

# 1st Asian Food and Agribusiness Conference: Biotechnology and Global Competitiveness

**B** iotechnology has wide applications in the food and agriculture sectors and offers tremendous potential for increasing productivity, the development of niche products, and achieving food and feed security. To provide a unique forum for leaders from the public and private sectors, NGOs, scientists, consultants, and entrepreneurs to discuss current and emerging topics in biotechnology important to advances in agriculture, agribusiness, and food industries in Asia, the APO in collaboration with the Council of Agriculture (COA), China Productivity Center (CPC), and Food and Fertilizer Technology Center held the 1st Asian Food and Agribusiness Conference on the theme Biotechnology and Global Competitiveness in Taipei, 15–18 July.

COA Deputy Minister Wen-Deh Chen delivered the inaugural remarks, when he noted that, “Taiwan and Asian countries face not only climate change, but also population growth, aging farmers, small-scale farming, increasing cost of agricultural inputs, competition for limited resources, food safety and security, trade liberalization and globalization, and cross-border spread of animal diseases and plant pests.” He added that the conference was relevant because it would address the challenges facing the global population. (The full text of his remarks is available at [http://www.apo-tokyo.org/wp/news/files/2013/08/Inaugural\\_Remarks\\_DM-Chen.pdf](http://www.apo-tokyo.org/wp/news/files/2013/08/Inaugural_Remarks_DM-Chen.pdf).)

More than 70 participants from 13 member countries attended. Fifteen resource persons from the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions/Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology; Asia BioBusiness Pte. Ltd. Singapore; CropLife Asia Singapore; International Service for the Acquisition of Agribiotech Applications Philippines; Journal of Commercial Biotechnology USA; Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation; Nanyang

Technological University Singapore; Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture Philippines; US Soybean Export Council; and five organizations of the ROC made thematic presentations on different aspects of biotechnology applications in the food and agriculture sectors. The conference consisted of thematic sessions, open forums, panel discussions, a poster exhibition, and visit to the Bio Taiwan 2013 exhibition.

One important outcome of the conference was the widespread consensus among experts and participants that biotechnology is an important tool to help APO members meet the challenges arising from climate change, natural resource constraints, food security, and sustainable development. Additionally, experts shared experience on the many proven applications of biotechnology ranging from biopesticides and biofertilizers to biotech (genetically modified) crops.

The participants agreed on a set of recommendations (available at [http://www.apo-tokyo.org/wp/news/files/2013/08/Recommendations\\_\\_Asian-Food-and-Agribusiness-Conference-2013.pdf](http://www.apo-tokyo.org/wp/news/files/2013/08/Recommendations__Asian-Food-and-Agribusiness-Conference-2013.pdf)) and resolved that they would do their utmost to contribute to advances in biotechnology applications for achieving national food and nutrition security in their countries by utilizing and disseminating the lessons learned from this conference. 🌐



*COA Deputy Minister Wen-Deh Chen delivering the inaugural remarks.*