

7th National Conference on Biological Control (NCBC) “**75 years of *Biological control of Pests and Diseases in Agriculture: Challenges and the Way Forward***”

ICAR- National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, Bengaluru & Society for Biocontrol Advancement (SBA), Bengaluru organized 7th National Conference on Biological Control - “**75 years of *Biological control of Pests and Diseases in Agriculture: Challenges and the Way Forward***” from 15 to 17 December, 2022 at Ramada Wyndham, Yelahanka, Bengaluru.

Delivering the welcome address, Dr S.N. Sushil, Director, ICAR-NBAIR and President, SBA threw light on the history of the establishment and achievements of the ICAR - NBAIR in support of the plant protection efforts of the country in terms of promotion of biological control of pests and diseases.

While delivering the inaugural address, the Chief Guest Dr Ashok Dalwai, Chief Executive Officer, National Rainfed Area Authority, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India, New Delhi., highlighted the need of adoption of climate smart agriculture and cautioned how the climate change and wrong uses of pesticides aggravates pest problems. He advocated conservation of biodiversity and stitching together of both *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of biocontrol agents to preserve ecosystem and promote biological control.

Dr A.N. Mukhopadhyay, Former Vice Chancellor, AAU, Jorhat highlighted his experiences on biological of plant diseases using Trichoderma and the way forward. Dr S.C. Dubey, ADG (PP&B), ICAR urged to strengthen the public private partnership to test, validate, mass produce and register the potential biocontrol products. Dr Sanjay Arya, Secretary (CIB & RC), New Delhi briefed the recent guidelines and policies on simplified registration of biopesticides. Whereas Dr K.L. Gujar, Joint Director (PP), CIB & RC stressed the importance of quality check on the biopesticides available in the market.

While addressing the entry of as many as 15 dreadful invasive insect pests with in last 10 years into India, the experts felt that in the wake of the increased trade, the country needs further strengthening of International and domestic quarantine, in-addition to development of database on invasive pests and free exchange of biocontrol agents between countries. Dr T.M. Manjunath, Ex-Director, Monsanto Research Centre, Bengaluru highlighted the challenges and prospects of integrating augmentative biocontrol with synthetic pesticides and other IPM strategies. Dr V.V. Ramamurthy, Former Professor, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi, emphasised on integrated taxonomy integrated with ecological data. Session on eco-system services played by insects, the speakers highlighted the importance of indices to quantify the functional and numerical diversity of natural enemies in a crop eco-system. Dr Subhash Chander, Director, ICAR-NCIPM, New Delhi indicated the strong need for long term studies to quantify the impact of climate change on tritrophic interactions and development of climate resilient biocontrol technologies. In the molecular front, Dr Alok Srivastava, Director, ICAR-NBAIM, Mau and Dr T. Venkatesan,

Head, ICAR-NBAIR highlighted the importance in development of molecular assisted smart biocontrol agents and RNAi based biocontrol technologies. Dr N.K.K. Krishnakumar, former DDG, Horticulture Sciences and former Director, ICAR-NBAIR urged the need of conserving the natural enemies of crop pests and plant pathogens and their relationship in agroecosystems. Former Directors of ICAR-NBAIR viz., Dr Chandish R. Ballal, Dr. A. Verghese, and Dr. N. Bakthavatsalam spoke about the successes of biological control of crop pests in India and future targets. Dr. P.D. Kamala Jayanthi, National Professor, ICAR-IIHR, Bengaluru in her address indicated that the semiochemicals including pheromones, plant volatiles and essential oils continue to play a major role in strengthening sustainable IPM programs.

The dignitaries released the conference abstract book, NBAIR at a glance, database on pentatomid bugs, technical folders on biocontrol agents, mobile app and a book on Arthropods related to veterinary and fisheries sector.

The valedictory session was chaired by Dr A.N. Mukhopadhyay. The session convenors presented the major recommendations emerged out of deliberations of each session. During the conference, various awards Institute by the SBA, including best PhD thesis awards, best research work on various categories, fellow awards, Best oral and poster awards were distributed to the scientists, research scholars and students. More than 250 delegates including 25 Industries participated in the three day conference.









