

Science and technology the keys to well-being

(Financial Times 2.6.2004)

From Prof Jussi Tammissola.

Sir, Birgit La Cour Madsen states that "narrow" technology will never produce progress on hunger, disease or the environment (Letters, May 25), in contradiction of the most basic experiences of humankind.

Better science and technology are our most valuable resources for health and well-being.

Paul Ehrlich warned in 1967 that hundreds of millions of people would inevitably die of hunger in Asia but their lives were saved by biological science applications.

In a few years, better crop varieties and production systems doubled or tripled crop yields in Asia.

New production methods proved very successful in the regions where their introduction was properly supported by micro-loans for small farmers.

Modern medicine has been another significant cause of better living in the west. "Narrow" scientific advancements in production and life technology may bring great improvements in nature conservation, such as more efficient crop production from modern plant varieties.

Let us save the receding rainforests with the help of modern technology.

Jussi Tammissola,
Associate professor (plant breeding),
Helsinki, Finland