**Foreword**

Food security in Asia depends largely on intensive rice production in the favorable environments of irrigated rice-based cropping systems. Further increases in productivity are needed because of predicted growth in population and decreased availability of water and land. Future yield increases will require improved crop care, integrated resource management approaches, and more knowledge-intensive strategies for the efficient use of all inputs, including fertilizer nutrients.

Site-specific nutrient management (SSNM) concepts have been developed in recent years as alternatives to the use of blanket fertilizer recommendations over large areas. These new approaches aim to achieve more efficient fertilizer use. Balanced fertilization increases profit to farmers, results in higher yields per unit of applied fertilizer, and protects the environment by preventing excessive use of fertilizer. SSNM strategies have been evaluated successfully in a wide range of farmers’ fields in Asia and are now positioned for wider-scale validation and adaptation by farmers in Asia.

This publication is a practical guide for detecting nutrient deficiency and toxicity symptoms and managing nutrients in rice grown in tropical and subtropical regions. The guide follows up on an earlier IRRI/PPI-PPIC publication, Rice: Nutrient Disorders and Nutrient Management, and is designed for translation and publication in other languages.

We hope that this guide will find wide dissemination and contribute to the delivery of proper nutrient management strategies to Asia’s rice farmers.

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Foreword to the 2nd Edition

In the last five years, site-specific nutrient management (SSNM) for rice has become an integral part of initiatives on improving nutrient management in many Asian countries. Nutrient recommendations were tailored to location-specific needs, evaluated together with rice farmers, and promoted through public and private partnerships on a wide scale. The first edition of Rice: A Practical Guide to Nutrient Management published in 2002 quickly became the standard reference for printed materials on SSNM. The guide was high in demand with 2,000 copies distributed and sold to date.

Over the years, SSNM has been continually refined through research and evaluation as part of the Irrigated Rice Research Consortium. Conceptual improvements and simplifications were made, particularly in nitrogen management. A standardized 4-panel leaf color chart (LCC) was produced and the promotion of the new LCC continues with more than 250,000 units distributed until the end of 2006. A new SSNM Web site was developed (www.irri.org/irrc/ssnm) to provide up-to-date information and local recommendations for major rice-growing areas in Asia. The revised edition of the practical guide thus became necessary to be consistent with newer information provided on the SSNM Web site and in local training materials. We are pleased that this 2nd edition is about to be translated into a number of languages, including Bangla, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, and Vietnamese.

We hope that this guide will continue to benefit Asia’s rice farmers in their efforts to improve yields and income through appropriate nutrient management.

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