

BiosafeTrain News

Issue 11,

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Welcome to our eleventh issue.

This has been a busy quarter for our students and our coordinators. We have a new MSc student from Makerere University, Uganda and one of our PhD fellows has published her research in the African Journal of Agricultural Research.

We organised a biosafety training course in Tanzania and also officially launched another infrastructural capacity, the Biosafety Level II Facility at the College of Natural and Applied Sciences, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Please read for more.

Best wishes,

Joy Owango, Editor.

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STUDENTS

New student from Makerere University, Uganda

Mariam Nantale is the new BiosafeTrain fellow from Makerere University. The MSc students' research will be on transgenic cassava under the biosafety concern and Cassava brown streak virus. Ms Nantale's supervisors are Dr. Titus Alicai and Dr. Richard Edema from Makerere University.

Hannah Karuri research published

BiosafeTrain fellow Hannah Karuri research has been published in the African Journal of Agricultural Research. Ms Hannah Karuri is a PhD fellow at the University of Nairobi and does her research at the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute. Her research is on 'Occurrence and distribution of soil nematodes in cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum* L.) production areas of Kenya.'

BiosafeTrain fellow Gerald Kyalo gets married

BiosafeTrain fellow from Makerere University, Uganda Gerald Kyalo got married to Ms Sylvia Kirabo in April 2010. Congratulations Gerald and we wish you all the best in your marriage and life.

REGIONAL AND WORLDWIDE

Biosafety training course in Tanzania 30 August – 6 September 2010

BiosafeTrain organized a course on 'Ecosystem diversity and function: Analysis and simulation' at the College of Natural and Applied Sciences, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

This was a five-day, intensive course, with lots of practical exercises, where the participants used their own data for analysis. The skills they gained are to be used during study planning, proposal and thesis writing and generally in their scientific careers.

The participants also learned how to use the R programme. R is a language and environment for statistical computing and graphics. The programme provides a wide variety of statistical (linear and nonlinear modelling, classical statistical tests, time-series analysis, classification, clustering, etc.) and graphical techniques, and is highly extensible. It is available as Free Software and runs on a wide variety of UNIX platforms and similar systems (including FreeBSD and Linux), Windows and MacOS.

Biosafety Level II Facility opened in Tanzania, 1 September 2010

A Biosafety Level II Facility was officially opened at the College of Natural and Applied Sciences, at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Tanzania in September 2010.

The facility was established with the assistance of BiosafeTrain a DANIDA-funded Enhancement of Research Capacity project at UDSM. The official opening was graced by the Director General of the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology Dr. Hassan Mshinda.

A Biosafety Facility is a building with equipment for bio-containment of genetically modified organisms during research before they are released into the field. In a Biosafety Facility, studies are done to know the possible or potential risks that the genetically modified organism could pose to other living organisms, to the environment and to human beings.

There are four levels of Biosafety Facilities, depending on the complexity of the research/study carried on the organism. The facility officially opened at UDSM, is a Level II facility. The Level II Facility is suitable for handling organisms of moderate potential hazards to human beings and the environment. Organisms to be handled in a Level II Biosafety Facility include bacteria and viruses that only cause mild diseases to humans, or are difficult to contain in a normal laboratory setting.

Relevant UDSM personnel have already undergone specific training in handling organisms in the facility. The facility has already been fitted with a biological safety cabinet and other equipment for conducting procedures in which various organisms may be experimented on.

BiosafeTrain the press

BiosafeTrain activities, its coordinators and researchers have been avidly covered in the press in the last quarter. BiosafeTrain's activities were covered in a two part television feature series in the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation in the primetime environmental programme *Earth Watch*, BiosafeTrain-KARI Deputy Coordinator Dr Muo Kasina's comments on Biosafety was covered on Science and Development Network News (Scidev.net), while BiosafeTrain fellow from University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Shilla Oshingi's research was covered in the Africa Science magazine.

IMPRESSIONS OF BIOSAFE TRAIN ACTIVITIES FROM MAY TO AUGUST



Participants of the course on 'Ecosystem diversity and function: Analysis and simulation' organised by BiosafeTrain at the College of Natural and Applied Sciences, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.



BiosafeTrain PhD fellow from KARI Ms Hannah Karuri being interviewed by reporters on her research.



Jane Tei M'Ringer, PhD student from the University of Nairobi being interviewed by reporters on her research.



BiosafeTrain Kenya Coordinator Prof Jenesio Kinyamario being interviewed on the project activities.