

Agribiotech meet stresses on partnerships

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Release of Dr TM Manjunath's book Q&A on Bt-Cotton in India

The Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) organized an agribiotechnology conference on April 12-13, 2007. The aim of the conference was to bring together the public and private institutes in the sector to jointly address the larger issues of propagation of modern technology to increase productivity, yield, and nutritional value of agriculture. And the living conditions of the farmers.

In tune with the theme of the conference, public-private partnership in promoting agribiotechnology in India, the conference was held at the campus of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Coimbatore, the country's premier agricultural university. Prof. MS Swaminathan, chairman, MSSRF and Dr MK Bhan, secretary, department of biotechnology (DBT), delivered the keynote address during the two-day conference.

Prof. MS Swaminathan called for partnerships, synergy, and symbiosis. "We need partnerships and not partitionship. While universities were doing science (research), the private sector was doing technology (development). These two need to converge," said Prof. Swaminathan.

The inaugural session included talks by Prof. C Ramasamy (vice chancellor, TNAU), Dr KK Narayanan (president, ABLE), Dr N Mahalingam, chairman, Sakthi Group of Companies, and M Ramasamy, managing director, Rasi Seeds. The inaugural session was followed by panel discussions on several subjects. Dr P Ananda Kumar, principal scientist, NRC for Plant Biotechnology, IARI and Prof. Balasubramanian, director, CPMB, TNAU, chaired the discussion on "Agribiotechnology Innovations: Stock taking and Finding Synergies", which included speakers like Dr Richard Broglie, director, R&D, DuPont, Dr Bharat Char, principal scientist, biotech R&D, MAHYCO, Dr KS Mohan, function lead, biotech product support and product launch liaison, Monsanto Research Center, and Dr Vai Ramanathan, head, genomics, Metahelix Life Sciences.

This session was followed by a public lecture, "Does India Need Transgenic Crops?" by Dr KK Narayanan and then by a panel discussion on "Public-Private Partnerships in Promoting Agribiotechnology in India". The discussion was moderated by Dr Gautham Nadig, director, Metahelix Life Sciences. The panel comprised Dr P Ananda Kumar, Dr Jagadish Mittur, director, Monsanto Research Center, Deepanwita Chattopadhyay, CEO, ICICI Knowledge Park, Dr Sudeep Kumar, technology networking and business development, CSIR.

The second day of the event began with a session on "Commercialization of Crop Biotechnology-Creating a Facilitating Environment". This was chaired by Dr MK Bhan and co-chaired by Dr Jagadish Mittur. The speakers included Dr Malathi Lakshmikumar, consultant, Lakshmikumar and Sridharan, Dr George John, advisor, DBT, and

Dr Sudeep Kumar.

During the conference, the ABLE Award for Excellence in Agricultural Sciences was conferred on Dr R Krishnamurthy, director, research, Rasi Seeds, in recognition of his outstanding contribution in the field of cotton hybrids.

Note: The complete details of the deliberations of the panel discussions will be available on www.biospectrumindia.com.