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Interactive workshop on detection of *Listeria* : A food-borne pathogen

Izatnagar, 21 August 2014. A two-day interactive workshop on detection of *Listeria monocytogenes*, which has globally emerged as a major food-borne pathogen affecting milk, meat and fish industries has been organized at Indian



Veterinary Research Institute on 20 and 21 August 2014. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr R.K. Singh (Director, IVRI) who emphasized to work on one health concept for prevention and control of diseases, either infectious or non-infectious. He expressed the need of requirement for a battery of sensitive diagnostic assays at different stages of infection caused by food-borne pathogens especially, *Listeria monocytogenes*. He also advised the participants to get informed about other important zoonotic diseases and food-borne pathogens.

Dr S.B. Barbuddhe (Project Coordinator, TranceLis and Principal Scientist, NIBSM, Raipur) presented an outline of workshop and explained its background. He also briefed about the technologies developed under the project and other newer diagnostics being developed. He urged upon the need for collaboration with medical practitioners, veterinarians or food microbiologists under the one health concept.

The Centre of Excellence and Innovation in Biotechnology on 'Translational Centre for Molecular Epidemiology of *Listeria monocytogenes*' (Trance Lis) was sponsored by Department of Biotechnology, Government of India. Recognizing the importance of this bacterium, it has been included in Food Safety and Standards Regulations (2011) by Government of India.

Workshop on Biosafety and detection of GM crops

New Delhi, 16 August 2014. The workshop on 'Biosafety and Detection of GM Crops' covered recent national and international developments in the area of Genetically Modified (GM) crops along with evolution of regulatory regimes, risk assessment and management strategies to address biosafety issues and their post-release monitoring. Shri Hem Pande (Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, and Chairman, Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee Government of India) inaugurated this workshop. He emphasized on generation of reliable scientific data and unanimous viewpoint based thereon about the importance of GM crops. He appreciated the consistent efforts of National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) in updating expertise in the area and its widespread dissemination for national capacity building. Dr K.C. Bansal, Director (NBPGR), stressed the importance and urgency of the workshop in present scenario of GM crops in the country and presented major achievements of NBPGR.

Apart from structured lectures, there were two prolonged interactive sessions dealing with real and hypothetical case studies on regulatory mechanism and three hands-on-training sessions in GM detection laboratory.

Padma Bhushan Dr R.S. Paroda (Chairman, Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences) highlighted the challenges and opportunities confronting Indian agriculture and emphasized on the importance of GM crops. He stressed on the utmost necessity to upgrade national capacity in terms



of risk assessment, biosafety and post-release monitoring of GM crops as well as for putting in place a foolproof, transparent and dynamic national regulatory regime.

Interaction meeting between Union Agriculture Minister and scientists of CITH

Srinagar, 24 August 2014. The Union Minister for Agriculture, Shri Radha Mohan Singh, visited Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture (CITH) and had an interaction meeting with the scientists. The Union Minister for Agriculture discussed



the importance of horticultural sector for livelihood security of farmers in the country in general and the valley in particular. He emphasized on the need for soil-and-water testing, soil-health cards,

strengthening of extension activities for transfer of technologies in collaboration with state development departments and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), intercropping, high density plantation for precocity, integrated agricultural system involving KVKs and State Agricultural Universities, speedy supply of quality planting material, introduction of mobile labs etc., for enhancing horticultural productivity and farm returns. He assured full support to CITH for strengthening the research and extension activities at Srinagar, Mukteshwar and new centre at Arunachal Pradesh. The Union Minister asked scientists to visit and have direct interaction with farmers for identifying problems and effective transfer of technologies.

Professor Nazeer Ahmed (Director, CITH) highlighted the achievements of the Institute and gave an account of new

varieties and technologies developed and also drew the attention of Union Minister for Agriculture about major constraints faced by the Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture.

A new post-graduate school at IIHR

Bengaluru, 16 August 2014. A new Post-Graduate School was inaugurated by Dr S. Ayyappan (Secretary, DARE and DG,



ICAR) at Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR). He said that IIHR has all the expertise in terms of human resources and advanced infrastructure facilities for conducting research and pursuing higher studies in horticultural science in the country. He called upon the students to make best use of these expertise and facilities to excel in their research studies. DG, ICAR also released the *Vision 2050* document of the Institute. Dr S. Ayyappan (Secretary, DARE and DG, ICAR) also laid the Foundation Stone for the 'Arkavathi Student Hostel'.

The Post-Graduate School is offering Ph. D programme in the disciplines of Fruit Science, Vegetable Science, Floriculture and Landscape Architecture and Post-harvest Technology at IIHR. During the current academic year (2014-15), 16 students (three in Fruit Science, six in Vegetable Science and seven in Floriculture and Landscape Architecture) have been admitted to pursue Ph.D. degree programme. The Post-Graduate programme is in-house and all the basic facilities required for the students such as hostel, classroom, library, playground, recreation facilities etc. have been created at the Institute campus itself.

Pomegranate cultivation training for tribals at NRC Pomgranate

Solapur, 20 August 2014. A training programme on 'Pomegranate cultivation and production of low-cost planting material' was organized at NRC on Pomegranate during 18-20 August 2014 under tribal sub-plan. Twenty-five tribal farmers from Dhule district of Maharashtra were provided training in various aspects of pomegranate cultivation through lectures, practicals and field visits. Hands-on training on production of low-cost healthy planting material of pomegranate was highly appreciated by all the farmers.

Dr R K Pal (Director NRC on Pomegranate) explained the importance of total utilization of pomegranate i.e. Juice for RTS, Seed for seed oil, rind for biocolour extraction, for improving the livelihood security of tribal farmers through entrepreneurship development. He also advised tribal farmers to form self-help groups. Establishment of technology demonstration unit at KVK-Dhule under TSP is proposed to help entrepreneurship development of the tribal farmers in the area.

Integrated watershed management programme

Patna, 23 August 2014. One week training programme on 'Soil and Water Conservation for Integrated Watershed Management Programme' for state government officials was inaugurated by Sri Narendra Singh, Agriculture Minister of

Bihar at ICAR Research Complex for Eastern Region. He urged watershed management officials to involve villagers in their programme. He advised officials to explain benefits of the programme to the villagers for promoting watershed activities and involvement of the villagers during the programme implementation. Sri Singh also desired involvement of NABARD in such programmes.

Sri A.L. Meena (Agriculture Production Commissioner, Government of Bihar) informed that the watershed programme is operational in 14 districts of Bihar and directed watershed officials to use GPS enabled photographs for watershed development programmes. Sri Meena further desired use of ICTs for wider coverage of the people through watershed approach. Dr B.P. Bhatt (Director, ICAR RCER, Patna) informed that in the training programme watershed experts from Dehra Dun and Uttar Pradesh have been invited as resource persons. Twenty-five officials from Directorate of Water Conservation, Government of Bihar participated in the training programme.



Union Minister visits NRC for Citrus

Nagpur, 22 August, 2014. The Union Minister of Road Transport, Highways Shipping, Shri Nitin Gadkari, visited National Research Centre for Citrus (NRCC) farm experiments, containerized nursery facility and laboratories during the visit. The Union Minister said that there is a need to produce organic citrus of uniform and good quality so that growers get better price in international market. Shri Gadkari exhorted growers for rainwater-harvesting, groundwater recharging, and cautioned farmers about excessive use of water from tube-wells. The Union Minister also released three publications concerning improved nursery practices and value addition from fruits available in Amravati district. The Union Minister assured all help to citrus growers through e-governance as well as for marketing of Nagpur oranges through facilities of Railways and Air-lines.



Dr S. Ayyappan (Secretary DARE and Director General, ICAR) informed that NRC for Citrus is to be upgraded as Central Research Institute on Citrus with regional stations in the XII Five-Year Plan. He assured that for better services to the citrus growers, the fund and staff of the Institute will be further strengthened. Dr Anil Bonde (an MLA from Morshi) suggested that a *mantra* like 'Arogayacha maha mantra, Roj kha ek santra' should be used as marketing slogan besides highlighting various health benefits of consuming orange, so that demand increases and growers get better returns.

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