

## **Joint workshop for Enhancing the Plant Quarantine Pest Monitoring and Investigation Capabilities with FAO**

Dr. Jeongbin Im

Professor, Seoul National University, Korea

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) announced that it held the joint workshop on developing plant quarantine for pest monitoring and investigation capabilities in Southeast Asia, in association with UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This project was the second joint project between MAFRA and FAO since they signed an MOU for food security in 2011. Actually MAFRA and FAO initiated the project for improving trans-border animal disease response capabilities in June 2012. In this workshop, there were more than 30 experts from Southeast Asian countries, APPPC, NPPO and FAO who were present. They analyzed the status of pest incidence and quarantine and discussed specific project plans by country and partner cooperation system.

The Korean government (mainly MAFRA) is planning to provide approximately 2 billion won by 2016 for the project to reinforce plant protection and quarantine capabilities for five countries near the Mekong River, such as Cambodia, Thailand and Laos, as well as Nepal. Through this project, MAFRA will diagnose the status of pest monitoring and investigation in those countries and run training programs customized for each country to enhance their monitoring and investigation capabilities. In addition, MAFRA will also lay the foundation for pest investigation by establishing a plant pest information system and utilizing it in updating and developing a regulated pest list.

Meanwhile, FAO International Plant Protection Convention (FAO/IPPC) has defined the improvement of plant quarantine capabilities of developing countries as a key project in the mid- and long-term project plan (2012-2019), and contributed to increasing farming production and income in those countries. IPPC is an international organization established within UN/FAO in 1951 for safe production of crops through prevention of inflow and spread of plant pests. Currently, it has 177 member countries and implements missions such as establishment of international standards for plant quarantine, stable food production and improvement of capabilities of developing countries.

As there is increasing pest incidence for various reasons, including global warming and increasing trade of agricultural products with expansion of market openings, the possibility of inflow of foreign plant pests into agricultural importing countries such as Korea has increased. Improving the quarantine capabilities of developing countries in Southeast Asia is expected to contribute to minimizing the inflow of harmful pests in the trading of agricultural products and improving the safety of agricultural products. It is a “win-win” program between agricultural importing and exporting countries. Particularly this project will be helpful for agricultural exporting and developing countries.

Date submitted: December 8, 2013

Reviewed, edited and uploaded: December 11, 2013