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Second ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting

New Delhi, 19 October 2012. Hon'ble Union Minister of Agriculture, Shri Sharad Pawar, and H.E. Minister of Agriculture, Lao PDR and Co-chair, Mr. Vilayvanh Phomkhe, inaugurated the 3-day event (jointly organized by the DARE/ICAR and CII) on 17 October 2012 at NASC Complex.



Dr S. Ayyappan (Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR) focussed on the agenda of this meeting. The Exposition is concurrently organized with the meeting to showcase technologies of the region to further promote and intensify cooperation between India and ASEAN nations in agriculture, forestry and allied sectors. Prominent institutions, industries and R&D organizations of ASEAN region and India are displaying relevant technologies and products having potential of adoption and exchange. Dignitaries also launched the *India-ASEAN News on Agriculture and Forestry*, a bi-annual newsletter brought by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research which will act as a window of activities, achievements, agricultural research information and policy issues related to the member-countries. Shri Pawar opined that this newsletter will provide a strong interactive platform for mutual benefit of the ASEAN member-countries and India. The Association of South-East Nations (ASEAN) is a group of ten nations – Brunei Darussalm, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam-which collectively aim to accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through mutual cooperation. The ASEAN-India working group on agriculture aims to facilitate promotion of joint research for development of technologies for increasing production and productivity in agricultural and allied systems.

Cultivation of Genetically Modified Crops from new technologies

New Delhi, 23 October 2012. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) had organized a discussion on GM crops which also brought together other Government of India Science Departments viz. Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Department of Environment and Forests (DoEF), Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC). The meeting included over 40 senior most eminent scientists, technocrats and bureaucrats. The group felt the necessity of jointly taking on board all the challenges being faced by Indian agriculture. It appreciated taking into cognizance all kinds of new sciences and technologies to meet the challenges. The group appreciated the potential of Biotechnology to contribute towards sustainable agriculture through traits in crops to tolerate various biotic and abiotic stresses, improve nitrogen uptake and its use-efficiency and enhance nutritional status of grains to address malnutrition in developing countries like India.

The group felt encouraged from recommendations of the Government on the way forward and its suggestions for several pragmatic changes that can improve the regulatory system to ensure that GM crop technology will be made available to Indian farmers in the best possible manner with all safety guidelines and protocols in place. It was emphasized that such new technologies will help farmers to produce more and conserve their valuable natural resources – sustainable agriculture in the truest sense. The meeting resolved to make use of the collective wisdom of the stakeholders from different backgrounds in addressing the issues being faced in nurturing science-led agriculture development in India.

Symposium on Indo-ASEAN Export Potential of Agriculture Products

New Delhi, 18 October 2012. "Several ASEAN member states enjoy excellent agro-climatic conditions suitable for production of the commodities that India imports in large quantity. Similarly, India can be an important source for many of the commodities imported by ASEAN member states. Shri Harish Rawat, the then Minister of State for Agriculture, opined that member countries can be benefited, if we explore the complementarities and align our agricultural productions and trade policies to encourage greater bilateral trade in agro-commodities.



Shri Abhijit Sen, Member, Planning Commission, traced back the economic co-operation in the ASEAN region and expressed satisfaction over growth of trade between India and ASEAN countries. He added that the leaders, policy planners and traders gathered here will deliberate on the bottle-necks, challenges and issues which are hampering trade. A road map must be devised and designed to accelerate the agri-trade between India and



ASEAN countries, he added. H.E. Dr Rusman Heriawan, Vice Minister of Agriculture, Indonesia appreciated India and its economic growth while delivering special address. ASEAN is looking for strong economic cooperation with

India for mutual benefits for the prosperity of the region, he said. Mr. Xaypladeth Choulamany, (Director General, Department of Planning and Cooperation, Laos PDR) emphasized the growing

need of mutual cooperation among ASEAN nations and India in trade, agriculture and other sectors. Mr Ashwin Shroff, (Chairman, CII National Sub-Committee on Agri-Biotechnology & Chairman and Managing Director, Excel Industries Ltd) made a presentation on 'Export Potential of Agriculture Produce' in which he elaborated challenges and suggested way outs. Earlier, Dr S. Ayyappan, (Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR) hoped that deliberations in the symposium will help identify mutual areas of cooperation and the related challenges. Deliberations will take place under four technical sessions with experts on the panel.

Biological Control of Papaya Mealybug in India

Bengaluru, 20 October 2012. Dr S Ayyappan (Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR) appreciated the efforts made by the entomologists of National Bureau of Agricultural Important Insects (NBAIL), in identifying the mealybug correctly leading to the short listing of probable biological control candidates including their source of availability.

Dr S. Ayyappan highlighted the damages caused by important mealybug pests on different crops. He emphasized that these mealybug pests cannot be managed by the use of toxic chemical insecticides as they are well protected by their waxy mealy secretions. The annual estimated economic benefit accrued to the farmers in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka alone accounts for ₹1,623 crores/year besides indirect benefit of reduction in hazardous effects of pesticide usage for the management of this deadly invasive mealybug using *Acerophagus papaya*. This tiny parasitoid measuring less than 1 mm saved a big crop loss especially in mulberry, cassava and papaya.



Earlier, Dr B S Bhumannavar (Director, NBAIL) highlighted the salient features of the success story of biological control of papaya mealybug in India. The papaya mealybug, an alien invasive pest, appeared on papaya in Coimbatore during July 2008. Being an aggressive insect pest, this mealybug soon spread to other economic plants like tapioca, mulberry and teak besides attacking more than 100 other plants including weeds. The Papain, Sago and Silkworm industries were threatened by the menace of this alien invasive mealybug. Based on this information, a request was made to USDA-APHIS, New Delhi, for the supply of three parasitoids. Dr Marc Gilkey, Agricultural attaché at New Delhi immediately coordinated and arranged for the mass breeding of these parasitoids and supplied five shipments from July to October, 2010 to NBAIL from their APHIS laboratory in Puerto Rico. Dr R.J. Rabindra, the then Director, NBAIL, spearheaded the mission for the mass multiplication and supplying these parasitoids to the farmers in all southern states and Maharashtra, which lead to the successful biological control of papaya mealybug on all the crops. More than 150 scientists and research scholars from different ICAR Institutes, State Agricultural Universities, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, State Department of Agriculture and Horticulture, USDA-APHIS and Industries participated in the deliberations. In the technical session, economic benefit accrued to the farmers' due to the release of the exotic parasitoids for the cultivation of papaya, tapioca and mulberry in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra was presented and discussed.

Current Seasonal Bulletin from NICRA, CRIDA

October 2012. During the last one week, monsoon was weak and confined to few parts of the country and as a result the rainfall deficit has increased slightly (-2 to -3%) and surplus was decreased slightly in all the sub-divisions of the country. Monsoon started withdrawing from north-western states and it was completely withdrawn from Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and New Delhi and

withdrawn from most parts of west Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Rainfall in monsoon is still deficit in west Uttar Pradesh, Uttara Khand, Haryana, Chandigarh and New Delhi, Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kutch, *madhya* Maharashtra, Marathwada, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, north and south Interior Karnataka and Kerala.

The following contingency measures are suggested in deficit rainfall areas:

1. Maharashtra as a whole received 980.0 mm of rainfall during the season which is 90% of its normal. In Marathwada region, intercultural operations in late sown cotton and pigeonpea is advised. The standing crops experiencing moisture stress at grain filling stage need to be given protective irrigation. Farmers are advised to prepare land for rabi sowing immediately after harvesting short duration pulses. In Vidarbha region, condition of *kharif* crops is satisfactory. Farmers are advised to undertake field preparations and procurement of inputs for timely sowing of rainfed chickpea (ICCV-2, ICCV-10, JAKI-9218, SAKI-9516, PKV Harita, PKV Kabuli 2 and 4), safflower (Bhima, AKS-207, PKV Pink) and *rabi* sorghum (Maldandi, Yashoda, SPV-504, CASV-14R, PKV Kraitinti) in first fortnight of October. In *madhya* Maharashtra region of Solapur farmers are advised to sow sorghum (Phule utara, Phule panchami, Parbhani moti, CSV-22, M-35-1), Bengal gram (Vijay, Digvijay, BDNG-797) and safflower (DSH-129, SSF-658, SSF-708, Phule Kusuma). In Nasik region, with sufficient rainfall received farmers are advised to sow early varieties of *rabi* crops like sorghum, Bengal gram, safflower in shallow red soils.
2. Karnataka as a whole received 596 mm of rainfall as against the normal of 816 mm for the season with a deficit of -27%. In south Interior Karnataka farmers are suggested to take up gap filling in finger millet and intercultivation in early sown crops.
3. Haryana as whole received 283 mm rainfall against the normal of 462 mm with a deficit of -39%. Interculture and moisture conservation measures are advised for conserving soil moisture for sowing of rainfed *rabi* crops like *raya*, gram and other pulses. In view of the possible attack of jassids and sundi in cotton crop spraying of insecticides is recommended.

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