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1ST CHINA-KOREA JOINT SYMPOSIUM ON INSECT BIOTECHNOLOGY

The above mentioned symposium was held at Zhongnan Garden Hotel, Wuhan, P. R. China during August 20-23, 2008, to initiate a scientific research network in the Asia-Pacific Rim intended for international academic and industrial institutions and professionals in this area.

The scientific program consisted of 5 plenary lectures, 17 oral presentations and a total of 52 posters. During the symposium, subjects ranging from mode of action of insecticides, mechanisms of insecticide resistance, molecular phylogeny and insects taxonomy, development of high active enzymes from invertebrate microbes, etc. were discussed. The afternoon of Aug. 22 was dedicated to a half-day trip for enabling all participants to visit the nearby Huazhong Agricultural University in Wuhan.

There were about 50 participants from China, 40 from Korea, 5 from the USA, 1 from Japan and 1 from UK. Throughout the symposium all presentations were held in the same conference room and most of attendants stayed in the same hotel, thus facilitating formal and informal interactions between the participants on subjects of mutual interest in the field of insect biotechnology. During the closing ceremony, the organizing committee awarded special recognitions to excellent student presentations. This is the first symposium of this kind jointly organized by Huazhong Agricultural University, China and The Korean Society for Insect Biotechnology, Korea. The next symposium will be held in Pusan, Korea in 2009.

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SEQUEL TO THE ARTICLE 'IPM INCLUDES THE USE OF PESTICIDES'

In the recent discussion article on "IPM Includes the Use of Pesticides" in the last (January 2009) issue of the IAPPS newsletter, it has been mentioned that "farmers in India have indiscriminately used the least expensive broad spectrum insecticides to control sucking pests in Bt cotton and this has resulted in disaster, as mealybugs have infested the cotton fields in the absence of their natural enemies." This statement is not correct. In the past, mealybugs were not a problem in cotton. Farmers might have controlled mealybugs with insecticides used for control of bollworm and other pests in the non-Bt cotton fields and prevented the flare up of mealybugs. The truth of the matter is that the current outbreak of the mealybug in Bt cotton and vegetable fields in India is due to the establishment of a new species of mealybug which has been introduced in the past couple of years. It is known as *Phenacoccus solenopsis* Tinsley (Hemiptera: Pseudococcidae), a native of North America. It was first collected and described from New Mexico in 1897. In 1990, it was first reported as a pest of cotton in Texas. It remained in the U.S. until 1992 before moving into Central America, the Caribbean, and Ecuador. In 2002, it was reported in Chile and Brazil. In 2007 it has been reported from Ghana and in 2008 from Nigeria.

Currently *Phenacoccus solenopsis* is also causing serious damage to cotton in Pakistan but this mealybug has been incorrectly identified as *Phenacoccus gossypiphilous* which is a *nomen nudum*. Israel, Pakistan and India have already contacted the California Department of Agriculture for possible collaboration in identification, collection, rearing and supply of natural enemies of this mealybug for classical biological control.

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VIRGINIA TECH WINS GRANT FOR IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA

Amid global concerns about food security, Virginia Tech's Office of International Research, Education, and Development has been awarded a \$1 million grant from USAID to improve agricultural productivity and ease trade barriers in Africa.

The African Food Security Initiative: Quality Food Production, Availability, and Marketing will focus on enhancing production of staple food commodities including the tomato-one of the most important cash crops for small-scale growers in Africa-and rice and maize, both major sources of dietary carbohydrates on the continent. The three-year project is funded by USAID's Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade.

The project will address food security and trade issues in the sub-Saharan countries of Mali and Senegal in West Africa and Uganda in East Africa. Both Mali and Senegal have stable governments interested in addressing agricultural issues and trade constraints. In Senegal, the least self-sufficient country in West Africa for rice production, the government has committed to growing all of its own rice by 2015.

Uganda, part of the East Africa Community that also includes Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi, is eager to strengthen trade both locally and with the European Union, a major trading partner. Entebbe's international airport is an embarkation point for agricultural exports to Europe worth \$25.5 million annually. The African Food Security Initiative, by setting up pest diagnostic labs and developing human resources in plant health and inspection, will help assure European importers that food coming from Africa meets international safety standards.

Techniques developed by the program will extend science-based food production methods that will increase yields, reduce crop risks such as virus diseases and insect pests, and lay the foundation for long-term productivity growth.

Virginia Tech will partner with Ohio State University as well as organizations in each of the targeted countries: the Office of the Upper Niger Valley and the Institute of Rural Economy in Mali, the Senegal Institute of Agricultural Research, and the National Agricultural Research Organisation and Makerere University in Uganda.

The project is an associate award to Virginia Tech's Integrated Pest Management Collaborative Research Support Program, also funded by USAID, which has been working in sub-Saharan Africa for 15 years.

"This award represents a tremendous opportunity for Virginia Tech," said S.K. De Datta, associate vice president for international affairs and director of the Office of International Research, Education, and Development. "Through our past success in international agricultural research, we have built a good reputation both overseas and with donor agencies. In this time of rising food prices worldwide, I'm honored that we've been selected to manage this critically important project."

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IAPPS Mission: to provide a global forum for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, integrating, and promoting plant protection concepts, technologies, and policies that are economically, environmentally, and socially acceptable.

It seeks to provide a global umbrella for the plant protection sciences to facilitate and promote the application of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to a the world's crop and forest ecosystems.

Membership Information: IAPPS has four classes of membership (individual, affiliate, associate, and corporate) which are described [here](#).

The *IAPPS Newsletter* welcomes news, letters, and other items of interest from individuals and organizations. Address correspondence and information to:

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