

Book review

P.C. Agarwal, C.N. Mortensen and S.B. Mathur, 1989. Seed-borne diseases and seed health testing of rice. C.A.B. International, Wallingford, UK. 106 pp. ISSN 0901-1773. Price £ 13.75, US\$ 24.

This joint publication of the Danish Government Institute of Seed Pathology for Developing Countries (Technical Bulletin No 3) and CAB International Mycological Institute (Phytopathological Papers No 30.) is a compilation of valuable information about 20 seed-borne diseases of rice, each of them presented in a separate chapter. In addition, there is a chapter on isolation techniques and identification of pathogenic seed-borne bacteria and an appendix on pesticides with their ISO names. This book is a useful guide for plant pathologists and seed technologists in handling rice diseases both in the field and in the laboratory. For each disease (13 fungal, 6 bacterial and 1 nematodal) information is given on the geographical distribution, losses incurred, characteristics of the causal organism, location of the pathogen in or on the seed, damage caused to seeds, seedlings and plants, transmission through seeds and other means, laboratory testing for health and control of seed-borne infection, and to a limited extent diseases in the field. Wherever known, comments are given on seed certification and quarantine. The book is well illustrated with clear and often excellent colour photographs, especially those showing typical symptoms in detail. Unfortunately, the CMI Distribution Maps printed black and white and small in size lack sufficient resolution. References to the literature are extensive and up to date. A general omission is that the significance of the seed-health-testing methods is not commented upon. This especially holds for those presented for detection of bacteria. It might have been sensible there to indicate the sensitivity related to tolerance levels and to the seed-transmission rates wherever known. The methods, however, are well described and as suggested easy to apply in seed laboratories equipped with basic instruments.

This concise handbook is recommendable to anyone professionally involved in education and advice on seed-borne diseases of rice. Moreover it will be a valuable accession for both applied and scientific research workers because of the many details and data selected on this topic. The authors are to be complimented on presenting such a handy guide, thereby undoubtedly contributing to further improvement of breeding, multiplication and production programs of rice.

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