10th Agriculture Technology Seminar a replicated success

UTAR Centre for Biodiversity Research (CBR), Faculty of Science and Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research (IPSR) jointly organised a successful Agriculture Technology Seminar titled “Emerging Pests and Pesticide Resistance in Malaysia.”

This 10th series of the Agriculture and Technology seminar attracted over 160 participants comprising researchers from local and abroad, staff, students, industry consultants and sponsors to present and discuss their expertise and research findings on topics ranging from plants to poultry. The seminar was held at UTAR Perak Campus on 14 November 2014.

“I’m proud that this seminar is held for the 10th time since its debut in April 2010 and well received by sponsors such as KLK Berhad as well as the participants,” remarked Advisor to the Organising Committee Assoc Prof Dr Say Yee How, who also extended his warm welcome to the speakers as well as participants.

Keynote speaker Dr Madonna C. Casimero from the International Rice Research Institute of Myanmar Office started the ball rolling. Through her talk titled “The Weedy Rice Saga: Battling with the Close Cousin of Rice”, Dr Madonna highlighted the great damage brought by the proliferation of *Padi Angin*, as it is known locally, to rice fields in Malaysia, Thailand and even across the globe. “In 2005, economic loss due to weedy rice was estimated to be 25 million USD per year in Malaysia,” she mentioned and emphasised that until a good integrated weed management strategy is developed, the battle to control this weedy rice would remain an uphill battle.

Discussions related to papaya were also brought up by two following speakers. Former Senior Research Fellow of Malaysian Agricultural and Research Institute Dr Chan Ying Kwok presented his findings titled “Breeding for Resistance against Bacteria Die Back (*Erwinia papayae*) on Papaya in Malaysia.” This was followed by Organising Chairman Prof Dr Ooi Aun Chuan’s presentation titled “An Exotic Insect Pest of Papaya and Suggestion for Its Management” which reported the discovery of the papaya mealybug, a native insect of Central and South America, in Kampar in 2013.

Weed Management Consultant Chung Gait Fee presented a paper on weeds of plantations and their management in general, herbicide resistance, summary of herbicide resistance in Malaysia and different approaches to handle herbicide resistant biotypes in plantations. Co-owner-cum-Consultant of Vet. Biotech Dr Chong Sung Fook was the following speaker who spoke about “Antibiotic Resistance and Vaccination Failures in Poultry Farming”.

Veterinary Research Institute Research Officer Syamsyiah Aini Shohaimi with her paper titled “Emerging and Re-emerging of Avian Diseases in Malaysia” pointed out the viral poultry
diseases such as Avian Influenza (AI) and Newcastle Disease (ND) as highly contagious and can lead to huge economic losses to poultry production.

Prof Ooi summarized the presentations of the seminar and extended his gratitude to sponsor KLK Berhad and Medigene Sdn Bhd for the support. “The purpose of this seminar is to identify problems plaguing the agriculture industry and to find solutions because we simply can’t dismiss the problems,” he said.

Dean of Faculty of Science Assoc Prof Dr Lim Tuck Meng gave a closing remark, saying that seminar, being a success again is a concerted effort by the organising committee. “We’ve gone a long way to continue the tradition of holding this seminar which discusses many agriculture-related issues. In fact, there are so many issues to discuss and explore that this seminar should be continued,” said Dr Lim, who added that such continuous effort would bear fruit as there will be more understanding about agriculture, which is vital for the survival of the human race.

A participant of the seminar, Amaran s/o Raman from Iris Agrotech Sdn Bhd said that the seminar has enriched his knowledge in pest control as well as learning about some solutions which could be useful to his work.
(Clockwise from top left) Dr Madonna, Dr Chan, Chung, Syamsiah, Dr Chong and Prof Ooi
Dr Lim presenting a token of appreciation to moderators Dr Tan Swee Lian (up) and Assoc Prof Dr Tee Chong Siang
Dr Lim receiving a token of appreciation from Prof Ooi

Group photo of the speakers and participants