

SAARC Regional Consultation on ‘Facilitating the use of microbial pesticides in South Asia’

The Regional Consultation on ‘Facilitating the use of microbial pesticides in South Asia’ was organized by SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Bangladesh, ICAR-NBAIR, India and CABI-South Asia at ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, Bengaluru from 21 - 23 August, 2017. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. T. M. Manjunath, a veteran biocontrol and IPM specialist, Dr. Ravi Khetarpal, Executive Secretary, APAARI, Bangkok, Dr. Chandish R. Ballal, Director, ICAR-NBAIR, Dr. W.A.R.T. Wickramaarachchi, Expert, Policy, SAC, and Dr. Malvika Chaudhary, CABI by lighting a lamp. Dr. Chandish R. Ballal, Director, ICAR-NBAIR addressed the gathering and welcomed the SAARC delegates to the meeting. The workshop started with the introductory speech given by Dr. W.A.R.T. Wickramaarachchi, Senior Program Specialist, SAARC Agriculture Centre. He gave an overview about the genesis of SAARC Agriculture Centre from its establishment to the full-fledged SAARC agricultural Centre in 2007, which is the premier institute in South Asia for sustainable Agricultural Development in SAARC countries. He stressed the importance about the utilization of microbial pesticides in the SAARC countries. Dr. T.M. Manjunath shared the mandate of SAARC and pointed out the challenges to be addressed like IPR issues, regulatory hurdles, political interference and duplication of research within and across countries and called for efforts to develop climate resilient biocontrol agents and genetic improvement of biocontrol agents. He also called for institutional research rather than individual centric research. Dr. Ravi Khetarpal, Executive Secretary, APAARI, Bangkok talked about biosecurity engagements and use of biopesticides for meeting SDGs in SAARC regions. He stressed the need for partnership to have well-knit information opportunities for SAARC so that environment friendly biopesticides can be better utilised. He also opined that innovative funding and partnership strategy are the needs of the hour in this field. Dr. Chandish R. Ballal, Director, ICAR-NBAIR gave an outline about the research carried out in the field of microbial pesticides in India. She briefed about the various success stories achieved in the country by the employment of effective microbial pesticides. Constraints in the field of microbial pesticide research like difficulty in rearing of host larvae, problems in fermentation, shelf life and cumbersome registration requirements were also pointed out. Dr. Ballal also suggested new approaches like combination of microbials with arthropod bioagents and symbionts.

The workshop continued with country-wise presentations on same day by the focal point experts of respective countries of SAARC namely Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Saedi from Afghanistan, Mr. Pema Tobgay from Bhutan, Dr. Rajan from India, Mr. Hussain Farah from Maldives, Mr. Dinesh Babu Tiwari from Nepal and Ms. U. S. K. AbeySinghe from Srilanka.

Chairman of the session Dr. Ravi Khetarpal and Co-chairman Dr. M. Nagesh gave recommendations on the session in general and for respective countries. It was also highlighted to provide compiled status report of use of biopesticides in SAARC countries and suggested for capacity building, technology transfer and exchange of experts.

On the second day, Dr. Malvika Chaudhary, CABI-South Asia presented on Global Scenario on uptake of biocontrol products by extension services eg Plantwise in selected countries from South Asia and other regions. Dr. Jagadeesh Patil, ICAR-NBAIR, Bengaluru presented on Current status of research and development on microbial biocontrol agents for insect and nematode pest management in India. Dr. Ramanujam, ICAR-NBAIR presented on Current Status of Research and Development of Microbial Biocontrol Agents for Crop Pest and Disease Management in India. Dr. Abraham Verghese and Mr. Senthilkumar Radhakrishnan, GPS Institute of Agricultural Management, Bengaluru presented on Recent advances in training to enhance the use of microbial pesticides. S. K. Ghosh from Multiplex Biotech Private Limited presented on Successful development and commercialization of microbial pesticides as crop protectant- An industrial perspective from lab to farm. Mr. Kumar, S, Multiplex Biotech Private Limited presented on SOLDIER, A WDP formulation of Entomopathogenic nematodes, *Heterorhabditis indica* strain NBAII Hi1 – A success story of transferring biocontrol technology from Institute to Industry.

Dr. Savitha, M.J. from Bio-Control Research laboratories, Pest Control India, Bengaluru: - Management of total Quality Control (TQC) of microbial biopesticides in agri business, followed by Dr. Manju Thakur, CABI-South Asia- “Plantwise” on Augmenting utilisation of bio-pesticides through extension approach, Dr. Y. B. Srinivasa from Tene Agricultural Solutions Pvt. Ltd on Digital extension for promoting biopesticides, Dr. Ramana Murthy, Pest Control India, Bengaluru on Biopesticides Markets- growing awareness of the value chain, challenges and opportunities and Dr. M. S. Rao, ICAR-IIHR, Bengaluru on Registration of biopesticides at CIB & RC, India.

Chairman of the session Dr. T.M. Manjunath proposed recommendations based on the discussions that spanned over the three days of workshop which included the Collaboration between SAARC countries for strengthening the production and use of biopesticides, policy decisions in each country for import and export, separate legislation for registration of chemical pesticides and biopesticides and simplification of registration procedure for biopesticides. Also he highlighted for creating awareness about biosafety and biosecurity of biopesticides and their proper use, permission for registration of biopesticides consortia products, training programme for researchers in the field of biopesticides, and creation of working group which can meet once in a year to advise and assess the progress.



Inauguration of SAARC Regional Consultation on ‘Facilitating the use of microbial pesticides in South Asia’ by lighting a lamp



SAARC Regional Consultation on ‘Facilitating the use of microbial pesticides in South Asia’



Release of Book of Abstracts in SAARC Regional Consultation on ‘Facilitating the use of microbial pesticides in South Asia’ (L-R: Dr. Abraham Verghese, Dr. W.A.R.T. Wickramaarachchi, Dr. T.M. Manjunath, Dr. Chandish Ballal, Dr. Malvika Chaudhary, Dr. Ravi Khetarpal)



Release of e-Publication in SAARC Regional Consultation on ‘Facilitating the use of microbial pesticides in South Asia’ (L-R: Dr. Abraham Verghese, Dr. W.A.R.T. Wickramaarachchi, Dr. T.M. Manjunath, Dr. Chandish Ballal, Dr. Ravi Khetarpal)