

President calls upon scientists to work for technology-led development of agriculture

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"In our economy, agriculture retains its primary importance in terms of value creation and employment generation. There are millions of farmers tilling on small and marginal holdings. Our challenge is to reach out to the last farmland and equip them with the best cultivation methods," said Pranab Mukherjee, President of India. He was delivering Foundation Day Lecture of ICAR on July 16, 2013 at New Delhi. He called upon the scientific fraternity to work towards a technology-led path for development of agriculture and prosperity for the farming community.

While reminiscing the era of 'ship to mouth existence' before green revolution, he said, "India is today a leading producer of essential food commodities like wheat, rice, fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, eggs and fish. It has transformed from being a food-deficient to food surplus country and an exporter of agricultural produce. This, in the face of an ever increasing population, is a laudable achievement with few parallels." I compliment the agricultural research and development system of our country for their untiring efforts, he added.

President of India launched 'Kisaan SMS Portal' that is capable of sending messages in regional languages on preferred crop and activity giving information and advisories. The portal is created by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Government of India.

President of India conferred Sardar Patel Outstanding ICAR Institution Award, Jagjivan Ram Abhinav Kisan Puruskar (National) and N.G. Ranga Farmer Award for Diversified Agriculture to ICAR Institutions of different categories and progressive farmers.

Sharad Pawar, Union Minister for Agriculture and Food Processing Industries and President ICAR Society released Publications, 'Climate Change and Sustainable Food Security' and 'Aadhunik Phal Utpadan' (Hindi) and presented first copies to President of India. Shri Pawar was presiding over the function.

Mr Pawar welcomed President of India and emphasized upon various challenges before India Agriculture. These challenges call for a paradigm shift in our research approach to harness the potential of modern science, encourage innovations in technology generation, and provide for an enabling policy and investment environment, he added. While complimenting ICAR Institutions for taking several worthy initiatives, he advised, "of course the real test of ICAR lies in the farmer's field. If farmer is able to produce more with less input and earn better, then I will consider ICAR's interventions are successful".

Pawar conferred various categories of ICAR Awards 2012 along with Mr Tariq Anwar and Dr Charan Das Mahant, Union Ministers of State for Agriculture & Food Processing Industries. Dignitaries conferred ICAR Awards on 70 awardees under 15 different categories that comprise three Institutions, one AICRP, 55 scientists (10 women), nine farmers and two journalists.

Dr. S. Ayyappan, Secretary, DARE and DG, ICAR welcomed President and other dignitaries and presented glimpses of ICAR achievements and the way forward. He informed that the Bureau of Indian Standards has granted the Quality Management Systems Certification ISO 9001: 2008 to the ICAR Headquarters and DARE on 5th July. Mr S.K. Khanna, Deputy Director General, Bureau of Indian Standards, presented the certificate to Dr. Ayyappan.

Members of Parliament, Vice Chancellors of agricultural universities, Directors of ICAR Institutes, distinguished scientists, academia, senior officials of Ministry of Agriculture and other line departments graced the occasion.

Shri Arvind Kaushal, Additional Secretary, DARE & Secretary, ICAR presented the vote of thanks.