maiz Y Trigo Londres 40, Mexico 6, D.F., Mexico
CIP	Centro Internacional de la Papa Apartado 5969, Lima, Peru
IBPGR	International Board for Plant Genetic Resources Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 00100 Rome, Italy
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the dry Areas P.O. Box 114/5055 Beirut, Lebanon
ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics Patancheru P.O. Andhra Pradesh 502 324 India
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036 U.S.A.
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture P.O. Box 5320 Ibadan, Nigeria
ILCA	International Livestock Center for Africa P.O. Box 5689 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
ILRAD	International Laboratory for Research on Animal Diseases P.O. Box 30709 Nairobi, Kenya
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute P.O. Box 933 Manila, Philippines



- Wageningen: Editorial Work, At An International Agricultural Research Center
- ISNAR** International Service for National Agricultural  
Research  
P.O. Box 93375  
2509 AJ The Hague  
The Netherlands
- WARDA** West Africa Rice Development Association  
E. J. Roye Memorial Building  
P.O. Box 1019  
Monrovia, Liberia

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**International Centers Not Sponsored by CGIAR**

- AVRDC** Asian Vegetable Research and Development  
Center  
P.O. Box 42  
Shanhua, Tainan 741  
Taiwan
- ICIPE** International Centre for Insect Physiology and  
Ecology  
P.O. Box 30772  
Nairobi, Kenya
- ICLARM** International Center for Living Aquatic  
Resources Management  
P.O. Box 1501  
MCC, Makati  
Metro Manila, Philippines
- ICRAF** International Council for Research in  
Agroforestry  
P.O. Box 30677  
Nairobi, Kenya

