



Happenings at NRC for Sorghum

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Meeting on development of Aflanet project

Drs. MS Basu, Director, and S. Desai, Sr. Scientist, NRC-Groundnut, Junagadh, M. Anandraj, Principal Scientist, IISR, Calicut, Urmila Dhuva, CRRI, Cuttack, Sangit kumar, Pr.Scientist, DMR, IARI, New Delhi, SV Reddy, Scientific Officer, ICRISAT, V. Paranidharan, Asst. Professor, TNAU, Coimbatore were participated in the first level meeting on development of Aflanet project held at NRCS on 15 January. The Project proposals were discussed in detail for each crop and the objectives and concerned participating centres were identified. In this meeting Dr. Ratnavathi has presented the project proposal entitled "National network project on prevention and management of Fumonism contamination in sorghum". On similar lines, Dr. TG Nageshwar Rao, Pr. Scientist, proposed a project entitled "Gene Pyramiding for resistance to multiple races of Anthracnose in sorghum". Dr. SS Rao, Sr. Scientist presented a project proposal entitled "Drought management for increasing rabi and dual purpose sorghum productivity."

Hindi Course

The Director inaugurated the Hindi *Praveen* Course

हिंदी प्रशिक्षण

हमारे केंद्र में सत्र जनवरी - मई २००४ तक होने वाली **प्रवीण कोर्स** के लिए दिनांक २०/१/०४ को निदेशक महोदय के कर कमलो द्वारा सत्र का उद्घाटन किया गया। इसमें केंद्र से १६ शिक्षार्थी प्रशिक्षण ले रहे हैं, जिसकी अध्यापका कुमारी सीमा वर्मा, गृह मंत्रालय, राजभाषा विभाग, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, हैदराबाद से हैं। इससे पहले ५४ अधिकारियों ने **प्राज्ञ कोर्स** उत्तीर्ण कर चुके हैं।



(part time, 4 months) on 20 January. Sixteen staff member are enrolled to learn this basic course. Ms. Seema Varma, from the regional office, Central Hindi Directorate is conducting the classes. It is pertinent to mention here that a total of 54 NRCS officials have already passed the Pragma (*Karyalayeen Hindi*) course .

Impact of NATP project on sorghum to World Bank team

A World Bank team consisting of Drs. C Bernard, RS Epworth and PS Sidhu were exposed to the success stories of NATP projects operated from NRC for sorghum using posters and exhibits. Drs. SL Mehta, National Director and JS Kanwar also attended this session held at CRIDA on 23 January. The visitors appreciated the program, and asked us to continue with further extension of our work in target villages. Dr. Audilakshmi will continue to demonstrate feasibility of community dryer for avoiding the grain mold problem of kharif sorghum, and Dr. Ratnavathi will further promote diversified uses of sorghum grain, and stalk for value-added foods, and industrial products including biofuel. Drs. SV Rao, S Indira and N Seetharama

also interacted with the visitors who expressed satisfaction on the progress made at NRCS using NATP funds. Reviewers appreciated the manner in which the commodity oriented program of NRCS has nicely fitted into the mission and farming-system oriented program of NATP under various themes.

Sh. MM Lal, Addl. Commissioner (Crops) assessed FLD programme

Dr. MM Lal, Additional Commissioner (Crops), DAC, Govt. of India, New Delhi, visited NRCS on 6 January to assess the progress of the front-line demonstration programme on sorghum funded by the ministry. Dr. Seetharama briefed the progress of the programme conducted successfully during 2003-04, as planned and approved by the ministry. Dr. Lal was taken around the institute and apprised of the other research and development activities of NRCS. Dr. Lal addressed the sci-



entists of NRCS on the activities of the ministry and congratulated the scientists on their contributions made to R&D of sorghum. Future needs for further extension of sorghum technology were also discussed.

Interaction with private sector

3 January: Drs. Y Yogeshwara Rao, Executive Director and KS Reddy, Marketing Manager, Vikki's Agrotech Ltd., Hyderabad visited NRCS. They had detailed discussions with the Drs. N Seetharama, Director, SL Kaul, BU Singh, Aruna Reddy and PG Padmaja on the sources of resistance to insects with emphasis on stem borer, sugarcane aphid and *Helicoverpa* sp. In addition, they have discussed the controlling strategies for the stem borer and sugarcane aphid, and felt that economically viable options are not available to the farmers. Other breeding strategies of involving the diverse-resources of resistance and method to enhance the levels of resistance by backcrossing to recover resistance with elite background were also discussed.

23 January: Mr. Ram Krishan Yadav, Geetha Hybrid Seeds, Hisar, visited NRCS. and met Drs. Biswas and Seetharama. He expressed his willingness to multiply

forage varieties and sell the quality seeds under the guidance of this Centre and our AICSIP unit at Hisar at a reasonable cost.

24 January: Mr. C. Ravindran, Chairman, and Mr. Mahidhar, member COLONAC group of companies have visited NRCS as directed by the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, to know the prospects of ethanol production from sweet stalked sorghum, and to explore the possibility of a joint study on biofuel production using sorghum and other promising alternate uses. The company is interested in conducting sweet sorghum trials at Kovilpatti in 1000 acres for the production of ethanol. Drs. Biswas, CV Ratnavathi, B Dayakar Rao



and N. Seetharama participated in the deliberations. All the NRCS publications were taken by them to show it to the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh. The Council is approached for seeking permission to start a collaborative project (received from the DDG).

Survey on sorghum cultivation in paddy fallows

Drs. Chari Appaji and B Subbarayudu visited Guntur district, AP to study sorghum cultivation in rice fallows being followed by farmers. Farmers are shifting to sorghum from traditionally cultivated second crop of paddy because of the severe drought and non-availability of irrigation. Earlier we had advised them on suitable cultivars for cultivation in paddy fallows, along with recommended package of practices to be adopted on war footing, through the local SAU (ANGRAU) which are now being followed on a wide scale.

Shooting of film on sorghum seed production technology

Video shooting of film on sorghum seed production technology, commenced from 15 – 18 January in 11 seed villages in Bellary district of Karnataka. This schedule covered harvesting of parental lines, seed set patterns as influenced by agro-ecology and rouging op-

erations required to preserve genetic purity including



seed processing equipment. Mr. H.S. Gawali, Multi-media officer shot the said sequences in digital footage under the direction of Dr. Vilas Tonapi, Sr. Scientist. Dr. Ravi Kumar, Regional seed officer, KSSC, Bellary also participated in this event.

Gold medal bagged by NRCS student

Ms. Y Aravinda Lakshmi, student of Dr. KBRS Visarada, Sr. Scientist, Biotechnology has won first prize (Gold medal) for her paper entitled "*Agrobacterium*-mediated genetic transformation of sorghum", in the competition of research paper presentation for M Sc students at Indo-American Centre for international studies, Osmania University on 17 January. This competition was conducted by Aurora Degree College, Hyderabad on the occasion of National level symposium on "Emerging frontiers of plant biotechnology: Revisiting the green revolution-genomic era". A total of 90 papers were submitted, 50 were selected for presentation and Ms. Aravinda stood first among them.



On the same occasion, Mr. N Sai Kishore, Ph.D, student, Biotechnology Unit, also presented a paper on "Stem-borer resistance in sorghum" in non-competition category. Dr. Visarada was nominated as one of the three judges for the evaluation of best poster presentation made by undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Joint staff council meeting

The III Institute Joint Staff Council (IJSC) meeting was held on 6 January at committee Room. The Director chaired the meeting. (minutes are posted on NRCS intranet).



Republic Day celebrations

The Nations 54th Republic Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and gaiety on January 26. Officials



across designations participated in sports and games. A special event to recognize the efficiency of field level workers in keeping the fields free from weeds was also organized and best performers were awarded prizes. The Director hoisted the National flag and addressed the NRCS family. He stressed the need to rededicate ourselves to reach the goals and to set new standards of achievements.. Prizes were distributed to the winners of various sport events conducted to mark the occasion.

Meetings and Seminars

Dr. KBRS Visarada attended the workshop on "*Biosafety issues related to transgenic crops*" held on 28 January, organized by Biotech Consortium India Limited at Hyderabad. This is the third among the series of six workshops by BCIL. The workshops are conducted in the six states, where cultivation of *Bt* cotton is approved. Participants included State Government officials, scientists from universities and research institutions, industries, private companies, NGOs and farmer cooperatives. Following conclusion were arrived at in this workshop:

- Bt gene is safe for humans.
- Failure of Bt cotton last year was due to drought, increase in sucking pests and use of non-local variety.
- CICR, Nagpur developed a simple Bt test-Kit to detect Bt and non Bt cotton. They are marketing it. Mahyco is also marketing such kits.
- CICR, Nagpur is notified as the referral body by Min of Agriculture for settling the issues regarding spurious Bt cotton seeds for the whole country
- It was expressed that a separate set of AICCIP trials may be conducted for transgenic crops.
- On the whole, farmers and activists expressed their confidence in the technology.

Dr. M Elangovan, Scientist (SS) participated in the National Seminar on "Resource management for sustainable agriculture" organized by the Andhra Agricultural Union held at Agricultural College, Bapatla from 28-30 January. He presented three papers, one oral entitled "GIS-A tool for sorghum diversity mapping" and two posters entitled "Evaluation of sorghum germplasm in Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh" and "Diversity in sorghum races".

Dr. TG Nageshwar Rao, Pr. Scientist, attended the meeting on Network project on "Gene pyramiding for biotic and abiotic stresses in crop plants" held at Directorate of Maize research, IARI, New Delhi on 28 January and presented a project proposal entitled "Gene Pyramiding for resistance to multiple races of Anthracnose in sorghum".

Dr. SS Rao, Sr. Scientist attended the meeting on "Network project on abiotic stress held at IARI, New Delhi on 29 January and presented a project proposal entitled "Drought management for increasing rabi and dual purpose sorghum productivity".

Family News

Master Kodali Rajesh Babu, S/o. Mr. K Ravindra Babu Librarian stood first in the Science Quiz of the Inter-school Talent Search Competition (2003) conducted by the Education Dept., Govt. of AP during 17 to 23 January at Jawahar Bal Bhavan, Hyderabad.

Visitors

5 January: Dr. Farzana, Asst. Prof., Plant Breeding, at ANGRAU, Hyderabad, visited the biotechnology lab along with 3 PhD students. They were appraised about the on-going programmes in sorghum biotechnology.

21 January: About 25 officials including 15 women visited NRCS as a part of their training programme, conducted by the Farmers Training Centre, MPEO, Ranga Reddy district, AP. They were explained the recent advances in sorghum production technology.

24 January: A 20 member team of agricultural extension



officers and multipurpose extension officers from the Department of Agriculture, RR dist of AP visited the NRCS as a part of their exposure visits to various research centres. They were explained the sorghum production technology and transfer of the same to the farmers.

30 January: Total 30 Farmers from Manchal Mandal, Ranga Reddy District- One member of water users



association along with one Agriculture officer, FTC, visited NRCS. They were exposed to improved high yielding varieties and hybrids, plant protection measures and alternative uses of sorghum and profitability.

New books in Library

1. Basic concepts of Vegetable Science / A compendium for JRF, SRF, ARS, NET, SET & Ph.D
2. Forage crop production in the tropics / C. George Thomas.
3. Plant Tissue culture; theory and practice - a revised edition / S.S. Bhojwani and M.K. Razdan.
4. Genes VII / Benjamin Lewin.
5. The Complete reference Windows XP Home edition by Levine Young.

Thought for the month

Worrying is like a rocking chair: it gives you something to do, but it does not get you anywhere.

Sunnata Vagga

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