

Fourth Group Discussion of the ICAR-All India Coordinated Research Project on Fruits

The fourth Group Discussion of the ICAR-All India Coordinated Research Project on Fruits was organized at the ICAR-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bengaluru from January 4 to January 7, 2017.



Dr. A. K. Singh, Deputy Director General (Ag. Extn. & Hort. Sci.), ICAR, inaugurated the ICAR-AICRP on Fruits Researcher Interactive Meeting of the Group Discussion and complimented the progress made by ICAR-AICRP on Fruits. In his inaugural address, Dr. Singh highlighted the increase in the production of horticulture crops in the recent years and the problems related to fruit cultivation. He also emphasized the need for commercialization of developed technologies, use of available indigenous and exotic varieties, focused fruit breeding, development of a forewarning system for diseases, nutrient management, production of healthy planting material, finding ways to sustain income from a single orchard, documentation of inventory of developed technologies, database management at the national level, promotion of the Farmer FIRST project, development of technology for a poly-house that could sustain high wind velocity, increasing collaboration and linkage with agricultural institutes, other AICRP's and CSIR Institutes, rationalization of positions in ICAR-AICRP on Fruits and resource generation.

Dr. W. S. Dhillon, ADG (Hort. Sci.-I), ICAR, New Delhi, in his address, highlighted the status of horticultural production, growth rate, post-harvest losses, production of quality planting material, rootstock and scion breeding, value addition, canopy management and the importance of technology transfer. Dr. T. Janakiram, ADG (Hort. Sci. - II), ICAR, New Delhi listed the important milestones in horticultural research and talked about the successful spread of developed varieties, post-harvest losses, reorientation of research programmes for doubling farmer income, carbonated fruit juices and the need for establishment of a centre for excellence for under-utilized fruits.

The function was presided over by Dr. M.R. Dinesh, Director, ICAR-IIHR, Bengaluru. In his presidential address, Dr. Dinesh emphasized the importance of coordinated trials, production of more progeny from known parents and use of developed microbial consortia by different centres. He also listed the problems in relation to the release of varieties in fruit crops. Dr. Prakash Patil, Project Coordinator (Fruits), presented the progress of work done at the 45 centres across the country on nine fruit crops, including mango, Citrus, banana, guava, litchi, grapes, papaya, sapota and jackfruit.

To facilitate effective deliberation, the event was conducted under two broad themes: Technical Review and Planning of Research Programmes under ICAR-AICRP on Fruits on the first two days and ICAR-AICRP on Fruits Researcher Interactive Meeting for identifying technologies under this project for different agro-climatic zones on the last two days.

In the eight technical sessions that were conducted, the research achievements made during 2015–16 in relation to crop improvement, crop production and crop protection were reviewed in detail and the research programme for the mandate fruit crops for the year 2017–18 was finalized. During this period, a total of 14 region-specific technologies were recommended, which include the PDKV -5 for the Nagpur mandarin variety; nutrient use efficient technologies for banana, Citrus and grapes; means to increase farm profitability of banana growers; HDP in mango; methods to regulate litchi flowering; and management schedule for *Fusarium* wilt in banana and fruit borer in litchi for the different agro-climatic zones of India.

Dr. A. S. Sandhu, PAU and Dr. Y. R. Chanana, PAU were the ICAR invitees for the fourth Group Discussion. Dr. S. Rajan, Director, ICAR-CISH, Lucknow, Dr. S. Uma, Director, ICAR-NRC for Banana, Dr. M.S. Ladaniya, Director, ICAR-CCRI, Nagpur, Dr. Vishal Nath, Director, ICAR-NRC for Litchi, Dr. S.D. Sawant, Director, ICAR-NRC for Grapes, Dr. P.L. Saroj, Director, ICAR-CIAH, Bikaner, Dr. Desh Beer Singh, Director, ICAR-CITH, Srinagar and Dr. H.P. Maheswarappa, Project Coordinator (Palms) also attended the Group Discussion.

More than 200 delegates from 28 SAU-based centres under 20 SAUs, 13 ICAR-institute-based centres, 1 CAU-based centre, including 1 private centre, and growers and nurserymen of Karnataka attended the four-day event. A total of 62 publications of extension folders and pamphlets published by different centres were released during the inaugural session of the Group Discussion. Also, a folder on ICAR-AICRP on Fruits that highlighted the mode of functioning and major achievements of the project was released at the event. During the interaction meeting with farmers, two progressive farmers were honoured. The farmers then shared their experience with the delegates at this meet.

The inaugural function ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. Reju Kurian, Organising Secretary of the event.

