



INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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From the Secretariat

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ICAC COTTON RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR - 2011

The International Cotton Advisory Committee honors a cotton researcher every year by awarding a certificate of recognition, a shield and an honorarium of US\$1,000. Every year applications are invited from February 1 to March 31. This year ten candidates from seven countries applied or were nominated for the 2011 award. The Selection Committee comprises of five anonymous judges from four countries. Members of the Selection Committee came to a consensus and selected Dr. Sukumar Saha, Research Geneticist, USDA/ARS, Genetics and Precision Agriculture Unit, Mississippi State, MS 39762, USA (E-mail: Sukumar.Saha@ars.usda.gov) as the **ICAC Cotton Researcher of the Year 2011**.

Dr. Sukumar Saha has thirty-five years of professional experience. He worked as an agricultural extension worker for eight years in India before immigrating to the USA. After working as a Research Assistant Professor for five years at Alabama A&M University, Dr. Saha assumed the present position with USDA/ARS in 1997. He demonstrated outstanding stature and received significant recognition as an international authority in cotton genomics and cytogenetic resources that are being used by the scientists in the USA and around the world. In recognition of his contributions to cotton, he was awarded "2010 Outstanding Research Award in Cotton Genetics" at the Beltwide Cotton Conferences organized by the National Cotton Council of America every year. Over 5,000 researchers/farmers attend these conferences.

Dr. Saha made a major contribution in developing PCR-based SSR markers (JSPER and MGHES), a critical first step for the use of PCR-based marker technologies in cotton breeding programs. MGHES markers were first publicly available EST-SSR markers for use as a tool for marker assisted selection program and molecular mapping in cotton. He also made a significant contribution in the discovery of molecular markers associated with important traits in cotton. Dr. Saha is one of the two lead scientists providing leadership in the release of 17 interspecific chromosome substitution lines in cotton. This research will provide a tool to overcome the problems of interspecific introgression and in the discovery of some novel genes or traits whose effects could not be detected in the donor Pima 3-79 line.

Dr. Saha helped to establish one of the most advanced molecular biology lab in the Central Asia and trained Uzbek young scientists. He is one of eight founding scientists who initiated International Cotton Genome Initiative organization (ICGI) to facilitate collaborative research work on cotton genomics at the global level about eight years ago. As the chairman of the Germplasm Work Group of ICGI, Dr. Saha provided leadership for the first time to document the current status of world cotton collection in collaboration with the curators from the major cotton growing countries and this report has recently been published in *Crop Science* as the cover page paper (2010. 50:1161-1179). Dr. Saha's research productivity is well documented in about 130 publications, including 77 peer-reviewed journal articles in many prominent journals, one germplasm release notice, a co-edited book, additional multiple papers and abstracts in presentations at conferences.

Dr. Saha is the third receipt of this award. The ICAC Researcher of the Year Award will continue. Information about the award is available at http://www.icac.org/tis/researcher_of_the_year/english.html.

Press releases are available via e-mail. Register online for this free service at:
<https://www.icac.org/cart/register.php?newsletter=1>

The Secretariat of the Committee publishes information related to world cotton production, supply, demand and prices, and provides technical information on cotton production technology. Detailed statistics are found bimonthly in *COTTON: Review of the World Situation*, \$185 per year via email, \$230 per year in hard copy. A monthly outlook is available by email for \$295 per year. Access to the latest weekly estimates of world cotton supply and use by the Secretariat is available on the Internet for \$460 per year. Access Secretariat reports at <www.icac.org>.