

Foreword

Welcome to the **First Issue 2015** 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 **12 articles**, of which **one** is a short communication and **8** are regular research papers and **3 articles** are from International Conference on Crop Improvement (ICCI) 2013. The authors of these articles are from **Malaysia, Nigeria, Bangladesh** and **Iran**.

In the short communication, researchers from the Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Universiti Putra Malaysia report on a new natural product compound benjaminin from *Calophyllum benjaminum* (Sahimi, M. S. M., Ee, G. C. L., Mahaiyiddin, A. G., Daud, S., Teh, S. S., See, I. and Sukari, M. A). The first research paper, a collaborative work between Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and International Islamic University Malaysia, documents species-richness and distribution of sea cucumbers (Phylum Echinodermata: Class Holothuroidea) in Malaysia (Kamarul Rahim Kamarudin, Gires Usup, Ridzwan Hashim and Maryam Mohamed Rehan). The second research paper reports on the inherent variability in growth and development of two ecotypes of the sesame plant (*Sesamum* sp.) in Malaysia (Tan, S. P., Rosli, B. M., Adam, B. P. and M. M. Morshed). The next research paper from the Federal University of Agriculture, Nigeria, reports on the growth trajectory of the Nigerian indigenous and exotic strains of chicken embryos during incubation under Nigerian conditions (Oke, O. E., Obanla, L. O., Onagbesan, O. M. and Daramola, J. O.)

In the next research paper, a group of researchers reports on the response to foot and mouth disease (FMD) vaccination among local Malaysian cattle of various vaccination backgrounds from endemic and non-endemic FMD areas (A. Abbo Hamad, L. Hassan, M. Z. Azmie, P. Loganathan, T. Jaafar, S. S. Arshad, J. Hashim, H. Amir, O. Norlida, M. A. Syarifah Asiah and M. M. Salih).

The next research paper, from Nigeria, reports on the performance, haematological parameters and faecal egg count of semi-intensively managed west African dwarf sheep to varying levels of cassava leaves and peel supplementation (Fasae, O. A., Amos, A. O., Owodunni, A. and Yusuf, A. O.). The seventh research paper, from Bangladesh, reports on the development of fertiliser recommendation for aquatic taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) in grey terrace soil (S. Noor, M. R. Talukder, M. K. R. Bhuiyan, M. M. Islam, M. A. Haque and S. Akhter). The next research paper, which is from Universiti Putra Malaysia and it

reports on lithium levels in coastal areas of Peninsular Malaysia, is an assessment based on mangrove snail *Nerita lineata* and surface sediments (Wan Hee Cheng, Chee Kong Yap, Mohamad Pauzi Zakaria, Ahmad Zaharin Aris and Tan Soon Guan) and the last research paper reports on the potent antioxidative components from Langsat (*Lansium domesticum*) peel (Kee, M. E., Khoo, H. E., Sia, C. M. and Yim, H. S.).

I conclude this issue with three articles arising from the International Conference on Crop Improvement (ICCI) 2013: screening for optimum concentrations of boron, copper and manganese for the growth of three-month-old oil palm seedlings in a solution culture (Tengoua, F. F., Hanafi, M. M., Idris, A. S. and Syed-Omar, S. R.); genetic divergence and evaluation of yield potential of *Jatropha curcas* accessions collected from Peninsular Malaysia (Arolu, I. W., Rafii, M. Y., Hanafi, M. M., Mahmud, T. M. M. and Askani, S.); and the last article is a report on the effects of over-expressing ethylene responsive transcription factor on expression of selected fruit ripening-related genes in oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis* Jacq.) mesocarp (Nur Annies Abd Hadi, Siti Nor Akmar Abdullah, Azzreena Mohamad Azzeme, Ahmed Al-Shanfari and Halimi Mohd Saud).

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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