

## ACAROLOGY NEWS, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

**FOURTH AFRICAN ACAROLOGY ASSOCIATION MEETING IN TUNISIA A GREAT SUCCESS** - The fourth meeting of the African Acarology Association (AAA), sponsored by the National Agronomic Institute of Tunisia and the National Veterinary Medicine School, was held at the Imperial Park Hotel, Yasmine Hammamet, Tunisia, 22-26 October 2007. Acarologists from many countries arrived on 20 and 21 October at Tunis International Airport, where they were met by staff members of the AAA organizing committee and escorted to the hotel. The local host was Dr. Kaouthar Grissa Lebdi, an acarologist who studied tetranychid and phytoseiid mites in Tunisia and Belgium.

Registration began at 8 A.M. on the first day of the conference, and the opening ceremony followed one hour later with a welcoming address by Dr. K. G. Lebdi, who recounted the history of acarological research in Tunisia. Dr. Vikram Prasad, Founder and Managing Editor of IJA, also welcomed those present and emphasized the importance of regional acarology meetings like AAA for the global development of our science. Underscoring the crisis in acarine taxonomy, Dr. Prasad urged acarologists to use all means at their disposal, including videography and the mass media, to disseminate knowledge of mites and ticks and to attract young researchers to this field. South Africa's Dr. Eddie Ueckermann, AAA President, discussed the history of AAA, and Dr. Abdelaziz Mougou, President, Institute of Research and Higher Education in the Ministry of Agriculture, reviewed the significance of mites in Tunisian agriculture. Following lunch, the veterinary and soil mite presentations began, together with a poster session. The duration of the meeting was largely devoted to mites of agricultural importance and to biocontrol. French and English were the official conference languages.

Three hands-on workshops were enthusiastically attended. In the first of these, on 23 October, Dr. James Amrine, Jr., of West Virginia, USA, demonstrated the use of 50% formic acid for controlling varroa mites. Participants were able to examine actual mite specimens and benefited from Dr. Amrine's long field experience. The second workshop, on 25 October, was conducted by Dr. Vikram Prasad, Michigan, USA, who discussed methods for making videos on mites and presented several examples of his work. Dr. Kawther El Kammah presented her video on Egyptian acarology, and Dr. Eric Palevsky presented a video on his research in Israel. On 26 October, Dr. Amrine again hosted a workshop, this time on eriophyid mites, in which he provided instructions for collecting and preserving mite specimens and infested leaves for long-term study, and on how to identify eriophyids to genus using his textbook.

On 24 October, conference participants enjoyed an all-day tour of the 'Museum of Bardo,' 'Historical Sites of Carthage,' 'Sidi Bou Said Village,' and several traditional Tunis shops. Later, all were treated to a traditional lunch and special AAA dinner, with native music and dance. The conference ended on Friday, 26 October, with a brief gathering, at which participants were thanked and given mementos of their time in Tunisia. Congratulations to the staff of the Imperial Park Hotel and the organizers of the fourth AAA meeting for a thoroughly delightful and informative program (see photos).

**NEW WEB SITE FOR AFRICAN ACAROLOGISTS ESTABLISHED** - Dr. Ehab M. Bakr (*embakr@yahoo.com; ehab@ehabsoft.com*) of Egypt has established a new Web site (*AfricanAcarologists@yahoogroups.com*) for communication between African acarologists and their colleagues worldwide. Dr. Bakr invites you to join the African Acarology Association mailing list, where your e-mails will automatically be distributed to those already on the list. To join, simply go to the Web site above and click on "Join this group."

**DR. KAOUTHAR GRISSA LEBDI OF TUNISIA RECOGNIZED BY IJA** - Dr. Kaouthar Grissa Lebdi (*aas4th@yahoo.fr; grissak@yahoo.fr; lebdigrissa.kaouthar@inat.agrinet.tn*), Department of Plant Protection, Laboratory of Entomology and Acarology, National Agronomic Institute of Tunisia (INAT), 43 Avenue Charles Nicolle, 1082 Tunis, Tunisia, was recognized by the International Journal of Acarology for her work on plant-associated mites and for her singularly successful efforts in organizing the Fourth African Acarology Association meeting in Tunisia from 22 to 26 October 2007 (see photo). Tunisia has great potential for research on acarines of agricultural, medical, veterinary and aquatic importance because so little work has been done there in the past, with the result that the country's fauna remains largely unknown. Dr. Lebdi, together with INAT Dean Dr. Fethi Lebdi and Dr. Abdelaziz Mougou, President, Institute of Research and Higher Education in the Ministry of Agriculture, would warmly welcome inquiries from anyone interested in conducting research on the mites and ticks of Tunisia, a country with a rich past, a young and friendly population, and an optimistic outlook for the future.

**DR. JAMES AMRINE, JR., HONORED FOR HIS WORK BY AFRICAN ACAROLOGY ASSOCIATION** - Most acarologists know Dr. James Amrine, Jr., of West Virginia University, Morgantown, USA, chiefly for his research on eriophyid mites and are not aware that he has also worked on varroa mites for most of his life. Dr. Amrine has published many papers on varroa mite control and continues to train acarologists and beekeepers worldwide. His well-attended workshop in Tunisia (*vide supra*) was conducted in association with the Acarology Development Foundation. For his many invaluable contributions, the African Acarology Association recently honored Dr. Amrine with an award (see photo).