

Honorable Minister of Horticulture and Sericulture Shri R. Shanker shows keen interest in the biological control of whitefly on coconut

Ramangara is one of the largest coconut growing districts in Karnataka and most commonly coconut is intercropped with mulberry, maize, areca nut and banana. Since 2017, coconut gardens were infested with four exotic whiteflies viz., rugose spiralling whitefly (RSW), *Aleurodicus rugioperculatus*, Bondar's nesting whitefly, *Paraleyrodes bondari* and nesting whitefly, *Paraleyrodes minei* and palm infesting whitefly, *Aleurotrachelus atratus*. Shree R. Shanker, Minister of Horticulture and Sericulture, Government of Karnataka reviewed the current situation of whitefly infestation in several coconut gardens in the district and interacted with farmers and other stakeholders on 30 January, 2021. During the survey, minister was keen on to learn various initiatives taken to manage these notorious pests in the state through the department of Horticulture in collaboration with ICAR-NBAIR, Bengaluru. Dr. K. Selvaraj, Scientist (Entomology) from ICAR-NBAIR joined the survey programme to brief about different whiteflies infesting coconut, mode of dispersal, host plants, nature of damage, natural enemies and their management strategies. Besides, augmentation and conservation strategies for the parasitoid, *Encarsia guadeloupae* and foliar application protocol for the entomopathogen, *Isaria fumosorosea* for the effective control of these whiteflies in coconut were demonstrated by Dr Selvaraj. The survey was conducted in collaboration with Department of Horticulture, Government of Karnataka. Shri. A. Manjunath, MLA, Magadi, several progressive farmers, department officials and other stakeholders participated in the survey and demonstration programme. This survey and demonstration programme was covered in several press and media in kannada language.



Shree R. Shanker, Minister of Horticulture and Sericulture, Government of Karnataka is briefing about *Isaria fumosorosea* to farmers and stakeholders