Workshop on Application of beneficial microorganisms for Farmers and Crofters

Coordinator: Prof. David Kothamasi

Funded by: Marie-Skłodowska-Curie Actions Horizon 2020 Individual Fellowship under the project MICROB-COM, grant ID 894188

Beneficial agricultural microorganisms not only promote healthy plant growth and increase yields, but they are also low-cost. For instance, savings in terms of costs incurred on phosphate fertilization required to sustain similar levels of plant productivity through use of arbuscular mycorrhizas has been estimated at US$ 549 billion per year. Likewise, substitution of nitrogen fertilizers with rhizobial species has led to savings of up to US$1.7 billion.

The Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law & Governance is organising a workshop and consultation event for farmers and crofters on the application of beneficial microorganisms for promoting healthy plant growth.

The workshop will be held on 24 February 2023 and will be a hybrid event. In person attendants will gather in room CL205 in the Collins Building (22, Richmond Street, Glasgow G1 1XQ). Details with the zoom link and passcode for the online participants will be provided in due course.

Entries are invited from interested farmers-crofters/farmer and crofter groups/ microbiology-life sciences-ecology and legal scholars/lawyers and students. Attendance will be free but only limited spaces are available, so kindly register [here](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/application-of-beneficial-microorganisms-for-farmers-and-crofters-tickets-495013788567?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=escb) and apply early. Travel costs by train/bus or fuel costs for car will likely be reimbursed and details will be confirmed shortly.

The Workshop will be inviting experts in Microbial Ecology who will talk about the availability of microbial inoculum for farms/crops and the benefits associated with them for crop growth. There will also be a talk on understanding patents on living resources including microorganisms used in agriculture including the risks of patent infringements from escaped microbes.

The talks will be followed by a panel discussion along with the participating farmer/farmer-crofter organizations on application of beneficial microbial inoculum for crop growth promotion.

Tentative plan for the Workshop will be as below:

Workshop Plan

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S.No. | Time | Programme | Speakers |
| 1. | 9.00 – 10.00 | Registration |  |
| 2. | 10.00 – 10.15 | Welcome | Dr. Antonio Cardesa-Salzmann |
|  | 10:15 – 10.30 | Introduction to the Workshop | Prof. David Kothamasi |
| 3. | 10.30 – 11:00 | Coffee |  |
| 4. | 11.00 – 11.30 | Arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi: key benefits in agro-ecosystems, formulation and application constraints | Prof. Stéphane DeClerck  Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium) |
| 5. | 11.30 – 12.00 | Soil microbiome engineering and field application with mycorrhizal fungi to enhance soil and plant health | Prof. Marcel van der Heijden, University of Zurich (Switzerland) |
| 6. | 12.30– 13.00 | Commercial availability and application of microbial inocula | TBA |
| 7. | 13.00 – 14.00 | Lunch |  |
|  | 14.00 – 14.30 | Patented microorganisms and the risks of patent infringement | Prof. David Kothamasi |
| 8. | 14.30 – 15.00 | Ecological knowledge and intellectual property rights: the need for reform | Dr. Saskia Vermeylen |
| 9. | 15.00 – 16.00 | Panel discussions, Q&As |  |
| 10. | 16.00 – 17.00 | Coffee |  |