



Tamil Nadu Agricultural University
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To
The Editor,

Date: 12-6-2015

Sir,

I request that the following matter may kindly be published in your esteemed daily:

**Reduce the Cost of Cultivation with Integrated Crop Management
Says APC**

The 81st Scientific Workers Conference 2015 was held at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) on June 12, 2015 at Anna Auditorium. More than 500 Scientists, Workers from various departments and farmers participated.

Dr. M. Maheswaran, Director of Research, TNAU, Coimbatore welcomed the gathering and made a brief presentation on the administrative set up and research activities in TNAU. He said that sustainable agriculture should integrate environmental health, economic profitability and social and economic equity.

Growing and diversified demand, technologies, resource availability and social influences each in isolation and also combination influences crop production. For the release of improved varieties, it takes 5 years for evolution and 5 years for evaluation. Co51 rice variety released in 2014 with duration of 110 days and resistance to blast and BPH has been cultivated in 5 lakhs acres in 2015 with net accrued income of Rs. 325 crores. The post variety release monitoring and withdrawal of released varieties are to be given attention. For denotifying the varieties, extension officials should give feedback on the performance and preference among the farmers.

Some of the denotified varieties are still cultivated by farmers. Basic infrastructure of seed farms have to be improved. TNAU has evolved more than 770 varieties in various crops, technologies like popularization and value addition in millets, mechanization of cotton, PPFM spray to mitigate drought in rice, biological control of pests are highlights of critical technologies which has been evolved in TNAU. Total grant of 6953 lakhs from

various agencies other than by All India Coordinated Research Projects. He requested that exclusive research grant should be given for doing work for research needs for Tamil Nadu conditions.

Dr. M. Rajendran, IAS., Director of Agriculture, Govt. of Tamil Nadu explained that there was 66 lakhs ha. area under cropping in 1990 which has shrunk to 42 lakhs ha now. Cropping intensity was 120% which has shrunk to 110% at present. Rainfall was 1200 mm at 90's with 900 mm at present. Average land holding was 1.2 ha which has come down to 0.8 hectare contribution of agriculture to GDP was 42% in 1960 but it has drastically come down to 6% at present. But the production was 86 lakhs mt in 2000 but within a short span of 15 years, the production has increased to 127 lakhs mt. In future he cautioned that water and energy are going to be limiting factors and productivity of crops like sugarcane is constant for 40 years. He requested concerted efforts on research on water and solar energy.

Th. Sitherasanen, IAS., Commissioner of Horticulture and Plantation Crops, Govt. of Tamil Nadu requested TNAU to evolve high yielding varieties and hybrids. Focus should be on cluster formation for crops. Demonstration plots should be increased to show the success of technologies to farmers.

Th. C. Manoharan, Director, Agri Business and Agricultural Marketing, Tamil Nadu in his special address briefed the activities for post harvest losses prevention including cold storage, evolving market complex, regulated market committee, commodity groups, terminal markets in Coimbatore, Madurai and Chennai in public private partnership model value addition of products, strengthening of E-trading activities.

Th. K.K. Kaushal, IFS, Chief conservator of Forests & Additional Director, Tamil Nadu Forest Academy, Coimbatore appreciated the concerted research efforts of TNAU in the development of post Independence India. He also lauded TNAU being No.1 Agricultural University in the country. He said excellence is not permanent but continuous and local problems should be given focus. Empirical studies are to be made in commodity production and pricing. Scientists, department officials interaction has to be improved. Tamil Nadu has been constantly maintaining 17% area under forests. Bamboo products marketing have to be given attention.

Th. K.B. Ramakrishnan, Chief Engineer (Agrl. Engg.), TNAU, Coimbatore said that Agriculture mechanization, Irrigation management and soil and water conservation are the priority areas of the department. For promoting green energy, 5 HP solar pump sets were installed in 1500 farmers fields. He expressed the farmers feedback with respect to inconvenience in handling wet land weeders and coconut climbers and paddy combined harvester and called for research in their lines.

Director of Sericulture, Govt. of Tamil Nadu told that Tamil Nadu stands first in silk production. From 15 kg silk per ha in 1990, it has raised to 100 kg per ha at present. Mulberry production has increased from 6000 kg per acre per year to 24000 kg per acre per year in Mulberry.

Director, NRC, Banana said India is No. 1 producer of Banana in world. Resistant cultures to fusarium wilt, drought and salt tolerant varieties are being evolved. Udayam, a variety released from NRCB has become popular. Disease free , cost economic planting material through tissue culture has to be focused to meet the needs of farmers. Integrated pest management using bio pesticides and bio control agents have been evolved. A virus detection kit to see whether planting material has virus or not has been evolved. He requested Director of Agriculture and Horticulture to arrange training of department officials in NRCB.

Director, CICR in his special address reiterated that India stands first in area and production but with low productivity. He requested change of evaluation pattern of varieties. It is a long term process and change in soil, water, climate at a rapid pace and the evolved varieties may not suit in a changed environment after 10 years. Whereas, in private sector, evaluation is done for 1 year.

Th. Rajesh Lakhoni, APC & Secretary appreciated Tamil Nadu Agricultural University for upgradation to 1st place from 17th place after the inception of the Vice-Chancellor. He said, that in 5 years, rice and pulses should be doubled, millet productivity should be tripled. Top three diseases in each crop should be focused and resistant varieties should be evolved. Maximum expenditure in fertilizers and pesticides incurred by farmers should be reduced. Crop wise IPM package especially for vegetables should be developed.

Dr. J. Daniel Chellappa, Senior Scientist, BARC said that early maturing drought tolerant varieties in oilseeds and pulses are being released and popular in Tamil Nadu. Groundnut TG37A has been found to have 3 times increased productivity than local varieties. TAG 24 is popular groundnut variety in India. TAU 1 urd bean has been popular in Maharashtra with 95% area coverage.

Radiation used for sprout inhibition, insect disinfestations, shelf life extension hygienization, quarantine. soil organic carbon detection kit, vibro thermal disinfectant, online domestic water purifier, fluoride detection kit for ground water, DiP N Drink membrane pouch are some of the products from BARC. Presently vector control programme is taken up jointly with government of Tamil Nadu.

Dr. K. Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor, TNAU, Coimbatore in his presidential address told that in comparison to 12% and 14% findings reaching people in medical and engineering fields, 34% of research findings of agriculture has been taken to farmers. Temperature sensitive male sterile lines were obtained in TNAU itself unlike yester years we depended on external sources. Out of the budget in agriculture, considerable amount is spent on electricity and exclusive research funding has to be given for Tamil Nadu. Due to the concerted efforts of scientists, extension workers and farmers, production has increased to 128 lakhs mt. Pulses productivity can be improved only if it is grown exclusively with all good agricultural practices and not simply sown and harvested. Central government funding has to be increased. He appreciated the efforts for bringing research centres for Jackfruit, Flowers and rain fed crops. He also appreciated with gratitude for the success of seed production with the help of farmers. 37 farmers in Gobichettipalayam helped TNAU in hybrid rice seed production. Post harvest storage and processing has to be strengthened. Rain water harvesting should be focused. Irrigation water facility should be extended to farmers in times of need. Irrigation infrastructure should be strengthened. If all the facilities and funding are not limited, with the concerted research and extension efforts, doubling the productivity and tripling the income of farmers can be done in near future.

Finally, Dr. V. Ravi, Director, Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute, Aduthurai proposed a formal vote of thanks.

Assistant Public Relations Officer



