Plant Genome Savior Community Award

While the contributions of scientists in the advancement of agriculture is measurable and quantifiable in the form of desired outcomes, the contribution of large number of individual farmers and farming communities who are engaged in agriculture for generations in conserving the agro-biodiversity which many times has even contributed in the development of many improved varieties goes unnoticed. It is these unsung heroes who have made important and decisive contributions towards advancement of Indian agriculture that the PPV&FR Authority wants to honour. It is to achieve this objective that the Plant Genome Savior Community Award are to be given annually. The award consist of Rs 10 lakhs in cash alongwith a citation and a memento. A maximum of 5 such awards will be given every year. The selection of awardee(s) is done by a national level committee.

The Award is open to all Indian farming communities, particularly the tribal and rural communities engaged in conservation, improvement and preservation of genetic resources of economic plants and their wild relatives particularly in the areas identified as agro-biodiversity hotspots. The applicants are required to submit evidences in support of the conservation work done by them, provide seeds/planting material of the conserved varieties, brief proposal for the utilization of the award money in community welfare and also to inform if the material has been utilized by any breeder in developing any other improved varieties etc.

Plant Genome Savior Community Awardees 2009-10

- Kopatgiri Nandiveerimath Seva Foundation, Gadag, Karnataka: for **in situ** conservation and documentation of 210 medicinal plant species, afforestation, & biodiversity conservation in Kopatgiri hills, Gadag, Karnataka
- Panchabati Gramya Unayana Samiti, Koraput, Odisha: for conservation of traditional rice land races some of which have also been used by scientists in developing improved varieties

Govt. of India have constituted the National Gene Fund that will also be utilized for:
- Payment of benefit sharing and compensation to local communities and
- Supporting the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources including **in situ** and **ex situ** conservation and
- Strengthening the capability of panchayats in carrying out such conservation and sustainable use

Before the formal initiation of Plant Genome Savior Community Awards starting from the year 2009-10, the Authority as a mark of recognition for the selfless conservation of genetic resources by farmers/farming communities, has awarded ‘Plant Genome Savior Community Recognition’ certificates to 9 farmers / communities during 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Plant Genome Savior Community Recognition Certificate Awardees during 2007-08

- Rung Bhotiya Farmers’ Community, Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand for low gluten wheat germplasm
- Sh B Pradeesh & others, Pallakad, Kerala for Kunju kunju rice land races
- Panchabati Gramya Unayana Samiti, Koraput, Odisha for conservation of rice landraces and also sharing these with scientists for use in their crop improvement programme
- Sh Sundaram Verma, Sikar, Rajasthan for excellent work done for conservation of traditional varieties of pearl millet, chickpea & cumin
- Swathi Samudaya Beej Bank, Tumkur, Karnataka for selection and conservation of white seeded horsegram

Plant Genome Savior Community Recognition Certificate Awardees during 2008-09

- Vrihi Beej Binimoy Kendra, West Bengal for conservation of 550 rice land races
- Farming and Tribal Communities of Jharkhand, Ranchi for conservation of 19 rice landraces having unique resistant gene against Bacterial Leaf Blight
- Sh P Narayanan Unny, Pallakad, Kerala for conservation of Navara rice landraces
- Kuruchiya and Kuruma Tribal Communities, Wayanad, Kerala for very good work done for conservation of rice land races with drought tolerance and medicinal properties

Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights (PPV&FR) Act, 2001 provides for the establishment of an effective system for protection of plant varieties, the rights of farmers and plant breeders and encourage the development of new varieties of plants.

PPV&FR Authority has finalized and notified distinctiveness, uniformity & stability (DUS) criteria for 45 crop species which form the basis for registration of plant varieties. Plant variety registration certificates for 274 varieties have been granted. This confers an exclusive right on the farmer/breeder(s) to produce, sell, market, distribute, import or export the registered variety.

As of now 270 varieties of rice, wheat, maize, cotton, sorghum, pearl millet, jute, chickpea, french bean & other crops are under various stages of testing for granting of registration. The Authority has established a separate Gene bank for conservation of seeds of the protected varieties, publishes the monthly Plant Variety Journal of India, supports 47 DUS test centers across the country for maintenance breeding & development of DUS criteria. Training and awareness generation programmes are regularly being organized/supported for the benefit of different stakeholders.
Mandate of PPV&FR Authority:

- To establish an effective system for protection of plant varieties, the rights of farmers and plant breeders and to encourage the development of new varieties of plants
- To recognize and protect the rights of the farmers in respect of their contribution made at any time in conserving, improving and making available plant genetic resources for the development of new plant varieties
- To protect plant breeders’ rights to stimulate investment for research for R&D in public & private sector for development of new varieties
- To facilitate the growth of seed industry in the country that will ensure the availability of high quality seeds and planting material to the farmers

Identified Agro-Biodiversity hot spots in India:

Application Form for the Plant Genome Savior Community Award

1. Name of the applicant(s)/Community:
2. Postal address, including block, village, P.O., District, State, Pin, Tel no, if any):
3. Status (Community/farming Community based organisation):
4. Agro-Biodiversity Hotspot area to which the community/applicant belongs?
5. Location of the conservation site:
6. Plants/Crops in which the conservation efforts have been made:
7. How many varieties (including farmers’ varieties, economic plants, wild relatives and other genetic resources) have been conserved (give details plants/crop wise)?
8. How much area is being planted/cultivated by the applicant with the conserved varieties?
9. Whether any innovative methods of conservation like cultural practices, storage techniques etc developed/adopted?
10. Give information (if available) about the varieties that were shared with others.
11. What is the distinct trait identified in the conserved variety/varieties (give details on variety basis)?
12. Name of the organization, if any, that identified any useful trait in the conserved varieties.
13. Has the variety (s) been entered in the Peoples’ Biodiversity Register maintained by the Biodiversity Management Committee? Yes/No
14. Whether the farming community rewarded or recognized for the conservation efforts by any other organization (give details)?
15. Name the agencies (Govt./NGO) conversant with the claims made.
16. Give a brief outline of the proposed work plan for utilization of the Award money (in 15-20 lines).

(Representative(s) of the farming community) I/We also certify that I/We have no conflict of interest/association or accrue any economic benefits with/from the above farmer(s)/community.

(Chairperson or Secretary of the concerned Panchayati/ Bio-Diversity Management Committee/concerned District Agricultural Officer/Director of Research (SAUs) or concerned District Tribal Development Officer)

Duly filled one set of application & declaration as annexure along with supportive information should reach in the following address:

Societies Block, 2nd Floor, NASC complex, DPS Marg, opp Todapur Village New Delhi 110 012.
Phone: 011-2584127, 25840777 Fax: 011-25840478
E-mail: ppvfr-agri@nic.in
www.plantauthority.gov.in