

Sukumar Saha Receives 2010 Cotton Genetics Award

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Contact: [T. Cotton Nelson](#) or [Marjory Walker](#)
(901) 274-9030

ATLANTA, GA – Dr. Sukumar Saha, a USDA Agricultural Research Service research geneticist, is the recipient of the 2010 Cotton Genetics Research Award.

The announcement was made here on January 7 during the 2011 Beltwide Cotton Improvement Conference, which convened as part of the National Cotton Council-coordinated 2011 Beltwide Cotton Conferences. In recognition, he received a plaque and a monetary award.

Dr. Saha, who has worked in the Genetics and Precision Agricultural Research Unit at Mississippi State University since 1997, has 35 years of professional research experience. He began his career as an assistant agronomist with the Indo-German Fertilizer Educational Project and then joined Texas A&M University in 1983 as a research assistant. In 1989 he joined Alabama A&M University as a postdoctoral research associate and later became a research assistant professor there.

Dr. Johnie Jenkins, a fellow USDA-ARS geneticist at MSU and a nominator, said Dr. Saha has demonstrated outstanding stature and received significant recognition as an international authority in cotton genomics and cytogenetics for the development of genetic and cytogenetic resources that are being used by scientists worldwide.

“His consistent research productivity, its impact, and scientific leadership have been recognized with a sustained outstanding research performance,” Jenkins said. “Dr. Saha is very well known in the cotton community of researchers for providing leadership in research activities.”

Among Dr. Saha's many contributions, Jenkins noted, was being one of the two lead scientists providing leadership in the release of 17 interspecific chromosome substitution lines in cotton and being one of eight founding scientists who initiated the International Cotton genome Initiative (ICGI) organization to facilitate collaborative research work on cotton genomics at the global level. As chairman of the ICGI Germplasm Work Group, he provided leadership for the documentation of the current status of the world

cotton collection in collaboration with the curators from the major cotton growing countries.

Dr. David Stelly, another nominator and Texas A&M faculty member/research geneticist, said Dr. Saha “has been a major contributor to cotton genetic research, germplasm introgression and development, and quantitative genetics. In addition, he has contributed significantly to the well-being and interactions in our domestic cotton genetics research community, to germplasm acquisition and to international cooperation.”

Dr. Saha’s research productivity is well documented in about 130 publications including 76 peer-reviewed journal articles in refereed journals and one germplasm release notice. He co-edited a book on cotton, currently serves as editor-in-chief of the *American Journal of Plant Sciences* and is a member of the editorial boards for the *Journal of New Seeds* and Scientific World Publications.

After beginning his education in India by earning a B.S. Botany, Zoology and Chemistry from Burdwan University and a M.S. in Cytogenetics and Plant Breeding from Calcutta University, Saha earned his Ph.D. in Plant Breeding from Texas A&M.

U.S. commercial cotton breeders have presented the Cotton Genetics Research Award for more than 40 years to a scientist for outstanding basic research in cotton genetics. The Joint Cotton Breeding Committee, comprised of representatives from state experiment stations, USDA, private breeders and the National Cotton Council, establishes award criteria.

Source: National Cotton Council