

# Farmer's Conclave on Invasive Whitefly



Coconut Development Board conducted a Farmer's Conclave on Invasive whitefly on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 at TNAU, Coimbatore. Shri Naveen Patle, Deputy Commissioner, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, who delivered special address during the occasion stated that any research activity for managing the whitefly attack by the research institutes as well as State Agriculture Universities shall be supported by Govt. of India through Coconut Development Board. Dr. N. Kumar, Vice Chancellor, TNAU in his address informed that whitefly has evolved as a serious pest in southern states and hence the matter is to be addressed seriously. He pointed out that farmers have to take up the management practices in a joint way so that the pest attack is controlled in an efficient manner. He also assured all support of TNAU in this regard.

Smt. G. Jayalakshmi IAS, Chairperson, CDB in her special address pointed out that this workshop is being organised based on the assessment of field situation during the visit of Hon. Agri Minister to the affected areas and as directed by the Ministry, so that views of farming community and the practicing farmers can be discussed in an open platform for formulating strategies for integrated management of the pest as well as arriving at a protocol for management of the



whitefly in discussion with research institutions. She said that CDB is extending financial support to various research organizations and Agricultural Universities for mass multiplication of parasites and predators for controlling this invasive pest. Chairperson added that this workshop is expected to bring insights that would help to develop a contingency plan to make the bio control agent available to the coconut farmers at an affordable cost. CDB shall be taking up a supportive role in assisting the farming community to adopt the prescribed scientific way to control whiteflies. She requested for the united and concerted efforts are expected of all stake holders.



Shri. Saradindu Das, Chief Coconut Development Officer delivered the welcome address. Dr. Anitha Karun, Director, CPCRI Kasargod chaired the technical session on Status papers on whitefly infestation and practices followed and Dr. L. Pugalendhi, Dean (Hort.), HC&RI, Coimbatore chaired the session on R&D in Whitefly. Dr. Selvaraj, Scientist, NBAIR presented the efforts made at NBAIR to tackle the menace of rugose spiraling whitefly and Dr. Rajamanickam, Professor (Adjunct) from CRS, Aliyarnagar Tamil Nadu highlighted the importance of pest in particular to Tamil Nadu, nature of damage, distribution and spread of the pest since 2016 and the research work being done at CRS, Aliyarnagar to curtail the menace. Dr. Madhu Subramanian, Professor KAU presented the status of RSW in Kerala since 2017 till date. Dr. Chandrashekar G.S. Scientist, HRES, Arsikere presented the status of RSW in Karnataka. Dr. Chalapathi Rao, Scientist, Dr.YSR Horticulture University presented the incidence of RSW in Andhra Pradesh and the efforts being made to curtail the same. Dr. Krishnakumar, Regional Director, Bioversity International gave a suggestion to work on ecological balances prevailing in pest predator population, insecticide resistance and also usage of Pongamia oil for the management of pest.

In the session on R&D in Whitefly Dr. Joseph Rajkumar, Principal Scientist, CPCRI, Kayankulam spoke on Invasive whiteflies on Coconut: Research updates and the way forward. Dr. Alagar, Assistant Professor, CRS, Aliyarnagar, Tamil Nadu in his presentation, highlighted the morphology, the assessment of

the occurrence of parasitoids and predators. Dr. Ramadevi, Senior Scientist & Head (PP), Dr. YSR Horticulture University, Venkataramannagudem explained antagonistic fungi, *Isaria fumosorosea* and its rice grain formulation of new strain pfu5 mother culture obtained from NBAIR, Bengaluru.

The panel discussion was chaired by Smt. G. Jayalakshmi, IAS, Chairperson, CDB and co chaired by Dr. Kumar Nallur Krishna, Regional representative, South and Central Asia, Bioversity International and Dr. Maheswarappa, Coordinator (Palms), AICRP (Palms), CPCRI. Smt. G. Jayalakshmi, IAS emphasized that a standard protocol (POP) is to be developed by the research institutes urgently considering the variation in the pest behavior in different states. Co chairman Dr. Kumar Nallur Krishna, regional representative indicated that all the five species are to be compared and DNA to be coded and R&D and DNA fingerprinting facilities must be improved to anticipate and avoid the dangers before the invasive pest entry in the country. Since there is a pan India responsibility on this issue the policies for effective quarantine also should be made.

At the plenary discussion, considering the vast spread of the menace being a potential threat to the coconut industry, the participants agreed on an urgent need for quick management measures. Conservation of biological control and health management strategies could be area-wide implemented through farmer-participatory and in community mode by all stakeholders to tackle the pest. ■