IPM CRSP Trip Reports

Country Visited: Indonesia

Dates of Travel: June 30, 2013 to July 11, 2013

Travelers Names and Affiliations: Wondi Mersie, Parthenium Project Coordinator

Purpose of Trip: To present a paper at the Biodiversity and Integrated Pest Management Conference and attend IPM IL Technical Committee meeting

Sites Visited: Manado, Rurukan and Tangkoko Nature Reserve

Description of Activities/Observations:

Thursday July 4, 2013

Attended the opening session and presentations of the International Conference entitled, “Biodiversity and Integrated Pest Management – Working Together for a Sustainable Future.” The conference opened by a key note address by Dr. Jan van Tol, Natural Biodiversity Center, Netherlands. The title of the address was the biological exploration of northern Sulawesi by Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-19130 and other 19th century pioneers. Before the key note address, Virginia Tech, USAID and Sam Ratulangi University officials made remarks about the conference.

In the afternoon, I made a presentation entitled, “Impact of the invasive plant, parthenium (Parthenium hysterophorus L.) (Asteraceae) on the above ground vegetation and soil seed bank of a rangeland in Ethiopia.” The presentations of the afternoon sessions were followed by questions to the presenters. The day’s presentations ended at 5 pm.

Friday July 5, 2013

Continued to attend the conference proceedings and interact with participants from different countries. The conference was informative and well attended. It established the link between sound pest management and maintenance of the natural ecosystem. Several presentations showed that biological diversity will lead to stable ecological system. Such a stable system allows the maintenance of proper balance between pests and their natural enemies. The small farm sizes in developing countries offer the opportunity to use integrated pest control methods including biological control to promote biodiversity in the ecosystem. The discussions that followed the sessions allowed participants to share their experiences in regard to pest control with minimal or no disturbance of the ecosystem.

The conference ended at 5:00 pm after a video show and remarks by the organizers.
Saturday July 6, 2013

I joined conference participants who chose to visit vegetable fields at Rurukan and Toure agricultural sites. The first tour stop was about two hours from the hotel in the hills of Rurukan. The field was planted to strawberries. It was stated that the varieties planted currently bear relatively small berries. The producers would like to have access to cultivars that produce large berries. The second stop was at cabbage field that has several insect problems. One of the options discussed for pest control was using natural enemies.

Lunch was at a facility run by organic farmers. One of the producers explained the steps followed in producing vegetables organically. There was an extensive discussion on the pest control practices during organic production of vegetables. The conversation also included the marketing of vegetables and the requirement to join the association of organic farmers.

After lunch, the participants visited two farms. The first was a tomato field that has a lot of virus and insect problems. The virus infestation was severe. The potential causes for the virus infection as well some of the steps that need to be taken to alleviate the problem were discussed. The second field visited was also planted to tomato. It also had a virus problem although not as bad as the first one. Discussions were held in the field on ways to reduce the virus infestation from buying certified seeds to rouging infected plants as soon as they show symptoms.

Sunday July 7, 2013

On Sunday, a field trip was made to the Tangkoko Nature Reserve. It was about a two-hour drive from the hotel. Many wild animals including birds are protected in this Reserve. The Reserve also has a facility to rehabilitate and release tortoise. Two were released to sea during the visit.

Lunch was at facility dedicated to the rehabilitation and release of wild animals rescued from illegal possession or abandonment. The facility is run by volunteers who provide medical treatment as well shelter and food to the animals. The team returned to the hotel after visiting the rehabilitation center.

Monday July 8, 2013

Attended Board and Technical Committee Joint Meeting of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Integrated Pest Management. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Bruce McPheron and started at 8:30 am. The meeting was opened with a welcoming remark by Dr. Guru Ghosh. After the opening remarks, Board and TC members introduced themselves.

I made my presentation on the accomplishments of the parthenium project between 11:00 and 11:15 am. The presentation focused on the current effort to release bioagents against parthenium in Ethiopia. It also covered the effort to build human and physical capacity for biological control in Ethiopia.
The meeting continued in the afternoon with general discussion on the presentations and impact assessment. There was a detailed discussion on collecting baseline and impact data. The group shared its experiences on the various aspects of impact assessment. Dr. Muniappan gave IPM IL (CRSP) impacts and ME updates. This was followed on USAID update by Dr. John Bowman, AOR. The later part of the afternoon was devoted to the discussion about upcoming RFA for IPM IL. Board and TC members provided suggestions on the contents of the RFA. All the comments were welcomed by Dr. Bowman.

The meeting ended after remarks by Drs. Ghosh and Bertelsen.

**Tuesday July 9, 2013**

Departed for U.S. from the hotel at 11:00 am and arrived in Richmond on July 11, 2013.