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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE *on* MONITORING AND BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF INSECT VECTORS OF HUMAN DISEASES

Institute of Plant Protection (IPP), MNS University of Agriculture, Multan, organized an Online International Conference on "Monitoring and Biological Control of Insect Vectors of Human Diseases" on April 8, 2021. Conference was a full-day event being curated by MNS University of Agriculture, Multan, with an audience including researchers, academia, students, industry and relevant policy makers. The goal was to bring together bright minds to give talks that are idea-focused, and on a wide range of subjects, to foster learning, inspiration and provoke conversations that matter. The conference was scheduled in two sessions, one from Pakistan and the other from United Kingdom. In his welcome address, Prof. Dr. Asif Ali, VC, MNSUAM applauded the organizers for such a needful event and emphasized on effective linkages between all stakeholders for a greater cause. He unveiled some hard facts about mosquito and mosquito borne diseases especially dengue fever. He emphasized that the government departments and citizens should join hands to control dengue and implement anti-dengue measures along with adopting necessary precautions in this regard. Dr. Syed Farooq Shah, CEO, Razbio Limited UK gave an overview of the conference. Dr. Somia Iqtadar, Chairperson, Dengue Expert Advisory Group (DEAG), Punjab talked on "Tackling Dengue in Punjab: A paradigm shift". The first breakout session (Insect Vector Monitoring & Biopesticides in Pakistan) was chaired by Dr. Khalid Mahmood, Deputy Chair, UPSIGN. During this session, Prof. Dr. Waseem Akram, Department of Entomology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, presented the dengue vector prevalence in climate change scenario and WHO recommended management strategies. Dr. Unsar Naeem-Ullah, Assistant Professor, Institute of Plant Protection, MNS-UAM, highlighted the modern gadgets for mosquito surveillance. Mr. Muhammad Asif Mehmood, Entomologist, Health Department Punjab, Lahore emphasized on the need of dengue vector monitoring as an effective tool for IVM. Prof. Dr. Shafqat Saeed, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, MNSUAM urged the use of biopesticides as an eco-friendly approach for pest management. Ms. Shafia Saba, Entomologist, Health Department, Multan pointed out that tree holes are the secret proliferation sites for dengue vectors. Ms. Tahira Maryam, Sociologist, Health Department presented her work on the response of public towards dengue fever and its vector.

The second breakout session (Socio Economic & Policy landscape for insect Vector Monitoring & Biopesticides in Pakistan) was chaired by Dr. Babar Bajwa, Senior Regional Director-Asia, CABI. Dr. Aftab Alam Khan, Razbio Pakistan highlighted the key findings of human centred research. Afterwards, dengue survivors, who have faced the dengue virus personally in Rawalpindi, Lahore and Multan, shared their perspectives. Mr. AD Abid, Director General, Plant Protection, Govt. of Pakistan gave an

overview of the status of biopesticides policy in Pakistan. His Excellency, Adam M. Tugio, Ambassador of Indonesia shared Indonesian experience of dengue control and success stories in this regard. Mr. Daud Saqlain, Country Director, Human Appeal Pakistan, Ms. Arifa Mazhar, CEO, Strengthening Participatory Organization and Mr. Syed Atiq Shah, President of Student Welfare Society expressed their opinion and messages for the participants.

The second session was online and managed from United Kingdom. Dr. Martin J. Wood delivered welcome talk and project overview. Dr. Owen Jones elaborated the role of traps and semiochemical based lures in arthropod disease vector monitoring. Prof. Belinda Luke, Biopesticides Team Leader, CABI, UK explained the lessons learned from biological insect control in agriculture to help control insect vectors of human diseases. Prof. Colin Berry, School of Biological Sciences, Cardiff University, UK discussed the challenges and prospects of insecticidal bacteria for vector control. Dr. Abeer Alkhaibari, Department of Biology, University of Tabuk, KSA shared research experiences regarding the use of the entomopathogenic fungus *Metarhizium brunneum* for control of *Aedes aegypti* larvae. Prof. David Hunter highlighted opportunities and challenges for biopesticides in developing countries. Prof. Tariq Butt, Swansea University, UK gave keynote remarks and presented the summary of event. The event was concluded by Dr. Syed Farooq Shah.

AWARENESS **WEBINAR** *on* **TUBERCULOSIS UNDER ONE HEALTH PROGRAM**

An online International Webinar under one Health Program on "Tuberculosis (TB) Impacts and its Management" was jointly organized by Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics, Nishtar Medical University, Multan and Department of Food Science & Technology, MNS University of Agriculture, Multan on April 2, 2021. The event was graced by Dr. Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti, Secretary Health, South Punjab, Prof. Dr. Asif Ali, VC, MNS University of Agriculture, Multan, Prof. Dr. Ahmed Ijaz Masood, VC, Nishtar Medical University, Multan. The objective of this webinar was to create awareness about TB amongst the masses. Prof. Dr. Kamran Siddiqui, Head, Department of Orthopedic Surgery, NMU welcomed the guests and participants of webinar. Afterwards, Prof. Asif Ali gave his remarks about the event. He said that there is dire need to create mass awareness in order to reduce this ailment from our country. We need awareness programmes and cooperation of big hospitals and medical universities to deal TB which is disease and stigma in our society. Dr. Asghar Javed, Associate Professor, NMU discussed the epidemiological importance of TB in South Punjab. Prof. Dr. Imran H.



Online INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR

under One Health Program on
"Tuberculosis;
Impacts and its Management"

**FRIDAY,
APRIL 02, 2021**
Islamabad, Karachi, Tashkent
START: 09:30 AM



Prof. Dr. Asif Ali
Vice-Chancellor
MNS-University of Agriculture, Multan



Prof. Dr. Ahmad Ijaz Masood
Vice-Chancellor
Nishtar Medical University Multan



Chief Guest
Dr. M. Ajmal Bhatti
Secretary Health, South Punjab



Guest Speaker
Prof. Dr. Imran H. Khan
UC-Davis, California, USA



Guest Speaker
Dr. Asghar Javed
Associate Professor, Pathology
Nishtar Medical University, Multan



Guest Speaker
Prof. Dr. Anjum Naveed
IAD of Pulmonology
Nishtar Medical University, Multan



Guest Speaker
Dr. Abdul Momin
Assistant Professor
NUMS, Islamabad

<https://zoom.us/j/98410408992?pwd=VDhoZWxITm1zQ3BkVUNuQmtkUktvZz09>
Passcode: 755515

scan to join the seminar





healthy life style and balanced diet for dietary management of TB. Dr. Ajmal Bhatti stressed to have counselling sessions for TB patients to minimize the burden of TB as it is a leading cause of avoidable deaths among the adults and children. He said that it is our responsibility to educate people about the prevention, diagnosis and treatment facilities of TB disease in Pakistan. Dr. Ahmed Ijaz Masood concluded the event and offered vote of thanks to the organizers, key speakers and participants for their valuable time and effort.

WEBINAR *on*

LATEST AGRI. TECHNOLOGIES AND ICM GADGETRY FOR PRECISION FARMING

MNSUAM is building synergistic partnership between academia and industry for strengthening sustainability and local successful adoption of latest agri. technologies. In this regard, under industry-academia linkage program, a webinar on "Performance and Impact of Latest Agri. Technologies and ICM Gadgetry in Precision Farming and Effective R&D Programs" was jointly organized by MNSUAM and Farm Dynamics, Pakistan. The objective of this activity was to establish collaborative and proactive engagement of academia and industry for successful adoption and local transfer of latest agri. technologies and ICM gadgetry. For this purpose, team MNSUAM and FDP organized a brief interactive session to explore and discuss potential and impact of innovative technologies for precision and climate smart agriculture in Pakistan. These technologies include: on-farm real time weather station with early warning alerts, drill and drop (Enviroscan) for irrigation scheduling, TDR, Digital insect pest monitoring systems, hand held plant and soil analysis and profiling gadgetries and role of ICTs and IOTs integration in agriculture. Mr. Muhammad Saood (Technical Manager, FDP) and Mr. Husnain Atta (Business Development Manager, FDP) were the key speakers of this webinar, while,

Prof. Dr. Hammad Nadeem Tahir (Institute of Plant Breeding and Biotechnology, MNSUAM) and Ms. Memoona from FDP were the moderators of this event. Mr. Saood acknowledged that the MNSUAM is playing an important role in promoting the growth of the agro-based industries. Together with MNSUAM, we will be able to engage academia, researchers, industry players, and farming communities to tap the tremendous potential of precision farming for economic and environmental benefits. Prof. Dr. Asif Ali, Vice Chancellor, MNSUAM, said, "We are keen to strengthen our connection with public and private sector and to explore new opportunities for academic excellence". South Punjab is a predominantly agrarian economy and the team MNSUAM is striving hard to take up innovative research and engage with the farming community for productivity enhancement, he further added. A large number of students, faculty and researchers from allied institutes attended this event.

UPSCALING OF CLIMATE ADVISORY SERVICES

In pursuit of its moral obligation to serve the farming community of the region, MNSUAM has launched farmer advisory services that comprise of daily crop and weather specific tips and information. Farmer advisory services are ensuring demand driven and need based agro-technology transfer to farmers with different farming backgrounds. In order to make climate advisory more meaningful and to broader the impact, an online seminar was organized with the active involvement of all stakeholders. Seminar was attended by Dr. Natalie Suckall, Research Fellow, School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, England; Dr. David Corbelli, UK Met Office; Mr. Muhamamd Riaz Khan, Director General, Pakistan Meteorological Department; Mr. Pema Gyamtsho, Director General, The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development; Mr. Barak Ullah, Additional Secretary Agriculture, South Punjab and Prof. Dr. Asif Ali, VC, MNSUAM. The participants agreed that climate and weather information is indispensable for climate resilience and adaptation and to avoid climate induced migration and decline in crop productivity. To counter act climatic extremes, medium and long term strategies need to be prioritized and make part of holistic policy drafted after stakeholder engagement and participatory research. It was agreed to extend the geographical and demographical range of climate advisory services to expand the outreach canvas so that large number of communities are benefitted from this activity. Prof. Dr. Irfan Ahmad Baig, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, MNSUAM, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ashfaq, Institute of Plant Protection, MNSUAM and Dr. Ghulam Rasul, Ex-Director General, Pakistan Meteorological Department also attended this meeting.

رمضان كريم
RAMADAN
Kareem

VICE CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE ON THE EVE OF HOLY MONTH OF RAMDAN

Prof. Dr. Asif Ali in his message to the campus community highlighted the significance of this Holy month and its impact on human lives and the society as a whole. He said that Islam has made comprehensive and integrated systems to train human beings so that they can play a pivotal role in the society. Ramadan is a chance to purify our souls and spirit of fasting must be reflective in an individual's acts and deeds. He asserted that keeping a check on physical needs and desires leads to spirituality and sympathy for the deserving and needy sections of the society. He urged the need to highlight the equality and brotherhood among Muslim Ummah to pass on the true spirit of Islam and Ramadan. During this Holy Month, we should pray for the peace and prosperity of our homeland and to defy the COVID pandemic that has affected every pillar of routine life. COVID-19 has affected our education system and people livelihoods are also at stake, he laminated. He urged that people can be protected by following the SOPs recommended by Government of Pakistan. This is an emergency situation which requires proactive and prudent measures to ensure health and safety of everyone. Further, as an academic and research based institutions, it is our responsibility to take it as an opportunity and find alternate ways to minimize the disruption of teaching and research schedule and reduce the risk of damage. We must act smartly as desperate times need desperate measures.

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MEETING WITH SYNGENTA LEADERSHIP: AGRICULTURE INNOVATION IN PAKISTAN

Prof. Dr. Asif Ali, VC , MNSUAM and Prof. Dr. Shafqat, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, MNSUAM had a meeting on April 14, 2021 with Syngenta leadership comprising of Mr. Alexander Berkovskiy, Regional Director, Asia Pacific for Syngenta, based in Singapore; Mr. Jonathan Parr, President Global Crop Protection; Mr. Saad Haroon, Head of Asia Group. In addition, Mr. Kazim Hasnain, Managing Director & Commercial Unit Head at Syngenta, Pakistan and Mr. Tauseef ul Haq, Business Sustainability and CPD Head, Pakistan attended this meeting as country representatives of Syngenta. Prof. Dr. Asif Ali gave a detailed presentation on agriculture innovations in Pakistan for sustainable agriculture and opportunities for academia – industry linkages. Officials from Syngenta stated that we invest and innovate to transform the way crops are grown and protected to bring about positive, lasting change in agriculture. We are focusing on pesticide residues in the final produce and preharvest interval. We are building confidence of all stakeholders i.e., Government officials, Researchers & rice exporters (Value chain partners) on Syngenta's products. Safe and responsible use of pesticide and awareness program is also our core agendas. It was agreed to expand collaboration between MNSUAM and Syngenta in Plant Protection and Seeds R&D. In addition to herbicide resistance, the Syngenta would establish insecticide resistance monitoring and management facility at University.

Synopsis/Thesis Defense

- Muhammad Arslan Nawaz has successfully defended his Ph.D thesis on April, 2021. The title of his thesis is "Assessment and use of sea buckthorn and apple diversity in northern Pakistan". He completed his Ph.D under joint supervision of Prof. Andreas Buerkert and Prof. Dr. Asif Ali from University of Kassel Germany under a collaborative program with MNS University of Agriculture, Multan.
- Ms. Sabah Merrium, Reg. No. 2017-uam-927, a Ph.D student in the Institute of Plant Breeding and Biotechnology will defend her Ph.D thesis on April 16, 2021 at 2:00 PM in GRC (online) at MNS University of Agriculture, Multan. The title of her thesis is "Genetic basis of leaf rolling dynamics for improvement of fog capturing and drought tolerance in wheat". All interested faculty, students and researchers are invited to participate.



- Mr. Muhammad Adnan, Reg. No. 2019-uam-3706, Ph.D scholar of Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, will defend his Ph.D. synopsis online on 28-April-2021 at 10:30 AM. The title of his synopsis is "Value addition of diammonium phosphate to improve phosphorous use efficiency and maize productivity". All faculty members and students are requested to attend and contribute towards the improvement of synopsis.



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