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To  
The Editor,

Date: 24-7-2017

Sir,

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

### **TNAU Sensitises Field Staff on Plant Parasitic Nematodes**

Nematodes are tiny microscopic worms that live in soil and these invisible creatures cause diseases in almost all crops. They damage the roots of plants, but the damage symptoms usually go unnoticed; consequently, most of the farmers and field workers are unaware about nematode diseases. The problems are more acute in horticultural crops and nematode infection originates through nursery planting materials, particularly in fruit crops.

The scientists of the Department of Nematology, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) have intercepted several cases in the recent years where nematodes spread across the states/countries with infested planting materials and the newly established orchards fail to take off resulting in huge losses to the orchardists. Taking cognizance of the matter, a one-day workshop on “Field Diagnosis and Management of Plant Parasitic Nematodes in Horticultural Crops” was organized jointly by All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Nematodes, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Department of Nematology, TNAU, Coimbatore on 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 at WTC Auditorium, TNAU Coimbatore. The main purpose of the workshop was to sensitize the extension/field officers of the state government and nurserymen for accurate diagnosis of the nematode problems and methods to raise nematode-free planting materials of fruit crops.

The workshop was attended by more than 100 delegates comprising Horticulture Officers, Quarantine Officers and nurserymen from Tamil Nadu and adjoining states. Dr. S. Subramanian, Head, Department of Nematology, TNAU welcomed the delegates.

Dr. K. Ramaraju, Director, Center for Plant Protection Studies, TNAU explained the genesis of the workshop; and Dr. M. Maheswaran highlighted the technologies developed for the management of nematode problems of the state.

Dr. Raman K Walia, Project Coordinator AICRP (Nematodes) ICAR, gave an overall scenario of nematode spread through horticultural crops at the national level and the necessity to curb it. Dr. A K Sinha, Plant Protection Advisor to Govt. of India, Ministry of Agriculture and the Chief Guest of the inaugural function of the workshop felt concerned about growing importance of nematodes in horticultural crops, and their spread to far-flung areas in the country. He proposed to launch country-wide training programme to educate the state and central govt. quarantine officers dealing with checking the spread of pests and diseases.

The Vice Chancellor, TNAU Dr. K. Ramasamy presided over the function. He spoke at length about the growing and emerging nematode problems particularly the problems faced by polyhouse growers. He appreciated the initiative taken by AICRP on Nematodes and exhorted all concerned to scale-up extension efforts to minimize crop losses due to nematodes.

The programme coordinator Dr. K.Poornima, Professor of Nematology, TNAU proposed the vote of thanks.

The participants of the workshop were given live demonstrations on the diagnosis of nematode symptoms on infested planting materials and methods to raise nematode-free planting materials.

Public Relations Officer