**Dr. Himani Priya Awarded Prestigious Crawford Fund Fellowship, Australia**

Dr. Himani Priya, Scientist, Agricultural Microbiology, ICAR-IARI, Jharkhand, was awarded the prestigious Crawford Fund Fellowship, Australia, and undertook a three-month visit as a Visiting Scientist at CSIRO, Agriculture and Food, Waite Campus, Urrbrae, South Australia.

During the fellowship, she successfully completed advanced training on *"High-throughput molecular and bioinformatics tools for understanding soil and plant microbiomes for sustainable agricultural production."* The training completed under guidance of Dr. V.V.S.R. Gupta, Senior Principal Research Scientist in Functional Soil Biology, CSIRO, with support from the Crawford Fund's South Australia Committee.

The programme provided hands-on experience in soil DNA extraction, PCR, quantitative PCR, Sanger sequencing, amplicon sequencing and microbiome bioinformatics. A major component involved studying nitrogen-fixing microbial communities associated with sorghum at two contrasting Australian field sites, Forest Hill and Loxton, including the isolation and molecular characterization of diazotroph isolates.

The expertise gained will support research on microbial bioinoculants, nutrient cycling and soil health, particularly in the acidic soils of Jharkhand. The fellowship also strengthened scientific exchange and opportunities for India-Australia collaboration in agricultural microbiome research.

**Featured by the Crawford Fund:** Read the fellowship feature on the Crawford Fund website




Dr Priya and Dr Vadakattu with a collection of root and rhizosphere samples for molecular microbial analysis.




Dr Priya with members of the Crawford Fund for Food Security's South Australia Committee, following a presentation about her training experience