

ICAR-NBAIR Organized Training for Agricultural Officials of Andaman and Nicobar Administration on Mass Production of Biocontrol Agents

The Bureau conducted three days (December 8-10, 2025) hands-on training on “**Mass Production of Biocontrol Agents for Management of Pest and Diseases**” for agricultural officials of Andaman & Nicobar Administration. This is tailor-made short-term exposure cum training with special focus on mass production of potential biocontrol agents for the biosuppression of emerging insect pests and diseases of coconut and arecanut. Dr. S.N. Sushil, Director, ICAR-NBAIR interacted with trainees, highlighted various success stories of Bureau and assured all possible support to strengthen the biocontrol programme in eco-sensitive island ecosystem. He also urged the trainees to disseminate information to growers and other stakeholders as master trainers for the timely initiation of suitable biocontrol strategies against various insect pests.



Recently, Plant Protection Adviser, Government of India constituted a joint inspection to assess the incidences of rugose spiralling whitefly and mealybug in different parts of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and recommended to strengthen biocontrol infrastructure and capacity building of agriculture officials in the islands. Therefore, training focused on standard operating procedures (SOP) for biocontrol laboratory, rearing of factitious host insects, parasitoids, predators and entomopathogenic fungus, antagonist fungus, entomopathogenic bacteria and nematodes for the management of insect pests and diseases in coconut and arecanut.

Further, trainees were exposed to field level diagnostic of emerging insects' pests such as whiteflies, mealybugs, black headed caterpillar, rhinoceros beetle, slug caterpillars, eriophyid mite and white grub and diseases such as bud rot and stem bleeding in coconut and arecanut. Besides, trainees experienced identification of parasitoids such as *Encarsia guadeloupae*, *Goniozus nephantidis* and predators, *Apertochrysa astur* and *Chrysoperla zastrowi sillemi* associated with

coconut and arecanut plantation. Trainees involved in on mass production of oil-based formulation of entomopathogenic, *Isaria fumosorosea* and antagonistic fungi *Trichoderma asperellum*.



Various augmentative and conservation strategies for these biocontrol agents and their compatible approaches such as semio-chemicals for coconut pests especially rhinoceros beetle was also covered for the benefit of trainees. Besides ICAR-NBAIR, resource persons from ICAR-CPCRI, Kasaragod, Kerala and Dr YSR Horticulture University, Venkataramannagudem, Andhra Pradesh also participated the training session.



(Source: ICAR- National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources (NBAIR), Bengaluru)