

Progress Report 2013: Asian Agri-History Foundation

YL Nene

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1. The Asian Agri-History Foundation (AAHF) Trust was established and registered in 1994 by a group of agricultural scientists who felt the need to educate agriculturists and all those directly or indirectly connected with agriculture of Asia with its rich agricultural heritage.

2. The number of subscribers to the journal Asian Agri-History in 2013 was 362 (Individuals 278; Institutions 84). Again we record our gratitude to **KK Ranade**, Director (Operations), IOT Engineers Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai and **T Suresh**, Genset Engineers, Vijayawada, India for obtaining subscription of over 100 persons.

3. We record our feelings of deep sorrow and great loss at the passing away of our Editor-in-Chief, **Dr RL Paliwal** on 5 January 2013, at the age of 85. He had served AAHF through his trusteeship and as the Founder Editor-in-Chief of Asian Agri-History since 1997. His obituary was published in the journal [Asian Agri-History 17(2)].

We also record with great grief the passing away of our Donors **Laxman Singh** and **DS Murthy**. Both were well-known plant breeders.

4. **Dr CLL Gowda**, an eminent scientist and currently the Deputy Director General-Research at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) became a trustee and accepted request to serve AAHF as Editor-in-Chief of Asian Agri-History from March 2013.

5. Activities of **YL Nene**, Chairman:

- ABP Majha (Star TV) recorded an interview with **Nene** on the importance of the mission of AAHF. The Video was televised on 23 February 2013 in Marathi with English subtitles (The Video can still be seen on internet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rec6ByXF-Ag>).
- Delivered a lecture “Farm implements of ancient and medieval India” at the 47th Annual Convention of Indian Society of Agricultural Engineers (ISAE) on 28 January 2013 at Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University (ANGRAU), Rajendranagar, Hyderabad.
- Delivered a lecture on “Crop disease management practices in ancient and pre-modern India” at the National Workshop on Strategies and Action Plan for Plant Health Management in

Twelfth Five Year Plan on 7–8 February 2013. The workshop was held at Thiruvananthapuram under the auspices of Kerala State Planning Board.

- On 29 July 2013 delivered a lecture on “Indigenous technical knowledge: Historical perspective, issues, and challenges” at the Training Program on ITK for Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihoods, organized by National Institute for Rural Development, Hyderabad.
- Delivered a keynote address on “Sustainable agriculture: Lessons to learn from ancient and medieval agriculture” at the National Workshop on Organic Farming in the Context of Changing Global Scenario held under the joint auspices of Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, Babasaheb Apte Smarak Samiti (Trust), Bharatiya Itihasa Sankalana Samithi, and AAHF on 6–7 April 2013 in Hyderabad.
- Delivered a keynote lecture on “Vedic Agriculture” at the Science Centre,

Kota (Rajasthan). The workshop on “Inventorisation and Documentation” was organized on 10 August 2013 under the auspices of Division of Science and Society, Kota.

- Delivered a lecture on “Classics in Indian agriculture” at Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya (RVSKVV), Gwalior. The Vice-Chancellor of the University **Dr AK Singh** had invited **Nene** (alumnus 1951–55) as Chief Guest at Foundation Day celebration on 19 August 2013 (see photos below).
- Delivered Inaugural Address at the National Conference on Microbes Promoting Crop Health, Productivity, and Sustainability organized by the Indian Phythopathological Society Mid-East Zone, CSIR-Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CSIR-CIMAP), and CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute (CSIR-NBRI) at Lucknow on 26 October 2013.



A 1917 “Mogul” tractor in front of the College of Agriculture, Gwalior. Nene graduated from this college in 1955.



Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor, RVSKVV (Gwalior) Dr AK Singh receiving publications of AAHF from YL Nene.

- The National Seminar on Innovations in Traditional Agriculture was held on 15–16 November 2013 at Pantnagar, organized by Uttarakhand Chapter of AAHF and GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology (GBPUAT). **Nene** delivered the Inaugural Address and Valedictory Address. He also presented a keynote address “Fumigation of plants in Vrikshayurveda”.

6. **MC Saxena**, Trustee, AAHF and Senior Advisor of the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) visited Darjeeling and interacted with members of West Bengal Chapter of AAHF. He also attended the National Seminar on Innovations in Traditional Agriculture organized by Uttarakhand Chapter of AAHF on 15–16 November 2013 at GBPUAT, Pantnagar and was Guest of Honor at the inaugural function (see photo below).



7. Activities of **SPS Beniwal**, Trustee:

Participated in the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony and the National Hindi Seminar on Knowledge and Science at the Atal Behari Vajpayee Hindi Vishvavidhyalaya in Bhopal,

Madhya Pradesh (MP) at the invitation of **Prof. Mohan Lal Chhipa**, Vice-Chancellor of the University. Although the university was established in 2011, its first Vice-Chancellor **Prof. Chhipa** was appointed in 2012. After allocation of 100 acres land outside Bhopal, the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony was held on 6 June 2013. **The President of India, Mr Pranabh Mukherjee** laid the Foundation Stone in the forenoon of 6th June in the presence of the **Governor of MP, Mr Ram Naresh; Chief Minister of MP, Mr Shivraj Singh Chauhan; and BJP-MP and the Opposition Leader in Lok Sabha, Mrs Sushma Swaraj.**

The National Hindi Seminar on Knowledge and Science was held on 6–7 June 2013. The seminar was organized in conjunction with the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of the University at the premises of the MP Science and Technology Council in Bhopal. **Beniwal** presented a talk on Sanskrit classics on agriculture in the session on Agriculture, Forestry and Animal Husbandry. On behalf of AAHF, **Beniwal** offered to provide assistance to the University in starting a diploma course on organic farming. **Prof. Chhipa** expressed desire to have Hindi publications from AAHF and looked forward to a fruitful collaboration with AAHF.

Beniwal attended a meeting held on 16 May 2013 by West Bengal Chapter of AAHF and visited some tea estates in Darjeeling to discuss about organic tea cultivation. He also attended the National Seminar on Innovations in Traditional Agriculture organized by Uttarakhand Chapter of AAHF on 15–16 November 2013 at GBPUAT,

Pantnagar and was Guest of Honor at the inaugural function.

8. Activities of SL Choudhary and SK Khandelwal:

- **SL Choudhary**, Hon. Secretary, AAHF and **SK Khandelwal**, Treasurer, Rajasthan Chapter of AAHF participated as resource persons in a two-day National Workshop on Organic Farming in the Context of Changing Global Scenario, Hyderabad on 6–7 April 2013, organized jointly by AAHF, Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, Babasaheb Apte Smarak Samiti (Trust), and Bharatiya Itihasa Sankalana Samithi. **Choudhary** delivered a lecture on “Importance of ancient plant protection practices” while **Khandelwal** lectured on “Ensuring sustainability by use of organic manure in agriculture”.
- **Choudhary** was invited to attend meetings held by West Bengal Chapter of AAHF at Darjeeling on 6 February and 21 April 2013 to discuss about organizing a Consultative Group Meeting on Organic Tea Cultivation. But this Meeting could not be held during the year.
- **Beniwal, Choudhary, and Khandelwal** attended a meeting at Darjeeling on 16 May 2013 conducted by West Bengal Chapter of AAHF to discuss the various issues related to organic tea cultivation.
- **Choudhary and Khandelwal** attended a meeting at Kalimpong on 19 May 2013 arranged by **Bhanu Thapa** of Bhartiya Kisan Sangh, Darjeeling District Committee, Kalimpong to



discuss about the various issues related to organic farming (see photo above).

- **Choudhary** delivered a lecture on “Role of ancient technologies for rural upliftment” to the participants at the establishment of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) at Kota on 12 July 2013. This was attended by farmers, NGOs, and bank employees.
- **Choudhary and Khandelwal** attended a one-day workshop on “Inventorisation and Documentation of Location Specific Problems Requiring S&T Intervention at Regional Level” and “Consultative Group Meeting on Vedic Agriculture” at Kota (see photo below) on 10 August 2013 organized by Department of



Science and Technology, Vigyan Kendra, Kota in collaboration with AAHF, Secunderabad. AAHF raised seedlings of *Gliricidia* plants (a good source of plant nutrients) in collaboration with Vigyan Kendra, which were distributed free of cost to the farmers who attended this workshop. **Choudhary** explained the utility of this plant in organic farming.

- **Choudhary** was invited to deliver lectures to the trainees under Centre for Advanced Faculty Training (CAFT)–Plant Pathology program on “Disease and Management of Crops under Organic Production” at GBUAT, Pantnagar. He delivered a lecture on “Ancient crop protection practices under organic farming” on 5 September 2013 and conducted a demonstration on preparation of *kunapajala* for nourishment and protection of crops on 6 September 2013.
- A two-day National Conference on Ancient Farming Technologies of India: Principles and Practices was held on 13–14 September 2013 at Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda (SGS)

Ashram, Eluru, organized jointly by Institute of Scientific Research on Vedas (I-SERVE), Hyderabad and SGS Gnana Bodha Sabha, Eluru, Andhra Pradesh. Nearly 200 farmers participated as delegates to hear speeches of eminent speakers from various parts of India. **Choudhary** and **Khandelwal** participated as resource persons (see photos below). **Choudhary** chaired a session and also gave a detailed presentation on “Conservation and protection of five basic elements of nature and protection of plants by adopting traditional practices”. **Khandelwal** delivered a lecture “Organic manures are key to agriculture sustainability”.

- The bulletin **Upavanavinoda** in Hindi translated by **Khandelwal** and **Choudhary**, published by Rajasthan Chapter of AAHF was released during the inaugural function of National Seminar on Innovations in Traditional Agriculture organized by Uttarakhand Chapter at GBPUAT, Pantanagar on 15–16 November 2013.

National Conference on Ancient Farming Technologies



9. Rajasthan Chapter of AAHF:

- The Directorate of Extension, Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology (MPUAT), Udaipur had conducted farmer-oriented training programs in January–February 2013. On behalf of Rajasthan Chapter of AAHF, **MM Simlot** (President) and **SK Khandelwal** (Treasurer) were invited to present brief lectures on “Value addition of foods in ancient India and Vedic agriculture”, which were appreciated by the farmers who had attended the training.
- The Chapter published the second newsletter on Ancient Agricultural Science (in Hindi) [*Pracheen Krishi Vigyan*]. It was duly released by **Prof. OP Gill**, Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor, MPUAT, Udaipur on 6 February 2013 (see photo below). The Newsletter was edited by **MM Simlot, IJ Mathur, SK Khandelwal, Ganesh Rajamani, SK Intodia, and Meena Sanadhya**. On this



Release of newsletter Pracheen Krishi Vigyan: (from left to right) Ganesh Rajamani, MM Simlot, KN Nag, OP Gill, IJ Mathur, SK Khandelwal, Meena Sanadhya, and RS Rathore.

occasion **Rajamani** briefly presented a talk on “*Kunapajala: An ancient liquid manure*”. The 3rd and 4th quarterly issues of the Newsletter were subsequently prepared by the same editorial team.

- The Chapter expanded its membership by enrolling four active agriculture scientists from different parts of Rajasthan. They joined the Chapter by subscribing for the journal.
- The current financial status of the Chapter is founded on a fixed deposit resource worth ₹ 372,765 saved over the years since its inception.

10. Uttarakhand Chapter of AAHF:

- The Executive Committee of the Chapter includes faculty of GBPUAT:
 - Patron: **Vice-Chancellor**
 - President: **J Kumar**
 - Vice-President: **Kewalanand**
 - Secretary: **Sunita T Pandey**
 - Treasurer: **ML Sharma**
 - Members: **Salil K Tewari, Deepa Vinay, Vandana A Kumar, AH Ahmad, Ruchira Tiwari, and Deepali Tewari Pandey**
- Two fellowships were awarded by AAHF to two MSc students of GBPUAT for their thesis work on traditional agriculture.
 - Effect of energy treatments and hydro-priming on seed quality during storage, crop establishment and yield of chickpea by **Rashi Sharma** for the degree of MSc (Ag) in Agronomy
 - Evaluation of animal origin product for honeybee disease management in

- Uttarakhand by **Meena Dhami** for the degree of MSc (Ag) in Entomology
- A popularity campaign for the Chapter was organized during All India Farmers' Fair at GBPUAT, Pantnagar. A stall was set up and pamphlets were distributed.
- A workshop on "Traditional Uses of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants in Uttarakhand" was organized on 19 February 2013. On the basis of the recommendations of the workshop cum interactive meet, a mega project has been submitted to NABARD for funding.

National seminar on traditional agriculture at Pantnagar



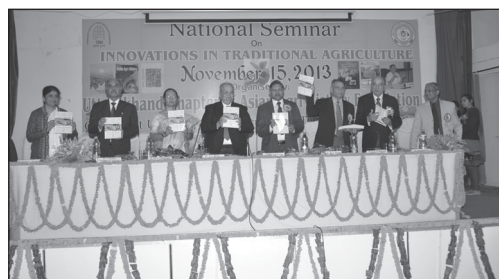
Chief Guest Dr YL Nene inaugurating the Seminar



Special Guest Dr Arvind Kumar, DDG-Education, ICAR, inaugurating the Seminar



Dr Sunita Pandey welcoming the guests



Dignitaries releasing the Souvenir at the inaugural function



Stalls exhibiting agroproducts



Dr YL Nene talking to a herbal expert

- The National Seminar on Innovations in Traditional Agriculture was held on 15–16 November 2013 at GBPUAT, Pantnagar. About 200 participants including scientists and farmers attended (see photos on p. 83). The recommendations of various sessions were recorded (see box below). The bi-annual Newsletter of Uttarakhand Chapter of AAHF was launched and released at the Seminar. The Chapter supports small producers of agroproducts which were exhibited at the stalls. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has sanctioned ₹ 300,000 for the Seminar.

Innovations in traditional agriculture

Recommendations of the National Seminar on Innovations in Traditional Agriculture held on 15–16 November 2013, organized by Uttarakhand Chapter of AAHF and GBPUAT are given below.

- Knowledge of ancient agriculture and its history are important and should be included in the course curriculum.
- Indigenous technical knowledge (ITK) should be an important area for research in the universities.
- Steps should be taken to include ITK in the course curriculum in state agricultural universities.
- Validation of indigenous knowledge and practices is essential and can be taken up in collaboration with the farmers, as all practices leading to improvement in agriculture are for the benefit of the farmers and they have a thorough knowledge.
- Innovative farmers–students linkages can be established to help in spreading of innovations generated by the farmers.
- Hill agriculture should be a priority research area.
- Bio-products being developed by various organizations should be standardized and patented.
- Effective traditional practices should be refined, patented, and popularized.
- Use of metaphysical energy, an ancient technique of India, has been found to be highly useful and should be included in the research agenda on agriculture as one of the alternate sources of energy for resource conservation and quality production.
- Indigenous practices which are the backbone of society should be developed further in collaboration with the farmers.
- **Dr SS Singh**, ex-Director, Extension Education, GBPUAT suggested setting up of Uttarakhand Agriculture Planning Board to accomplish this mammoth task and also an agriculture museum at the national level to preserve the history of Indian agriculture.

11. West Bengal Chapter of AAHF:

- The Chapter places on record sincere thanks to AAHF members **SPS Beniwal**, **MC Saxena**, and **SL Choudhary**, and other senior members of AAHF for attending the meetings as well as for regular interaction with the tea planters of the region. **YL Nene** continues to be the guiding force and the Chapter thanks him for moral support.

- A day-long meeting was held on 29 January and 21 March 2013, with the Scientists of the Darjeeling Tea Research and Development Centre (DTRDC), Kurseong, Darjeeling at the DTRDC Building and at Longview Tea Estate (TE). **VS Parmar**, President of West Bengal Chapter Committee, the DTRDC Project Director, Tea Board of India, **Mahipal Singh** and his entire team of scientists attended the meeting. Other Committee Members of the Chapter were also present:

AK Jha and **Gopal Sumani**, Jayshree Tea; **TC Sharma**, **V Dhancholia**, and **Naresh Pareek**, Chamong Group Tea; **Kuldip Singh**, Longview Tea; **Parminder Singh Bhui**, Goodricke Group Ltd; and **Shanatan Nandy** representing the small tea growers from the plains.

- At the meetings the Chapter members shared the developments on various experiments being carried out by different companies and individual gardens.
- The most notable one was on fish concoction called *Indshafari*. Members proposed that since this has given

tremendous results, it should be patented by the parent body, i.e., AAHF, Secunderabad. A separate letter to this effect will be sent soon.

- Good results were obtained with rice–cow dung–water used for combating drought.
- *Kunapajala* experiments are being carried out, but the final results are yet to come. Prominent ones are the compatibility of *Vitex negundo* concoction with *Beauveria bassiana* strain (an entomopathogenic fungus), and *Polygonum hydropiper* with *Trichoderma harzianum*. Results in both the cases were very positive at the Peek Chemical Laboratory, Siliguri.
- A meeting was held at Darjeeling on 16 May 2013. Chapter members as well as **Beniwal**, **Choudhary**, and **Khandelwal** attended and discussed the on-going experiments and various aspects of organic tea. **Beniwal** visited Longview TE, Samsing TE, and Bamandanga TE which have gone organic. His tips were noted and used later.

12. Publications:

AAHF published the bulletin Vishvavallabha (in Marathi).

13. The new website of the Foundation **www.asianagrihistory.org** has been in existence since 2011 and updated regularly. A large number of persons from all over the world contacted AAHF seeking information on agricultural heritage of Asia.

14. During 2013, thirty-six articles and two 'book reviews' were published in the four

issues of the journal *Asian Agri-History* (Vol. 17).

15. During 2013, the following awards were conferred:

With the donation of ₹ 100,000 by **Sipani Krishi Anusandhan Farm**, Mandasaur, Madhya Pradesh, India, AAHF instituted **Sipani Krishi Anusandhan Farm Award** for the Best Paper published in *Asian Agri-History* each year. Accordingly the Award for 2013 has been given to the paper entitled “Medicinal plants used by traditional healthcare practitioners of dominant tribes of Koraput in Odisha” authored by **Smita Mishra, Saujanendra Swain, Susanta Sekhar Chaudhury**, and **Ajay Kumar Parida** (*Asian Agri-History* 17(4):311–324). The Award consists of total cash prize of ₹ 5000 and a Certificate to each author.

With the donation of ₹ 100,000 by **Ms Santosh Mehra**, w/o the **Late Dr KL Mehra**, AAHF Founder-Advisor, the Foundation instituted **Dr KL Mehra Memorial Award** for the Best Paper on Biodiversity published in *Asian Agri-History* each year. Accordingly the Award for 2013 has been given to the paper entitled “Grasses and their varieties in Indian literature” authored by **KG Sheshadri** (*Asian Agri-History* 17(4):325–334). The Award consists of a cash prize of ₹ 5000 and a Certificate to the author.

With the donation of ₹ 222,000 by **Prof Lindsay Falvey** (AAHF International Advisory Board member, Australia) and **Ms**

Simone Falvey, the Foundation instituted **The Falvey Award** for the Best Paper on Asian agricultural history aspects of animal welfare, notable historical innovations associated with the past period of Indianization across Asia, or spiritual aspects of agriculture published in *Asian Agri-History* each year. Accordingly the Award for 2013 has been given to the paper entitled “Sustaining rice landraces in-situ and on farm through biocultural diversity in Koraput, Odisha, India” authored by **Smita Mishra, Susanta Sekhar Chaudhury**, and **VA Nambi** (*Asian Agri-History* 17(2):123–139). The Award consists of total cash prize of ₹ 10000 and a Certificate to each author.

16. **SM Sinha**, Hon. Advisor (Art and Printing) continued to actively help in ensuring high quality of all publications. We are grateful to **Sinha**.

17. Many persons helped the Foundation. We are especially grateful to **Ch Vengala Reddy** (Consultant-Production) and **S Vijay Ramchander** (Hon. Editor). We are also grateful to the Foundation staff for their hard work and dedication: **Sheila Vijayakumar** (Managing Editor), **K Salai Muthu** (Administrator and Finance Officer), **SV Raghav Rao** (Finance-Audit), and **D Surya Prakash** (Office Facility Manager). Some authors have specially expressed gratitude for improving the quality of their papers published in *Asian Agri-History*.

18. The accounts were audited by the auditors Messrs. **ND Karwa & Co.**, Hyderabad and submitted to the tax authorities in time.