

Massive Yield Drop of China's Super Hybrid Rice

In the 1990s, China launched an initiative to cultivate a super high-yield hybrid rice in an effort to feed 20% of the world population with only 7% of its arable lands. Yuan Longpin, an agricultural scientist and educator, was designated as leader of the research team. Under Yuan's leadership, the output of the "super hybrid rice" surpassed 1,000 kilograms per mu last year (1 hectare equals 15 mu). At that time, Yuan Longpin was called the "father of hybrid rice."

However, in recent years, the said super hybrid rice started to experience grave drop in yield. In 2013, yield of rice fields across China stood at 447.8 kilograms, roughly half the output recorded in experimental farmlands. Deng Guofu, a rice expert at the Guangxi Academy of Agriculture said the difference between actual output and experimental output lies in the fact that rice planted in test fields enjoy better fertility, better environment and better cultivation.

Recently, newspaper headlines have declared Yuan Longping's developed rice strains as massive crop failure. Significant crop loss caused by rice blast, a deadly disease affecting cultivated rice, hit more than 10,000 mu of rice fields in six cities in Anhui province, a major rice producer in East China in the autumn of harvest season in 2014. In Wuhe county, the yield of rice fields dropped from 500 kilograms per mu to 50 kilograms per mu or even to none.

"Anhui was hit hard by the crop failure," said Liu Gen, deputy head of the provincial seed administration station.

After witnessing massive crop failures, local farmers blamed leading advertisements for their loss. On the package of seeds sold to farmers, the ad claims the strains has a resistance of 5.6 grades, which indicates an incidence rate of only 25%, but inside the package, a piece of paper shows that the seeds have a resistance of 9 grades, suggesting the possibility of catching a disease is as high as 100%, according to the Southern Weekly report.

In response, Peng Guanjian, the executive president of Yuan Long Ping High-Tech Agriculture Co., told National Business Daily that the poor harvest was mainly a result of a natural disaster which affected not only rice fields on which Liangyou 0293 are planted, but also other varieties. The affected harvest rice strains, "Liangyou 2093" is one of the products developed by Yuan Long Ping High Tech Agriculture co., and enterprise founded in 1999 to promote super high-yield hybrid rice.

Source: www.chinadaily.com.cn

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