

Call to address re-emergence of virus diseases

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GLOBALISATION of agricultural and horticultural products through worldwide trade and commerce was contributing to an emergence or re-emergence of several virus diseases in plants, said Prof. Naidu Rayapati, scientist from Washington State University, USA, here on Monday.

He was here to take part at the workshop on the global theme project 'International Plant Virus Disease Network Workshop and Planning Meeting for Asian Regions', funded by the Integrated Pest Management - Collaborative Research Support Programme, at TNAU.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Rayapati stated that developing a 'one-size-fits-all' strategy was not possible for successful implementation

of control measures against insect-borne virus diseases in diverse ecological conditions.

"Emergence of insect vector biotypes due to selection pressures and geographic expansion of virus diseases and their vectors to new geographic environments are causing problems," he said.

He said insect-borne virus diseases did not have any geographical or national boundaries. Hence, the workshop would develop a network of collaborators in host countries of South Asia, Southeast Asia and Central Asia.

"In recent years, virus diseases are increasingly causing severe problems in subsistence agriculture in developing countries to the production of quality and nutritious vegetables," he said.

Due to lack of chemical agents analogous to fungi-

cides and bactericides to control plant virus diseases, alternative strategies must be deployed for the sustainable management of diseases caused by insect-borne viruses, he pointed out.

The meeting would discuss and share experiences among participants and promote IPM strategies that cross geographic borders for eco-friendly management of virus diseases towards food security, conservation of genetic diversity and environmental sustainability in Asian countries.

Vice-Chancellor of TNAU, Prof. P Murugesu Boopathi, during his address said that plant diseases were reported to cause losses of about 60 billion US dollars by lowering both quality and quantity of agricultural production.

Since viruses cannot be cured by adopting a single technique, he said combined

efforts of virologists, molecular biologists, plant breeders, agronomists and the government was required.

He indicated the state had allocated Rs 60 lakh for management of cassava mosaic disease through supply of disease free planting materials to farmers.

According to Prof. R Samiyappan, Director of Centre for Plant Molecular Biology at TNAU said that the IPM CRSP programme had identified five critical issues.

They were: International Plant Diagnostic Network, International Plant Virus Disease Network, Management of the Weed Parthenium, IPM Impact Assessment and Gender Knowledge.

Fifteen delegates from different South Asian countries and USA took part in it, which would go on till July 16.