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To
The Editor,

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Sir,

I request that the following matter may kindly be published in your esteemed daily:

TNAU opens new arenas for collaborative research on Biomass valorization

Biomass represents an abundant carbon neutral renewable source for the production of bioenergy and bioproducts. The conference organized by TNAU on Sustainable Utilization of Tropical Plant Biomass: Biocatalysts, Bioproducts and Biorefinery (SutB⁴) created a platform for overseas scientists to transfer concepts and technologies in a holistic approach. As a positive outcome of this conference, renowned scientists from overseas showed green flag to move ahead with further collaborative researches with TNAU on biomass bioconversion and biorefinery. This new avenue will be on the diversification of existing collaborations.

In this regard, the foreign delegates from Ireland, UK, Germany and Russia had an interactive meeting with Dr. K. Ramasamy, the Vice Chancellor on 19-11-2016. Dr. K. Ramasamy recalled the earliest collaboration of TNAU with Russia on organic carbon enrichment and microbes associated with organic carbon status of soil. He also stressed on the potential of phenolic acid and derivatives of lignin for plant growth promotion as well as plant immunity development. He added that already TNAU has started working on lignin derived products under various research programs funded by DBT, India.

Through this platform, Prof Xinmin Zhan, professor at Civil Engineering Department in the National University of Ireland, Galway, consented to join hands with TNAU on biodiesel production and bioremediation of wastes.

Dr. Virginia Echavarri Bravo, faculty from School of Biological Sciences, Edinburgh, United Kingdom said that the Edinburgh University wish to extend its boundary with TNAU in the area of lignin derived products. Our earlier collaboration with Dr. U. Sivakumar, Professor, Microbiology, TNAU was encouraging on lignin derived products and looking for further collaboration through BBSRC and DBT funding.

Alla V. Bryanskaya, faculty from Russia was deputed by Professor Peltek Sergey, Institute of cytology and Genetics, SBRAS, Russia aimed to have newer collaboration with TNAU on thermophilic enzymes for biomass valorization. This working team has alighted to India with the dual purpose of attending the SutB⁴ conference and to explore the possibilities of joint venture with TNAU scientists to plan joint research program through DST, GoI and RMST, Russia.

While recalling our ongoing collaboration between Dr. U. Sivakumar from TNAU and Dr. Oxana Taran, Professor, Boreskov Institute of Catalysis SBRAS, Russia, both teams are actively exchanging their expertise and so far developed novel pretreatment technologies for biomass conversion. In addition to the existing collaboration, this team gave their consent to work on thermophilic enzymes with TNAU by exploring Kamchatka thermal hot spring in Russia which is an exuberant gene pool for mining novel thermophilic microbes and genes. Discovery of new microbes and novel genes for production of biomass derived products will bring a breakthrough in enzyme development.

Further Dr. K. Ramasamy also emphasized to explore the overseas research teams as a adjunct faculty to TNAU for academic and knowledge exchange program.

The complementarity of the Indian and foreign team will enable to develop bio- and catalytic technologies for integrated biomass processing value chains which result in production of variety of feed stock chemicals for bio-based economy.

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