



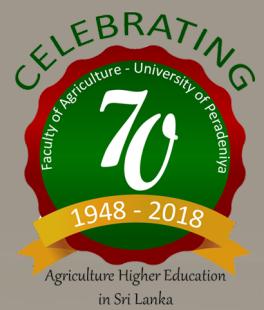
PERA e-AGRI NEWSLETTER

FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE - UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA

SERVICE EXCELLENCE, LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION, ADAPTABILITY AND INNOVATION

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Date of planting-2020.11.02
Variety -B9 352
Treatment - 9
Replicate - 03



FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE - UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA

NEWSLETTER

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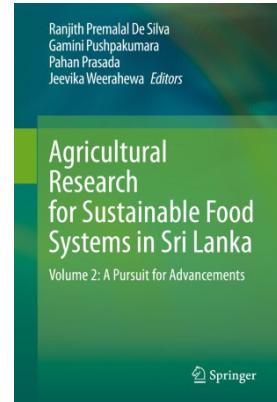


EVENTS

Faculty Published the Book - Agricultural Research for Sustainable Food Systems in Sri Lanka.

Volume 2: A Pursuit for Advancements

Faculty of Agriculture published the book titled "Agricultural Research for Sustainable Food Systems in Sri Lanka. Volume 2: A Pursuit for Advancements" in October 2020. Several academic staff members from the Faculty of Agriculture and senior scientists from the Department of Agriculture and from other government and private sector organizations contributed as authors for this book, which is now available from the Springer Nature®. The Publications and Public Relations Committee of the Faculty of Agriculture took the initiative to compile this book in 2018 as a part of the celebrations to recognize contributions of the Faculty to 70 years of agriculture higher education in Sri Lanka. Professors W.P.R.P. De Silva, D.K.N.G. Pushpakumara, H.L.J. Weerahewa and Dr. D.V.P. Prasada served as the editors.



Opening of the New Building of the Department of Crop Science



Ceremonial opening of the new building that provide an extension to the Department of Crop Science was held on 26th November 2020. The Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dean, Heads of Departments, Emeritus Professors and staff of the Department of Crop Science attended the ceremonial opening of the new building. The construction works of this three-storied building was initiated in 2016 under the Faculty Master Plan. The building houses lecture theatres, laboratories, staff rooms, and a glasshouse catering for the purpose of teaching, training and research activities.



Annual Congress of the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture Successfully Staged Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic



Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture (PGIA) is the postgraduate arm of the Faculty of Agriculture. The PGIA Annual Congress provide the platform for researchers to present, discuss, debate and disseminate scholarly research findings stemming out from postgraduate research work in Agriculture and allied disciplines to a wider national and international scientific community. The 32nd Annual Congress of the PGIA was held during 19-20 November, 2020 as a virtual conference at the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya. Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka and Maldives, H.E. Mr. Denis Chaibi graced the inaugural session of the congress as the Chief Guest.

Distinguished Professor Ratan Lal, Carbon Management and Sequestration Center, The Ohio State University Columbus, USA, delivered the keynote speech on 'Managing Soils for Addressing Global Environmental Challenges'. Several other dignitaries including Prof. Upul B. Dissanayake, The Vice Chancellor, University of Peradeniya, Prof. C.M.B. Dematawewa, Director, PGIA and Prof. D.K.N.G. Pushpakumara, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, addressed the Inaugural Session of the Congress. Professor John Dixon, University of Queensland, Australia and Professor John W Crawford, University of Glasgow Adam Smith Business School, Glasgow delivered the invited speeches.

Researchers conducted oral presentations under 11 scientific sessions: Nutrition & Food Quality, Agronomy & Plant Breeding, Organizational Management & Extension, Economic Efficiency in Agricultural Systems, Functional Properties in Food, Microbiology & Biotechnology, Modeling & Forecasting and Resource Management in Cascade Systems. Posters were present in the sessions on Crop and Soil Science, Resource Management & Extension and Technological Interventions in Food & Agriculture. In parallel to the PGIA congress several side events took place. In order to improve the communication skills and effective disseminating scientific findings by budding scientists, four workshops were also held on different



topics related to publications and presentations. The Soil Science Society of Sri Lanka also joined with the 32nd Annual Congress with the PGIA and jointly hosted a virtual technical session on 19 November 2020 on "Biochar for improving soil functions". These workshops and technical sessions were well attended by a large number of registered participants.

Prof. R.S. Dharmakeerthi of Department of Soil Science served as the coordinator of 32nd PGIA annual congress and several staff members of Faculty of Agriculture served in the organizing committee. We congratulate Prof. R.S. Dharmakeerthi and his team for the job well done.

FEATURE ARTICLES



Career achievements: An interview with Prof. W.A.P. Weerakkody, The Chairman of National Institute of Postharvest Management

Prof. W.A.P. Weerakkody, a Senior Professor in the Department of Crop Science of Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya with over 30 years of experience in the field of horticulture, has been appointed as the Chairman of the National Institute of Postharvest Management (NIPHM) in Sri Lanka with effect from January 2020. The NIPHM is operating under the Ministry of Agriculture with the main objective to improve postharvest technology of durable and perishable crops through research, developments, training, extension and consultancy/advisory services. At present, it is under the purview of the State Ministry of Paddy, Other field crops, Organic agriculture and Fruits and Vegetables. An interview was conducted with Prof. Weerakkody on his new role as the Chairman at NIPHM.

Q- What is NIPHM and its basic tasks?

A- The NIPHM was formally known as Institute of Postharvest Technology (IPHT), and is descending from the Rice Processing Research and Development Center (RPRDC) which was established in 1970s. Presently its mandate covers all the value-chain management aspects of a broad range of crops including rice, other cereals, pulses, condiment crops, fruits, vegetables, floricultural crops and export agricultural crops. We aim to reduce post-harvest losses of all the target crops and to increase shelf-life of perishable crop based food commodities and to assure food security and nutritional needs of Sri Lankans. The main institution is located at Anuradhapura and regional centers are located in Colombo, Kandy, Wariyapola, NuwaraEliya, Ampara and Hambantota, covering the major production centers of the target crops and also the major agro-climatic zones.

Q- As a national institute, what is the role of NIPHM in national agriculture?

A- Although the farmers get a good quality harvest, its full benefits has not been realized by the nation due to inadequate attention on postharvest management, which is essential to maintain the quality of the produce until it reaches the consumer. Thus, we develop and disseminate technologies and provide the necessary support to reduce postharvest losses enabling all the role players of the value chain to get a reasonable share of the profit.

Q- What are the programs implemented by the institute to achieve the institutional objectives?

A- We conduct research and developmental programs and regular and tailor-made training programs. Most of our research projects are government funded, and some are sponsored by the private sector. All researches are focused on nationally important issues. For instance, a team of researchers are developing a temperature and humidity controlled storage system for onions, aiming to subside price hikes in onions during the off-season. As one of its developmental programs, NIPHM recommended to use plastic crates throughout the value chain of fruits and vegetables to reduce postharvest losses. This good practice was almost rejected at its inception. However, we have revised the program along with a subsidy scheme and connected with the rest of the value chain steps, through which we managed to increase its adoption rate. Also we conduct awareness campaigns and training programs to disseminate knowledge and skills to different stakeholders including farmers, food processors, government officers, students, etc.



Q- What are the future prospects with respect to the institute's goals?

A- For the year 2021, many R and D proposals have been developed by the researchers of the institute. Further, we managed to establish collaborations with several external institutions and research groups locally and internationally.

Some of the activities planned are research on assessment of postharvest losses and greenhouse gas emissions from food wastes; feasibility of cold-storage and transport by railways and reefer containers (sea freight); vertebrate pest control and developing harvesting tools for tall canopies. We also plan to run a few pilot projects to improve the supply chain management of fresh fruits and vegetables reducing their post-harvest losses from 40% to 25%. During the last few decades marketing process, especially of perishable crop produce has not much changed, other than minor changes in value-chains of supermarkets or export-oriented markets. Therefore, we are planning to introduce new value chain projects in the future, especially for perishable produce with the ministry and treasury's support. Further, the institute hopes to expand its regional extension network by adding three more centers at Gampaha, Monaragala and Trincomalee during the next year. Moreover, the usual awareness and training programs of the institute will be further improved by organizing 1-2-day awareness campaigns, targeting stake holders in Colombo and five other main cities of Sri Lanka during 2021 and 2022.



Q- How is your affiliation to the University of Peradeniya supporting you to achieve the institute's goals?

A- First of all, I must thank the university authority for permitting me to take up this responsibility on part-time basis. I am working in the university 2 days a week and rest of the period at the institute. Some of the research staff at NIPHM and the collaborators were alumni of the University of Peradeniya. The strong student-teacher bond that we preserved at the University was very much helpful in implementing our programs. My colleagues of the University of Peradeniya, together with some other resource persons from other universities of Sri Lanka, including those at NERD Center provide their maximum support by giving technical advises in the fields of agriculture engineering, food technology, horticulture and bio-statistics. Especially the collaboration of Prof. Sanath Amaratunga and his crew (Faculty of Agriculture) on system automation and the commitments of Prof. Leelananda Rajapakse (Faculty of Engineering) on developing a

formal link for technology transfer with the NERD Centre deserve special thanks. In this way, my ties with my first affiliation, the University of Peradeniya have worked here so much.

We congratulate Prof. Weerakkody on his career advancement directly contributing to the development of agriculture sector in the country.

The interview was conducted by Ms. Ranmalee Serasinghe (AG/15/183) and Ms. Darshika Perera (AG/15/176) from the Agriculture Faculty Journalism and Media Society under the guidance of Prof. Ramya Fonseka and Drs. Warshi Dandeniya and Uvasara Dissanayake.



A Precious Gift from Homegarden to Fight Evil Cancer

Plants have been the origin of many medicinal drugs which are used today to prevent and treat diseases and conditions in both human and animals. Tropical countries includes Sri Lanka are hot spots harbouring many plant species with superb medicinal properties. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in developing countries and one in every eight men and one in every eleven women die from any type of cancer worldwide. Among many cancer types oral cancer is the second frequent type of cancer in Sri Lanka. However, oral cancer is also one of the most preventable cancers with known risk factors which can be easily modified with habitual intervention.

Many therapeutic drugs are being tested for the treatment of cancer and plants have been a key focus in anti-cancer drug discovery. Heen bovitiya (*Osbeckia octandra*) is an indigenous plant to Sri Lanka and widely used in traditional medical practice for many diseases especially related to the liver including the cirrhosis. Heen bovitiya is a small shrub and presently popular as an ornamental plant in home-gardens as it bears beautiful violet colour flowers. Paying attention to the herbal properties of the plant, a final year undergraduate project of Faculty of Agriculture was formulated to evaluate and find possible anti-cancer bioactive properties of leaves of the Heen bovitiya plant.

The study has provided first hand evidence that water extracts from the leaves of Heen bovitiya has induced the oral cancer cell death under the in vitro conditions and significantly reduced the spreading (metastasis) of the cancer. Moreover, Heen bovitiya leaf extract has the ability to induce the cancer cell death by damaging the nuclear material DNA present in the cancer cells very effectively.

Further investigations should be carried out to reveal and identify the anti-cancer compounds from Heen bovitiya, which would increase its potential to be developed as a therapeutic drug for oral cancer. All experiments were conducted at the Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Research Laboratory in the Department of Animal Science as a final year undergraduate research project by Ms. Madhusha Prasadani (AG/13/257) and was recently publish in an indexed international journal "Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Medicine and Pathology". The study was supervised by Dr. K.P.S.S. Kodituwakku from Department of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture and Dr. R.P. Illeperuma from the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya.

Research article link: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joms.2020.09.003>



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Original Research

Leaf Extract of *Osbeckia octandra* L. (Heen Bovitiya) Suppresses Human Oral Squamous Cell Carcinoma Cells Migration and Induces Cellular DNA Damage*

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Ms. Madusha Prasadani
AG/13/257

Developing Eco-friendly Soil Fertility Management Technologies for Rice Cultivation in Sri Lanka



Indiscriminate fertilizer usage and related environmental and health issues are hot topics in the agriculture sector today. Even with correct usage of chemical fertilizers, about 50 -70% of the applied fertilizers are lost from soil polluting the environment. In order to minimize losses while protecting the food security and environmental health of the country, the Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture in collaboration with several other local and foreign institutions, i.e. Rice Research and Development Institute (RRDI), Batalegoda, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, The University of Winnipeg and International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) is conducting a target oriented research project with the funding from National Research Council of Sri Lanka (NRC TO-16/07). The 5-year project was started in 2017 and during the past four years the scientists have developed number of eco-friendly farming technologies to reduce chemical fertilizer usage in the rice cultivation of Sri Lanka, the sector which uses about 50% of the chemical fertilizers imported to Sri Lanka.



This project has been conducted in seven work packages. A research team lead by Prof. W.A.U. Vitharana of Department of Soil Science calibrated a site-specific nutrient management decision support system to identify the optimum N-P-K rates required for individual paddy fields in Sri Lanka and validated it. They have observed that with identified optimum rates the productivity of the rice fields could be increased by about 500 kg per hectare on the average.

Dr. W.S. Dandeniya from the Department of Soil Science in collaboration with Dr. W. Balasooriya from Wayamba University of Sri Lanka developed two biofertilizers to solubilize unavailable soil P and to fix

atmospheric N in paddy fields. They observed that by using biofertilizers the synthetic fertilizer that provide N and P can be reduced by 25-50% depending on the site characteristics. Another team lead by Prof. R.S. Dharmakeerthi from Department of Soil Science developed a novel and low cost slow-release urea fertilizer that has the capacity to reduce urea application by 25% in paddy fields. For this slow-release fertilizer they used rice husk biochar to regulate the N release from urea granules. Recycling of agricultural wastes such as rice husk using biochar technology was another aspect considered in this project.



Dr. A.K. Karunaratna from the Department of Agricultural Engineering and his team developed an industrial scale down-draft pyrolyzer, which has the capacity of producing rice husk biochar continuously at a rate of 20-30 kg per hour, fulfilling a long-felt need in waste management. Using these developed technologies Mr. D.N. Sirisena and Dr. U.K. Rathnayaka of Rice Research and RRDI Batalegoda and Prof. R.S. Dharmakeerthi are conducting field trials to identify the best combination of developed technologies to reduce chemical fertilizer usage while maintaining or increasing productivity in rice cultivated fields in Sri Lanka. Two seasons of field experiments conducted so far suggests that the new eco-friendly technologies could be incorporated with the parachute transplanting technique effectively. Prof. D.M. de Costa from the Department of Agricultural Biology and Dr. A.M.C.P.K. Attanayaka from Department of Soil Science are evaluating the environmental and plant health aspects related to the developed new technologies while Prof. U.K. Jayasinghe-Mudalige from Wayamba University of Sri Lanka is assessing the socio-economic and marketing related issues. In addition to above mentioned scientists, Prof. D. Kumaragamage from the University of Winnipeg and Dr. T. Stayanarayana and Dr. K. Mujumdar from International Plant Nutrition Institute are supporting to develop these technologies. More than ten publications have been made from this research in refereed journals. Prof. R.S. Dharmakeerthi lead the project as the principal investigator.

If the developed technologies are fully adopted by the paddy sector of Sri Lanka and reduce chemical fertilizer usage by 25%, which experiments conducted so far indicates, then the country would be able to save about Rs. 5 billion per annum from foreign exchange earnings. There will be many virtual rewards by safeguarding the environment as well.

APPOINTMENTS



Professor W.P.R.P. De Silva has been appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Vocational Technology, Sri Lanka with effect from 8th October 2020.



Professor B.F.A. Basnayake has been conferred the title of "Professor Emeritus" in appreciation of his valuable and dedicated service to the University.



Dr. N.U. Jayawardana has been appointed as the Head of the Department of Agricultural Biology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya for a period of three years with effect from 21st November 2020.



Dr. S.H.N.P. De Silva assumed duties as a Senior Lecturer (Grade II) affiliated to the Department of Crop Science at the Sub Campus, Mahailuppallama on 14th October 2020. Dr. De Silva obtained Ph.D. from the University of Tokyo, Japan. His dissertation is titled "Optimizing Productivity and Quality of Wheat through Modelling Approach".



Ms. A.B.P. Bandara joined the Department of Agricultural Engineering as a Lecturer (Probationary) on 3rd November 2020.



Ms. S.S.K. Chandrasekara joined the Department of Agricultural Engineering as a Lecturer (Probationary) on 9th November 2020.

RETIREMENTS

Prof. D.C. Bandara



Prof. D.C. Bandara retired from University service on 26th November 2020 after serving the Department of Agricultural Biology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya for over 42 years, of which 18 years were in the capacity of a Professor/ Senior Professor. Prof. Bandara

taught and trained undergraduates and postgraduates in the fields of basic and advanced plant physiology, stress physiology, developmental biology, cell biology and plant biochemistry. During her tenure, she has served as the Head of the Department of Agricultural Biology, and the Chairperson of the Board of study in Agricultural Biology, Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya. Prof. Bandara was instrumental in establishing the Teaching methodology unit of the Faculty of Agriculture and she was the first Director of the staff development centre of University of Peradeniya. Prof. Bandara provided her invaluable service for the activities pertaining to quality assurance in higher education in Sri Lanka under the University Grants Commission. The Faculty very much appreciates her services to the students, colleagues and administration. We wish her a happy and healthy retirement.

Prof. K.A. Nandasena



Prof. K.A. Nandasena retired on 2nd December 2020 after 40+ years of service to the Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya. He first joined the Department as a temporary lecturer in 1979 and gradually advanced in his career contributing to develop the field of

soil fertility and plant nutrition in agriculture higher education in the country. At the time of retirement, he was serving as a Senior Professor in the Department. During his tenure, Prof. Nandasena has served as the Head of the Department of Soil Science, a core member of the Curriculum Development Committee of the Faculty, a Council Member of several state Universities and two consecutive terms as the Vice Chancellor of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka (RUSL). He also served in a number of national level committees related to agriculture. Prof. Nandasena was honored with Doctor of Science (honoris causa) degree by Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. He is a founder member of the Staff Welfare Society of the Faculty of Agriculture. The Faculty very much appreciates his services to the students, colleagues and administration. We wish him a happy and healthy retirement life.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Drs. R.P.N.P. Rajapakse and B.E.P. Mendis - recognition of research contributions

Drs. R.P.N.P. Rajapakse and B.E.P. Mendis have been ranked among the top 2% scientists of the world for the year 2019 in a recent paper from Stanford University USA, published in the Journal of PLoS Biology. This has been based on a publicly available database of 100,000 top scientists that provides standardized information on citations, h-index, co-authorship-adjusted hm-index, citations to papers in different authorship positions, and a composite indicator. We congratulate Drs. Rajapaksha and Mendis on their achievements.



Dr. D.V. P. Prasada – Award winner Global Development Awards Competition 2020

Dr. D.V. P. Prasada of Department of Agricultural Economics and Business Management is the recipient of 2nd prize of the Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development, which is a competitive research grant program under the Global Development Awards Competition 2020. This year awards have been granted for three winning projects proposals that were developed based on well research policy implications and hold promise to improve understanding of development related issues. Dr. Prasada was awarded with US \$ 10,000 for the project titled "Balancing a triple threat: divers' health, collapse of fishery and the vulnerability of livelihoods in the artisanal sea cucumber fishery in Sri Lanka". We congratulate Dr. Prasada on his achievement.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Workshop on Ethical Conduct of Work

A workshop on 'Your Ethical Conduct at Work' was conducted for the non-academic staff members of the Department of Crop Science on 9th December 2020 under AHEAD ELTA/ELSE World Bank funded grant received by the Department. Mr. Saman Rajapakshe, Registrar, University of Peradeniya served as the resource person.

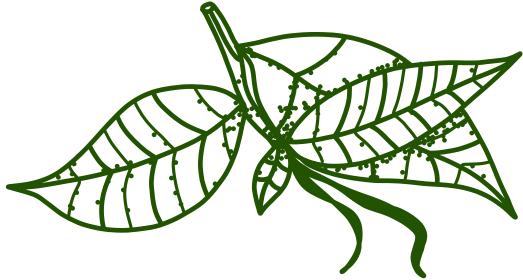


Awareness Program on 'Sensitivity to Gender'

The Gender Education and Women's Initiative Unit (GEWIU) of the Department of Agricultural Extension, Faculty of Agriculture conducted an awareness program on 'sensitivity to gender' for the 1st year students at the Mahailuppallama Sub Campus from 9th to 12th of November 2020 as half a day sessions on group basis. Ms. R.M.S. Wijerathna, Coordinator of the GEWIU served as the resource person.

Orientation Program for Probationary Academic Staff Members

The Teaching Methods Unit of the Faculty of Agriculture conducted an orientation program for the probationary academic staff members of the Faculty on 28th November 2020. This program was introduced to support them fitting into their new job role as University Academics at University of Peradeniya. History and the administrative structure of the Faculty of Agriculture, ethical conduct in the workplace, conducting in course delivery on-ground and online, conducting assessments of laboratory and field-based assignments, anti-rag act and by laws, probationary staff member as student counselors, rights and responsibilities of the employees, career development, opportunities for postgraduate studies were among the topics addressed during the program. Profs. D.K.N.G. Pushpakumara (Dean), D.C. Bandara, B. Marambe, G.L.L.P. Silva, H.L.J. Weerahewa, R.M.C.P. Rajapaksha, D.A.N. Dharmasena, W.M.T. Madhujith, and S.P. Nissanka, Dr. L.N.A.C. Jayawardena and Mr. Saman Rajapakshe, Registrar of University of Peradeniya served as the resource persons. Based on the feedback of participants, this program will include to the Faculty calendar as an annual event.



OUTREACH

Ceylon Tea – Our Nations' Pride



The Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya partnered with the Sri Lanka Tea Board to conduct full-day seminar sessions at the Ceylon Tea Museum at Hantana, Kandy on 23rd December 2020. The Technical Sessions and the guided tour in the Museum was held on the theme "Ceylon Tea – Our Nations' Pride: A Road Map for Sri Lanka Tea Industry, a



way forward". Professor D.K.N.G. Pushpakumara, Dean of Faculty of Agriculture, Mr. J. Molligoda, Chairman, Sri Lanka Tea Board, Mr. J. Edirisinghe, Tea Commissioner, Mr. S. Alawathegama, Deputy Chairman, Planters' Association of Sri

Lanka and Mr. B. Baptist, Borker's Association of Ceylon graced the Inaugural session. Prof. S.P. Nissanka, Drs H.M.G.S.B. Hitinayake, A.J. Mohotti and K.W.L.K. Weerasinghe served as the Resource Persons from the Faculty of Agriculture in the Technical Sessions and Panel Discussions. Dr. M. Ariyaratne, Head, Department of Crop Science and final year students attached to the Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture participated for the event. Several officers from the Sri Lanka Tea Board, Planters Association, and Broker's Association also served as resource persons. Prof. B. Marambe of Department of Crop Science and Mr. D. Karunaratne of Sri Lanka Tea Board jointly moderated the sessions.



Research Partnerships on the Preparation of Soil Organic Carbon Inventory and Maps of Sri Lanka

Prof. R.S. Dharmakeerthi and Prof. W.A.U. Vitharana from the Department of Soil Science received a consultancy project from the Ministry of Environment, Sri Lanka for the preparation of national soil organic carbon stocks inventory and digital maps. The project is financially supported by a special grant that value Rs. 4.52 million awarded from Global Environment Facility (GEF) program of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through the Ministry of Environment. The database and digital maps developed through this project will be indispensable resource for national reporting for global initiatives such as Land degradation neutrality (LDN), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), framework for reducing emissions from Deforestation and Forest degradation in Developing countries (REDD+ mechanism) and research on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Further, the Department of Soil Science received a project on "Analysis of the soil & litter samples of the National Forest Inventory". The Project is funded by the Department of Forest Conservation and the value of the grant is Rs. 5.13 million. The activities of the project will be coordinated by Prof. R.S. Dharmakeerthi and Dr. D.N. Vidana Gamage.

The funds of both projects will be handled through the Agribusiness Centre of the Faculty of Agriculture. In addition to their national relevance and contribution to the granting institutions, both these projects will support capacity building of undergraduate students and staff of the Faculty by providing opportunities to engage in nationally important research activities. Further the funds received through these two projects will help to improve laboratory environments of the Department of Soil Science.

ACTIVITIES OF STUDENT SOCIETIES

Stay Connected and Nurture Creativity: AFELA



The Agriculture Faculty English Literary Association (AFELA) of the Faculty of Agriculture, officially launched the VISION Magazine for this year on the 22nd December 2020 along with a Facebook Live session on its official page. The launch of VISION Magazine has always been one of the main events in AFELA calendar and the magazine showcase creative work of the students of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya. Although a Talent Show is usually held in parallel to the launch of the magazine, taking the prevailing COVID19 pandemic situation into consideration, this year VISION Magazine was launched on a virtual platform for the first time in history as an e-magazine with a number of online side events.

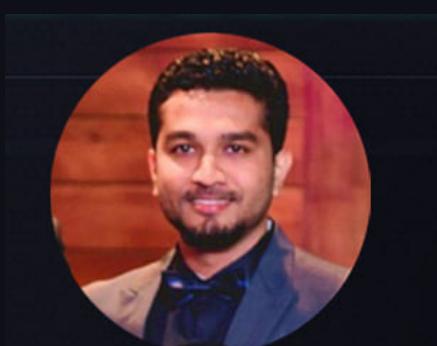
AFELA took initiatives to popularize themselves among the public by launching several competitions under the categories of poetry, short story, article writing, drama scripts, paintings, doodles and cartoons that were opened for school children and undergraduates from all local universities. An e-certificate will be awarded to all participants and the outstanding creations will be published in the next AFELA Vision Magazine.

AFELA has also conducted several other projects despite the pandemic situation such as Virtual AFELA birthday, Virtual AFELA Debater with Live stream broadcast, Be Yourself Facebook article series etc. AFELA has also extended the reach through many social platforms namely Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn. Dr. L.N.A.C. Jayawardena guided the students as the Senior Treasurer of AFELA in their activities.

Visit AFELA Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/afelauniversityofperadeniya/> to receive more recent updates of their activities.

Remain Active and be Popular:

Society of Food Science and Technology (SFST) conducted an interactive session on 20th December 2020 with Mr. Tharindu Gallage, CEO, Empire Food Solutions (Pvt.) Ltd. via zoom with active participation of about 100 undergraduate students of the Faculty. Further the Society conducted a virtual orientation program for the first year students of Faculty of Agriculture to introduce SFST and its activities. Nearly 60 new members join the Society after the orientation program.



Mr. Tharindu Gallage
CEO/Food Technologist
Empire Food Solutions (Pvt) Ltd.

Society for Aquatic Resources Conservation celebrates World Fisheries Day

Society for Aquatic Resources Conservation organized a photography, essay and drawing competition parallel to World Fisheries Day 2020 from 22nd November to 6th December, 2020. The competition was open to undergraduates and students of higher educational institutes of Sri Lanka. Ms. M.R.F. Rifdha of Ocean University of Sri Lanka won the first place in photography competition while Mr. S. Jayawardene of University of Peradeniya won the first place in drawing competition while Ms. G. Diddeniya of University of Peradeniya won the first place in essay competition. The activities were held under the guidance of Dr. A.R.S.B. Athauda, Senior Treasurer of the Society. More details of the event is available in Facebook page of the Aquatic Resources Conservation Society (<https://www.facebook.com/pearaSARC/>).



Sanoj Jayawardene
University of Peradeniya



1st

Ishara Rajapaksha
University of Peradeniya



2nd

Janith Chandrasiri
University College of Anuradhapura



3rd

M.R.F. Rifdha
Ocean University of Sri Lanka



1st

Vimukthi Dissanayake
Ocean University of Sri Lanka



2nd

W.M.H.G. Prabath
University of Peradeniya



3rd