

Superannuation

Dr G. Saikumar Superannuated in December, 2024

Dr G. Saikumar, a distinguished scientist in Veterinary Pathology, made pioneering contributions to the understanding and control of swine viral diseases of economic and public health importance in India. Born on 2nd December 1962, he attended Cambridge School in Cuttack, Odisha; obtained BVSc & AH from OUAT, Bhubaneswar (1985), and acquired Master's (1988) and Doctoral (1995) degrees in Veterinary Pathology from Deemed University, IVRI, Izatnagar. He joined ARS in 1992 and served at ICAR-IVRI, Izatnagar, UP until his superannuation in December, 2024. He had post-doctoral research training at Institute of Animal Health, Pirbright, UK, where he had the opportunity to learn molecular biology and developed an RPV-PPRV chimeric virus.



Over the course of his career at ICAR-IVRI, he established himself as a leading expert and orator in swine virology, molecular epidemiology, and disease diagnostics. His research focused primarily on Classical Swine Fever (CSF), where he developed next-generation molecular diagnostics, including RT-PCR, real-time RT-PCR, and DNA/RNA probe-based *in situ* hybridization assays. His groundbreaking studies on the molecular epidemiology of CSFV provided the first comprehensive insights into emerging genotypes in Indian pig populations, forming the basis for surveillance and control strategies in the country. Dr Saikumar's contributions extended to a wide spectrum of swine diseases. He reported and characterized the occurrence of Porcine Circovirus-associated disease, Porcine Parvovirus-linked reproductive failures, Swine Influenza (H1N1), Porcine Teschovirus, Porcine Sapelovirus, Swinepox, and Porcine Enterovirus G infections in Indian pigs. His work on zoonotic infections was especially impactful during the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, he provided critical insights into the virus in swine hosts, and his studies on Japanese Encephalitis (JE) in pigs revealed their role as amplifying hosts in recurrent outbreaks affecting children in endemic regions. This research culminated in the development of an inactivated JE vaccine for pigs, for which he filed a patent, marking a landmark achievement in Veterinary Public Health. Collectively, these contributions elevated the Swine Disease Laboratory, Division of Pathology, ICAR-IVRI, into a recognized National Referral Laboratory for swine diseases. Dr Saikumar authored over 150 peer-reviewed research papers in reputed national and international journals and supervised 30 Master's and Doctoral scholars, significantly contributing to capacity building in Veterinary Pathology. He provided academic and administrative leadership as Acting Head, Division of Pathology, and later as Acting Joint Director (Research) at ICAR-IVRI (April 2021-November 2022). Beyond research, he played a major role in research management and institutional leadership. As In-charge, PME Cell (9 years), he streamlined research planning and monitoring, which enhanced both the quality of publications and the intellectual property portfolio of ICAR-IVRI. He also served as Chairman, Institute Animal Ethics Committee; Member, Institute Biosafety Committee; and was part of the Institute Management Committees of several ICAR institutes, including ICAR-CIRG, ICAR-CIRB, ICAR-NIHSAD, ICAR-NRC Camel, and ICAR-NIVEDI. He was a Board Member of ICAR-IVRI and Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, Tirupati. Dr Saikumar superannuated from ICAR service on 31st December 2024, leaving behind a legacy of scientific excellence, institutional development, and mentorship in Veterinary Pathology and swine disease research. **The Indian Association of Veterinary Pathologists wishes him a healthy, happy, peaceful and purposeful superannuated life.**