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Foreword

Rice is one of the most important staple foods in the world. Over 50 percent of the world population depends on rice for about 80 percent of its food requirements. About 95 percent of the global output of rice is produced and consumed in developing countries. Important progress has already been made. Global rice production has trebled since the beginning of the 20th century, thanks to the efforts of national as well as international organizations, including FAO. With the slowdown in the growth of rice production since 1990, however, it has become increasingly important to renew efforts to sustain this crop in order to meet the increasing demand. Meanwhile, land and water resources for further expansion of global rice production have become increasingly limited.

The projected increase in world population brings to the fore the importance of both expanding rice output to meet demand and improving access to this vital food. These improvements require the effort of experts in all areas. Information on rice and rice production technologies is

essential for a constructive effort towards sustainable rice development and production. The main objective of “FAO Rice Information” is to make available to interested individuals (farmers, developers, researchers, extension workers, policy makers etc.) and institutions (governmental, non-governmental and international) useful information in order to assist them in their efforts to improve sustainable rice production.

This Third Volume of FAO Rice Information provides: information on rice production, consumption and nutrition during the period from 1995 to 2000; updated Profiles of Country Rice Facts; and information concerning the two most important rice weeds – red rice and the *Echinochloa* complex – in different rice-producing countries. It is hoped that the publication of this volume will generate increased support for sustainable rice production and promote global collaboration in the collection, analysis and dissemination of information on rice and related factors.

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