COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Ohio State University professors will be leading agricultural projects in Latin America and Burma as the result of three new programs funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The university has signed a cooperative agreement for four years with AID to establish demonstration projects in at least four countries on using rural savings to finance development.

The second program is a four-year contract between AID and Ohio State and Michigan State University to assist the government of the Dominican Republic to improve its planning and management of the country's natural resources.

The third program is a four-year contract between AID and the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities, of which Ohio State is a member, to assist the government of Burma to increase production of maize and oilseed crops.

Ohio State will be the lead institution on the Burma project. MUCIA is a consortium of seven major universities and has its headquarters at Ohio State. Texas A & M University, which is not a MUCIA member, also is part of the project.

"These projects are the most recent evidence of a resurgence of international agricultural work at Ohio State," says Richard

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Meyer, director of international programs for the university. Meyer notes that Ohio State had major agricultural programs in India and Brazil from the late 1950s through the early 1970s, but that the programs ended as these two countries modernized and the technical assistance was no longer needed.

These new programs often will involve younger faculty members who didn't have the opportunity to participate in the earlier international projects, Meyer says.

The new projects will differ from the earlier ones in the length of service abroad, Meyer says. While many professors spent several years living in India and Brazil, there are likely to be fewer persons on long-term assignment abroad with the new projects. Instead, more professors will be involved, and they will stay for shorter periods.

Meyer says the university is selective about which international projects to become involved in, but he believes the involvement is important.

"We are providing humanitarian or technical assistance to these developing countries," he says, and that is responding to a national policy which calls for U.S. universities to contribute to these countries' development.

"We are providing technical training to foreign and American graduate students," he says. "Agricultural products are America's leading export so it is important that students understand the international dimensions of agriculture."

"We are involved with problems which are not unique to the specific country in which we're working," he adds. "Many - more -
countries face disastrous natural resource problems like those faced in the Dominican Republic natural resource management project. Ohio's experience in natural resource management may have important applications, while Ohio State professors will bring knowledge and new ideas back to Columbus classrooms because of their experience in the Dominican Republic."

The $1.4 million cooperative agreement on rural savings will be directed by Douglas Graham, professor of agricultural economics and rural sociology and director of the Latin American Studies Program.

The agreement continues the work on rural finance in developing countries which Ohio State has done with AID for the past 15 years. Faculty in the university's department of agricultural economics and rural sociology have worked in some 20 developing countries during that time.

The rural savings projects promote domestic capital formation for development as a way of reducing reliance on financing from abroad.

David Hansen, associate professor and associate chairman of the agricultural economics department, will coordinate Ohio State's involvement in the natural resource program in the Dominican Republic. Ohio State's share of the contract is $215,000.

The total contract for the Burma program is $5.8 million, of which $1.6 million will be managed initially by Ohio State. Harold Bauman, associate professor of agricultural economics and assistant dean of the College of Agriculture and Home Economics,
will coordinate Ohio State's work under the project. Donald Herr, professor of agronomy, will be the team leader for the project personnel working in Burma. He and his wife, Joan, an assistant professor of human nutrition and food management, will be leaving for Rangoon shortly.

In addition to research to improve crop production, the program includes the education of 35 Burmese at the Ph.D. and master's degree level and the training of another 70 in short-term, non-degree programs.

The Burma program is significant because it is the first non-military technical assistance project that AID has funded in the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma in the last 25 years, according to Meyer. The Burmese government had excluded the United States from technical work in the country during that period.

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(Contact: Richard Meyer, (614) 422-2882.)

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Professors aid developing countries

By Steve Sterrett

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Burma gets OSU assistance

By Abby Schultz 1-27-83
Lantern staff writer

Ohio State is helping Burmese agriculturists expand their food production in one of the first U.S. technical assistance programs there in 20 years.

The Socialist Republic of Burma, coming out of cultural and technological isolation, has sought a major U.S. aid package for a Burmese-designed program to improve production of corn and edible oilseeds.

Oilseeds are the second biggest staple in the Burmese diet, next to rice, said Don McCloud, associate director of the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities (MUCIA).

The consortium, a group of Big Ten schools including OSU, won the $5.8 million contract from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Texas A&M also will participate in the project.

MUCIA's contract is part of a $30 million USAID agricultural assistance project. Burma has contributed $20 million.

The program is designed specifically by Burmese agriculturists to produce peanut, sesame, sunflower, corn, and soybean crops at higher yields, said a consortium press release.

Before 1950, Burma, located south of China in southeast Asia, was a major exporter of rice and other agricultural products. Production fell during the 1960s, strapping the economy and creating nutritional shortfalls.

After a military coup in 1962, Burma became a closed society — much like China, McCloud said.

"Like China, their advances in technology and science have not kept up with the rest of the world," he said.

The Burmese, however, did improve their rice production. Now, they have designed a program, using U.S. technical expertise, to improve corn and oilseed production.

Burma has abundant natural resources, but it doesn't have the plant varieties it needs, or the agricultural scientists, said William Flinn, director of MUCIA.

The consortium's main concern is not research and development of new plant varieties. It aims to increase and sustain corn and oilseed production using existing Burmese facilities, he said.

"This very specific production oriented project calls for people that can address production problems," said Dr. Harold Bauman, assistant dean of the College of Agriculture and campus coordinator for the project.

Ohio State agronomist Dr. Donald Herr, went to Rangoon, the capital of Burma, in December to head the project. Herr has had experience in producing crops, Bauman said.

"He had his own farm, so he can say how to plant that field, or harvest that crop," he said.

Herr will work with the Burmese Agricultural Production Corporation and a network of selected Burmese farmers and he plans to draw upon faculty and students from OSU, other MUCIA schools, and Texas A&M for expertise.

OSU knows a lot about producing soybeans, corn, and sunflowers, since they are grown in Ohio. But OSU will need Texas A&M's expertise with sesame and peanut production, said Bauman.

As part of the program, Burma will come to the United States for technical training.

"A major element of the project is in the training of the Burmese people," Bauman said.
OSU assisting Burmese in edible oils project

By Ruth Hanley
Dispatch OSU Reporter

Ohio State University agricultural experts are smoothing the way for Burmese farmers to grow more edible oil for home consumption.

Since 1982, OSU has administered a $5.8 million program of technical assistance and training with that aim.

THE PROJECT is part of a $51 million joint effort between the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Burmese government. The U.S. contribution will be $30 million by the end of the four-year program in October.

The eight-member Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities was selected to administer the technical assistance portion of the program. OSU, a consortium member, was named the lead institution.

Burmese farmers raise the oil-producing crops of maize, sesame, sunflowers and peanuts, but the country still must import $7 million to $8 million worth of edible oils each year.

Mark Headings, OSU coordinator of the assistance program, said the project’s goal is to make Burma self-sufficient in production of edible oils. He is chairman of agricultural business technology at OSU’s Agricultural Technical Institute in Wooster, Ohio.

The Burmese diet revolves around rice and foods cooked in oil, Headings said. More oil in the diet should improve nutrition in the world’s 10th-poorest country, where annual per capita income is $160, he added.

The assistance program has established four experimental seed farms in rural Burma, which is slightly smaller than Texas and is bordered by China, India, Bangladesh, Thailand and Laos.

PROJECT STAFF members are studying soil composition, fertilizers, seeds, weed control and irrigation techniques. The project also provides modern equipment to a country where many farmers still plow with oxen, Headings said.

OSU has coordinated the selection of five long-term technicians and 21 short-term consultants to assist the Burmese project staff. They were selected from OSU and other universities with expertise in different agricultural areas.

OSU also has arranged for 19 Burmese students to study for master’s degrees at U.S. universities, Headings said. Seven already have returned to apply their knowledge at project sites in Burma.

About 50 Burmese farmers and government officials have toured U.S. farms and taken part in short-term training programs as part of the program, Headings said.

A project evaluation in January 1985 found that production of maize, groundnuts, sesame and sunflowers has increased steadily since 1982.

“Although accomplishments vary considerably . . . overall progress is excellent,” the report said.

HEADINGS, WHO spent 18 days in Burma in November, agreed. “I was impressed with the progress I saw,” he said.

But, he said, he does not think the country will be self-sufficient in edible oil production by October. The program may be extended, he said.

Progress has been hampered by shortages of gasoline, cement, construction materials and fertilizers, and by difficulties in obtaining customs clearances.

“It can be quite difficult in working with the bureaucracy,” Headings said. “Things aren’t like they are here. It’s not an efficient, streamlined system.”

The assistance program is aiding the Burmese government, but more time is needed for the expertise to filter through to individual farmers, he said.

Headings said modern equipment would improve production but “most of the farmers couldn’t afford a tractor anyway.”
OSU's Mark Headings with the Burmese flag in the background
OSU assisting Burma in oil crop production

By Jay Cooper
Lantern staff writer

Ohio State and other midwest universities are trying to help the Asian country of Burma become self-sufficient in producing edible oils.

Their effort is part of a $51 million program jointly sponsored by the Burmese government and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The four-year program that began in 1983 provides assistance to government farms so Burma can improve production of edible oil crops such as peanuts, sesame, corn, and sunflower.

The Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities, which includes Ohio State, is in charge of the technical assistance and participant training part of the program. Ohio State was named the lead member of the consortium.

Edible oils such as sunflower oil are extremely important for nutrition in Burma because they supply important nutrients, calories, and taste to the food, said David B. Min, associate professor of food and science nutrition.

This, along with the expense of importing the oils, led to the Burmese government’s request for the program.

Mark Headings, OSU campus coordinator of the program, said the program has helped improve Burma’s ability to produce these oils, but they are not yet self-sufficient. He said the program may be extended if any funds remain at the end of the program in October.

Experts for the program come from the consortium in areas such as seed technology and insect control. These experts help run four government farms set up to develop ways to improve seed production in typical growing environments.

Students at participating universities are trained in irrigation, farm management, and related areas. Nineteen students have come to study; seven have already returned with master’s degrees.

Headings said this part of the program will help sustain improvements after direct assistance is removed.

He said a follow-up program is planned, but it will be up for bid and Ohio State may or may not be involved. He stressed that to be successful the Burmese government must keep working toward its goal.

"With any country, the number one thing is being able to maintain what (aid) they get," he said.

Headings, who went to Burma in November, said it was not uncommon to see expensive tractors working beside a wooden plow driven by oxen. He said it is important to continue to help Burma through the intermediate steps; otherwise most progress will deteriorate with the equipment.
MUCIA continues its Burma support

Ohio State has received $725,000 in continued support from the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities Inc. (MUCIA) for assisting Burma to increase oilseed crop production.

The four-year project, which will end next October, is aimed at providing technical assistance and training for production of such crops as peanuts, sesame, sunflower and maize.

Oils from these crops constitute a major portion of the Burmese diet. Better crop yields would lessen the nation’s dependence on imports, according to the project director, Mark E. Headings, associate professor and chairperson of the Agricultural Businesses Division at Ohio State’s Agricultural Technical Institute, Wooster.

The Ohio State project, one of several MUCIA-sponsored programs, includes sending consultants to assist Burmese agricultural officials, as well as coordinating the assignment of Burmese students for specialized training at six American universities. These are the University of Georgia, Colorado State University, Oregon State University, Mississippi State University, Texas A&M, and Ohio State.

Some 18 Burmese students have undertaken master’s degree programs in agronomy and related subjects at these universities, and nine have received degrees and returned to assignments with the Burma experiment station.

The grant for the Burma project was one of 222 November and December research agreements totaling $9,901,787 reported to the Board of Trustees at its Feb. 7 meeting.

The largest agreement was a $999,895 continuation grant from the U.S. Army Tank-Automotive Command, Warren, Mich., for “A Mobility System Design Study for an Agile Automatic Land Vehicle” in the departments of Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering.

Other large agreements included:
- $582,650 from the Agency for International Development to continue support in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology for improvement of savings and credit services in developing countries.
- $453,078 from the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Md., to continue a study in the Department of Otolaryngology on inflammation of the middle ear.
- $448,800 from the Army Corps of Engineers, Ft. Meade, Md., for a new project on microwave antenna technology in the Department of Electrical Engineering and the ElectroScience Laboratory.
- $252,431 from the University of Cincinnati to continue support in the College of Medicine of the Area Health Education Center Program.
- $248,979 from the Ohio Department of Development to support a Thomas A. Edison Partnership program between Universal Energy Systems Inc., Dayton, and the Department of Computer and Information Science on advanced simulation language and multi-computer design to improve metal forming.