

International Cotton Researchers Association (ICRA): Updates on Major Activities

Michel Fok, Chair, ICRA

ICRA Secretariat

After the election of a new Executive Committee in 2016, ICRA initiated a process in May 2016 to identify an institution that could serve as its Secretariat. As described in the previous issue of *THE ICAC RECORDER*, six cotton-related institutions from Latin America, Asia and Africa offered to undertake the responsibility of serving as the Secretariat. The Executive Committee appreciated the show of interest from each of the institutions, and there was agreement that all applicants were highly qualified. An offer from the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC)

to act as ICRA Secretariat for five years was accepted by the Executive Committee during its meeting in Islamabad in November 2016.

The PCCC will soon announce the names of Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Secretariat.

The process has now reached the final stage of signing the official Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). A formal ceremony could take place soon in Pakistan. Dr. Khalid Abdullah, Vice-President, Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (khalidabdullah99@yahoo.com) and Dr. Michel Fok Ah Chuen, Chairman, ICRA will be signatories to the MoU.



Setting Up Full Paper Proceedings of the WCRC1 to WCRC6 on ICRA Web Page

Starting from the [WCRC4](#) in Lubbock USA in 2007, each of the conferences created their own dedicated web sites for [WCRC5](#) in Mumbai, India, in 2011 and for [WCRC6](#) in Goiania, Brazil, in 2016. Online submission of abstracts, registration etc., was done on the websites. Proceedings of the conferences were also uploaded online on the WCRC websites. These specific websites could be accessed for a limited period of time on their respective online locations, and each is now unavailable.

However, efforts were made to maintain the full research paper proceedings of the conferences on the [ICAC](#) website. Proceeding papers of the first three conferences WCRC1 in

Australia (1994), WCRC2 in Greece (1998) and WCRC3 in South Africa (2003) are available only in hard copy. ICRA has now launched an initiative to coordinate the availability of full papers of all the WCRC conferences held so far on its website. The objective is to provide the papers in one place to maintain an active interaction on global knowledge and scientific advances on cotton. This would ensure the availability of all WCRC papers on the ICRA website as a permanent online free-access repository, irrespective of the status of the individual conference websites. ICRA now has access to the electronic files of all communications and full papers of all the previous conferences starting from WCRC1. ICRA received excellent support from the organizers of the previous WCRC conferences in setting up the online proceedings on the ICRA website. The online proceedings of the WCRC1 are now ready, and it is worth visiting the [1994 panorama](#) of cotton research in the world.

Executive Committee

According to the ICRA Rules and bylaws, ICAC is endowed with one seat in the ICRA Executive Committee, occupied by the Head of its Technical Information Section. After Dr Rafiq's retirement, ICAC is now represented by Dr. Keshav Kranthi.

On April 3, 2017, Dr Rafiq Chaudhry retired as the Head, Technical information Section of the ICAC after serving for a marathon-like 26 dedicated years. ICRA was his brainchild. Rafiq, as researchers across the world fondly call him, not only gave shape to the idea of ICRA by laying a firm foundation, but also by setting up a roadmap to nurture it. He was deeply convinced for the need of ICRA as a global knowledge-sharing platform. Rafiq managed to have ICAC provide its support to set up ICRA and also made use of his international network to help set up the Executive Committee of ICRA with a sound geographical representation. Readers of *THE ICAC RECORDER* and members of ICRA fondly acknowledge his vision and perseverance in setting up ICRA as a global platform for cotton researchers.

ICRA Platform

ICRA has invested substantial time and effort to restructure its website to facilitate scientific interaction among members. ICRA provides an opportunity for researchers to exchange notes, views and communications on the ICRA website based on the online proceedings. Each communication is presented as a newly tagged post, and by default becomes a topic in the discussion forum that any visitor can follow. ICRA members can contribute through comments and questions. Any ICRA

member can submit posts, which are moderated before the topics are listed for forum discussion. Members can launch new forum topics not linked to posts, without moderation. The profile function has been enriched to enable the members to inform about their projects and publications in addition to their affiliation and background. A *Wiki* function named *Gossypedia* has been added with an objective to provide a platform for the transfer of knowledge between different generations of cotton researchers. [More information](#) on the above mentioned functions is available through various posts

published on the ICRA website.

The ICRA platform is now almost ripe to be fully utilized by researchers to prepare for a virtual world of togetherness. There is a need to take full advantage of the ICRA website to share ideas and thoughts on cotton science for the sake of the world cotton sector. Researchers may send their ideas to icracotton.org@gmail.com to improve the website or the functioning of ICRA so that it can become a vibrant forum for exchange of knowledge amongst cotton researchers of the world.

ACRDN VII Meeting

ASIAN COTTON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (ACRDN)

Venue: Le Méridien, Nagpur, India 15-17 September 2017

Theme: 'Production of Quality Fiber and Doubling Farmers Income'

Sponsors: ICAC & ISCI (Indian Society for Cotton Improvement)

Hosts:

- Indian Society for Cotton Improvement (ISCI), Mumbai &
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi

Participants: 50-60 including 25-30 overseas delegates

Speakers: 15-16 invited experts on latest technological developments

Agenda:

- Discuss global best practices for yield enhancement
- Develop sustainable action plan to manage whiteflies, pink bollworm, leaf curl virus and the American bollworm
- Discuss recent research developments, technologies and gaps

Contacts:

- Dr. C. D. Mayee, President ISCI: charumayee@yahoo.co.in
- Dr. A. J. Shaikh, Secretary, ISCI: shaikhaj@rediffmail.com
- Dr. M. V. Venugopalan, organizing secretary, ACRDN: mvvenugopalan@gmail.com
- Dr. Keshav R. Kranthi, ICAC: keshav@icac.org

ALIDA XIV Meeting

LATIN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR COTTON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (ALIDA)

Venue: Hoilday Inn Express de Maceió Brazil, 28th August 2017.

Theme: 'Boll Weevil Integrated Pest Management'

Sponsors: ICAC & FAO

Host: EMBRAPA

Participants: 25-30

Speakers: 5-6 invited experts on latest technological developments

Agenda:

- IPM recommendations for sustainable cotton with emphasis on Boll weevil management

- Develop area-wide IPM implementation plan
- Discuss recent research developments, technologies and gaps

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