

Foreword

Welcome to the **Third Issue 2014** of the Journal of Tropical Agricultural Science (JTAS)!

JTAS is an open-access journal for the Tropical Agricultural Science published by Universiti Putra Malaysia Press. It is independently owned and managed by the university and run on a non-profit basis for the benefit of the world-wide science community.

This issue contains **eight articles**, out of which **one** is a short communication and **seven** are regular research papers. The authors of these articles are from **Malaysia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, India** and **Iran**.

The short communication paper discusses species diversity and external nest characteristics of stingless bees in meliponiculture (*Kelly, N., Farisya, M. S. N., Kumara, T. K. and Marcela, P.*). Their study of 161 stingless bee colonies at a bee farm in Kelantan, Malaysia, revealed five species of stingless bees and one unidentified species. The species included *Trigona itama*, *Trigona thoracica*, *Trigona terminata*, *Trigona laeviceps*, and *Hypotrigona scintillans* and one unidentified meliponid. From the list, only *T. itama* and *T. thoracica* were mostly used in meliponiculture

The seven research papers cover a wide range of topics. In the first research paper, researchers from Njala University, Sierra Leone, report on their study of the effects of different rates of palm kernel and barley residues as organic manures on growth and yield of maize on a degraded upland soil (*M. T. Lahai, J. P. C. Koroma and P. M. P. Mornya*). The next research paper from Nigeria discusses the influence of thermotolerance acquisition in broiler chickens through early feed restriction in response to acute heat stress (*Abioja, M. O., Sodipe, O. G., Abiona, J. A., Oladipo, K. A., Kasali, O. D., Akerele, Z., Ola, A., Oke, H., Ogundele, O. and Osinowo, O. A.*). The following research paper, from Universiti Putra Malaysia, briefly discusses the benefit of HYDRUS 2D Model simulation in silt pit efficiency towards conserving soil water (*Mohsen Bohluli, Christopher Teh Boon Sung, Ahmad Husni Mohd Hanif and Zaharah A. Rahman*).

In the next research paper, researchers from Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering and Technology, India, present a multivariate classification of promising paddy cultivars on the basis of physical properties (*Singh, Y. and Prasad, K.*) while the following research paper presents a multivariate and an ordination approach to classify the attractiveness of the plant species in pastoral lands (*Fazel Amiri and Abdul Rashid Mohamed Shriff*).

Collaboration work between Universiti Putra Malaysia and the Institute of Medicinal Plants-ACECR, Iran, examines the genetic diversity of *Fusarium solani* populations obtained from black pepper (*Piper nigrum* L.) fields in Malaysia and assess the phylogenetic relationships of *F. solani* isolates using ISSR markers in order to manage yellowing disease

in black pepper (*Shahnazi, S., Meon, S., Vadamalai, G., Yazdani, D. and Shabanimofrad, M.*). The last research paper is from a group of researchers from Universiti Malaysia Sabah and Universiti Sains Malaysia collaborating on the demographics of horseshoe crab populations in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia, with an emphasis on *Carcinoscorpius rotundicauda* and some aspects of its mating behaviour (*Robert, R., Muhammad Ali, S. H. and Amelia-Ng, P. F.*).

I anticipate that you will find the evidence presented in this issue to be intriguing, thought-provoking and useful in reaching new milestones in your own research. Please recommend the journal to your colleagues and students to make this endeavour meaningful.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all the contributors, namely, the authors, reviewers and editors, who have made this issue possible. Last but not least, the editorial assistance of the journal division staff is fully appreciated.

JTAS is currently accepting manuscripts for upcoming issues based on original qualitative or quantitative research that opens new areas of inquiry and investigation.

Chief Executive Editor

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