



TEXAS A&M  
**TODAY**

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## Newly Created Division Part Of International Society For Horticultural Sciences

July 18, 2018





Bhimu Patil

By Blair Fannin, Texas A&M AgriLife Communications

Dr. Bhimu Patil, head of the Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center at Texas A&M University in College Station, has been elected chair of horticulture for human health for the International Society for Horticultural Sciences (ISHS).

Headquartered in Belgium, the newly restructured division launched by the ISHS Council and Executive Committee consists of 1448 of the organization's 6862 members from 135 countries. Patil will be formally inducted as chair Aug. 16 during the International Horticulture Congress in Istanbul.

"We are pleased to have Patil leading this international effort, furthering the advancement of science in the critical areas of nutrition and health," said Dr. Patrick Stover, vice chancellor and dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M.

As an executive member of ISHS, Patil has been involved actively to restructure the division. According to the organization, ISHS aims to optimize collaborations and scientific interactions

among members, improve the scientific experience of each member of the society, and increase the relevancy of meetings and symposia by including innovative, cross-disciplinary issues, according to the society. It also has a goal of advances in science to benefit society, promoting an understanding of how these advances can improve human health.

As chair, Patil said he envisions the new division needing to establish a strong relationship with the private sector and global organizations such as World Health Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. He said he plans to use leadership, mentoring and active listening to promote an inclusive environment that values diverse contributions.

“This division will have a significant global impact for the ISHS by using the power of transdisciplinary scientists and students to improve our understanding of how plants can help improve human health, and to educate researchers, producers, and consumers worldwide,” he said.

Patil has been a leader in research and education in the health-promoting effects of fruits and vegetables. In 2005, he co-founded the international Human Health Effects of Fruit and Vegetables symposium, also known as FAV Health, a biennial conference drawing premier researchers from almost 40 countries to share the latest findings on enhancing the healthy aspects of fruit and vegetables.

He hosted and chaired the FAV Health 2017 symposium in Houston that, for the first time, actively engaged industry members and students and attracted transdisciplinary scientists, students and stakeholders from 38 countries. He also co-organized FAV Health symposia at different sites around the world, including the U.S., France, India and Australia.

“It is an honor for the International Society for Horticultural Science and its members to work with global science leaders such as Patil,” said Jozef Van Assche, ISHS executive director.

“For the ISHS, they are a guarantee for successful and innovative scientific meetings and conferences, and independent judgement on scientific publications resulting from these meetings.

“Bhimu has done a magnificent job as chair of the ISHS Section on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants for the period 2014-2018 and we look forward to working with him in the capacity as chair of the new division. Bhimu was elected for this office by his peers for the term 2018-2022. The International Horticultural Science community hopes that he also may serve as a bridge for collaboration between Texas A&M and ISHS.”

Patil attributes his success to dedicated students, hardworking staff, engaged stakeholders and thoughtful multidisciplinary collaborators from institutions around the globe.

“Dr. Patil has been a tremendous asset to the fresh produce industry,” said Jimmy Bassetti, president of J&D Produce in Edinburg. “Having worked together for nearly a decade, I have seen his desire to better understand and improve the health benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables. As a grower and shipper of fresh produce, it is critical that we are delivering the best flavor and highest nutritional content to our customers while also employing exceptional food safety protocols, managing production costs, and maximizing yields. Bhimu understands that connection.”

These efforts at the international level eventually led to development of the Horticulture for Human Health division. Patil is currently the chair of the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Section of the International Society for Horticultural Sciences and served as Vice Chair of the Commission Fruits, Vegetables and Human Health.

“Dr. Patil has done a lot of incredible work for Texas farmers and growers,” said Dante Galeazzi, CEO and president of the Texas International Produce Association in Mission. “His research into healthy eating and new varieties has been of tremendous benefit to our industry. I’m sure he will bring the same enthusiasm and proven studies that he’s brought to the Texas fruits and vegetables industry to his new appointment.”

Patil’s scientific focus has centered on foods for health research, education and outreach and his activities have helped colleagues, students, commodity producers, food industry and members, and consumers. He has secured \$16.5 million for his research and educational programs, published 185 peer-reviewed articles, and been invited to present at 48 international meetings during which he has given 12 keynote/plenary talks, and at 98 national and 51 regional meetings. Patil has provided leadership in professional societies such as ISHS, American Society for Horticultural Sciences, and the American Chemical Society. He has chaired or co-chaired 23 symposia/colloquia. He also served as chair of the Division of Agriculture and Food Chemistry of the American Chemical Society in 2007.

Patil has led multidisciplinary scientists in developing healthy, flavorful, and safe vegetables and fruits. For example, he recently received a multi-million-dollar U.S. Department of Agriculture grant for sustainable, systems-based approach for a safer and healthier melon supply chain in the U.S.

Patil attributes his success to dedicated students, hardworking staff, and “thoughtful multidisciplinary collaborators from institutions around the globe.” “To link horticulture, other interdisciplinary sciences and human health, he developed three unique multidisciplinary, multi-state courses: “Science of Foods for Health” and “Phytochemicals in Fruits and Vegetables to Improve Human Health,” and “Nexus of Food and Nutritional Security, Hunger and Sustainability, which are offered at several American universities.”

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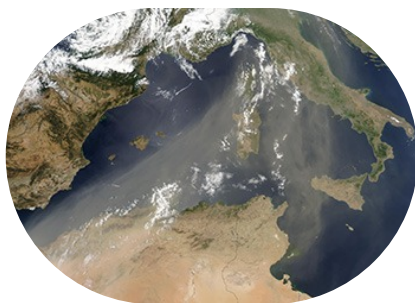
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