

## ACIAR PROJECT FOR THE BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF SIAM WEED IN INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

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Siam weed, *Chromolaena odorata*, is a major weed of pastures and plantation crops in West Africa and south-east Asia. Many potential biocontrol agents exist but only 2 have been trialled, without success to date. Siam weed continues to spread south, and is now in Papua New Guinea as well as Timor and Irian Jaya, and is threatening Australia. ACIAR is funding a 3-year project in which suitable insects will be sent from South America for detailed host-testing in quarantine in Indonesia and the Philippines, followed by field release if the insects prove safe. The project started in January 1993 and a stem-galling fly *Procecidochares connexa* is already being tested in quarantine in Indonesia and will be sent to the Philippines shortly. Other insects will be trialled next year.

## PUBLIC ISSUES IN THE RELEASE OF HERBICIDE RESISTANT CROPS

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This paper outlines issues of public concern emerging in response to the breeding of herbicide resistant plants, including the release of transgenic plants, the potential for the transfer of the herbicide resistance gene to weeds, the increased selection pressure for the development of herbicide resistance in weeds, the potential for increased use of herbicides, and the potential impact of herbicides on the environment, specifically the accumulation in soil and the contamination of ground and surface water.

These are important issues in the context of Government initiatives in the development of sustainable systems of agriculture and pose an enormous challenge for stakeholders, including the agrochemical and seed industries, farmers, environmental and consumer interests. The Bureau of Resource Sciences is preparing a discussion paper on the subject in the expectation that Governments may be forced to intervene in order to balance the demands of competing interests.