

Press Note (23.2. 2019)

The 14th Agricultural Science Congress was organized by National Academy of Agricultural Science (NAAS) and ICAR- Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi from February 20-23, 2019 in the premises of the National Agricultural Science Complex, New Delhi.

The congress themed, “**Innovations for Agricultural Transformation**” was timely when the Government is making all efforts to lessen the agrarian crisis and improve the farmers’ welfare through doubling their income.

The congress was attended by 1736 delegates including 506 students. Forty three delegates from 17 countries including USA, UK, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Columbia, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Kenya participated in the Congress. Besides participation from 46 ICAR institutes, state agricultural universities, several central research institutes, International institutes such as IRRI, CIMMYT, ICRISAT, IFPRI, CIAT, BISA, Harvest Plus, ACIAR, University of Queensland, University of Tennessee, Word Bank, University of Mannitoba, University of Adelaide, University of Catania, Massey University and many other attended the Congress. There were six plenary sessions and four panel discussions by eminent speakers covering all major themes of the Congress. Besides this there was a separate Students Elocution Contest attended by the students of 11 different universities. Some of the lead speakers in the Congress included international experts such as, Dr W.H. Pfeiffer, Dr Lee Hickey, Prof John Dixon, Dr Danielle Carrier, Dr Rajeev Varshney and many stalwarts of Indian Agriculture.

ASC-India Expo 2019, an exhibition was also organized as a part of this Congress with participation from 123 exhibitors from ICAR, SAUs, state governments and national, state and private sector organizations.

The scientific programme of the Congress on Ten thematic areas covered a wide range of topics that included genetic improvement of field and horticultural crops,

plant protection, natural resource management, food processing and value addition, animal sciences, fisheries, agricultural engineering, information technology, social sciences and agricultural education. There was an additional theme exclusively meant for farmers to present their innovative ideas and experiences.

A total of 32 technical sessions covered cutting edge areas of agricultural science including technologies such as genomics, genome editing, speed breeding, assisted reproductive technologies, protected cultivation, vertical farming, aerial imaging using drones and remote sensing in natural resource and crop management, emerging technologies in post-harvest management of crop and animal products, water security, soil health, climate smart agriculture, modern technologies for pest-pathogen management, crop residue management, pest and diseases forecasting, emerging nutraceuticals, immune-nutrition, internet of things and artificial intelligence, solar energy, agriculture mechanization, agricultural financing, ICT aided technology delivery, etc.

About 1100 posters were presented and out of which 22 posters were selected for Best Poster Award.

For realizing the 'Evergreen' revolution, on-farm application of innovations related to precision agriculture, natural resource management, climate smart agriculture, mechanization, micro-irrigation (per drop more crop), ICT, digital technology, farmer-market linkage, value chain and post-harvest management, renewable energy are highly essential. Issues related to these areas including price realization, and farmers' net income has been thoroughly discussed during this four-day event.

The Congress showcased agriculture not only as the prime source of employment and livelihood security for nearly 50 percent of India's population, leaping to be the largest in the world by 2025, but also as a business opportunity, service provider, industry and ecosystem protector. Congress was an intellectually rich multi-stakeholder platform for discussing and critically analyzing veritable disruptive innovations for transforming agriculture and food systems to reshape India.

Reflecting on the journey from the ‘green revolution’ to the ‘gene revolution’, the Congress underpinned the need for innovations to drive congruent acceleration of productivity, profitability, sustainability, and inclusivity. Along with innovative technologies, the Congress examined and identified the uncommon synergistic transformative policies, strategies, institutions, partnerships, processes, products, investments, business models, trade, group dynamics (FPOs, cooperatives), and human resources development.

Further, in this fast changing globalized world, and keeping in mind of the increasing awareness of local-global interdependence, together with imminent threat of climate change, achieving the sustainable development goals by 2030, set by the Zero Hunger Challenge and the Paris Declaration, the Congress critically analyzed the scope of international partnership towards creating an Evergreen Economy for Evergreen India.

There is need to upscale and out scale the farmers’ innovations as innovations are significantly contributing towards enhancing farm profitability. Innovator farmers may be recognized not only with awards and visibility, but they must also be provided policy and financial support to take up leadership role in training other farmer for transforming agricultural sector.

The valedictory function was chaired by Prof. Panjab Singh, President, NAAS, New Delhi, Prof. K. Vijayraghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser, GOI, was the chief guest of the day. Dr. A.K. Singh, Chairman, Organizing Committee, XIV ASC 2019, and Director, IARI formally welcomed the chief guest. Dr R B Singh Chairman, Scientific Programme Committee, XIV ASC 2019 & Former-President, NAAS, New Delhi presented the recommendation of the XIV Agricultural Science Congress. Awards for the Best Poster Presentation (22No.), Best Exhibitors (15No.) and Winners of the Students Elocution Contest (2No.) were presented by the chief guest. Dr Ashok Kumar Singh Organising Secretary, XIV ASC 2019 and Joint Director (Research), IARI, New Delhi presented formal vote of thanks.