

TNAU is the best rice research centre in the country



In the post independence era, agriculture received the maximum boost in investment on research and infrastructure development following the famous statement by then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Everything could wait but not agriculture'. Toeing those principles of the union government, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the nodal agency for agricultural research and education incepted All India Coordinated Rice Improvement Project (AICRIP) in 1965. The main emphasis was to coordinate inter-disciplinary, inter-institutional research activities through joint programme planning, free exchange of germplasm and organization of multi-location trials to develop appropriate varietal and management technologies for different rice ecosystems in India. The programme is managed by Directorate of Rice Research (DRR) in Hyderabad since April 1975. Under this programme rice research activities in 127 research centres spread across all the states in the country are coordinated with the noble aim to increase rice production in the country to feed the growing population. The programme accomplished the task with elan that presently India is the largest exporter of rice in the world.

This is the largest network programme devoted to a single crop anywhere in the world. Tamil Nadu Agricultural University represented by the Paddy Breeding Station at Coimbatore and Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute at Aduthurai are the cooperators in AICRIP since inception. Under the umbrella of AICRIP till date around 25000 elite improved lines developed by different cooperating centres were tested in multi-location trials in the country which led to the release of 1037 varieties including 69 hybrids till 2014. The programme also has standardized region, season and cultivar specific crop production and protection strategies to suit the changing cultural and social practices of the rice farmers in the country. AICRIP also takes up the task of delivering technology to the doorsteps of the farmers through conduct of

Front Line Demonstrations on new varieties and management technologies benefitting 30200 rice farmers during the last one decade.

2015 is the golden jubilee year of AICRIP and the commemoration was kickstarted in Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad on 12.04.2015 during the annual All India Rice Workshop attended by about 1000 scientists from public and private institutions involved in rice research. Honourable Union Minister for Labour and Employment Shri. Bhandaru Dhathreya participated in the event.

During the inaugural ceremony of the golden jubilee year of the AICRIP, best rice research centres were awarded for their excellent contribution during the past 50 years. Paddy Breeding Station in TNAU was selected as the best AICRIP Centre for its glorious contribution to improve rice production in the country through development of 21 rice varieties and their suitable crop husbandry methods. Paddy Breeding Station which was established in 1912 has so far released 52 rice varieties and four rice hybrids which boosted the rice production in the state from 35 to 80 lakh tons in a span of 50 years. This centre released the famous CO 25, CO36, CO40 (Rajarajan), CO43, Ponmani, the fine grain rice hybrids CORH3, CORH4 etc., which transformed rice cultivation in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere which was acknowledged during the event. The latest variety CO51 is already very popular among the farmers of Tamil Nadu and is gaining footholds in rest of the country as well. Professor S. Robin, Head of Paddy Breeding Station received the award from Dr. Robert Zeigler, Director General, International Rice Research Institute, Philippines. Dr. S. Ayyappan, Director General and Dr. J. S. Sandhu, Deputy Director General from ICAR and Dr. V. Ravindra Babu, Project Director of AICRIP attended and gave felicitations at the function.

Dr. K. Ramasamy, Vice Chancellor, TNAU congratulated the rice team of the university for this feat and encouraged them to work still harder to contribute to the state's mandate of doubling the food grain production in the state which requires an annual average growth rate of 6.7%. He also remarked with optimism that TNAU scientists are experienced and equipped adequately to integrate the cutting edge genomic technologies to breed new rice varieties for the future which would require less water, manures, pests and disease resistant and more nutritive.