

Executive Summary

The Second International Conference on Vetiver

by

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As Thailand was assigned by the Interim Committee to be the organizer of the Second International Conference on Vetiver, the Office of the Royal Development Projects Board (ORDPB) being the main coordinating agency for the Royally-initiated Vetiver Projects, in collaboration with the Chaipattana Foundation, have put up an effort to organize the Second International Conference on Vetiver in Phetchaburi Province during 18-22 January 2000 on the theme of "Vetiver and the Environment". The objectives were to commemorate the Auspicious Occasion of His Majesty the King's Sixth Cycle Birthday Anniversary 5 December 1999 and to be the stage where academics and practitioners of vetiver, both in Thailand and from abroad, can discuss and exchange knowledge, information as well as experiences in working with vetiver. The Conference was honored by the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn who graciously opened and attended the Conference.

There were altogether 30 participating countries, namely, Australia, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Denmark, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji Islands, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Portugal, P.R. China, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Uganda, USA, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe and Thailand. The total number of participants were 400, of which 99 are foreigners. The Conference Program included Plenary Lectures, Panel Discussions, Concurrent Sessions, Poster Presentation, Exhibition, and Study Tours.

For the Plenary Lectures there were 10 topics, six of which were presented by the winners of the King of Thailand Vetiver Awards, who received their awards from Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn on 17 January 2000. The awards were given to the three most outstanding works for each of the two categories which are vetiver research and dissemination of vetiver technology.

The three most outstanding works on vetiver research consist of:

- 1) "Use of Vetiver and Other Three Grasses for Re-vegetation on a Pb/Zn Mine Tailings at Lechang, Guangdong Province: A Field Experiment" by W.S. Shu, H.P. Xia, Z.Q. Zhang, C.Y. Lan and M.H. Wong from People's Republic of China;
- 2) "The Global Impact of Vetiver Grass Technology on the Environment" by Paul Truong from Australia;
- 3) "Research on Methodologies for Selection, Propagation and Cultivation Techniques of Vetiver Grass and Its Application in Thailand" by Department of Land Development from Thailand.

The three most outstanding works on dissemination of vetiver technology comprise of:

- 1) "Vetiver Technology Development and Dissemination in China: From

Agriculture to Engineering" by Liyu Xu from People's Republic of China;

2) "Promoting Vetiver Grass Technology in Venezuela" by Oscar S. Rodriguez P. from Venezuela;

3) "The Use of Vetiver Grass System for Erosion Control and Slope Stabilization Along the Yadana Gas Pipeline Right of Way" by Petroleum Authority of Thailand.

Besides the Plenary Lectures, there were four Panel Discussions under the following topics.

1) Experience in Putting Together Country-Wide Vetiver Program: Policy Issues, Expectations and Results

2) Vetiver and Natural Disaster

3) Reports of Regional Networks

4) Reports of National Networks

Also included in the Conference Program were Concurrent Sessions in which the participants separated into groups to attend the three following topics of their choice.

Group A. Soil and Water Attributes

Group B. Basic Research and General Studies

Group C. Other Topics

The total number of topics for the Concurrent Sessions was 47.

For Poster Presentation, altogether 48 topics were put up to display technical works on vetiver by participants from various countries and prizes were given to the three best posters along with one consolation prize which are:

First Prize: "Effect of Gamma Radiation on Vetiver Callus" by Assistant Professor Malee Nanakorn et al., from Department of Botany, Kasetsart University, Thailand;

Second Prize: "Study on Soil Microbial Biodiversity in Rhizosphere of Vetiver Grass in Degradating Soil" by Vanlada Sunanthapongsak et al., from Land Development Department, Thailand;

Third Prize: "Effects of Vesicular-Arbuscular Mycorrhiza and Phosphate Fertilizer on Phosphorus Uptake on Vetiver Using Nuclear Technique" by Associate Professor Sombun Techapinyawat et al., from Department of Botany, Kasetsart University, Thailand;

The Consolation Prize: "Use of Vetiver for Soil and Water Conservation in Tea Lands in Upper Mahaweli Catchment-Sri Lanka" by S.M.B. Makadawar and H.M.C.A.B. Helarawa from Sri Lanka.

Furthermore, there was an exhibition showing progress of vetiver works from 24 agencies in Thailand on the spacious lawn outside the hotel building. The exhibition received great interest from the public with substantial visits by participants, students as well as the local people.

Moreover, participants of this Second International Conference on Vetiver were taken on

study tours to observe applications of vetiver at five sites in the area of Phetchaburi, Ratchaburi and Prachuap Khiri Khan Provinces. These five sites involved:

- 1) The Chaipattana-Mae Fah Luang Reforestation Project, Nhong Plub Subdistrict, Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province;
- 2) The Late Princess Mother's Garden within the area of the Huai Sai Royal Development Study Center;
- 3) Khao Bor Khing, also within the area of the Huai Sai Royal Development Study Center, Sam Phraya Subdistrict, Cha-am District, Phetchaburi Province;
- 4) Vetiver grass plot of Mr. Songsak Kheoklee, Baan Tha Ma Rid, Klad Luang Subdistrict, Tha Yang District, Phetchaburi Province;
- 5) Khao Cha-ngum Area Rehabilitation Project, Khao Cha-ngum Subdistrict, Photharam District, Ratchaburi Province.

The Conference turned out successful through excellent cooperation among many agencies including the government sector, the private sector as well as both Thai and international speakers who participated in this Conference. At the moment, the Technical Committee is preparing the proceedings which will be distributed in the future.

This International Conference on Vetiver has greatly benefitted the vetiver circle in various ways, ranging from presentation of technical research works; exchange of knowledge, ideas and experiences; to introduction of new technology and ideas on vetiver utilization, especially in the conservation of soil, water and the environment. This thus leads to a better world, for example with respect to waste or refuse treatment. Additionally, there were some discussions about products made of vetiver leaves, especially its use as substitute material in the industrial sector. This Conference gave an opportunity for representatives from different vetiver networks around the world to meet and foster bright and future collaboration. Moreover, the assembly also addressed the future directions for vetiver works which will help in determining the policy and planning for vetiver promotion, at both national and international levels.

As for the next International Conference on Vetiver which will be held four years from now or in 2004, the meeting has designated the People's Republic of China to be the organizer of the Conference under the theme of "Vetiver and Water", an interesting issue highlighting many roles of vetiver in water conservation.

The Conference evaluation was assessed by asking the participants to fill the forms and submit them on the closing day which was 22 January 2000. There were altogether 109 forms submitted. According to the data in the filled forms, a majority of the participants were graduated with master and doctorate degrees, and were in the age range between 41 to 60 years. Out of a total of 30 countries, three fourths were male participants. The opinions can be concluded as follows:

- For the public relations, the First and Second Announcements gave full details of the Conference to the participants, with very few improvements needed;
- For the academic aspect, a majority of the participants commented that the topics for the panel discussions, concurrent sessions and poster presentation as well as the method of the Conference provided extensive knowledge to the participants. Some rated all these satisfactory, while others, about 10% of the total forms submitted, suggested that improvements were needed. For instance, each session was given a limited time, not enough for discussion; the

sound system of the lecture rooms was not satisfactory; some lecturers were not fluent in English; the poster presentation room was too small and there was not enough time to visit the exhibition;

- For the technical tours, three fourths of the participants were satisfied and impressed with them since the time and five chosen sites were well managed. Besides, the presentations were well prepared. The participants were impressed with the experiences differently according to their backgrounds;

- For general arrangements and facilitation, including the welcoming party, transportation, accommodation, and food during the Conference, the feedbacks were good. However, some participants commented that they should be accommodated at the same hotel as the Conference venue.

In conclusion, the Second International Conference on Vetiver has been very successful and achieved all its intended goals. Compliments from various agencies, both national and international, were given to this Conference owing to an excellent cooperation among many parties concerned. From this great collaboration, it can be clearly seen that vetiver has a bright future and will continue to play a major role in soil, water and forest conservation towards sustainable development according to His Majesty the King's Royal initiative.