An International Conference on “Next-Gen Preparedness for Food Security and Environment Sustainability” was organized from 22nd to 24th November 2023 by the Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat to commemorate the centenary year of the Rice Research Station at Titabor.

The conference was inaugurated on Wednesday 22nd Nov, 2023 by Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra, Chairperson, PPVFRA and Former Secretary and DG, ICAR, Govt. of India, New Delhi as the Chief Guest. In his inaugural address, Dr. Mohapatra emphasized on building a sustainable Food System through proper use of available natural resources. He highlighted the importance of farmers’ contribution in conservation of landraces especially in North East region of the country, and the importance of registration of farmer’s varieties with the PPVFRA under the PPVFR Act, 2001. He mentioned the need to make agriculture profitable without compromising the ecology and health of the environment. In this regard, the traditional/local varieties, germplasm resources and wild relatives, which are abundant, can be of immense use, he pointed out.

The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Bidyut C. Deka, Vice Chancellor, AAU Jorhat. Dr. Rabe Yahaya, International Research Scientist, Mechanization and Post-Harvest, IRRI; Dr. Udaya Sekhar Nagothu, Director, Centre for International Development, NIBIO, Norway and Ms. Beate Langset, Counsellor-Climate and Environment, Norwegian Embassy, New Delhi graced the inaugural programme and provided profound insights into the overarching theme of the conference. The book “Hundred Years of Rice Research” and e-book “Rice Culture and Research” were released on the occasion.

The inaugural session was followed by 11 Technical Sessions and two special sessions, one on IIRI, Philippians and one
on PPVFR Act, 2001. There were 12 keynotes lectures, 35 lead lectures, 18 invited lectures, 134 oral presentations and 203 poster presentations in the conference. The special session on PPVFR Act, 2001 was chaired by Dr. A. Pattanayak, Former Director, VPKAS and IIAB, Ranchi and Co-Chaired by Dr. Bhattacharya, Associate Dean, College of Agriculture, Burdhhwan, BCKV, Kalayani.

Sh. U.K. Dubey, Dy. Registrar, PPVFRA, Ministry of Agriculture, GOI delivered a lead lecture on “An overview of PPVFR Act, 2001”. Dr. P. K. Barua, former; Head of the Department & Professor of Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics, AAU, Jorhat spoke on the topic “Protection of Breeders Rights”. Dr. Kishore Kumar Sharma, Head of the Department of Plant Breeding & Genetics, AAU. Jorhat delivered a lecture on “Reward & Recognition to the farmers & farming communities”. Mrs. Gargi Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of Plant Breeding & Genetics, AAU, Jorhat made a presentation on the topic “Protection of Farmers Varieties under the PPVFR Act, 2001” and Dr. Atul Sharma, Ex-Joint Director; Agriculture, Assam deliberated on the topic “Conservation & Protection of Traditional Varieties of North East region”.

A total of 40 participants including faculties, Masters and Doctoral researchers and farmers from different districts of Assam attended the session. In the open discussion, one of the farmers emphasized on the need for organizing more awareness program on PPVFRA guidelines for the benefit of the farmers. As per the request of another farmer, the “registration process of traditional varieties under PPVFRA” was discussed by the invited speaker Dr. Atul Sharma, Ex-Joint Director, Agriculture, Assam.

The session ended with the remarks from the Chairman and Co-chairman and vote of thanks given by Dr. Nagen Sarma Barua, Professor, Department of Plant Breeding & Genetics, AAU, Jorhat and Convener of the session.

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