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Eggplant Project Members Meet with Potential Multiloc Partners in the Visayas

Project and Study Leaders of the Fruit and Shoot Borer-Resistant (FSBR) Eggplant Project under the Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II visited Cebu and Iloilo in the Philippines last April 25-26, 2007 in preparation for the multilocation trials of the said project.

Dr. Josefina O. Narciso, Principal Investigator, and six members of the project met with collaborators regarding the project and the proposed multi-location trials in the areas. They also visited the potential multilocation trial sites for each region.

Dr. Narciso and Reynaldo B. Quilloy, one of the study leaders of the project, first met with Dr. Peter Sobrevega, station manager of the Western Visayas Integrated Agricultural Research Center (WESVIARC) in Iloilo to pay a courtesy call and to assess the site. Dr. Narciso presented the project overview, and the proposed multilocation trial, and discussed issues and concerns related to the implementation of the trial.

Meanwhile, Dr. Nenita L. Opina, and three FSBR Eggplant Project members, visited Brgy. Uyungan, Miag-ao also in Iloilo. They surveyed and collected samples of eggplants, and noted down eggplant diseases in the area. The following day, they proceeded to Brgy. Tambo, San Miguel, Iloilo, and Brgy. Lanag, Leon, Iloilo to do the same survey and collection. They were able to gather data on farming practices of the local people and eggplant production in the region.

After their visit in Iloilo, all project members headed to Cebu where Dr. Narciso, Mr. Quilloy, and Dr. Lourdes D. Taylo met with Eduardo B. Lecciones Jr., Regional Executive Director of the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Unit for Region VII (DA-RFU 7) and Mr. Ed Alama, Head of the Regional Technical Division.

Dr. Josefina O. Narciso briefs the station officials of the DA-RFU 7 in Cebu City. The briefing was done to explain the proposed multilocation trial in the region.

Discussions about the proposed multilocation trial were conducted, as what was done in WESVIARC the previous day.

Dr. Narciso and Mr. Quilloy then went to Argao, Cebu, to meet with Mr. Virgilio Abobo, Officer-in-Charge of DA's Southern Cebu Farming System Research and Development Station. Mr. Abobo assisted them in doing the site assessment in the area. The two also went to the Mandaue Experiment Station in Mandaue City, Cebu for another site assessment.

Dr. Taylo and the rest of the group went to Mandaue City and Carcar City for another survey and collection activity. *(ZB Juliano)*

Harvesting of confined field trial for transgenic potato resistant to late blight at IVEGRI on April 23, 2007.

Indonesia Yields High with LBR Potato

The Indonesian Vegetable Research Institute (IVEGRI) in Lembang, Indonesia conducted its own confined trial of late blight resistant (LBR) potato in their local area. The Institute planted eight potato varieties, five being resistant to the Late Blight Disease last January 18, 2007. These were harvested three months later.

Harvest data indicated that the five LBR Potato varieties weighed more than the other three varieties. The LBR Potato varieties also produced more tubers than the other three varieties.

The harvesting of the potatoes was done in accordance to the requirements of the Indonesian Biosafety and Food Safety Technical Team. All the potatoes were kept in closed containers and all equipment used were cleaned on the same spot as the harvest. After the harvest, the potato materials which will no longer be needed for further studies were burned. *(M Herman)*

Members of Papaya Biotechnology Network Southeast Asia Visit PRSV-R Papaya Project in IPB

Participants of the Papaya Biotechnology Network Meeting pose for a group picture during their visit in IPB last June 15, 2007.

Fourteen participants of the technical and coordination meeting of the Papaya Biotechnology Network of Southeast Asia visited the Papaya Ringspot Virus-Resistant (PRSV-R) Papaya Confined Trial Site located at the Institute of Plant Breeding in the University of the Philippines Los Baños last June 15, 2007. The participants came from different institutions like the National Center of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology in Thailand, Monsanto USA, the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute, and the Indonesian Center for Agricultural Biotechnology and Genetic Resources Research and Development.

They were welcomed by the PRSV-R papaya project team led by Dr. Pablito M. Magdalita, principal investigator. Dr. Magdalita briefed the participants on the status of the research status of the research project and the biosafety measures being undertaken by the project under the supervision of the National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines (NCBP). Ms. Lolita M. Dolores, study leader, also shared results of her study on the virology part of the project. Among those present during the visit were Dr. Marina P. Natural, chair of the UPLB-IBC and Ms. Geronima P. Eusebio, representative of the Plant Quarantine Services of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

The site visit was in connection with the Papaya Biotechnology Network of Southeast Asia Technical and Coordination Meeting held last June 14-15, 2007 at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila, Makati City, Philippines. *(VRG Lee and ZB Juliano)*

NCBP Reps Visit IPB-developed GM Crops

Dr. Magdalita (left) discusses the status of the GM papayas at the IPB-CSC compound with (from left) Ms. Vera Sinohin, Dr. Flerida Cariño and Ms. Julieta Fe Estacio of NCBP.

Representatives from the National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines (NCBP) visited the Papaya Ring Spot Virus-Resistant (PRSV-R) and Fruit and Shoot Borer-resistant (FSBR) eggplant projects last May 7, 2007 at the Institute of Plant Breeding-Crop Science Cluster (IPB-CSC), College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines Los Baños (CA-UPLB).

Dr. Flerida Cariño, NCBP member and professor at the University of the Philippines Diliman, made an ocular inspection of the PRSV-R papaya plants and the FSBR eggplants. With Dr. Cariño were Ms. Julieta Fe Estacio of the NCBP Secretariat and Ms. Vera Sinohin, Department of Natural Resources (DENR) representative to the NCBP. They also discussed with the project team updates and plans for the regulatory aspects of both projects. Project coordinator Dr. Desiree M. Hautea, and project leaders Drs. Pablito M. Magdalita and Josefina O. Narciso gave a briefing on the project and accompanied the NCBP members to the sites. Also present during the visit were Drs. Romeo B. Rejesus, Severina B. Exconde and Olivia P. Damasco, members of the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) of UPLB.

Dr. Cariño suggested that the proponents make a new proposal for the confined trial of PRSV-R in the IPB-CSC experimental farm in Paciano Rizal, Bay, Laguna. "An objective of this confined trial site is to identify the unintended effects of the PRSV-R papaya," said Dr. Cariño. The project proponents will gather phenotypic and genotypic data at the trial site. *(TP Lawas)*

PRSV-R Papaya Poster is 2nd Best Poster in the 19th FCSSP Scientific Conference

L-R: Dr. Pablito M. Magdalita, Abigail May R. Oropesa and Lolita D. Valencia, with the PRSV-R papaya poster.

The poster "Phenotypic Characterization and Micropropagation of Candidate PRSV-Resistant (PRSV-R) Papaya Lines from *Agrobacterium*-Mediated Transformation" won second prize in the best poster category during the 19th Scientific Meeting of the Federation of Crop Science Societies of the Philippines (FCSSP) held June 13-15, 2007 at the Development Academy of the Philippines, Tagaytay City. The poster is co-authored by Dr. Pablito M. Magdalita, Ms. Abigail May R. Oropesa, Ms. Lolita M. Valencia, Mr. Jesherun Asher M. Tarun and Dr. Desiree M. Hautea.

The poster showed the characterization of flowering and fruiting traits of the PRSV-R selected lines and production of micropropagated clones of these transgenic lines. The research was conducted at the Crop Science Cluster-Institute of Plant Breeding (CSC-IPB), College of Agriculture-University of the Philippines Los Baños (CA-UPLB).

The technology illustrated in the poster is a part of the project entitled "Development and commercialization of PRSV-R papaya for fresh fruit and papain production" co-funded by PCARRD, ABSP II, ISAAA and EMERGE.

The three-day FCCSP Scientific Conference was sponsored by the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR), Provincial government of Cavite, City government of Tagaytay and Cavite State University. *(TP Lawas)*

Workshop on Food Safety and Risk Communication for Philippine Biotech Crops

The Food Safety and Risk Communication Workshop for Selected Pinoy GM Crops was held last May 10-11, 2007 at the Oasis Hotel, Los Baños, Laguna. This was co-organized by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agribiotech Applications (ISAAA) through the Economic Modernization through Efficient Reforms and Governance Enhancement (EMERGE), Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSPII), the United States Agency International Development (USAID), Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI), and the SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA).

The workshop aimed to share and learn lessons from the experiences on biosafety regulations both from India and the Philippines, and to discuss and address potential food safety issues concerning the Papaya Ringspot Virus (PRSV) Resistant Papaya and the Fruit Shoot Borer Resistant (FSBR) Eggplant.

Ten project staff members of the ABSPII attended the workshop, which consisted of five members from each of the PRSV Papaya and FSBR Eggplant Projects. They were among the 44 participants who represented the academe, scientists, cooperative leaders, Institutional Biosafety Committee members, the DA-Biotechnology Core Team and its Science & Technology Review Panel, and representatives of the government such as those from the Bureau of Plant Industry. The two-day workshop consisted of lectures on experiences of India on the biosafety regulations, insect

Ms. Roanne R. Ripalda, Research Associate of the FSBR Eggplant Project, shows the FSBR Eggplants to the workshop participants inside the contained screenhouse facility.

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ABSPII Project Personnel Join Team Building Activities

An educational trip and team building workshop co-organized by the Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSPII), the Economic Modernization through Efficient Reforms and Governance Enhancement (EMERGE), and the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) was held on April 22-25. The Lakbay-Aral and Team Building Workshop of PRSV-R Papaya and FSBR Eggplant Projects, consisted of a field exposure to papaya and eggplant growing areas and markets in Mindoro and Aklan, Philippines. Strengths and weaknesses of the projects, and plans for future activities were assessed.

ABSPII staff and activity leaders interact with one another through team building exercises.

There were a total 45 participants, with 23 participants from the Fruit Shoot Borer-Resistant (FSBR) Eggplant Project, 19 participants from the Papaya Ringspot Virus (PRSV)-Resistant Papaya Project, and two ABSPII staff. Dr. Randy A. Hautea, ISAAA Global Coordinator and Project Manager of the PRSV-R Papaya Project, was also a participant.

The activity aimed to enhance the knowledge and capacity of project researchers and staff on papaya and eggplant growing areas and familiarize them on their markets through field exposure. It was also designed to assess the project in relation to its objectives, to its home base, the Institute of Plant Breeding in the University of the Philippines, and with its funding agencies. Most importantly, it intended to develop a closer working relationship among the staff to foster excellent work performance.

Jeshurun Asher M. Tarun, Research Associate for the PRSV Papaya Project, expressed how the field exposure to the markets and growing areas made an impact. The participants were able to survey the virus and diseases that infected papayas, and other problems to eggplant growers in Mindoro. "As part of our field exposure trip, we had the chance to do a real life collection of plant germplasm. It was fun because we were able to mingle and share our experiences with the local people of the area," said Mr. Tarun. "The collection expedition, as a whole, was a dry run in my part since this is just the start of another exploration in which much detailed and planned activities should be undertaken," he added.

After the survey and collection, the participants all headed for Boracay, Aklan, where the team building activities and workshop were held. Facilitated by Dr. Jaine C. Reyes of UPLB, five team building activities were done as a way for participants to foster closer relationships and promote unity among them. *(ZB Juliano)*

MAHYCO Director Visits IPB

Dr. Usha B. Zehr, Joint Director of Research of the Maharastra Hybrid Seeds Company (MAHYCO), visited the Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB) in the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) last April 17, 2007. Dr. Zehr was welcomed by Dr. Josefina O. Narciso, Principal Investigator of the Fruit and Shoot Borer Resistant (FSBR) Eggplant Project. The two scientists were joined by Dr. Olivia P. Damasco, member of the UPLB Institutional Biosafety Committee, during the courtesy call to Dr. Jose E. Hernandez, Director of the Crop Science Cluster-IPB of the College of Agriculture, UPLB. The courtesy call was followed by a visit to the contained screenhouse facility of the FSBR Eggplant.

Dr. Usha B. Zehr (left) ask Dr. Lourdes D. Taylo about the mass rearing set up of the fruit and shoot borer insects at the IPB Entomology Laboratory.

Dr. Zehr proceeded to the IPB Entomology Laboratory and met with Dr. Lourdes D. Taylo, study leader for the FSBR Eggplant Project. Dr. Taylo gave updates on the bioefficacy and baseline susceptibility studies. Dr. Zehr suggested that the probit-dose analysis should include concentrations where the lowest and highest mortality were observed. She also took note of the high efficacy of the first generation of backcross FSBR eggplants against the local strain of the FSB. Since all the data generated from India, Bangladesh and Philippines will be pooled for comparison of the product performance, it is necessary that all the collaborators adopt the same protocols.

Dr. Zehr visited Ms. Alma O. Canama, study leader of the FSBR Eggplant project, who showed her the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) analysis results on the Back Cross 1 First Generation 1 (BC1F1) plant selections and presented some concerns on event-specific primers from MAHYCO.

MAHYCO is one of the primary collaborators of the said FSBR Eggplant Project. It turned over the FSBR Eggplant BC1 seeds to the Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSPII) last June 7-10, 2006 in India. The seeds were produced by backcrossing Generation 1 donor lines with the Philippine recurrent parents, and were obtained by ABSPII following the required process of the National Biosafety Committee of the Philippines and the Bureau of Plant Industry - Plant Quarantine Services. *(LD Taylo, AO Canama, ZB Juliano)*

Workshop on Food Safety... (From page 3)

resistance management, and an overview of food safety assessment of GM crops in the Philippines. The status of the PRSV Resistant Papaya and FSBR Eggplants were also presented by project leaders Dr. Pablito M. Magdalita and Dr. Josefina O. Narciso, respectively. The review assessment form especially those sections pertinent to food safety concerns were also tackled by Dr. Saturnina C. Halos, chair of the Department of Agriculture-Biotechnology Advisory Team. As for risk communication, experiences on how it is practiced from a technology developer, the government, a non-government organization, and the private sector were all shared to the participants. *(ZB Juliano)*

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