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Women-friendly agricultural tools draw the attention of President Obama

Women-friendly tools and implements developed by Central Institute of Agricultural Engineering (CIAE), Bhopal drew the attention of US President Barack Obama and received appreciation for the exclusiveness and novelty. CIAE was participating in the agricultural EXPO organized jointly by CII and USAID in Mumbai on the theme "Tools and implements for drudgery reduction of farm women workers" for the visiting US Delegation.



President Obama took keen interest in the tools and implements developed by CIAE for reducing the drudgery of farm women in agricultural operations. The tools and equipment were explained and demonstrated by Dr LP Gite, Project Coordinator, AICRP on Ergonomics and Safety in Agriculture, CIAE, Bhopal. President Obama himself operated some of the tools such as maize sheller and groundnut decorticator and felt that such devices would go a long way in facilitating farm women to carry out the agricultural operations more efficiently.

More from less for more

On the occasion of 37th Foundation of Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board (ASRB), Dr R A Mashelkar, Former DG, CSIR and presently Bhatnagar Fellow and President, Global Research Alliance, National Chemical Laboratory, Pune delivered the Foundation Day Lecture. He discussed India's potential to drive 'inclusive innovation' that can deliver more value for more people at less cost and utilising minimum natural resources.

He further added, people need not 'low cost' but 'ultra low cost' solutions. Indian firms have historically understood that only catering to the rich limit their market scope, said Dr Mashelkar.

The Chief Guest Dr S Ayyappan, Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Director



General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) appreciated the efforts made by ASRB. The Board has done valuable contribution to ICAR and it is distinguishable among all other recruitment boards in the country, said Dr Ayyappan.

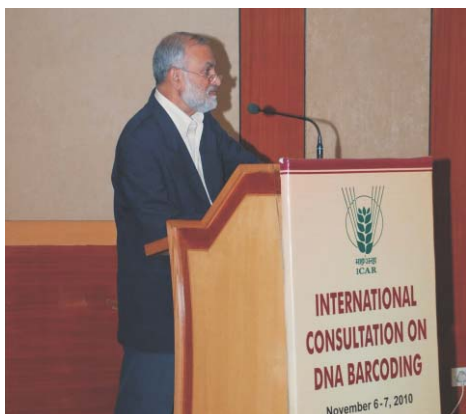
International Consultation on DNA Barcoding

An International Consultation on DNA Barcoding was organized by ICAR at NASC Complex, where about 75 participants including senior representatives from Consortium of Barcode of Life (CBOL), USA, International Barcode of Life Project (iBOL), Canadian Centre for Barcoding, University of Guelph, Canada, Royal Botanical Garden, Edinburgh, UK and St. Louis University, USA participated.

Dr S Ayyappan, Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR, in his plenary address emphasized on the significance of Barcoding and announced to initiate a mega project with a likely budget of 50 crores from NAIP for Barcoding of plants, insects and fish in the country involving the respective Bureaus and Dr W S Lakra, Director, Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Mumbai as the Nodal Officer for national and international coordination and networking.

Horticulture can solve the problem of malnutrition- Prof. Swaminathan

In the Inaugural address on the theme of the 4th Indian Horticulture Congress-2010, 'Horti-Business and Economic Prosperity', noted agricultural scientist and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Prof. MS Swaminathan urged for good pricing, policy and marketing strategies to boost horticulture in the country. He suggested that 'Shiksha Food Park' can be set up for promoting affordable horticulture products at local level. While describing the challenges posed by the climate change, Prof. Swaminathan emphasized the need for *ex-situ* and *in-situ* biodiversity conservation.



Dr S Ayyappan, Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR elaborated the important role of horticulture in Indian GDP in his address. 'Horticulture in India has a huge potential. Farm mechanization, quality seeds and planting material are the areas where more can be done. Profit, Prestige and Partnership are three Ps which should be addressed through coordinated efforts', he added.

Annual Day of National Agricultural Science Museum

Contributions of the Indian Agriculture are enormous and the museum is an important medium to convey its progress to the world. With more awareness and publicity, it will become a centre of attraction for every section of the society', said Dr Panjab Singh, Advisor, Agriculture Plantation, ETA Star and Former Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR at Annual Day programme of National Agricultural Science Museum (NASM), New Delhi. Newly inaugurated virtual tour of NASM, regular updating and new literature will be a value-addition for visitors. 'Hon'ble Parliamentarians may also be invited to visit the museum', suggested chief guest.

Dr S Ayyappan, Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR motivated brilliant students to pursue agriculture sciences as their main subjects for career. Quiz competitions, interactive sessions, visits and other mass awareness activities may be taken up to popularize and publicize the museum. Four mobile agricultural museums for Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and North-East region will be introduced soon for disseminating agriculture related knowledge, said Dr Ayyappan.



Winners of the essay and quiz competitions were awarded certificate and memento. A virtual tour of NASM through ICAR website was also launched on the occasion. A film on NASM and booklet *The Saga of Indian Agriculture* was also released by the guests.

Dr CD Mayee, Chairman, Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board and Dr MM Pandey, Deputy Director General (Engineering) also lauded the role of NASM as centre of learning.

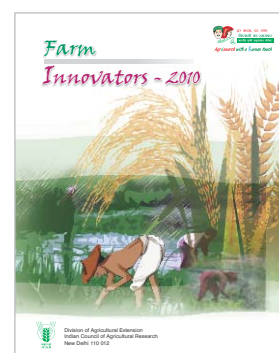
Nation-wide programme for classical biological control of papaya mealybug

The National Bureau of Agriculturally Important Insects (NBAIL) organized a National Consultation on the classical biological control of papaya mealybug using natural enemies at Bangalore. Apart from attacking papaya the mealybug damages several other crops like pigeonpea, sunflower, tapioca, okra, tomato, brinjal, cocoa and mulberry as well as weeds like parthenium and trees like teak, plumeria and thespesia. Chemical control is ineffective, increase the cost of protection and create environmental hazards.

In the national consultation organized under the Chairmanship of Dr T P Rajendran, Assistant Director General (Plant Protection), ICAR and co-chairmanship of Dr R J Rabindra, Director, NBAIL, Bangalore, a strategic plan for rapid production, distribution and conservation of the parasitoids was developed involving KVKs, CIPM centres of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, New Delhi, SAUs, ICAR institutes, Central Silk Board, KFRI, IFGTB, industry like Sago Serve and Senthil Papain and food Products Limited and voluntary organizations like Safety Brigade.

Saluting the farm innovators

Apart from innovations and scientific package of practices developed and transferred from R&D institutes, innovations in the form of grassroot level technologies and methodologies developed by some of the innovative farmers and rural youth are benefiting widely to farmers and have also been accepted across the system. Such innovative technologies and methodologies are largely confined to some locations. Benefits accrued from such innovative ideas need to be widely shared across the country. And the scientific talents behind such grassroot level innovations need to be encouraged and recognized. Valuable ideas and techniques generated by them largely go unnoticed owing to lack of proper documentation and opportunities for wider dissemination. An initial and pioneering attempt in this direction has been made by the Division of Agricultural Extension, ICAR, to document such innovations developed across the country in the form of publication *Farm Innovators-2010* for the benefit of various stakeholders.



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