

Crystal National Agri Awards for farmers and agriculture scientists

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Responding to the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's independence day speech in which he had asked scientists to bring innovative farm practices from lab to land and ensure per drop more crop, one of country's leading agri business companies Crystal Crops Protection, announced a first of its kind awards to recognize contributions of farmers and scientists to Indian agriculture.

Present at the awards ceremony to honour winner farmers and scientists from across the country, were union agriculture minister, Mr Radha Mohan Singh and Union transport and rural development minister, Mr Nitin Gadkari gave away the Crystal National Agri Awards on August 27. The awards were organized by Krishi Anusandhan and Kisan Vikas Foundation (KAVF). It is "aimed to identify and felicitate all those whose contributions have made a difference to the agriculture eco-system."

"Farmers are the backbone of the national economy. I am happy that this unique initiative is designed to recognize innovations and initiative of farmers. The winners will inspire many others," said the agriculture minister at the ceremony. "Our government is committed to ensure soil cards for all farmers in the next three years and irrigation in all fields in the next five years," he said.

Crystal Group has taken the lead to promote Indian farmers and agriculture scientists for their innovative and exemplary work in increasing agriculture production and bringing in innovation on the farm and in labs, informed Mr NK Aggarwal, chairman, Crystal Group. An Agri Vision Document with some key prescriptions to address challenges in the agriculture sector too was unveiled on this occasion.

Awards were given away to 12 progressive farmers for using innovative practices; six scientists for outstanding contribution to agri research; two special jury awards and one NGO which has been working innovatively among farming communities. The

jury members for the awards comprised respected public sector scientists including Dr CD Mayee, former chairman, Agricultural Services Recruitment Board, ICAR, Govt of India; Dr Jay G Varshney, former director, Directorate of Weed Science Research, ICAR, Govt of India, Jabalpur; and Dr T Haque, former chairman, Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, Govt of India.

"Indian agriculture is among the biggest and the most vibrant in the world. It sustains the lives of billions of Indians besides providing livelihood to millions of farmers. Yet the interest in this sector, and the attention to it, has been dwindling and this is one effort to bring the glory back to this sector," added Mr Aggarwal.

Mr Aggarwal also announced the company's support to build 100 toilets for the girl child across Bihar, UP, Odisha, Jharkhand, Maharashtra through KAVF and donated Rs 21 lakh towards this. "Inspired by the call of the Prime Minister and in keeping with our commitment to contributing meaningfully to the communities we work with, we decided to contribute to this very novel work," informed the chairman of Crystal group, which has a strong presence in crop protection and agri equipment.