

Agrovision to boost farming sector

Eight Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) institutes have engaged in developing agro products and farming equipment participated in Agrovision 2019 exhibition organized at Nagpur, Maharashtra from 22-25 November 2019. The institutes displayed their products for the benefits of farmers and guided them on how they can increase their productivity with minimum cost of production. The event was coordinated by CSIR- National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur.

In the exhibition CSIR- Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI), Durgapur showcased its new inventions for modern agriculture including solar-based automatic irrigation and cotton picking head. Automated irrigation with solar tree was demonstrated to the farmers as an ideal solution to load shading. The picking of cotton balls is still done manually, especially by women and children. Therefore, the institute demonstrated that the spindle type, tractor operated picking head can be used to mechanize cotton harvesting and thereby reduce the overall production cost. In order to promote mechanized agriculture among farmers with small land holdings, a small-range 11.2 horsepower diesel engine tractor that costs rupees 2 lakh was also displayed by CSIR-CMERI.

The farmers of Vidarbha were encouraged to cultivate various varieties of lemongrass and palmarosa developed by CSIR-Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP), Lucknow to get more benefits. The institute has already deployed improved varieties of lemon grass and palmarosa in 600 acres of land in Vidarbha. Various herbal products including skin care, hair care, mosquito repellent, nutraceuticals, disinfectants, etc. were also showcased by CSIR-CIMAP.

CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), Palampur demonstrated a potential of Stevia cultivation in Vidarbha, which is known as sweet herb of Paraguay and 300 times sweeter than sucrose. On an average, dry leaf yield of stevia is 3.0-3.5 tonnes/ha/year, which fetches market price of Rs.100 to 120/ kg, resulting in net return of Rs.2.0-2.7 lakh/ha/year. Edible and ornamental bamboos were also displayed by the institute.

CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow exhibited the biofertilizers, bioplastics and herbal products including gulal, dye, soft drinks, chocolates, jam, etc. Minister for Road Transport & Highways of India and Shipping Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Nitin Gadkari in his inaugural address said, "These kind of interactive exhibitions are very beneficial as they give a window to the stakeholders to know about the advanced technology and how they can be harnessed."



Nitin Gadkari at the exhibition

The technologies relating to carbonated orange juice and dehydrated citrus fruits, along with economically viable processing were also displayed by CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute. The institute also apprised the farmers about bakery, beverage, cereal, fruit and vegetable products.

CSIR-NEERI informed the visitors about the work done by the institute on green corridor development on national highway between Jam and Hinghanghat in Nagpur region. Significant achievements relating to wasteland development in rural areas, bamboo cultivation on fly ash dump sites and phytoid technology for treatment of wastewater were also displayed. Dr. Hemant Purohit, Senior Most Scientist, CSIR-NEERI inaugurated the CSIR pavilion. He interacted with the participating scientists from various CSIR Institutes.

Keywords: CSIR, agriculture, agrovision, exhibition