

This is the third issue of the IPM Innovation Lab newsletter.

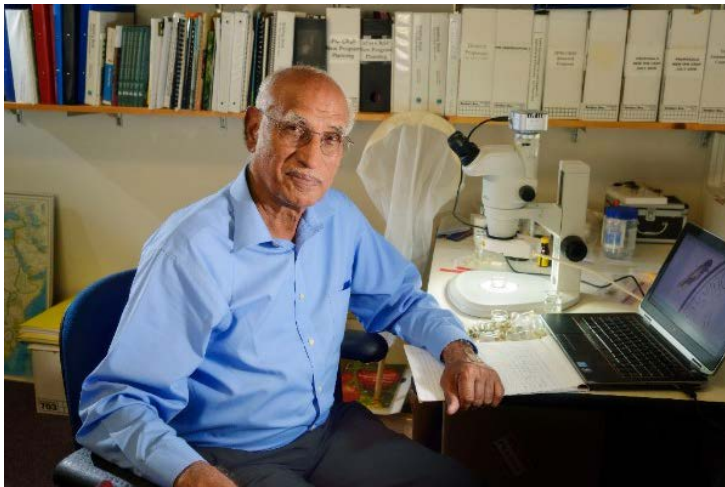
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# IPM INNOVATION LAB

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for  
Integrated Pest Management

## Muni's Musings



Hello readers,

Welcome to the third edition of our Integrated Pest Management Innovation Lab newsletter. In this issue, we talk to Dr. Wondi Mersie, the Principal Investigator on our Biological Control of Parthenium project, and Laouali Amadou, a Ph.D. candidate in entomology from Niger who studied with me for a semester here at Virginia Tech. We will also keep you up-to-date on our coverage in the media, the news in the world of invasive pests, and our upcoming events and workshops.

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The USAID-funded Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Integrated Pest Management at Virginia Tech raises the standard of living of people in developing countries by working with them to develop the best solutions to the agricultural challenges they face. In addition to reducing damage caused by pests and diseases, the program also deals with issues such as gender, health, nutrition, equitable use of resources, and agricultural education.

## PI Profile



Wondi Mersie stands in front of a tank at Wollenchiti Bioagent Rearing site in Ethiopia.

Wondi Mersie has been working with the IPM Innovation Lab, formerly the IPM Collaborative Research Support Program, since 2005. His projects have focused on the invasive weed *Parthenium hysterophorus*, which is causing a lot of damage to his home country of Ethiopia. He is the principal investigator (PI) for IPM IL's "Biological control of the invasive weed *Parthenium hysterophorus* in East Africa" project. Currently in its third phase, the project focuses on developing and implementing biological control of *Parthenium* in East Africa.

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## Student Q&A





Laouali Amadou working in an entomology lab at Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Amadou plans to take what he's learned and apply it to the pest problems in his home country.

Nigerien Ph.D. student Laouali Amadou is on track to become the eighth entomologist in his home country. He recently spent six months doing a study abroad at Virginia Tech as part of a collaboration between the IPM Innovation Lab and the **Sorghum and Millet Innovation Lab at Kansas State University** to work on biological control of the pearl millet head miner. While in Virginia, he worked with the entomology department and took English classes. He returned home to Maradi, Niger in May to complete his studies and to spend time with his wife and two sons.

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## Highlights and Happenings



Asia Program Manager Short Heinrichs and workshop leader S. Nakkeeran at the "Production and use of bio-control agent *Trichoderma* and plant growth promoting Rhizobacteria" workshop at the Royal University of Agriculture in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

#### Trichoderma workshop in Cambodia

From June 13-17, 2016, the IPM Innovation Lab hosted the workshop "Production and use of bio-control agent *Trichoderma* and plant growth promoting Rhizobacteria" at the Royal University of Agriculture in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This workshop, led by Dr. S. Nakkeeran from Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, was co-hosted by iDE and taught over 30 participants how to grow their own *Trichoderma*, a fungus that fights pests and promotes plant growth.

#### Muniappan discusses Tuta with news outlets

Tuta absoluta, the South American tomato leafminer, has been all over the news recently due to its decimation of tomatoes in Nigeria. Muni was interviewed by a number of outlets including BBC World Service, [WVTF Radio IQ](#), [Virginia Tech News](#), and [Bloomberg](#) about his expertise on the invasive moth. And just last week, the pest was confirmed in Nepal and Bangladesh.

#### East Africa planning meeting

From March 28 to April 6, 2016, members from two IPM Innovation Lab teams traveled to Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania for the first planning meetings of the "Vegetable IPM for East Africa" and "Grains IPM for East Africa" projects. The meetings were attended by the Principal Investigators for both projects, John Cardina of Ohio State University for the vegetable IPM project, and Tadele Tefera of International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology for the grains IPM project. By holding these meetings during the same period of time, the Principal Investigators of both projects were able to meet and could share their unique knowledge to help one another's projects.

#### Trip to Ethiopia for Parthenium project

Wondi Mersie, the PI for IPM IL's Biological Control of Parthenium project, recently returned from a trip to Ethiopia to participate in a training workshop at Wollenchiti bioagent rearing site and confer with

Ethiopian partners on the implementation of the project. You can read more about his trip and project above in our "PI Profile."

#### Work in Nepal covered on Virginia Tech News

The IPM IL's associate award in Nepal was covered in the Virginia Tech News in June. [The article](#) discussed the impact of the IPM work down there, both economic and environmental.

#### Muni in the Richmond Times-Dispatch

[An op-ed by Muni](#) about the importance of awareness when it comes to *Tuta absoluta* was published in the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

#### IPM Innovation Lab to hold joint meeting

On July 7 and 8, 2016, IPM IL will hold a joint meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee and Project PIs in Blacksburg, VA. Each PI or acting PI will give a presentation about their project, the Technical Advisory Committee will hold their meeting, and we will hold a catered reception to introduce our IPM IL partners to members of the Virginia Tech community.

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## What People Are Talking About



Here are some of the recent trending headlines that IPMers and Feed the Future fans are talking about.

### **Food Prize**

The 2016 winners of the World Food Prize are Drs. Maria Andrade, Robert Mwanga, Jan Low, and Howarth Bouis. Andrade, Mwanga, and Low are a three-person team from the International Potato Center (CIP) who won for their achievement in developing the orange-fleshed sweet potato. Bouis is the founder of HarvestPlus and pioneered the implementation of a multi-institutional approach to biofortification as a global plant breeding strategy.

### **Nobel laureates write a letter to Greenpeace**

Over 100 Nobel laureates signed a letter taking a stand on the side of GMOs against Greenpeace, an organization that opposes them. "We urge Greenpeace and its supporters to re-examine the experience of farmers and consumers worldwide with crops and foods improved through biotechnology, recognize the findings of authoritative scientific bodies and regulatory agencies, and abandon their campaign against 'GMOs' in general and Golden Rice in particular," the letter states.

### **Tomato Production down around the world**

Global tomato exports have fallen in value by 9.5% from 2014 to 2015.

### **Zika Team**

Three Virginia Tech scientists, Drs. Jake Tu, Igor Sharakhov, and Maria Sharakhova, are a part of the [Aedes Genome Working Group](#), an effort to map the genome of the Aedes mosquito, which is responsible for the Zika Virus.

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## A Look Ahead



Here are some of the exciting events and meetings coming up:

**Joint Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee and Program Coordinating Committee**

July 7-8, 2016, in Blacksburg, Virginia, USA

**The American Phytopathological Society Annual Meeting**

July 30-August 3, 2016, in Tampa, Florida, USA

Associate Director Amer Fayad and Naidu Rayapati will be presenting the poster "Virus diseases: a major threat to high value vegetable crops in Bangladesh and Nepal." Their poster will also be featured in the poster huddle, "Is globalization of agriculture contributing to the emergence of plant virus diseases?"

**IPM Innovation Lab Workshop on Diagnosis of Plant Virus Diseases**

August 10-12, 2016 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**International Congress of Entomology**

September 25-30, 2016, in Orlando, Florida, USA

IPM IL will be presenting two symposia: "Global Spread and Management of the South American Tomato Leafminer, *Tuta absoluta*" and "Integrated Pest Management Components and Packages for Tropical Crops."

**International Conference on Biodiversity, Climate Change Assessment, and Impacts on Livelihood**

January 10-12, 2017 in Kathmandu, Nepal

12th Arab Congress of Plant Protection  
November 5-9, 2017 in Cairo, Egypt



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