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To
The Editor,
Sir,

Date: 04.01.2025

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

Agri PitchFest 2.0 at TNAU

E-YUVA Centre of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, supported by BIRAC, New Delhi, functioning in the Department of Plant Biotechnology, Centre for Plant Molecular Biology & Biotechnology, TNAU, in association with Centre of Excellence in Biotechnology (CoEB), section 8 company of TNAU, organized a one-day innovation competition related to food, agriculture and environment entitled “Agri Pitch Fest 2.0” at TNAU on 03rd January, 2025.

The event was conducted to groom the young talented minds towards solving some of the pressing problems relevant to food, agriculture and environment currently prevailing in the society with technical expertise and to give an exposure to the startup ecosystem. The competition is for the students of TNAU, TNAU’s constituent and affiliated colleges. Fifty student teams submitted their novel ideas and 13 teams were selected for pitching their ideas in the final round. Earlier, Dr. E. Kokila Devi, Professor & Head, Department of Plant Biotechnology, CPMB&B, TNAU, Coimbatore welcomed the gathering. In the inaugural address, Dr. N. Senthil, Director Centre for Plant Molecular Biology & Biotechnology, TNAU delivered the keynote address, emphasizing India's remarkable contributions to biotechnology. He highlighted the importance of innovation in entrepreneurship across diverse fields, underlining its vast potential for business exploration. Dr. V. Balasubramani, Controller of Examinations, TNAU, graced the event as the chief guest. In his address, he encouraged students to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career path, inspiring them to transition from job seekers to job providers and contribute significantly to society.

The inaugural session set the stage for an insightful technical session. Ms. Swathi Gopalakrishnan, Founder, Protivore – Base’P Sustainable Foods, Coimbatore, shared her entrepreneurial journey, inspiring students with her decision-making experiences. She motivated the audience to pursue academics with a clear vision and purpose, urging them to understand the relevance and impact of their work. Dr. Muniyasamy Neerathilingam, Founder, OxonEx Biological P. Ltd., Bengaluru shed light on his scientific innovations and highlighted innovation as a promising career option. His talk encouraged students to explore opportunities in science and technology to create meaningful solutions

There was also a panel discussion on the topic, “innovation as a career choice” with panel members Mr. Sriram Shankaran, Board member – Native Angels Network Association, Coimbatore, Dr. Muniyasamy Neerathilingam, Founder, OxonEx Biological P. Ltd., Bengaluru, Ms. Swathi Gopalakrishnan, Founder, Protivore – Base’P Sustainable Foods, Coimbatore, Er. Chennaprasad Ramraj, Managing partner, Hydrotech solutions, Coimbatore. Finally, Dr. Arul, Professor and Head, Department of Plant Molecular Biology & Bioinformatics, Chief Coordinator, E-YUVA Centre, CPMB&B, TNAU proposed a formal vote of thanks. Following the technical session and panel discussion, the 13 finalist teams presented their ideas. The ideas include functional foods from pearl millet and coconut based probiotic paneer, a smart band based hydration monitor for kids, ecofriendly soil nutrient management, remediation of water bodies, etc. Dr. P. Balasubramaniam, Director of Natural Resource Management, given valedictory address and awarded cash prizes to the top three ideas, with the first prize of ₹5,000 conferred to the team from AEC&RI, Coimbatore, for their outstanding project titled *"Waste to Wealth – Novel Designs: Dripper Cum Sprinkler and Dripper for Treated Waste Water."* The second position, with a cash prize of ₹3,000, was secured by AC&RI, Coimbatore, while the third prize of ₹2,000 was awarded to the team from AC&RI, Vazhavachanur campus. The Agri Pitch Fest 2.0 highlighted the ingenuity and dedication of participants in driving innovation for food, agriculture and environment for sustainable future.

Public Relations Officer