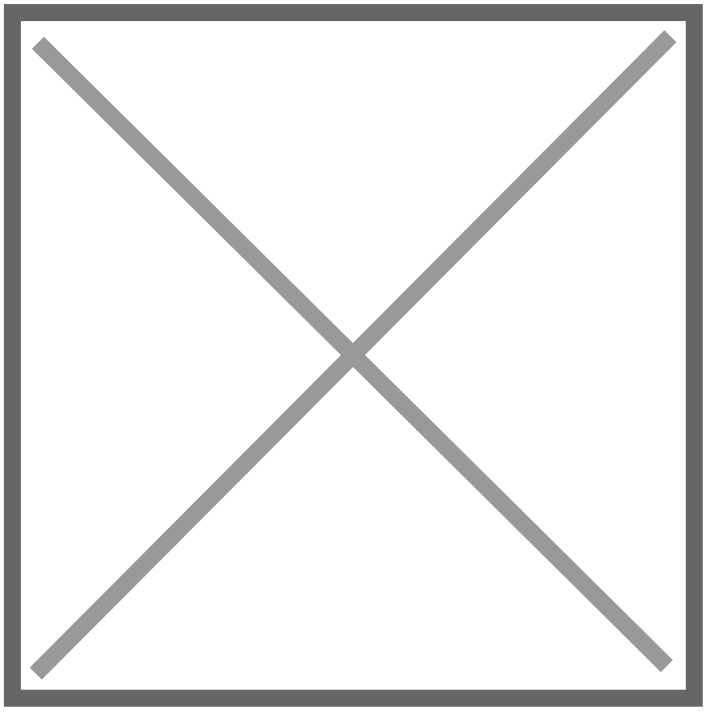
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Research in post harvest is vital for food security, says ICAR chief

While inaugurating two-day brainstorming session on 'Post harvest technology and value addition of agriculture produce: scenario, issues and strategy' at the Central Institute of Post-Harvest Engineering and Technology (CIPHET), Punjab, on May 1-2, 2010; Dr S Ayyappan, director general of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) stated that research in post harvest is very important for addressing food security in India and increasing income of farmers. He also emphasized that ICAR institutes need to develop industrial standard technologies to stay in competition.

The objective of brainstorming session was to identify critical gaps and formulate future strategy for research in post harvest technology, including partnership among R&D institutions. More than 80 experts from across the country participated in the brainstorming session.

Calling for collaborative approach between different institutions in post harvest, Dr Ayyappan said that ICAR institutes need to be competitive and should produce technologies of industrial standards. He said that we would be facing competition from China and other fast developing economies. Initiatives have to be taken in post harvest as processing in the country is very low as per international scenario. Being a nodal institution, CIPHET, could play a key role.

Dr RT Patil, director of CIPHET, said that multi-disciplinary approach is needed for research in post harvest. The institute had developed many technologies, which had been widely adopted across the country.

SITE study shows 62% 'uncontrolled' diabetics in New Delhi

Aventis Pharma Limited (Sanofi-aventis Group) has announced the results of the Screening India's Twin Epidemic (SITE) study. The New Delhi results follow the Maharashtra results announcement in November 2009.

SITE is the first cross-sectional study to assess the prevalence of diagnosed and undiagnosed cases of diabetes and hypertension amongst nearly 20,000 patients visiting general practitioners and consultant physicians across major cities all over India.

Dr Ambrish Mithal, chairman, Division of Endocrinology and Diabetes, Medanta—The Medicity, said, "The comprehensive data on diabetes and hypertension collected for SITE New Delhi shows that 62 percent of the diabetic population were inadequately controlled inspite of treatment. About 27 percent of the diabetic patients screened, had kidney complications."

Cardiovascular death rates are high and appear to be climbing in countries like India where diabetes is highly prevalent. In India, in the past five decades, rates of coronary disease among urban population have risen from four percent to 11 percent. The WHO estimates that 60 percent of the world's cardiac patients will be Indians by 2010. With the rising tide of diabetes in India, the double jeopardy of diabetes and hypertension is set to result in an explosion of cardiovascular and other

complications – unless preventive action is taken now.

OSDD to create repository for TB research

As a first national endeavor, CSIR led Open Source Drug Discovery (OSDD) program, has taken an initiative to create an Open Access Repository for clinical strains of Mycobacterium tuberculosis (Mtb). In this regard, OSDD has given an open call for contributions from the researchers across the country to the Open Access Repository.

Ideally a researcher on TB anywhere in the country should be able to access strains, DNA, proteins and so on of Mtb for carrying out research. Therefore, realizing that the access to research materials for researchers is essential for furthering drug discovery process, OSDD would provide such research materials free of cost to any researcher anywhere in the country, provided such researcher agrees to share the research results with the community.

To understand the biology of TB infection in the country, particularly in the context of drug resistance, it is necessary to study the diversity of Mycobacterium tuberculosis strains in the country. While some studies have already pointed to existence of such a diversity, in view the technological tools that are now available it is necessary to collect and analyse the variation across the country.

According to OSSD program, all Mtb strains contributed will be tagged with the contributors name and it shall be a condition of access that due credits and acknowledgements should be provided in any publication that comes out of the study on the strains so accessed. The contributions will also be acknowledged on the OSDD website. The OSDD program of India is a CSIR-led team India consortium with global partnerships.