

Meeting of ICAR Regional Committee No. VI held at AAU, Anand

XXVth meeting of ICAR Regional Committee No. VI, comprising the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan; and UTs of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, was jointly organized by ICAR-Central Arid Zone Research Institute and Anand Agricultural University at Anand. The meeting started with welcome address by Vice-Chancellor of AAU, Dr N.C. Patel on 4 February 2019 in the auditorium of B.A. College of Agriculture.



Speaking as Chief Guest, Shri Parshottam Rupala, Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, and Panchayati Raj gave lucid account of present day agricultural scenario of the country and its special needs. He underlined the



need of small farm machinery specifically suitable for small and fragmented holdings. He recollected that green and white revolutions were need of the hour. Shri Rupala invited all the stakeholders to come together to fulfill the Prime Minister's promise of doubling farmers' income for which he suggested promotion of Integrated Farming System for small and marginal

farm holdings for livelihood security and High-Tech Cultivation for global markets in cluster of villages in canal irrigated areas.

Shri Jaydrathsinghji Parmar, Minister of State for Agriculture, Government of Gujarat mentioned that their state agriculture department intends to increase number of seed sale points to enhance seed replacement rate in the state. He highlighted the role of efficient irrigation techniques in water management and cited the example of Banaskantha district which has benefitted a lot from wide spread use of drip irrigation systems popularized through Pradhan Mantri Krish Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY). He also emphasized that post-harvest (PH) losses in our country are large which need to be reduced and the value addition needs to be given high priority to save PH losses as well as to increase farmers' income.



Dr T. Mohapatra, Secretary, DARE and DG, ICAR mentioned that Regional Committee Meetings provide unique opportunities as ICAR institutes and SAUs of the region reach out to state line departments to listen to their problems and provide solutions, if available, otherwise initiate research programme to find suitable solution. Dr Mohapatra also pointed out some of the key issues pertaining to organic farming, protected agriculture, dryland agriculture, arid horticulture, etc. that were expected to be discussed in detail during the 2-days meeting.

Dr. K. Alagusundaram, DDG (NRM) and Nodal Officer of Regional Committee underlined the contribution of Zone-VI in production of cotton, castor, groundnut, pulses, oilseeds, coarse cereals, fruits, milk etc. and highlighted the strong presence of ICAR institutes and SAUs in the region. He was concerned over depleting groundwater table in low rainfall areas of Rajasthan and felt the need of up-scaling of groundwater recharge techniques. He mentioned that climate change is emerging as a major challenge which is likely to adversely affect agricultural production and farmers' economy.

Mr. Sanjay Prasad, Additional Chief Secretary of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare Department of Gujarat advised the farmers to select crops depending on texture and fertility of the soil of their fields and to adopt modern production technologies. Padma Shri awardee Shri Vaalabhbai Marwaniya, 96-years old carrot-farmer from Junagadh district was felicitated during the inaugural function. Shri Marwaniya shared his long experience of carrot cultivation, its marketing and development and adoption of suitable varieties depending on carrot uses. The farmers participating in the RCM, discussed their problems related to organic farming, primary processing,

quality of bio-control agents and bio-fertilizers, lack of prudent market intelligence which were discussed in detail and answered by experts of different disciplines.

Action taken report on the recommendations of XXIVth RCM was presented by Dr O.P. Yadav, Director CAZRI. It was followed by the problems raised by officials of the state departments of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and fishery, which also continued on 5th February. The issues were discussed one by one and appropriate action points were decided, wherever needed.

The RCM ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.