

ICAR celebrates its 90th foundation day, agriculture minister lauds its role

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New Delhi: Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Mr Radha Mohan Singh congratulated scientists and officials of the of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) along with farmers from across India on ICAR's 90th Foundation day and award ceremony function held in New Delhi on 16th July.

Mr Singh said the efforts of the ICAR have not only helped India transform from an importing nation to an exporting nation but also provided self-sufficiency and nutritional security in foodgrains. Due to the efforts of our skilled scientists and the hard work of the farmers, the country today has a buffer stock in foodgrain.

Working towards the government's mantra of Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Mr Singh said that ICAR has established the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), Assam and IARI, Jharkhand on the lines of India's leading agricultural research institute IARI, Pusa.

ICAR is playing a vital role in fulfilling the government vision of doubling farmers' income by 2022. Keeping in mind the suggestions of the Council, the government, besides increasing budgetary allocation, has also created several corpus funds to improve the infrastructure of

dairy, cooperative, fisheries, animal husbandry, agriculture market, small irrigation scheme, water bodies management etc.

The Minister said a Soil Health Card scheme has been initiated so that farmers can know before sowing the health of the soil in his farm, the kind of crop to be grown and the type and quantity of nutrients to be used. Simultaneously, with the motto of 'Har Khet Ko Paani', around 100 irrigation projects are being completed under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY). In order to ensure better price discovery for farmers, the online platform e-NAM has been started. The government has also fulfilled its promise of providing MSP at 1.5 times and more over cost of production for 14 Kharif crops.

Mr Singh expressed happiness and said that due to the techniques developed by ICAR and hard work of the farmers, foodgrain production touched 275.68 million tonnes this year, which is 10.64 million tonnes more than 265.04 million tonnes recorded in 2013-14. Horticulture production has touched 305 million tonnes this year. The country is also moving forward in pulses production and with around 23 million tonnes of pulses production this year, close to self-sufficiency. Due to this, the import of pulses has gone down from 10 lakh tonnes in 2016-17 to 5.65 lakh tonnes in 2017-18, saving the country Rs 9775 crore in foreign exchange.

The Pusa basmati 1121 variety of Basmati rice developed by ICAR has helped India earn more than Rs 18,000 crore in foreign exchange every year. During 2010-14, India earned Rs 62,800 crore in foreign exchange from exports, which rose to Rs Rs 71,900 crore in 2014-18.

The Agriculture Minister said the by coordinating ICAR's agricultural research, education and advance line activities at a national level, more than 750 start-ups and agri entrepreneurs have been developed, including farmer entrepreneurs in various areas of agriculture. In the agribusiness incubation centres established in 24 ICAR centres, technical assistance is being provided to the entrepreneurs.

The Union Minister concluded by saying that the country has full faith in the efforts of ICAR's scientists and the hard work of the farmers and hoped that together, the country will move forward on the path of agricultural development faster than ever before.

Mr Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare said ICAR has given special emphasis on higher education in agriculture to enable skilled youth in the field of research & education and the recommendation of the Fifth Dean Committee has been implemented in all Agricultural Universities. More than 30 techniques have been developed by ICAR to generate income from agriculture waste which can be increase the income come of farmers he added.

Chief Guest and dignitaries released ICAR publications, knowledge products and technologies on the occasion.

Awards were distributed for excellence in 16 different categories in the award distribution function, which include 3 institutes; 1 SAU; 2 AICRPs. The agriculture minister congratulated the three Best Ranked Universities and Official Language Awardees and other award winners for outstanding achievements and contributions.

Dr Trilochan Mohapatra , Secretary (DARE) and Director General (ICAR) briefed about the achievements of ICAR. Mr Chhabilendra Roul, Additional Secretary DARE and Secretary, ICAR, delivered welcome address. Directors of ICAR Institutes, awardees, and ICAR officials were present on the occasion.