

Four Indians win Monsanto Beachell-Borlaug International Scholarship

09 January 2013 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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Four young Indian agriculture students have been awarded the prestigious Monsanto Beachell-Borlaug International Scholars Program (MBBISP) Research Fellowships for 2012, which encourages new plant breeding research for rice and wheat production among the budding scientists. The winners are Mr Bharath Reddy from Texas A&M University, Mr Navdeep S Jamwal from CSK Himachal Pradesh Agriculture University, Ms Bharathi R Ramadoss from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, and Ms Amandeep Kaur from Punjab University.

Mr Bharath Reddy's wheat research is focused on enhancing yield potential of hard red winter wheat at Texas A&M University, USA in collaboration with CIMMYT, Mexico and Turkey. On receiving the award, Bharath Reddy said, "Receiving the MBBISP grant is a turning point of my life. I hope other deserving Indian students also seek the assistance of this scholarship. I am happy that I can pursue my dream and continue studying. I hope that I can contribute to my nation in meeting the ever growing food demand."

Mr Navdeep Jamwal's wheat research is focused on improving drought tolerance and rust resistance in wheat at CSK Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University in collaboration with the University of Leicester, UK. The research in rice by Ms Bharathi Ramadoss is focused on optimal glycemic index in rice at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in collaboration with the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. Ms Amandeep Kaur, whose rice research is focused on stabilizing rice bran oil to avoid rancidity of oil at Punjab Agricultural University in collaboration with the University of Maine, USA.

MBBISP allows the scholar to develop advanced breeding techniques, conduct at least one season of field work in a developing country, includes a full package of support, i.e. a generous stipend, tuition and fees, research fees, health insurance, travel and funds for the collaborating institution, and advising professor. With a grant of \$10 million (â,150 crore) from Monsanto, the MBBISP is administered by Texas AgriLife Research, an agency of the US-based Texas A&M University System.

"At Monsanto, we believe that improving agri, improves lives. Meeting the growing food demand can be achieved through

science and innovation, which is possible only through opportunity and education. The Monsanto Beachell-Borlaug International Scholars Program is aimed at developing highly trained rice and wheat breeders who show dedication and promise as future leaders in the field of agriculture. India has a wide pool of scientific talent and it is a matter of pride that four young, dynamic scientists are researching for the future of agriculture," said Mr Christopher Samuel, director, Public Affairs, Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility, Monsanto India.

India tops the Monsanto Beachell-Borlaug Scholars list with four out of 14 global scholars in 2012 and also tops the overall list with 14 scholars from 2009 till date.