

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
PRESIDENTIAL COURT
ERTH ZAYED PHILANTHROPIES



الإمارات العربية المتحدة
ديوان الرئاسة
مؤسسة إرث زايد الإنساني



جائزة خليفة الدولية لنخيل التمر والابتكار الزراعي
KHALIFA INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR DATE PALM
AND AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION

UAEU

جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة
United Arab Emirates University



Khalifa Intl. Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation,
affiliated with Erth Zayed Philanthropies Foundation, UAE Presidential Court.
In collaboration with UAE University.

Organizes

The Eighth International Date Palm Conference, 2026

Emirates Palace Hotel, Abu Dhabi – United Arab Emirates

28th April – 01st May, 2026



In coordination

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
PRESIDENTIAL COURT
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS OFFICE



الإمارات العربية المتحدة
ديوان الرئاسة
مكتب الشؤون الدولية

هيئة أبوظبي للزراعة والسلامة الغذائية
ABU DHABI AGRICULTURE AND FOOD
SAFETY AUTHORITY



Food and Agriculture
of the Organization
United Nations



IDPGN

الشبكة الدولية لعصف الجوهول
MEJHOUL
INTERNATIONAL
NETWORK

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Introduction

Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation, affiliated with Erth Zayed Philanthropies Foundation, UAE Presidential Court, efforts' continue at all levels to strengthen the status of the date palm tree, as a driver of developmental and economic growth. These efforts aim to increase productivity and maximize the benefits derived from the value chains associated with its industry, thereby contributing to a qualitative transformation in desert farming, and turning environmental challenges into promising development opportunities.

In this context, Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation, affiliated with Erth Zayed Philanthropies Foundation, Presidential Court, will organize the Eighth International Date Palm Conference, in collaboration with the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), from 28th April – 01st of May, 2026, in close collaboration with local, regional, and international organizations concerned with date palm cultivation and production worldwide. Where this conference serves as a living embodiment of His Highness's insightful vision and his dedication to advancing this strategic sector, which serves as a vital pillar of food security and sustainable development.

This conference represents a continuation of a scientific journey that began nearly three decades ago, when the United Arab Emirates launched a series of international date palm conferences, as follows: the First session held from 8th –10th March 1998, the Second session held from 25th –27th March 2001, the Third session held from 19th –21st March 2006, the Fourth session held from 15th –17th March 2010, the Fifth session held from 16th –18th March 2014, the Sixth session held from 19th –21st March 2018, and the Seventh session held from 14th –16th March 2022. Where the 2026 conference, will mark the eighth milestone in this pioneering journey.

The Conference is as a prestigious international platform for the exchange of expertise, knowledge, and innovations. It brings together leading scientists, experts, decision-makers, and key stakeholders concerned in date palm cultivation, production, and processing from across the world, in a rich scientific environment that fosters dialogue, discussion, and the integration of perspectives. Respected Ministers of Agriculture from date-producing countries will also be invited, with the aim of disseminating the scientific outcomes and practical recommendations of the Conference officially, and strengthening international cooperation to develop this vital sector, in line with modern advancements.



Conference's Objectives

- » Updating and expanding the scientific knowledge base on the latest research findings in the field of date palm production, propagation, protection, and the development of post-harvest technologies.
- » Artificial intelligence in research and studies, and smart marketing through intelligent applications, globally.
- » Presenting and comparing the United Arab Emirates' advanced experiences in developing the date palm sector, with best international practices in date-producing countries, contributing to enhanced knowledge integration, and the exchange of practical expertise.
- » Strengthening the framework of international technical and scientific cooperation, across all stages of the date palm value chain, from cultivation to processing and export, through the establishment of strategic partnerships between research institutions, private sector, and government entities.
- » Exploring the artificial intelligence applications, and advanced technologies in the development of the agricultural sector in general, and the date palm sector in particular, including agricultural data analysis, resource management, production forecasting, and pest control.
- » Highlighting leading agricultural innovations in date palm cultivation, production, and processing, while encouraging investment in agricultural innovation and technology, to enhance production efficiency, and the sustainability of natural resources.
- » A special attention will be provided to the Red Palm Weevil / International Consortium for Red Palm Weevil Control.



Conference's Theme

The 8th International Date Palm Conference, is held under the theme: "Envisioning the Future of Date Palm Cultivation, Red Palm Weevil Control, and Date Industry."

Organizing Partners

National Partners
International Affairs Office, Presidential Court (IAO)
International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA)
Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA)
United Arab Emirates University (UAEU)
Date Palm Friends Society (DPFS)
International Partners
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)
International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)
Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)
Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA)
Global Crop Diversity Trust (Croup Trust)
International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB)
Mejhoul International Network (MIN)
International Date Palm Network (IDPGN)
International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS)



Key Distinguished Aspects of the Conference

1. The 8th International Date Palm Conference, 2026, is distinguished by a number of features and activities that makes it a dynamic scientific platform, and an attractive destination for participants from across the world, including:
2. Participation of a distinguished group of leading international scientists and experts as keynote speakers, alongside high-level attendance of officials and ministers from date-producing and exporting countries.
3. Coverage of a wide range of scientific and technical topics addressing various aspects of date palm cultivation, production, processing, and marketing, reflecting the advancement of knowledge, and the diversity of challenges and opportunities.
4. A dedicated day to discuss the latest developments and activities of the “International Consortium for Red Palm Weevil Control” (C4RPWC), which was previously launched in cooperation with the esteemed International Affairs Office of the Presidential Court, with the aim of enhancing international coordination and showcasing effective initiatives and experiences in combating the pest.
5. In light of the significant commercial importance and global spread of the Mejhoul date variety, a full day will be dedicated to presenting its latest developments, and exploring opportunities for its advancement and marketing, in line with the current market updates.
6. Presentation the latest research findings, and pioneering international experiments in the date palm sector, enriching the scientific content and enhancing knowledge exchange among researchers and practitioners.
7. A renewed design for the scientific sessions based on interaction, openness, and interdisciplinary integration, keeping pace with rapid developments in agricultural sciences and technologies.
8. Organization of a high-level accompanying exhibition, showcasing the latest innovations, technologies, and products in the field of date palm cultivation, while providing opportunities for networking among researchers, companies, and investors.
9. Arrangement of selected field visits to prominent date palm cultivation sites in the UAE, alongside distinguished cultural and touristic locations, reflecting the environmental depth and heritage identity of the UAE, including a visit to Al Foah Dates Company.
10. Holding the conference at an ideal time of the year, where moderate weather and advanced facilities create a comfortable and stimulating environment for active participation and knowledge exchange.



Date and Venue

Date: 28th April – 01st May, 2026.

Venue: Emirates Palace hotel, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates



Conference's Topics

1. Artificial Intelligence applications, in the field of date palm cultivation, production, & processing.
2. Combating the Red Palm Weevil / "International Consortium for Red Palm Weevil Control"
3. Cultivation and production of the Mejhoul and Barhi varieties.
4. Packaging, marketing, and international trade of dates.
5. Regional and international cooperation, and exchange of expertise.
6. Biotechnology, genetic engineering, and tissue culture propagation.





Attendees / Participants

The 8th International Date Palm Conference serves as a comprehensive platform that brings together stakeholders in the date palm cultivation and production sector, to exchange knowledge. The Conference features broad participation from both the public and private sectors, covering all stages of the production value chain, and among the participants of the conference are:

1. Date palm growers
2. Executive directors of date palm projects
3. International date exporters and importers
4. Experts specializing in various fields of date palm cultivation, & the date industry
5. Government entities and agencies
6. Concerned regional and international organizations
7. Specialized research and development centers
8. Date processing & packaging companies, managers of agricultural establishments, & date marketing companies.
9. Nutritionists
10. Local, regional, and international centers specializing in biotechnology and genetic engineering.
11. Organizing Partners (as previously mentioned in Section 4), as well as producers and consumers.





Accompanying Exhibitions

An exhibition of the following pavilions will be organized during the conference:

1. Display of Mejhoul variety dates, from some participating countries.
2. Agricultural innovations that won the Khalifa Award.
3. Date products, and by-products.
4. Findings on controlling the Red Palm Weevil.
5. National industries based on date palm fronds, and other by-products.
6. Propagation of date palm trees using tissue culture technology.
7. A photo exhibition from the Award's "Date Palm International Photography competition", and the winning and outstanding poems from the "Date Palm International Poetry competition".



Conference's Committees

The Executive Committee

1. H.E. Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, Chairman of the Award's Board of Trustees, and Chair of the Executive Committee.
2. Excellency Dr. Abdelouahhab Alboukhari Zaid, Prof., Member of the Board of Trustees, Secretary General, Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation, Erth Zayed Philanthropies, Presidential Court.
3. Excellency Dr. Ahmed Ali Al Raeisi, Vice-Chancellor of the United Arab Emirates University.
4. Excellency Dr. Helal Humaid Saeed Al Kaabi, Member of the Board of Trustees, Chair of the Financial and Administrative Committee of Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation.

Scientific Committee

Prof. Franz Hoffmann	Chair of the Scientific Committee, KIADPAI.
Prof. Harrison Hughes	Professor of Horticulture, Colorado State University
Prof. Yvon Martel	International Chief Scientist, Agriculture and Agri-food, Canada
Prof. José I. Cubero	Professor of Genetics and Plant Breeding (emeritus), University of Córdoba
Dr. Khaled Masmoudi	Professor, College of Agriculture & Veterinary Medicine, UAEU.
Dr. Dr. Rida Shibli	Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA)
Prof. Mohammed Abdul Muhsen Alyafei	Dean of the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, UAEU.
Dr. Ahmad Elolimy	Assistant Professor, College of Agriculture & Veterinary Medicine, UAEU.
Dr. Mohammad Shteiwi	Associate Professor, College of Agriculture & Veterinary Medicine, UAEU.
Dr. Abdul Jaleel Cheruth	Associate Professor, College of Agriculture & Veterinary Medicine, UAEU.
Dr. Aydin Basarir	Associate Professor, College of Agriculture & Veterinary Medicine, UAEU.
Dr. Shyam Kurup	Associate Professor, College of Agriculture & Veterinary Medicine, UAEU.
Dr. Synan Abuqamar	Professor, College of Science, United Arab Emirates University (UAEU).
Dr. Sabir Muzaffar	Professor, College of Science, United Arab Emirates University (UAEU).
Dr. Walid Al Saleh	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Dr. Amgad El-Kady	Executive Manager, Food and Agro Industries Technology Center (FAITC), Ministry of Industry, Arab Republic of Egypt
Dr. Ricardo Salomón Torres	Research Professor, Sonora State University
Dr. Younés Noutfia	Head of the Agro-Food and Quality Department, INRA French National Institute for Agricultural Research, Morocco.
Prof. Abdallah Oihabi	International Expert
Dr. Salah Eddine Zaid	International Expert
Dr. Mohamed Aziz El Houmaizi	International Expert
Dr. Ibrahim Jboory	International Expert
Dr. Walid Kaakeh	International Expert
Dr. Sarada Krishnan	Director of Programs, Global Crop Diversity Trust (Crop Trust)
Dr. Jitendra Thakur	Group Leader, Plant Transcription Regulation Laboratory, ICGB – New Delhi

Organizing Committee

Mr. Tag Elsir Musa	Administrative Officer, KIADPAI.
Eng. Imad Saad	Media Officer, KIADPAI.
Mr. Ahed Karkouti	Public Relations Officer, KIADPAI.
Ms. Esraa Shatnawi	Event and Exhibitions Coordinator, KIADPAI.
Ms. Afra Al Kaabi	Nominations Coordinator, KIADPAI.
Ms. Yasmeen Al Antari	Accountant, KIADPAI.
Ms. Sara Nasr	Coordinator, Date Palm Friends Society
Ms. Rona Burgos	Administrative Assistant, KIADPAI.
Ms. AlYazi Al Kaabi	Public Relations Assistant, KIADPAI.
Eng. Saeed Alyammahi	Director of Agricultural Development Department, ADAFSA
Mr. Husain Ali AlShamisi	Head of Events Department, ADAFSA
Mrs. Samar Negida	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Dr. Babagana Ahmadu	FAO Representative, Republic of South Africa.
Dr. Mohamed Ali Bob	RPW Specialist, Directorate of Programs Office, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), UAE.
Dr. Shaaban Salim	Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)
Dr. Hamadttu ElShafie	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)
Eng. Nancy Ammar	Agricultural Engineer, Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)
Ms. Joanna Purcell	Partnerships Lead, Global Crop Diversity Trust (Crop Trust)
Dr. Ramesh Sonti	Director, ICGEB New Delhi Component
Ms. Marianna Maculan	ICGEB Chief, External Relations
Prof. Abdallah Oihabi	International Expert
Dr. Salah Eddine Zaid	International Expert
Ms. Fatema Aref AlMulla	International Affairs Office, Presidential Court



Conference's Language

English and Arabic (simultaneous interpretation).



Research Papers and Proceedings

The organizing committee will print and distribute the following booklets:

1. Daily Conference's program booklet
2. Abstract booklet of the scientific papers presented at the Conference
3. Poster presentation booklet
4. Proceedings book containing the scientific papers approved by the Conference's Scientific Committee, which will be published as in previous sessions, in collaboration with the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS).



Terms and Conditions for Submission and Acceptance of Research Papers

All research papers submitted by participants must comply with the terms and conditions set forth by the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS). Authors are requested to follow the instructional steps and Paper Guidelines as detailed at the following link:

<https://www.ishs.org/authors>

1. Failure to submit a scientific paper that adheres fully to the standards outlined in the link above will result in the participant's disqualification, as determined by the Conference Scientific Committee.
2. The final deadline to submit your scientific paper, is the 31st of December, 2025.



Conference Participation Registration

- » Participation applications are accepted exclusively through electronic submission, via the official Conference's website: www.idpc.ae

For Further Inquiries, Please Contact:

- » Mr. Ahed Karkouti (Mobile: +971 55 6828 700)
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- » Ms. Sara Nasr (Mobile: +971 50 579 4989)
- » Ms. Rona Burgos (Mobile: +971 50 687 0488)
- » Or visit the Conference's website: www.idpc.ae



Conference's Conveyors

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Host Country

The United Arab Emirates is a federation of seven emirates, each with its own unique character and personality but yet united with a common goal and destiny. Abu Dhabi is one of the most modern cities in the world. It is the center of government and business life in the UAE and is the largest and most populated of the seven Emirates. The architecture of its modern buildings and sky scrapers is the finest in the Middle East. Large gardens and parks, green boulevards lining all the streets and roads, sophisticated high-rise buildings, state-of-the-art communication services and transport, the presence of all the international luxury hotel chains, rich shopping malls, cultural centers and events provide tourists a one-of-a-kind experience all year round. Abu Dhabi stretches south to the oases of Liwa, where some of the world's largest sand dunes can be found, and east to the ancient oasis of Al Ain. The official religion of the UAE is Islam, but other faiths are tolerated and freedom of worship privately is given.

Language

The official language of the UAE is Arabic, and among the other used languages is English.

Currency

The official currency of the United Arab Emirates is the Dirham, where the exchange rate of one US Dollar, is equivalent to 3.67 UAE Dirhams.

Climate

The sun shines throughout the year, and April is considered a month of moderate weather, with average high temperatures around 30°C and lows around 25°C.

Formal Dressing

Conference's participants are required to wear formal dressing during the Opening Ceremony.

Travel and Transportation

Kindly note that internal transportation will be provided from arrival until departure, including transfers between the hotel and the Conference's venue.



Post-Conference Tours

The Conference's Organizing Committee will arrange a scientific tour on Saturday, 02nd of May, 2026, which will include:

- » Al Foah Date Factory, in Al Saad.
- » Al Ain Oases, along with historical sites.

Kindly note that the transportation will be arranged by the Conference's Organizing Committee, where participation in the tours is optional.

Accordingly, the organizing committee would like to inform participants that the participation form will be available with the organizers on the first day of the Conference. Where interested participants are kindly requested to complete the form, and submit it to Ms. Afra Al Kaabi (Mobile: +971 50 5429944) (Email: amk@kiaai.ae)