Asian Agri-History Foundation (AAHF)
G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar

Dear GBPUA&T Alumni,

This is in perusal of the earlier Announcement sent to you by Dr SPS Beniwal, Chairman of Asian Agri-History Foundation (AAHF), in which he conveyed to you the great news of the establishment of the Headquarter of AAHF at GBPUA&T, Pantnagar effective 1 June 2019.

I, as the Executive Secretary of AAHF, would like to provide you some important information and activities of our Foundation. With this objective in mind I have attached a pamphlet on Asian Agri-History Foundation that describes rational behind establishment of AAHF and elaborates on its mission, objectives, activities, achievements, impact, future activities and governance.

Due to intense efforts of late Dr. YL Nene, the knowledge of crop production and protections generated by our ancient and medieval scholars has become available to us only in the last 25 years, i.e., after the establishment of AAHF in 1994. The first book translated by AAHF from Sanskrit to English in 1996 was “Vrikshayurveda” (The Science of Plant Life) by Surapala, a 1000-year-old text is an independent, full-fledged work on the subject of Vrikshayurveda that mainly deals with various trees and their healthy growth and productivity. It was through this book that we learnt of the first liquid fertilizer of the world described in this book as “Kunapajala”. Another book in Sanskrit “Krishi-Parashara” (Agriculture by Parashara) written by Maharishi Parashara is another Sanskrit book dated 400 BCE which was translated by AAHF into English in 1999. This is the first-ever “text book” on agriculture in the world in which the information is logically described in chapters. Thus, the easily accessible knowledge is now applicable to the production of different crops in modern India, especially at the small and marginal farmers’ level.

In addition to the publications listed in the pamphlet, the following publications of AAHF are also now available:

1. Indian Agricultural Heritage (c. 400 BCE -1700 CE) (AAHF, 2014)
2. Guide to Gardening translated by BM Jawalia (400 years ago) (AAHF, 2014)
4. Glimpses of the Agricultural Heritage of India by YL Nene (AAHF, 2007)
5. A Textbook on Ancient History of Indian Agriculture by RC Saxena, SL Choudhary and YL Nene (AAHF, 2009)
6. Revitalizing Higher Agricultural Education in India: Journey towards Excellence by PM Tamboli and YL Nene (AAHF, 2011)
7. Agricultural Biodiversity Heritage Sites and Systems by Prof Amruth K. Singh (AAHF, 2015)
Most of these publications have time-tested valuable knowledge of agriculture production and protection which need to be included in the text books of students (under- as well as post-graduate) curricula of agriculture science.

Besides the above, AAHF has also been regularly publishing Asian Agri-History, a quarterly international journal, since 1997. The annual subscription to this journal is Rs 600/- whereas a three-year subscription is Rs 1500/-. Orders for our publications can be placed at our address: Asian Agri-History Foundation, College of Agriculture, GBPUA&T, Pantnagar 263145 Dist. Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand (asianagrhistory94@gmail.com).

It should be highlighted here that the knowledge of Vrikshayurveda has been successfully applied and validated by AAHF and its Chapters in different crops and agro-ecological situations. Good examples are their application to tea production in the Darjeeling tea gardens by the West Bengal Chapter of AAHF and to different crops in Kerala by the Kerala Chapter of AAHF. Now, AAHF, with a base in Pantnagar, has fixed its priority to benefit the low-input and small-holder farmers of the mountainous areas of the state of Uttarakhand by introducing to them the time-tested technology of Vrikshayurveda. For this, AAHF is organizing a 2-day workshop on \textit{“Vrikshayurveda and Traditional Practices in Uttarakhand State: Present Status and Future Potential”} in Pantnagar from 23-24 October 2019 to develop a road map for initiating the work in farmers’ fields in Uttarakhand.

We are happy to be in touch with you and would be happy to provide you with any additional information on our activities.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Sunita T. Pandey
Professor, Agronomy and Project Coordinator,
Natural Farming Research Programme &
Executive Secretary, Asian Agri-History Foundation (AAHF)
College of Agriculture, GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar-263145,
Dist. Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand, INDIA
Mobile: 7668641574; 8859020329; 9412120735
Email: asianagrhistory94@gmail.com; sunitatewari_8@yahoo.co.in
Website: www.asianagrhistory.org
The South and Southeast Asia regions had generally provided food security to their population for several millennia, with only occasional famines in a few limited pockets primarily due to drought. Farmers in these regions had evolved some of the most sustainable agricultural management practices suitable for different agroecoregions. In recent years, however, the South Asia region in particular has often been projected as a food-deficient region, where mass-scale starvation could occur in the future despite the fact that modern technologies have been adopted over large areas. Ironically, in the past three decades, the sustainability of agriculture based on modern technologies has been questioned, and with good reason. How can we make the agriculture in South and Southeast Asia sustainable and environment-friendly?

The Asian Agri-History Foundation (AAHF) was, therefore, established and registered in 1994 by a group of agricultural scientists to facilitate dissemination of information on agricultural heritage; to promote research on sustainable agriculture in South and Southeast Asia regions; to learn from the traditional wisdom and the indigenous, time-tested technologies, which would provide clues for (i) understanding how farmers adjusted to changing environment in the past, and (ii) developing appropriate technologies leading to prosperous, environment-friendly, sustainable agriculture.

MISSION
The AAHF mission is to ensure food sufficiency and nutritional security in the South and Southeast Asia regions by promoting environment-friendly, sustainable agriculture.

OBJECTIVES
- To disseminate information on the history and heritage of agriculture in the South and Southeast Asia regions.
- To stimulate interest in research on the history and heritage of agriculture in Asia with a special focus on South and Southeast Asia.
- Promote environment-friendly, sustainable agriculture (including organic agriculture) based on the knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices gathered in heritage publications on agriculture.

ACTIVITIES
- Regular publication of Asian Agri-History, an international quarterly journal.
- Translation of heritage manuscripts/papers on agriculture into English and other languages and their publication.
- Encouragement and support to research on traditional agriculture through fellowships in universities and other institutions.
- Promotion of Asian agri-history in education.
- Conduct of seminars, conferences, and lectures to promote exchange of information on agricultural heritage and sustainable agriculture and collaboration among interested scholars.
ACHIEVEMENTS

Award
AAHF was honored through an annual national award “Param Poojaniya Shree Guruji Puraskar – 2009” by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Janakalyan Samiti, Maharashtra “for its devoted and excellent research work in the field of Indian agriculture”.

Publications
AAHF publications (including the journal articles) have received substantial attention from the media. The readership includes scientists, teachers, scholars, extension workers, entrepreneurs, farmers, and others.

Journal
Asian Agri-History, an international quarterly journal of history of Asian agriculture (including environment), is being published since March 1997. The journal covers a wide range of topics and has highlighted ancient methods of rainfall prediction and validation, agrobiodiversity, indigenous farming system (crops and livestock) practices, etc. Each year three awards – Sipani Krishi Anusandhan Farm Award, Dr KL Mehra Memorial Award, and The Falvey Award – are given to authors for best paper in various categories.

Bulletins
The ancient scriptures are replete with information on innovative methods of maintaining the quality of land, water, and environment. Nine ancient texts in Sanskrit, Persian, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi have been translated into English (one into Marathi) and published so far with scientific commentaries as Agri-History Bulletin series. Several of these bulletins have also been published in Hindi and Marathi to cater to regional requirements.

Books
- Glimpses of the Agricultural Heritage of India
- Mriga.pakshi.shastra (The Science of Animals and Birds)
- A Textbook on Ancient History of Indian Agriculture
- Revitalizing Higher Agricultural Education in India: Journey towards Excellence

Others
- Organic Tea: A Vrikshayurveda Experience (Report)
- Seven proceedings of conferences/seminars

Ancient Classics: Agri-History Bulletins
1. Surapala's Vrikshayurveda (The Science of Plant Life)
2. Krishi-Parashara (Agriculture by Parashara)
3. Nuskha Dar Fanni-Falahat (The Art of Agriculture)
4. Kashyapiyakrishishukti (A Treatise on Agriculture by Kashyapa)
5. Vishvavallabha (Dear to the World: The Science of Plant Life)
6. Lokopakara (For the Benefit of People)
7. Krishi Gita (Agricultural Verses)
8. Upavana.vinoda (Woodland Garden for Enjoyment)
9. Krishi-shasanam (Management of Farm) (in Marathi)
Proceedings, interviews, and group activities

Several conferences and seminars were organized by AAHF and the Chapters to exchange and disseminate information on agricultural heritage. Through lectures, interviews, demonstrations, and hands-on training in ancient technologies, members of AAHF and the Chapters have promoted the activities of AAHF and created and enhanced awareness of the traditional wisdom of our ancestors in India and other countries such as Thailand and The Netherlands. AAHF has been instrumental in promoting Asian agri-history as a subject in four universities in India.

IMPACT

- AAHF publications have revived and restored the importance of agricultural heritage in Asia.
- The journal Asian Agri-History has gained importance for its high quality and timely publication and is referred to by scientists, researchers, and scholars in their publications/lectures.
- Basmati rice patent: The article on Basmati, a distinct scented variety of the Indian subcontinent, was published in the journal Asian Agri-History in 1998. It provided strong evidence in favor of the geographical identity of Basmati variety, which helped the Government of India in an international dispute on Basmati patent.
- Kalanamak rice: The historicity of Kalanamak, an aromatic rice variety, was quoted in the journal Asian Agri-History in 2005. This information has been useful as Kalanamak was awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2013 for its status in Uttar Pradesh.
- Several newspapers and magazines in Indian languages have reported AAHF activities and have included information generated from AAHF bulletins and journal for the benefit of farmers.
- Agri-History Bulletins serve as a treasure and as important sources of ancient wisdom for adoption/adaption of traditional methods by agriculturists including farmers, e.g., Vrikshayurveda practices.
- With permission from AAHF, the bulletin Vrikshayurveda was translated into Tamil and Kannada by other institutions.
- The guiding influence of AAHF has gone a long way to revolutionize several tea estates in Northeast India into organic plantations.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- To extend and intensify “the search for heritage texts/literature on agriculture and allied subjects” throughout India and other countries in Asia.
- To encourage papers from outside India for publication in Asian Agri-History journal.
- To encourage establishment of more AAHF Chapters in India and elsewhere in Asia.
- To continue efforts for promoting awareness of Asian agri-history in various forums in Asia and beyond.
- To encourage and support research on Vrikshayurveda practices.

GOVERNANCE

AAHF was established as a non-profit Trust through donations and continues to function through donations and funds from well-wishers in India and abroad. The Foundation Office is located in Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India and is annexed with a library of more than 1000 books related to agri-history.

Trustees and Advisors are based across India and in USA, Australia, The Netherlands, Canada, and Switzerland. To promote the ideology of AAHF and cover extensive areas, three regional chapters having about 30 to 60 members each were voluntarily established: (i) Rajasthan Chapter in Udaipur in 2000; (ii) Uttarakhand Chapter in Pantnagar in 2008; and (iii) West Bengal Chapter in Darjeeling in 2008. The Executive Committees of the Chapters carry out related activities in the respective states of India.