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STATE OF RESEARCH ON WHEAT AS A STRATEGIC CROP IN THE SENEGAL RIVER VALLEY

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Abstract: Due to its multiple uses (bread, couscous and pasta, starch and animal feed), Senegal wheat imports has hugely increased in 15 years from 216 465 t in 2000 to 573 435 t in 2016 for a value exceeding 250 million US\$.

Whilst it is clear that bread wheat was of particularly interesting for our country, it should be kept in mind that the consumption of durum wheat made product as pasta, couscous, and biscuits, are becoming more and more important in our consumption habits.

Wheat cultivation has the potential to significantly increase the cultural intensity of the Senegal River Valley (SRV) with cold dry season wheat plantings that are expected to partially satisfy domestic demand for durum and bread wheat without hindering rice production and while gaining market part for durum wheat by specifically exploiting the particular seasonality that favors the maturity of wheat in the SRV when supply to the world market is sharply declining.

Studies in the 1970s and 1980s had demonstrated the possibility of wheat production in the SRV and pre-extension of wheat cultivation had even started in 1973 in Savoigne and Dagana in 1975. However despite water and land availability, favorable climate and research results of the period, the economic and strategic plans of the time did not favor wheat cropping extension over large areas.

However, acquired knowledge during these years gave important data whose exploration and updating would help in saving time for new research interest.

Under the auspices of the Senegalese Institute for Agricultural Research (ISRA), significant achievements and progress have been achieved since the beginning of the 2000s with partners from different countries (Morocco, Mali, Egypt) and international institutions (ICARDA, CIMMYT). This paper highlights achievements during the last 10 years as well as prospects for the next years.

Keyword: Senegal river valley, wheat

ABSTRACT