

Asian Maize Conference organized at Ludhiana

The Asian Maize Conference and expert consultation on “Maize for Food, Feed, Nutrition and Environmental Security” was inaugurated at Ludhiana on 8

October, 2018 by Dr Trilochan Mohapatra, Secretary

Department of Agriculture Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare,



Government of India and Director General ICAR. The three-day conference was organised jointly by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre, ICAR-Indian Institute of Maize Research (ICAR-IIMR), Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), CGIAR Research Program on Maize (MAIZE) and the Borlaug Institute for South Asia (BISA), with more than 260 participants from several maize-growing countries in Asia besides experts from outside the continent.

Martin Kropff, CIMMYT Director General, on the inaugural function said that maize in Asia has high productivity and high demand, with a 5.2 per cent annual growth as compared to a global average of 3.5 per cent but its demand would double by the year 2050. “Therefore, we need to produce two times more maize in Asia, using half as much input, and it needs to be twice as nutritious,” stressed Dr Kropff. He stressed the need for continued funding for maize research keeping in mind the climate change problem.

Dr Trilochan Mohapatra, Director General, ICAR urged the scientists to work towards increasing maize productivity to five tons per hectare in the *kharif* season. Citing example of Pakistan and China, Dr Mohapatra dwelled on the need for public private partnership system in India for developing hybrids to improve maize productivity. Dr B.M. Prasanna, Director, Global Maize Programme, CIMMYT and CGIAR Research Programme on Maize highlighted the

diverse range of topics to be covered in the conference, from breeding for climate resilience in maize-based systems and climate-smart agriculture to socio – economics for greater impact besides the importance of public private partnerships. Dr Prasanna also expressed his concern at the growing incidence of 'fall armyworm', an invasive insect pest that has spread through 44 countries in Africa and was recently reported in India. "Working together to control this pest needs to be our prime importance," he said. In his welcome remarks Dr N.S. Bains, Director Research, Punjab Agricultural University, expressed delight at the conference being held in India for the second time after 24 years. Dr. Sujay Rakshit, Director, ICAR-Indian Institute of Maize Research, Ludhiana thanked the delegates on the inauguration programme. Dr. B.S. Dhillon, Vice Chancellor of Punjab Agricultural University was awarded with MAIZE Champion Award on the occasion.



The conference had nine technical sessions on the aspects of the maize improvement through novel tools, enhancing farmers' income, socio economics, crop management and conservation agriculture, farm mechanization etc. The conference also had three panel discussions. The 2018



Maize-Asia Youth Innovators Awards were launched in collaboration



between the CGIAR Research Program on Maize (MAIZE) and YPAD (Young Professionals for Agricultural Development) during the run-up to the Conference. The awards recognize the contributions of innovative young women and men

who can inspire fellow young people to get involved with maize-based agri-food systems and given to four scientist on 10 October, 2018. A field visit to the research farm of BISA, PAU and IIMR was also held on 10th October 2018 to highlight the public and private hybrid in popular in India, conservation agriculture, mechanization and precision nutrition to the participants of the 13th AMC at Ladhowal farm, Ludhiana.

