

FARMERS' FIELD DAY ON ADOPTION OF BIOCONTROL TECHNOLOGIES

Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana in collaboration with ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, Bangalore and Nahar Sugar Mills, Amlah organised a Farmers' Field Day on "Adoption of Biocontrol Technologies" at village Fatehpur, district Patiala on October 19, 2016 in which about 250 farmers participated. This field day was held to create awareness among the farmers regarding the role of natural enemies in the management of economically important insects.

The function was presided over by Dr B S Dhillon, Worthy Vice Chancellor, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. Dr P K Chakraborty, Additional Director General (Plant Protection & Biosafety), ICAR New Delhi; Dr Chandish Ballal, Director & Project Co-ordinator AICRP-BC, ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, Bangalore; Dr D B Ahuja, ICAR-National Centre for Integrated Pest Management, New Delhi; and Mr Harish Pahwa, General Manager, Nahar Sugar Mill, Amlah graced the occasion as Guests of Honour. In addition, Dr R S Sidhu, Director Extension Education, PAU, Ludhiana, Dr R S Gill, Head Department of Entomology, PAU, Ludhiana, Dr S K Jalali, in-charge AICRP-BC cell, NBAIR, Bangalore and Dr B Ramanujam, Principal Scientist, NBAIR, Bangalore also participated in the function.

Dr R S Sidhu, while welcoming the dignitaries and farmers, stressed upon the ecological approaches to pest management in different crops.

Dr S K Jalali highlighted the role of egg parasitoid, *Trichogramma* in management of lepidopteran pests in different field, horticultural and vegetable crops. He commended the PAU-AICRP centre for recommending the augmentative releases of *Trichogramma* spp for the management of stalk borer, *Chilo auricillius*, early shoot borer, *Chilo infuscatellus* and top borer, *Scirpophaga excerptalis* in sugarcane; stem borer, *Chilo partellus* in maize; stem borer, *Scirpophaga incertulaas* and leaf folder, *Cnaphalocrosis medinalis* in rice. It is worth mentioning here that PAU has transferred technology regarding mass production of *Corcyra* eggs and tricho-cards to six sugar mills of Punjab, viz. Doaba Coop. Sugar Mills Ltd, Nawanshahr (SBS Nagar), Morinda Coop. Sugar Mills Ltd, Morinda (Ropar), Gurdaspur Coop. Sugar Mills Ltd, Paniar (Gurdaspur), Nahar Sugar Mills Pvt. Ltd., Amlah (Fatehgarh Sahib) and Rana Sugar Mills Pvt. Ltd. Buttar Seviyan (Amritsar) and Fazilka Coop. Sugar Mills Ltd, Fazilka. He added that these sugar mills are successfully running biocontrol laboratories under the technical guidance of Biocontrol Section, Department of Entomology, PAU, Ludhiana. Since 1999, the large-scale demonstrations on bio-suppression of sugarcane borers have been conducted over an area of about 83,665 acres by Punjab centre in collaboration with sugar mills.

Dr D B Ahuja shared with farmers, the technologies developed by the NCIPM centre, viz. light traps, pheromone traps and other eco-friendly techniques for monitoring and management of insect pests.

Dr P K Chakraborty, appreciated PAU-Sugar Mills collaboration for dissemination of biocontrol technologies to farmers' fields. He advised the farmers to minimise the use of

insecticides and to adopt integrated pest management (IPM) protocols involving cultural, mechanical and biological approaches. He suggested the need based use of insecticides for the production of ecologically safe food. He advised the farmers to get information on latest farming practices from 'Farmers Portal' of the Government of India.

Dr Chandish Ballal, appreciated the efforts of stalwarts like Dr S P Singh (PDBC, Bangalore), Dr K S Brar and Dr Maninder Shehmar (PAU, Ludhiana) who have played a leading role in implementing biocontrol technologies on large scale. She also congratulated the present PAU-AICRP team, led by Dr KS Sangha, for successfully organizing the field day and taking forward the biocontrol programme to the higher levels in Punjab. She invited the farmers for training on low cost mass production of bioagents and biopesticides at NBAIR, Bangalore.

In his inaugural address, Chief Guest Dr B S Dhillon, stressed on the adoption of biocontrol technologies exclusively and in conjunction with other management techniques, such as timely sowing of crop, selection of varieties, judicious use of fertilizers, need based application of green chemistry insecticides following proper spray technology. He thanked the sugar mills for helping in propagating the usage of tricho-cards for management of sugarcane borers. He hoped that the area under biocontrol technologies would increase in future.

A Progressive farmer, S Gurmail Singh Guneke shared his experience of using bioagents (Tricho-cards) in maize, sugarcane, jowar and basmati rice and urged the other farmers to adopt non-chemical methods of insect control.

Dr R S Gill proposed the vote of thanks. The field day, being a maiden attempt to popularize the usage of Biocontrol technologies, was appreciated by the farmers who vowed to adopt and disseminates the technologies.

