



“Hopper Race”

(7- 8 minutes x 10 stories, produced by TVE Japan)

Synopsis

Rice hoppers are “pests” that suck rice straws dry and then die when there are too many of them. They have come to be called as “Green Revolution pests” because outbreaks of rice hoppers became out of control in the 1970s in Asian countries and threatened the success of the Green Revolution.

These little insects are now drawing attention again in Asia’s rice producing countries. Infestation of Brown plant hopper (BPH) and white backed plant hoper (WBPH) have been seriously damaging millions of hectares of rice paddies leading to the loss of several million tons of rice every year. Those countries include Thailand, China, Indonesia, Vietnam and surrounding countries.

What is making these hoppers pests? This educational TV program walks the fields with rice scientists, ecologists and entomologists. Their attempts are to restore biological control to the rice ecosystem by increasing biodiversity and genetic biodiversity. Rice plant hopper (Hoppers for short) will be the guide to this documentary.

By observing the underneath rice world from their point of view, one would see clearly today’s agriculture going against the rules of Nature. By reviewing the history, consequence becomes visible when agriculture emphasize too much on increasing production and ignores biodiversity.

Dr. Heong, a senior entomologist from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) breakdowns the rules of ecosystems and Nature into easy segments. So let the journey begin, the camera will discover the wonders of Nature with you.

The world population had reached 7 billion and keeps growing. This creates higher pressures on food production in the coming decades. What are the warning from hoppers? What have we learnt from the mistakes in the past and how can we avoid repeating it? This is an endless race between rice plant hoppers and us human beings.

Who might be the ultimate winner?