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INITIAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING NEPAL VEGETABLE IPM PROJECT

Crop losses due to vegetable pests (insects, diseases, weeds, nematodes, and rodents) are a major constraint to alleviating poverty and improving nutrition in Nepal. Pesticides are often applied in attempts to reduce these losses, but improper use of pesticides is a threat to health and biodiversity. IPM is a decision support system for pest management that goes beyond pesticides and uses evidence-based information to reduce losses due to pests, minimize reliance on synthetic pesticides, and foster long-term sustainability of agricultural systems. The **Asian Vegetable and Mango IPM IL (AVMIPM) program** led by George Norton of VA Tech and funded by the USAID Feed the Future Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Innovation Lab at Virginia Tech (oired.vt.edu/ipmil). will implement ecologically-based, participatory IPM in Cambodia, Nepal, and Bangladesh, with a focus on pests (insect pests, pathogens, weeds) of tomato, eggplant, cabbage, cauliflower, beans, cucurbits, onion, and mango.

The project will build on previous IPM IL work, which developed and released several vegetable IPM packages. The new IPM IL project will undertake adaptive research in each of the countries to tailor existing and new IPM practices and packages to local conditions, especially in Feed-the-Future districts. It will develop, adapt, and diffuse IPM technologies through close interaction among international and host-country scientists in public and private institutions. It will work with Feed the Future programs in disseminating and promoting adoption of those technologies to farmers.



Visit to a vegetable IPM demonstration site near Kathmandu

To kick start the Nepal activities a project inception stakeholder meeting with representatives from Nepalese agencies including CEAPRED, NARC, PPD, DOA, FAO and iDE, was held at the iDE office in Kathmandu, Nepal February 4, 2016.

George Norton summarized the objectives and approach of the Asian Vegetable and mango IPM program. The participants then broke into two discussion groups: one to develop the crop and pest priorities for the technical plan and the other to discuss collaboration across all the partners. Priorities for crops and pests were established and then project proposals for Year 1 developed. A working group for the National IPM Program with representatives from PPD, NARC, DOA, CEAPRED, FAO, and the private sector was established. Similar stakeholder meetings held in Cambodia, January 25 and in Bangladesh January 31 resulted in the development of research and technology transfer activities for Year 1.

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NEPAL BIODIVERSITY PROJECT INCEPTION WORKSHOP

As in many other countries, weeds and animal pests limit agricultural production in Nepal, and indiscriminate use of commercial chemical treatments in response causes health and ecological problems, including threats to native flora and fauna. Invasive plants have also been expanding their ranges in recent years, displacing native plants, including those of cultural and medicinal value. The roles of agricultural practices and of climate change in pest and invasive species expanding their ranges in Nepal remain poorly understood. The project “**Participatory Biodiversity and Climate Change Assessment for Integrated Pest Management in the Annapurna-Chitwan Landscape, Nepal**” (nepalbiodiversity.org) is led by Nir Krakauer of the City University of New York (CUNY) and funded by the USAID Feed the Future Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Innovation Lab at Virginia Tech (oired.vt.edu/ipmil).

The project will conduct research and provide training on the fundamental science of the distribution of native and invasive species over an elevation transect in relation to climate, the ecological services they provide, and the impacts of land use and agricultural practices. The project is being undertaken in collaboration with Tribhuvan University (TU) and Agriculture and Forest University (AFU) in Nepal and Institute for Global Agriculture & Technology Transfer (IGATT) in the USA. The project inception consultative workshop was held on January 29, 2016 in Kathmandu, Nepal, with over two dozen government agencies, academic institutions, and nonprofits participating.

The workshop included an overview of the project, comprised of research capacity building at Nepal universities as well as pilot training programs to community groups to diversify rural income streams.



Nepal Biodiversity Workshop participants

Research directions discussed included management of *Parthenium hysterophorus* through biological control; finger millet and buckwheat distribution and productivity as hardy drought-resistant crops; combating the invasive species *Ageratina adenophora* through restoration of native species; assessing the role of insect diversity in choosing IPM technologies; and genotyping and niche modeling to assess determinants of diversity in insect pollinators and their

commensals and parasitoids. Speakers highlighted the national importance of the environmental issues to be addressed, particularly increasing problems due to invasive species and pests and increasing vulnerability of rural communities, where most of Nepal's population still lives, in the context of climate change.

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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 the world's crop and forest ecosystems.

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